



Briefing Note to Scrutiny and Overview Committee – 4 July 2013

The purpose of this Briefing Note is to update the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on the Youth Council's progress to-date and to seek comments and/or recommendations for any further work that might benefit the Youth Council and young people living in South Cambridgeshire.

- Youth Councillors have now completed their surveys of local schools, which included observing lessons, interviewing teachers and students and researching different schools' ethos and Ofsted Inspections to capture best practice from across the District. The Youth Council expects to have a completed report with recommendations, by the end of September 2013 and would welcome the opportunity to share the Report with Scrutiny and Overview for comment before submitting it to the providers of the new school for Northstowe.
- The Youth Council has now set up a small working group to prepare for the Park Life event in August and the launch of its health and wellbeing campaign.
- Four Youth Councillors attended the fourth Cambridge Conversations event at Emmanuel College, Cambridge to launch the 10 sofas, 10 minutes initiative. Hosted at Emmanuel College and chaired by Lord Richard Wilson and Bishop David of Huntingdon, the Cambridge Conversations was developed in early 2012 following the Government's concept of the Big Society and these times of budgetary restraint. There is a growing number of people who are very concerned about what's happening in their local areas but fewer and fewer channels of communication for them to use if they do not wish to engage in a political party or union. Following on from the three previous, hugely successful, 'Conversations' the fourth one was to launch an initiative to help communicate across local areas with local people in their local environments. Youth Councillors heard keynote speaker Phillip Blond (author of *Red Tory* and Director of the think tank ResPublica), Sam Scharf from the Money Advice Service and Susannah Compton (38 Degrees – acting on listening: getting your voice heard) discuss how best to listen to local people and the barriers that prevent really hearing what real issues are, and how best to help people access and shape services in their areas. Youth Councillors Tom Mayer, Helena Keys, Dale Hargrove and Callum Hatch played an active part in a lively debate before launching the 10 sofas, 10 minutes initiative: designed to help stimulate conversations about what matters to people. Blow up sofas, banners and equipment have been stored in strategic places across South Cambs and the City so that volunteers can 'man a sofa' – inviting passers by to chat about the things that affect them, how they feel about where they live, the kinds of services they'd like to see and how they think they can help make things better. The Youth Councillors will be hosting a sofa in Cambourne during the summer holidays, with a special focus on young people but would also like to include all age ranges; another sofa should be available at the Park Life event in August at Milton and Youth Councillors will record (video, voice recording and note

taking) conversations with people which will then be collated into a log to feed in to Cambridge Conversations 5 early in 2014.

- Youth Councillors will also be attending the Summer Business Forum at Elms BMW in Cambourne in early July. The Business Forum is very keen to hear the views of employment opportunities for young people as well as help young people understand what employers need from them. Local businesses are also keen for the Youth Council to facilitate small group sessions to come up with future ideas for employment and business.
- Work on next year's election has now begun as it needs to be timed with the South Cambs Magazine to ensure that all young people across the District have the opportunity to volunteer to be a Youth Councillor – as last time, if more than 20 young people volunteer then there will need to be an election so the current Youth Councillors are preparing lots of promotional literature to help raise the profile even more.
- Spending time with District Councillors will now be easier as the safeguarding issues have been clarified, and also exams are now completed for many.

Briefing Note by: Youth Cllr Tom Mayer and Lead Officer – Tracy Mann – contact: 01954 713342
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