

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: June 23 2009	Meeting Name: Executive
Report title:		Southwark Youth Council – Terms of reference for new participation model	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Assistant Director of 11-19 services and youth	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. The Executive note the terms of reference for the relaunched Southwark Youth Council and new participation model.
2. The Executive agree the terms of reference for new participation model.
3. The Executive support the cross council implementation of the participation model.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Southwark's Enhanced Youth Inspection by Ofsted published on 16 December 2008, cited Southwark's young people's involvement in decision making, planning and evaluation as adequate. It recommended the youth service should fully implement the Young Southwark participation framework.
5. As a result a Joint Action Plan was drawn up for the youth service, building on existing good practice, whose outcomes included:
 - Terms of Reference agreed by Children Services Management Team for the relaunched Southwark Youth Council.
 - Stakeholder events for all secondary schools and other represented young people.
 - All members of Youth Council and lower participation tiers democratically elected by Sept 2009.
 - Youth Council meetings held regularly, supported by sub structures within community areas.
 - Clear and transparent lines of responsibility in place.

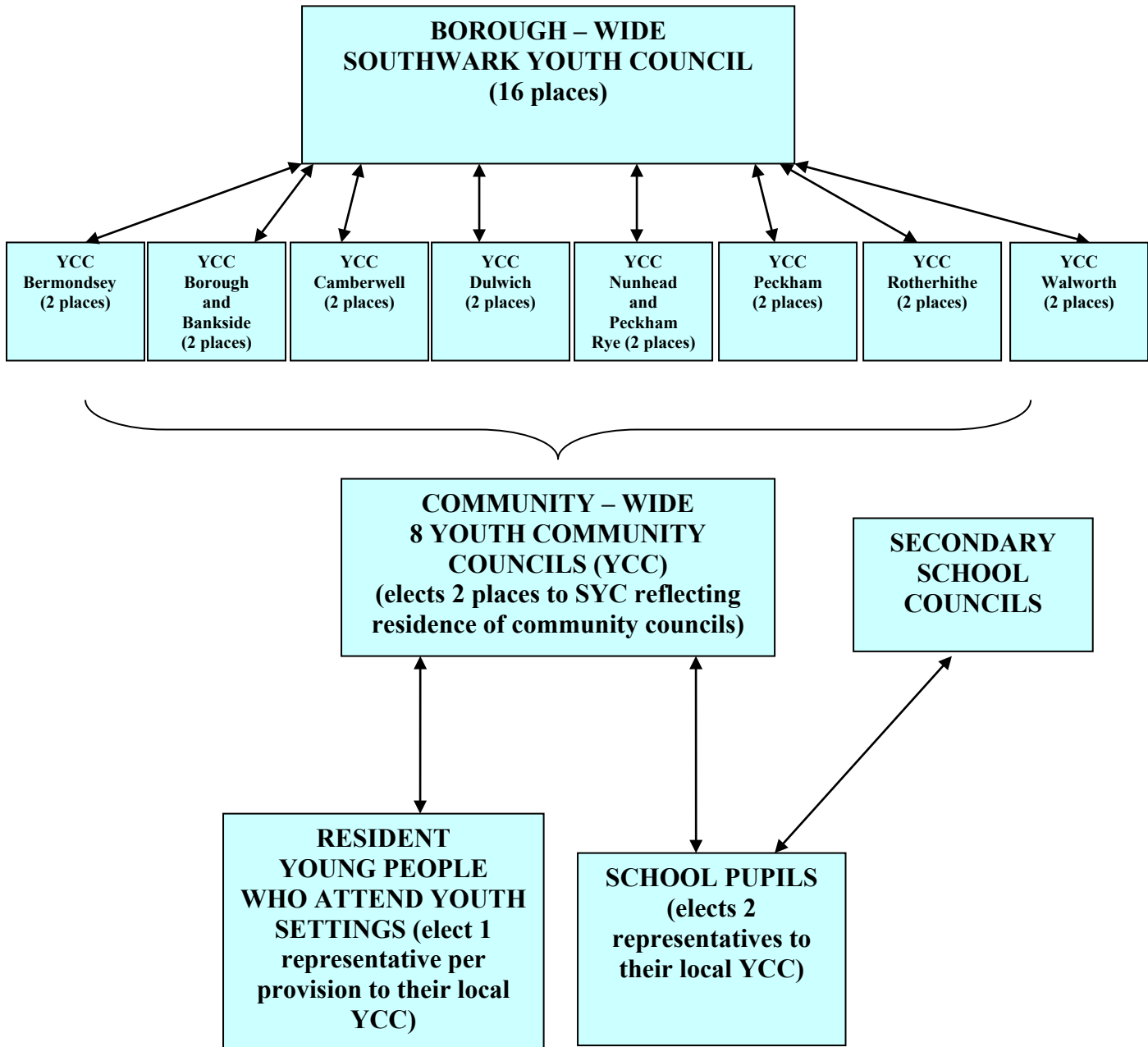
KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The participation model being proposed recognises that young people need to advise decision making at the highest level in the borough. It also recognises that a participation model without a democratic mandate has no accountability and cannot truly represent young people in Southwark.
7. Currently elected young people (e.g. Members and Deputy Members of the UK Youth Parliament) can be disconnected from the local issues and local young people. Therefore a model is needed that represents young people through their school, local community and borough which can address their issues and enable them to feel they are being truly represented.

