

	<p align="center">Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee 18th November 2015</p>
<p align="center">Title</p>	<p align="center">Promoting British Values and Citizenship amongst Children and Young People in Barnet - Hearing the voices of children and young people</p>
<p align="center">Report of</p>	<p>Commissioning Director – Children and Young People</p>
<p align="center">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p align="center">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p align="center">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="center">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p align="center">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A – A summary of the rights under the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Unicef) Appendix B – UN Convention on the Rights of the child In Child Friendly Language</p>
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Summary

This report outlines steps that the Children’s Service wishes to take in respect to Promoting British Values and Citizenship amongst Children and Young People in Barnet. The report also looks at improving our role as a corporate parent, and how the voice of children and young people can be better represented in the borough. The Committee is asked to consider the content in the report.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee endorses the importance of promoting British Values and Citizenship and agrees to the establishment of a range of approaches to engage with children and young people in Barnet, as set below:

(a) that the Committee agree to receive an annual report from Members of the Youth Parliament detailing issues that it deems to be important and relevant to young people in the borough. The timing of this report will be confirmed by officers following the approval of this recommendation.

(b) That the Committee agrees and is mindful of the rights of the child as set out in UK Law as detailed at 1.3 and Appendix 1.

(c) That the Committee agree that the Council's corporate parenting approach and pledge is refreshed as detailed in 1.4 and that the Commissioning Director for Children and Young People be delegated to progress this.

(d) That the Committee agree to introduce a survey of young people in Barnet as part of the Annual Resident Survey of the borough, as detailed at 1.5.

(e) That the Committee agree to the development of a Barnet Youth Charter with Children and Young People to further promote British Values, as detailed at 1.6.

(f) That the Committee agree to the establishment of the Barnet Youth Assembly, as detailed at 1.7. to mirror "Lynk Up Crew: The Mayor's Young Advisors" linking to the establishment of an Annual CELS meeting involving young people.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

1.1 BRITISH VALUES

In 2014 the Government issued guidance to maintained and independent schools on promoting fundamental British values. The guidance sets out that schools should promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, in

accordance with their requirements to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Underpinning the requirement was:

- encouraging students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely;
- enabling students to acquire a broad general knowledge of, and respect for, public institutions and services in England;
- encouraging respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

The list below describes the understanding and knowledge expected of pupils as a result of schools promoting fundamental British values.

- an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;
- an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety;
- an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;
- an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour; and
- an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

1.12 The concept of Promoting British Values and Citizenship amongst children and young people should be considered more widely within the work of the Council and the aim of these recommendations is to strengthen our reputation as an authority that supports young people in the borough and to assist Barnet, as the Mayor of London suggests, in “preparing young Londoners for life and work in a global city”.

Barnet's Corporate Plan is underpinned by the principles of Fairness, Responsibility and Opportunity. They are at the heart of our Council's approach and work with young people needs to be cognisant of those aspirations.

The 2011 UK Census found that there are more children and young people in Barnet than the prevailing projection had suggested, with an additional 1,650 0-19 year olds and 1,300 more 20 to 24 year olds compared to the prevailing hybrid data. Given this marked increase, it is vital to consider ways in which we can improve our offer to young people in the borough.

1.2 ANNUAL REPORT FROM MEMBERS OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT TO COUNCIL

There are four youth Members of Parliament in the borough; the election of these youth MPs this year saw young people choose from a list of 35 candidates aged between 11-18. In total, 10,977 votes were cast by young people in the borough, which was a higher voter turnout than areas such as Cumbria, Devon and Cornwall, which all have a comparatively similar size electorate. The highest turnout came from the London Academy, where 1,120 votes were cast. This helps to illustrate the interest that young people in the borough have in the democratic process. Due to this, it seems pertinent that our Youth MPs have an input in our local process, which gives rise to recommendation 2 – the notion that our Youth MPs submit an annual report on the views of young people in the borough.

Hearing the voices of young people in the borough is important in order to understand issues that affect this particular demographic. By receiving such a report it is possible that the Council will be aware of issues that are important to young residents that it otherwise would not have been aware of. The writing of this report would be assisted by the Voice of the Child Team and would be, in its nature, apolitical. Its prime purpose would simply be to feedback the issues that are relevant to young people in the borough.

1.3 UN CONVENTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international treaty designed specifically to meet the needs of children (see Appendix 1). The CRC includes 45 articles which cover all aspects of a child's life within civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society. At its core, the CRC aims to protect

the rights of children worldwide to ensure that their quality of life is respected and considered at all times. In 1991 the UK government ratified the document, which means that we have an obligation to fulfil and uphold its principals.

