

THE ASSEMBLY

15 SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE BAD YOUTH FORUM

Title: Annual Report of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum (BAD Youth Forum) 2009/10	For Information
<p>Summary:</p> <p>The BAD Youth Forum aims to give the Council greater contact with young people and in turn give young people a voice in local democracy.</p> <p>The Forum is an annually elected representative body of all young people aged 13 – 19 years old in the Borough, regardless of background. It is made up primarily of school students and representatives from various other youth organisations in the Borough.</p> <p>The elections for the current Forum were run in secondary schools in October 2009. The first meeting of this year's Forum took place on 20 October 2009 where the young people identified the key issues that they saw as important to champion. As a result two specific sub groups were formed covering issues of health and crime and safety, as well as a generic consultation group. The Forum as a whole is planned to meet four times a year with the two sub groups meeting more regularly to develop and deliver specific work plans based on the issues important to young people in the Borough.</p> <p>The meeting in January each year takes the form of a question and answer session at which local and regional decision makers along with officers and representatives from other public bodies are invited to attend to answer a range of questions from the Forum. This year's event which took place on 20 January 2010 was as ever a lively affair with a range of challenging and engaging questions posed by Forum Members to a Panel made up of Councillors Rocky Gill, Cabinet Member for Children, Helen Jenner, the Corporate Director of Children's Services, Bill Murphy the former Corporate Director of Resources, John Biggs, GLA Member, DI Tony Kirk, Metropolitan Police and John Strutton, Transport for London (TfL). The areas covered included truancy, school lessons, school dinners, job opportunities, voting age, use of Oyster cards, safety on public transport numbers of police on the streets, levels of youth crime and Council spending and budgets generally</p> <p>In order to further young people's awareness of issues of democracy the Forum would normally hold its April meeting as part of a visit to the Houses of Parliament. Unfortunately the event could not take place this year as it clashed with the period leading up to the Parliamentary and Local Elections in May 2010.</p> <p>The Forum also provides the opportunity to consult and inform young people, and officers from across the Council and representatives from other organisations have attended Forum meetings during the year. These have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NHS Barking & Dagenham who worked with the group to develop an anti-smoking campaign aimed at young people. Discussions included effectively getting the campaign message across to young people.• Representatives from Children's Services to discuss the Children & Young People Plan (CYPP). In this meeting young people shared ideas about how B & D can be a better place to live, how young people could be healthier and what facilities young	

people feel need improving. This will feed directly in to the CYPP.

- B & D Events Team who consulted with young people to gather their views about how future borough events could better engage young people and cater for their needs.
- Consultation with catering services on schools meals.
- Higher Education partners on accessing further education.
- Subwise regarding misuse of drugs by young people. The young people helped to develop a plan on how to advertise the Subwise service more effectively to young people.
- Safer Neighbourhood Team who completed a questionnaire with young people about youth safety. Issues raised regarding safety on public transport in the borough has prompted the Crime and Disorder Unit of TfL to attend the Children's Trust to discuss ways forward.
- Department for Education (formerly the Department for Children, Schools and Families)- discussing issues around financial support for young people e.g. Education Maintenance Allowance.

Other key activities/achievements of the Forum during the year have included:

- The election of the forum Chair and Deputy Chair, the UK Youth Parliament Representative and the Deputy Youth Parliament Representative.
- Representation at the Youth Mayor Summit facilitated by the Commonwealth Institute.
- Attending regular UK Youth Parliament regional meetings across London
- Young people have within their sub groups taken part in team building exercises.
- Production of a series of 'virals' (short films) around alcohol abuse in partnership with NHS Barking and Dagenham and Media Citizens.
- Working with a photographer, Youth Forum members have led a 'light our parks campaign' which has seen them collect 700 signatures to date from young people, to lobby for better lighting in the borough's parks so they can make full use of facilities. This has helped to dramatically raise the profile of this issue within the council.
- Receipt of the Diana Award for Excellence for their short film 'The Secret'.
- Receipt of a Positive Images award from Children and Young People Now for their film 'The Secret'.
- 15 young people working towards, and achieving, bronze Youth Achievement Awards.

Looking ahead to next year's Forum it has been decided to change the basis of electing the Forum so that in future it will run from January to December. The reasons for such a change are:

- To enable young people a longer period from returning to school to the election day in order to learn more about the Forum and their role as a potential member
- To offer more support to schools in the build up to the elections and further develop effective relationships with newly elected school councils
- To allow current members to assist and support in the election of new Forum members and be able to have a handover meeting with new members so that current campaigns/projects are able to continue with a greater level of consistency
- To give the young people longer to work on campaigns and promote the achievements of the Forum

As there is a time lag between the finish of this year's Forum and the start of the new one in January 2011 a number of the existing Forum will continue to meet. The purpose of this group will be to review the current format of sub-group sessions, election process and achievements of the Forum. The young people will have adequate time to prepare a suitable training package for the new members and work with youth workers to encourage other young people in their school and youth groups to nominate themselves. The returning group will also plan and deliver an information session for members who have nominated themselves, advising them how to write a manifesto and lead a successful campaign to become a new member of the Forum. This group will act as mentors for the new members in January 2011.

Representatives of this year's Forum, Jade Ramsey, Paul Cox, Salwa Rahman, Shekhar Seebaluck and Tommy Lee, have been invited to attend the Assembly and answer any questions Members may have about the report.

Name: Christine Pryor	Title: Head of Integrated Family Services	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 5552 Email: Christine.pryor@lbbd.gov.uk
Name: Nina Clark	Title: Divisional Director Legal and Democratic Services	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2114 Email: nina.clark@lbbd.gov.uk
Report Author: John Dawe	Title: Group Manager Democratic Services	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2135 Fax: 020 8227 2171 Minicom: 020 8227 2685 E-mail: john.dawe@lbbd.gov.uk

Consultees

The following were consulted in the preparation of this report:

- Councillor Rocky Gill, Cabinet Member for Children and Education
- Helen Jenner, Corporate Director of Children's Services
- Nina Clark, Divisional Director of Legal and Democratic Services
- Erik Stein, Group Manager, Extended Schools
- Sally Allen-Clarke, Youth Worker

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

Agendas and minutes of the BAD Youth Forum