

A Youth Council for Gedling

Proposal

- To work in partnership with Borough Secondary schools and Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Engagement Team to introduce a Gedling Borough Youth Council.

Objectives

- To support and encourage young people's involvement in and understanding of democracy
- To give young people a say in future issues affecting them
- To act as a sounding board for the Council and other partners on key issues affecting young people

Proposal in more detail

Drawing on the experience of the Youth Parliament, the aim is for a Youth Council to be established to cover the Borough of Gedling. This would initially involve a more democratically elected element to the current Gedling Scrutiny Advisory and Development Board, but could, with the support of the young people involved, evolve into a Youth Council.

The Youth Council should represent young people from across the Borough, largely by working through the Borough's secondary schools. The suggestion is that there should be two youth councillors from each of the Borough's eight secondary schools.

Elected youth councillors would serve a term of two years. Youth councillors can be of any age within the secondary school age range but must resign their post when they leave school. It is suggested Youth Councillors are between years 7 and 11 when elected.

The councillors should ideally be directly elected by pupils at each school. Candidates in each school would put their names forward for election and produce a manifesto setting out why they should be elected. All pupils at the school would then have the opportunity to vote in an election for the candidate(s) of their choice.

The Borough Council will help schools to deliver a directly elected election tailored to the needs of each school. Support available may include: -

- printing "ballot papers";
- loan of ballot boxes; polling booths
- using class registers as "electoral registers"
- producing election signage;

- training pupils to take electoral roles (such as Returning Officer; Presiding Officers; Counting staff)
- briefing teachers involved in delivery (PHSE staff, for example)
- supervision (with school staff) an election count and announcing a result
- training for successful candidates in relevant skills (such as chairing meetings)
- possible mentoring support from existing Gedling Borough Councillors to successful candidates

The County Council's Youth Engagement in Democracy pack will be available as supporting material. The County Council's Youth Engagement bus could be made available as a "polling station".

Why should schools be interested

- Links with national curriculum (numeracy; literacy)
- Strengthening concepts of citizenship and engagement
- Introducing and strengthening concepts of democracy and representation
- Student empowerment

What will the Youth Council Do?

- Give local young people a real say on issues relevant to their futures, helping them shape their futures
- Act as a sounding board for various public services on the impact of their plans on young people

The Youth Council agenda will be set by the young people themselves, supported and advised by the Youth Service.

The Borough Council is committed to use a Youth Council as a sounding board to consult with on issues related to and relevant to young people, and will encourage other partners to do this. Examples might include the Local Plan and the need to make budget savings. Content will be presented in styles and using techniques young people understand and relate to. The Borough Council will offer the Council Chamber, free of charge, as meeting venue for Youth Council meetings.

When will this happen

Ideally elections would be held in Spring 2014, on different days at each school.

Further information

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