8. The Children and Young People's Plan guidance for 2009 by the Department for Children, Families, and Schools, states that genuine participation of children, young people, parents, carers and families is crucially important. It states that children and young people should all be encouraged to look at their current service provision and be asked about their hopes and aspirations for the future – to help develop a vision of what their services, communities and neighbourhoods should deliver. Local authority good practice needs to show that children's voices need to be at the heart of service improvements and planning for sustainable futures.
9. Implementing the Participation Framework was a key requirement in the Enhanced Youth Inspection which the Youth Service have committed to implementing this year as part of the Joint Action Plan. Progress on achieving this outcome will be reviewed by Ofsted's CAA inspection.

Policy implications

10. The proposed model is as follows:



Borough-wide Southwark Youth Council

11. Southwark Youth Council will represent young people across the borough. Two representatives from each of the eight Community Councils to be elected to the Southwark Youth Council. The 16 Southwark Youth Council members will be elected for one year with members eligible to stand for a further year. Maximum time to serve on Southwark Youth Council will be two years. Southwark School

Pupils and college students in years 10-13 and young people resident in the borough aged 14- 18 will be eligible to stand.

12. Once in post members will be encouraged to take an area of responsibility which will shadow the portfolios of the Leader and Executive that are relevant to children and young people, acting in an advisory capacity. SYC members' views can help to contribute to the key priorities of the Children and Young People plan and other council policy. This will be organised through officer support.
13. Likewise SYC members will be encouraged to work with the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors from the Corporate Management Team in an advisory capacity, according to their area of responsibilities. SYC members' views can help to contribute to the Southwark Council's key corporate priorities including the Local Area Agreement targets that cover children and young people. Also SYC Members will be encouraged to forge individual links with organisations that are part of Young Southwark, including the Primary Care Trust. Again this will be organised through officer support.
14. Training will be available for all members to equip them for their area of responsibility, assisted by a participation officer.
15. The objectives of the SYC will be to:
 - To advise the political and executive officer leadership for the Council on key issues affecting children and young people across the borough.
 - Represent young people's voices from across the borough.
 - Advise and assist in the development of other youth groups in the borough by linking with other networks, mentoring and providing training.
 - Educate adults and other young people and be a consultative body on the needs and experiences of children and young people.
 - In co-operation with the 8 Youth Community Councils influence the allocation of the Youth Capital and Opportunity Fund. It is hoped that SYC members in conjunction with the 8 YCCs will eventually influence the allocation of other participatory budgets that affect children and young people.
16. Co-opted Members - The group may invite other interested parties and/or partners to its meetings to enable it to carry out its duty. Such members will not have voting rights but will have observer and advisory status. Partners asked to participate could include local voluntary organisations that cater for young people in hard to reach groups for example LGBT youth group, Speakerbox for Children Looked After and Fast Forward that represent children and young people with disabilities. In the development of the new SYC, membership will be transitional. Current SYC members will have the option to be co-opted as part of the transitional arrangements for developing SYC.
17. Southwark Youth Council will be relocated to the Canada Water Library when it opens in 2011. SYC members will meet on a regular basis with the Leader and Executive, Chief Executive and Strategic Directors, members of Young Southwark and senior policy-makers in the Council. The regularity and format of their meetings according to what best meets everyone needs, but will include formal agendas and minutes taken.

18. Finally members will be accountable to their respective Youth Community Councils for decisions made by Southwark Youth Council where they have to report back on a regular basis, as well as SYC members visiting and addressing School Councils that are located in their community areas. SYC can feedback to a wider audience of young people through newsletters, website 'Whtvr' and blog.
19. Southwark Youth Council will meet with Young Southwark on a bi-monthly basis continuing the current arrangement of the present Youth Council.

Youth Community Councils

20. Youth Community Councils will represent the following eight local areas in the borough:
 - Bermondsey
 - Borough and Bankside
 - Camberwell
 - Dulwich
 - Nunhead & Peckham Rye
 - Peckham
 - Rotherhithe
 - Walworth
21. Every school pupil in Southwark will elect two representatives to their Youth Community Council. They will be elected for one year with the option of re-election for another year. There will also be one elected representative from other youth activity sites, including youth clubs and organisations representing hard to reach groups, in their respective community area.
22. We envisage that once the Youth Community Councils are up and running they will have a close working relationship with the Community Councils with the regularity and format of their meetings organised accordingly. Proposals on a format for the meetings can be agreed between the Chairs of the Community Councils and YCC members, through officer support. The benefits from having a close working relationship include:
 - Strengthen the views of young people in the wider community
 - Formally represent the views of young people on all decisions of the Community Councils which affect young people in the area.
 - Educate and inform other young people and be a consultative body on the needs and experiences of children and young people living in a particular Community Council area.
 - Regular meetings between the respective Youth Community Councils and Community Councils.
 - Inter generational development and supporting cohesion and improved perceptions between young people and adults.

