Draft Recommendations of the Children's Services Select Committee's Student Voice Scrutiny Review 2012/13

### Extending the Voice of School Councils

The Committee recommends that all schools:

1. Allocate a slot for school council representative(s) to address staff during staff meetings or on staff training days, where this is likely to add momentum to a school council initiative or improve communication between the school council and staff.

2. Dedicate at least one school assembly every year to receiving a talk or presentation from their school council on a matter that is important to students.

3. Create clear and active links between their governing body and school council to ensure students are routinely consulted and involved in decisions about school policy and given an opportunity to report to governors on the impact of Student Voice on wider aspects of the curriculum.

### Mechanisms for providing Meaningful Feedback

The Committee recommends that:

4. The BAD Youth Forum put in place a system for the borough's UK Youth Parliament representatives to feedback relevant matters to school councils.

5. All schools ensure that all teachers recognise the importance of enabling school councillors to provide good feedback to their class by supporting them to hold regular meetings which are held in school time, in a recognised venue, and with sufficient time to discuss matters.

6. All schools ensure young people representing their school in the Youth Parliament also sit on their school council, or have a system in place to feedback relevant matters that have been raised in Youth Parliament sessions.

7. All schools support their school council to establish good links with the Barking & Dagenham (BAD) Youth Forum and ensure mechanisms are in place to feedback and share information, for example, by including BAD Youth Forum matters as a standing item on the school council's agendas, and recommending items from school council's minutes to go forward to be discussed at the BAD Youth Forum.

8. Ensure a member of the Senior Management Team attends a school council
meeting on a termly basis to provide meaningful feedback to the school council on decisions affecting students and to create an opportunity for a two way dialogue to take place.

### Supporting School Councils to be more Dynamic and Raising their Profiles

The Committee recommends that all schools:

9. Arrange staff training to ensure teachers and students are clearer on how opportunities to include debate and discussion, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum, in their school council's activities, impact upon attainment and behaviour.

10. Raise the profile of their school council by promoting its activities and celebrating its successes through authorised social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter, the school handbook or prospectus, the school website, notice boards in prominent areas, official school publications that are shared with parents, and by including school council meetings in the school diary.

11. Ask their governing body to consider whether it would be appropriate to allocate a small amount of funding to their school council.

### Recommendations for the Local Authority to help develop Student Voice

The Committee recommends that:

12. The Council's Democratic Services team shares its local democracy presentation for children and young people with schools and the BAD Youth Forum to help students understand how local democracy works and how they can use these principles to strengthen student voice.

13. Children's Services officers ensure best practice and areas for development from the School Councils Review are widely disseminated to schools.

14. Ward councillors ensure that each school council in their ward receives an offer from them to attend a school council meeting and information about their surgery times with an invitation to raise any items they would like with them. This information is to be provided annually.

15. Children’s Services officers produce a list of upcoming Student Voice activities which is published on the 'Youth 4 us' website.