**Hereford City Youth Council Consultation**

1. **Remit**

HVOSS has been asked to carry out consultation with youth groups and young people to recommend a mechanism to enable a new “Youth Council” or a Youth Voice structure that allows young people to have a say in the Decision Making Processes in Hereford City Council (HCC). Working in partnership with “The Participation Company “and Tracy Morris (HCC) to produce a combined report to be presented to the HCC at their meeting of 8th September 2015.

1. **Activity**

The Participation Company sent out an online survey during June/July 2015 <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HerefordYouthVoiceConsultation2015>

HVOSS youth development team used its network of member organisations and its Interest Groups to support this consultation work. This report includes consultations with:

1. Member originations
2. HVOSS Youth Interest Group (YIG)
3. HVOSS Mayors Youth Interest Group (MYIG)
4. 2 x Groups Young People ( Group of 8 unemployed 18 – 20 year olds) (Group of 12, 15 – 17 year olds)
5. Promoted the Youth Participation on line survey to hvoss members and young people
6. **Research Findings**
7. **Member Organisations:**

HVOSS engaged in consultation was held with 5 member organisations at individual meetings. As a starting point for discussion the recommendations from a focus group meeting of 14th October 2015 was referred to. Discussion points raised were:

* HVOSS promoted positively that the current commitment from HCC and this was a good time to establish a Youth Council mechanism.
* Aims, objects and outcomes need to be agreed by having such a forum.
* Is this more than a tick box exercise or a 'nice idea'. There needs to be first a substantive offer and proposal from the council. What resources are available, what's on the table in terms of provision and support, is there scope for generic youth provision?
* A city youth council needs facilitation by a qualified youth worker, are HCC prepared to contribute to pay staff? Issue of who pays for facilitation of consultation was raised
* Is a Youth Council body a necessary structure? Young people now generally engage in consultation only on specific issues rather than general issues
* Concerns of raising Young Peoples aspirations, Youth Groups have supported consultation methods in the past, what is different this time?
* Hereford City is different to local communities, there are so many diverse backgrounds how do we ensure representation of all of them?
* Will any of the issues raised through consultations with young people be acted on by the HCC
* “I don't feel I am confident in what is being offered to look to engage young people”
* Should a virtual method of youth council be considered?
* One member organisation offered to do specific consultation on certain issues with their member ship of young people to feed back to the HCC
* The general idea of what the youth council could look like is fine in one
* Road shows - can work well to raise specific issues and allow voiced feed back
* Elections – can be a lot of work, been very un-successful in past
* Self Nominated Youth Councils – generally not representational especially engaging the “hard t o reach”
* Existing Youth work voice network – draws on existing networks, needs facilitation

Conclusion and Recommendations

* Process - It's how it will work and who the group are led by that makes these forums work or not work.
* Resourced - Need funding to help facilitate
* Inclusive- Any model should allow for a representation of all the diversity of needs of YP
* Any structure needs to be exciting and engaging for young people
* Engaging - Should ensure a two-way exchange of issues between young people and adults and adults to young people.
* Allow for young people to be listened to and be considered as valued stakeholders
* Needs to build trust and confidence with young people and youth workers
* Meaningful - Have tangible outcomes.
* Making a Difference - Help children and young people to understand the adult democratic process.
* Wider Impact - A representational network was favored as the most effective method of engagement, this would:
  + Draw on the wide network range of diverse needs and energy from young people
  + Increase pool of young people getting involved
  + Potential of virtual gatherings through internet
  + Good network to disseminate and gather information
  + Pool resources

1. **YIG Youth Interest Group**

This meeting was held on 12th November 2014 with an agenda item to discuss issues for young people and what could be done to improve things

Representative members and young people in attendance were from: (Hereford CIC, Close House, Talent Match, Music Pool, Live Wire, Phoenix Bereavement, Hereford Skate Park, Herefordshire Federation of Young Farmers, MYLO Outreach Unit, Health watch)