The State of the Children's Rights in London report, written by the Children's Rights Alliance for England, recently indicated that local authorities in London are failing to appreciate the extent of their obligations under the UNCRC and are not putting them at the heart of their decision-making for children.

Further, in light of recent events at local authorities such as Birmingham and Rotherham, it would seem appropriate to publicly confirm our recognition of the rights of children as embedded in UK law. By doing this, we would also be strengthening our commitment to our corporate objective of ensuring a better quality of life for all.

1.4 CORPORATE PARENTING

The London Borough of Barnet has responsibility to act as a corporate parent for all looked after children and young people in the borough. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Board is reviewing our local approach. In October 2012 the Council developed a pledge of how looked after children and young people will be supported and as part of the review it is recommended that this pledge is updated to take account of recent changes in legislation and practice since 2012. It is recommended that authority to update the pledge is delegated to the Commissioning Director for Children and Young People.

1.5 YOUNG PEOPLE'S RESIDENT SURVEY

The Council conducts a survey on an annual basis to gather residents' perceptions on how the Council is performing and how it can improve. With a youth electorate of 43,252 (those registered to vote in Youth MP elections), it is proposed that we should include a survey of young people within our annual survey. This would help us to better understand the challenges that young people are facing in the borough from their perspective, which in turn would help us to develop services that better meet the needs of our population as a whole.

1.6 BARNET YOUTH CHARTER

Barnet is a growing London Borough and in its growth there is an opportunity to ensure that developments are child friendly because "Children live in families, families make communities, and communities make Barnet". To develop this further the Council is building on this commitment to the Child Friendly City approach by creating a Barnet Youth Charter for Children and Young People. This would include a commitment to specific rights embedded in UK law that are directly relevant to the

London Borough of Barnet. The charter would confirm our commitment to providing the best opportunities to the young people in the borough. The development of this charter would be undertaken by Family Services and would be included in the Children and Young People's Plan. Further, the development of this charter will involve wider consultation with children and young people through existing contacts, such as school councils. Such a consultation will help to shape the charter to reflect the rights that young people in the borough deem necessary to protect and promote.

1.7 BARNET YOUTH ASSEMBLY

The Governance Service – in tandem with the Children's Service – has designed a 'Youth Assembly' that would operate as a sub-group of the Barnet Youth Board. This Assembly would allow local students the opportunity to discuss issues specifically relevant to them in Barnet. Local Youth Councils, such as this, are designed to engage young people to focus on improving their local area. To enable this Assembly to engage meaningfully with the Council, in addition to its regular meetings, it is proposed that an annual meeting would be held formally with the CELS committee in the Council Chamber with a specific focus on Youth involvement and engagement giving young people on the Assembly an opportunity to participate in a formal Council meetings, and would furthermore strengthen our commitment to giving opportunities to young people that help them to make an excellent start in life.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires a local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation within the local authority, with other partners and with other relevant persons in order to improve the well-being of children in its area. Well-being includes:

- physical and mental health and emotional well-being,
- protection from harm and neglect,
- education, training and recreation,
- the contribution made by children and young people to society, and
- social and economic well-being.

Under section 11 of the above Act, local authorities and other statutory partners must ensure that their their functions are exercised having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This report recommends good practice in relation to promoting the welfare of young people and improving their well-being, in particular in relation to their role in society and their social and economic well-being.

The Director of Children's Services (DCS) has a statutory duty to fulfill the following in their post:

The DCS should have regard to the General Principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and ensure that children and young people are involved in the development and delivery of local services.

The approval of these recommendations would therefore contribute towards the fulfilment of the DCS's obligation towards these duties.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 None.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

3.2 The Director of Children's Service will work in partnership with the Children's Service in order to implement the decisions.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The implementation of these recommendations would work towards the achievement of our corporate objectives, which promotes improving the opportunities that we offer to residents and which aims to support Barnet's children and young people to have a great start in life.

5.2 Resources

5.2.1 The implementation of these recommendations will be done through existing teams and contained within existing budgets held in the Children's Service.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 As detailed in Annex A, Responsibility for Functions, in the Council's Constitution the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee has the responsibility for all matters relating to the Children's Service.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 Any risks associated will be considered during the implementation of these

recommendations.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010,
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups,
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.5.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

5.5.3 In line with this, any work undertaken as part of these recommendations will consider and adhere to all relevant stipulations of the 2010 Equality Act.

5.5.4 When considering well-being, it is important to take account of different age groups, race and religious factors and disability. These factors will be considered when undertaking further work, including ensuring that children and young people are able to express their views on proposals.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 Plans for consultation and engagement with young people have been set out in this report.

5.7 Insight

5.7.1 None

5.8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

5.8.1 None