School Councils and other youth activity sites

23. There will be elections in all secondary and independent schools, special schools, Pupil Referral Units and FE colleges for young people in Years 10-13 to sit on their school council. We envisage that the School Councils will be consulted on the curriculum design of their school as well as local extended school services offered to pupils. Electoral Services will offer elections training and support for elections to School Councils and Youth Community Councils.

24. There will be elections in all youth activity sites for young people aged 14-18 who are resident in the borough and do not study in Southwark. One young person will be elected from each youth provision to their local Youth Community Council.

25. Timescale and delivery

Deliverable	Timeframe
Southwark school pupils to have elections for their School Councils and elect two representatives to their local Youth Community Council. Likewise resident young people to nominate one representative per provision through their local youth setting.	By end of September 2009
Existing Southwark Youth Council and Area Forum representatives to be consulted to support development transformation and offered the opportunity to continue their participation by getting involved in the new format.	From September – November 2009
2 representatives from each Youth Community Council to be elected to Southwark Youth Council.	By November 2009

Community Impact Statement

26. The participation model supports the Southwark Alliance priorities as set out in Southwark 2016 – Sustainable Community Strategy for the direct engagement of local people – as electors, residents, students, service users and through businesses, faith groups and voluntary organisations. In particular, by involving local people in the design and scrutiny of public services, encouraging user feedback and ensuring that the voices of all our communities, including children and young people, are actively canvassed and listened to.

27. The model proposals also support Southwark's Community Empowerment strategy through the establishment of elected Youth Community Councils that will give a formal voice to young people in influencing the decisions of the Community Councils and will be an important step in engaging young people in promoting local democracy.

28. Finally the model is within the spirit of the independent Councillors Commission report *Representing the future* which proposed:

- actively engaging with young people in participative activities such as consulting on a new road layout near a school;
- creating opportunities for young people to meet councillors to discuss their concerns and interests; and,
- making young people aware of what councillors do and how to become a councillor.

Resource implications (CSC09009)

29. There will need to be sufficient officer support for the relaunched Southwark Youth Council and 8 Youth Community Councils to ensure they carry out their duties effectively. This includes offering training to elected SYC and Local Members as and when necessary.

30. The costs of providing this support will be contained within existing Youth Service revenue budgets.

Legal Concurrent

31. The Council is asked to agree the terms of reference for the new participation model to relaunch the Southwark Youth Council.

32. The power to create a Youth Council is consistent with the well beings powers contained in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. In addition the creation of a Youth Council is consistent with and supports the Council's duties to children and young People under the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004 and the Children and Young People's Plan.

33. When considering the terms of reference for the Youth Council, members should have regard to the following:

- Parental consent will be required for those under 18 years of age
- All adults meeting with those young people under 18 years of age should have a current Criminal Records Bureau check

Consultation

34. The new participation model proposals were presented at the annual '*Your Talk, Our Take*' conference on 1st April. 127 children and young people and practitioners attended, which included 11 secondary schools, 1 Pupil Referral Unit, 1 special school and James Allen Independent School. Also children and young people from organisations that provide services in the community were also present that included SE1 United, Millwall Community Scheme, Southwark Travellers, the Salmon Centre, and Speakerbox.

35. In the morning workshops children and young people welcomed the principle of having an elected model, which they felt would help raise the profile of what Southwark Youth Council does in representing their views at the highest level in Southwark. They felt that their opinions would be taken more on board from the school if they and their fellow School Council members had a democratic mandate.

36. The Executive Member for children services and education formally introduced the participation model proposals to the annual ‘*Your Talk, Our Take*’ conference on 1st April. Preliminary discussions have taken place with the Leader, who has fed into the proposals, but further consultation with the Leader, and Executive members for children services and citizenship, equalities and communities will take place. This has already resulted in the model proposing a close working relationship with the Community Councils and Youth Community Councils.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
<u>Southwark’s Enhanced Youth Inspection</u> , Ofsted, 16 December 2008	Tooley Street	Jonathan Slater
<u>Southwark Joint Area Action Plan</u> , 11-19 services and youth directorate, March 2009		
<u>The Children and Young People’s Plan guidance for 2009</u> , Department for Children, Families, and Schools, January 2009		
<u>Southwark 2016 – Sustainable Community Strategy</u> , Southwark Alliance		
<u>Southwark’s Community Empowerment Strategy – Draft</u> , Corporate Strategy, May 2009		
<u>Representing the future</u> , Councillors Commission, December 2007		

Audit Trail

Lead Officers	Jane Bailey, Assistant Director of 11-19 services and youth	
Report Author	Jonathan Slater, Policy Officer – Strategy and Partnerships	
Version	Final	
Dated	12 June 2009	
Key Decision	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director Communities, Law & Governance	Yes	Yes
Chief Finance Officer	No	No
Children's Services HR	No	No
Children's Services Finance	Yes	Yes