* Young People’s Issues raised:
  + What’s lacking are places for young people go to feel safe
  + Need to make Hereford a better place for young people, for them to have access to good facilities at minimal cost.
  + Young people need to feel they are part of Hereford and that they aren’t excluded, that they ‘have options, and feel welcome’
  + A place to meet their friends, feel safe and warm, with food and drink. No issues of older young people dominating the younger ones, need to find a way to find a balance.
  + Chill out zone, drinks, music, seating - a meeting place where young people could access affordable non alcoholic drinks
  + Meeting place to plan and organise events and volunteering opportunities
  + Training place for life skills:
* *Finance / bank accounts -bills/business/tax/p45 p60*
* *cv/applications - interviews/role play*
* *social skills, mental health -weekly discussion group*
* *drugs/alcohol/smoking/energy drinks*
* *politics – parenting*
* *what is not taught at school*
  + Venue for youth events –such as music venue
  + Someone to talk to - Support from youth workers
  + Parents often part of the problem, if young people have a chaotic home life and school can be equalling challenging a youth club type of place can be the only place they feel safe
  + Need somewhere to access all information relating to available services etc , even advice as to where to borrow chairs, also advice on how to fund raise
* What works:
  + Peer Led youth work works such as “Young Farmers”
  + Putting some equipment or something solid in place you will find young people will take it over and make it their own.
  + Skate Park is free, is somewhere to go,
  + An area of their own, not just to skate. - Safe place which is self-managed
  + Consultation on specific issues – Use text and face book
  + Consultation events and workshops such as this
  + More collaboration to use space
  + Draw on Young Peoples champions to support, include faith based resource

1. **MYIG - Mayors Youth Interest Group**

This meeting was held on the 13th June 2014 where a discussion was held on the pro and cons of youth councils

* The importance of consulting with young people and addressing any youth provision based on their needs was recognised rather than older generations making decisions based on their perceptions.
* It was the important to allow young people especially the “ones who need youth provision” to have a method of consultation and representation at local level ie market towns.
* The views of young people to support decision making as appropriate would be very helpful.
* Frustrations of previous youth council were raised as it had severe limitations in direct communication between the council and young people. Whatever method used it needs a direct link to the council.
* It was considered that youth councils did work but needed regular facilitated support

1. **HVOSS Informal consultation with two group’s young people**

Questions raised were; how they are viewed; how would you change things?

* + People view us as trouble, they don’t understand us
  + A safe place to meet sociably outside of school
  + We need more positive things to do
  + Someone to talk to “at our level” Someone to go for advice and guidance
  + Someone to challenge us to motivate us and raise aspirations.
  + Don’t want to sit and be talked at but a place to chat about issues etc

How do I change something? –

* Information pack on who to go for what I can get
  + Young Leader training can help
  + A One stop shop for young people to access support and advice
  + Consultation works but YP respond generally only interested if an issue effects them
  + Get training but with someone who understands us

1. **On Line Survey**

HVOSS promoted this to its member groups and young people they worked with within the city

* Concern was raised by Hvoss youth workers that the design of the “On Line survey” would not engage with some of the “hard to reach” young people
* Young people who are likely to complete this are those well motivated or those who are facilitated to complete it with the support of a youth worker
* All results were signposted to The Participation People”

**Youth Participation People**

**Results from On-Line Survey:**

**Taken from WE Notes 23.7.15 - Need to be updated!**

Questions

1. Are you involved with a community group, project or local organisations that take part in Hereford community events? 68% said yes 25% No

2. If yes, what group/ project or organisation are you involved with?

* Looked After System
* Gypsy Romany Traveler Groups
* Skate Park

3. How important do you think it is for young people to speak with Hereford City Council?

87% Said Yes there should be a Youth Council

4. How do you have your voice heard in your School or Youth Group?

34% have a say on their program of activities

24% are involved in staff recruitment

16% in governance of their project

5. Have you ever heard of the "Adopt a Councilor" project?

0% had heard of this initiative

6. If yes, what can you tell us about it. Do you think it's a good idea? Would you want to get involved? Are there better ways of getting your voice heard?

49% said Focus Groups

7. Hereford City Council wants to speak to young people regularly about issues that affect them.

Need results from survey

1. **Possible Ways Forward** –

Four models of engagement have been considered, they are tabled below to show the Advantages and Disadvantages

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Model** | **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** |
| HCC comes to you! | * Running regular surveys and focus groups keeps consultation information alive and fresh * Requires small amounts of staff support from Youth Groups to facilitate | * Costs £3,200 * It doesn’t promote 2 way exchange of ideas * It’s dependent on HCC * It’s not youth led * Dependant on goodwill of youth leaders to facilitate * Dependant on range of backgrounds of young people consulted to give clear picture of issues |
| Elections | * Raises the profile of HCC * Creates a focus for youth representation in the City * Helps decision makers know where to go for help * Young people gain experience of taking part in an election | * Costs £7,700 per year * Lots of pressure for a few young people * Attracts self motivated groups of young people, can have a distorted view on the issues of Young People * Running the elections takes a lot of organising and work from staff * The elected young people volunteer 2 years of their time on top of school and other pressures. |
| Self nominated Youth Council | * Cost £3000 per year * A team - lots of people to do lots of work * Young people can get involved as much or as little as they want * Accessible to different types of young people. | * Costs £3,560.00 * Not as high profile * Difficult to advertise the group * Could end up not being representative of HCC’s youth * Doesn’t help young people know what it’s like to be involved in an election |
| Existing Youth Voice Groups | * Includes lots of people * Gets young people involved in specialist projects and develops specialist skills * Young people can get involved in the projects they want to * This is already running in the existing in Hereford, it just needs linking together. * Young People are supported and facilitated by youth group leaders * Consistency of groups participating to allow consistency of representation * Can allow true participation of young people * Allows a holistic picture to be viewed of current youth issues * Creates a good range of youth representation and are considered as stakeholders with the HCC | * Costs £5,760. 00 * It doesn’t link up all the youth participation work going on in * HCC decision makers not sure who to approach or speak to on particular topics * Might lead to duplication of work * Difficult to recruit to different groups * Needs partnership approach with both young people and adults to give guidance to support true participation |

1. **Recommended Way Forward.**

From the feedback of the consultations we have identified key issues:

Given that:

* Not any one engagement model is ideal
* Elections are hard work and past experiences have been unsuccessful in recruiting a good representative range of young people
* Self nominated youth councils again to not give a good representational range of YP’s views

We would recommend:

* The established youth group voice is an existing network but would benefit from a mechanism of internet consultation.
* The HCC road shows would raise awareness and profile of the will and need of engaging with young people issues whilst demonstrating a response to current issues

Recommend a Threefold approach would also be the most cost effective

* 1. A combination of using road shows together with making use of the existing youth voice groups whilst developing an internet method of consultation and virtual meetings could work.
  2. The existing network would help recruitment from the wide range of diverse groups of young people within the city
  3. Focus groups set up for young people to discuss relevant issues and offer feed back to HCC

With any mechanism we would propose a 1 year cycle to consult with Young Peoples - These have been identified through current consultations included in this report. Highlighted issues are:

* + A safe place to go – someone to talk to
  + Peer led activities
  + Life skill training

Consultation & Report to HCC

Issues &

Method of Participation Agreed

Recruit

Youth Action Group/

Youth Council

Review &

Celebrate

2nd Campaign

1st Campaign

Respond to Identified Issues identified from initial consultation

Consult for 2nd Campaign

Review &

Celebrate

**Cost of Threefold approach Item 5 Appendix 1) £8,000 per annum**

**Appendix 1**

**Estimated Costs for Youth Council Mechanisms**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mechanism | Unit Cost | Costs |
| 1. HCC comes to you! | Say 4 Road Shows  Activities to support 4 events @ £250 = 1,000. 00  Co-ordination & Volunteer Training –  4 x 20 @ £15 = 1,200.00  Youth Worker Facilitation 4 @ £200 = 800.00  Report writing and presentations 4@ £50 = 200.00 | £3,200.00 |
| 2. Elections | Promotional events 800. 00  Co-ordination support and Facilitation  for elections 200 hours @ £15 3, 000.00  Preparation for meetings 8 x 8 @ £15 960.00  Facilitation of youth council  Say 8 meetings @ £150 1,200. 00  Training sessions for Youth Council 1,200. 00  Reports and presentations 960. 00  Printing It equipment etc 180. 00 | £8,300.00 |
| 3. Self nominated Youth Council | Preparation for meetings 8 x 8 @ £15 960.00  Facilitation of youth council  Say 8 meetings @ £150 1,200. 00  Training sessions for Youth Council 1,200. 00  Report writing and presentations 4@ £50 = 200.00 | £3,560.00 |
| 4. Existing Youth Voice Groups | Co-ordination of network  2 x 40 @ £15 = 1,200.00  Support to existing Youth Groups to  support consultations  4 consultations x 5 groups @ £50 1,000.00  Preparation for meetings 8 x 8 @ £15 960.00  Facilitation of youth council  Say 8 meetings @ £150 1,200. 00  Training sessions for Youth Council 1,200. 00  Report writing and presentations 4@ £50 = 200. 00 | £5,760. 00 |
| 5.Threefold approach  Road shows  Existing Youth Voice Network  Virtual Network &  Electronic Consultation | Road shows as above 3,000. 00  (exclude report writing)  Existing Youth Voice Network  Co-ordination of network  2 x 40 @ £15 = 1,200.00  Facilitation of youth council  Say 8 meetings @ £150 1,200. 00  Training sessions for Youth Council 1,200. 00  Report writing and presentations 4@ £50 = 200. 00  Facilitation of virtual network and  IT consultation 4 x 20 @ £15 = 1,200. 00 | £8,000. 00 |