

## The Highland Council

Adult and Children's Services Committee – 22 May 2013

Agenda Item	3.
Report No	ACS/41/13

### Developing Youth Participation

#### Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

#### Summary

This report and associated presentation by young people and the Northern Constabulary on their experience of the benefits of youth participation, provides members with an update on youth participation in Highland.

It also explains how youth participation contributes to the commitment in For Highlands Children Three to: ***“ensure that the planning and provision of children's services reflect involvement and consultation with children and young people”*** and should be built into For Highlands Children 4.

#### 1. Background

1.1 Youth Participation is: involving young people in policy development; service planning and service delivery. It benefits the Council and public organisations because:

- It allows them to improve services based on the views of young people;
- Encourages organisations to design services which properly meet the needs of young people;
- Supports the current focus on “preventative expenditure” by taking account of service users' views at an early stage in service design;
- Encourages young people to have an interest in politics, and understand how local and national decision making processes are managed.

1.2 The Council and its partners have a long standing commitment and track record of involving children and young people in its planning and decision-making. This commitment has run through the Childrens Plans during the course of the last ten years and is described in the current plan as follows:

*“ensure that the planning and provision of children's services reflect involvement and consultation with children and young people”.*

#### 2. Youth Participation in Highland

2.1 All Scottish local authorities have a Youth Parliament and a supporting youth participation structure. This has been driven by the Scottish Government which

supports the Scottish Youth Parliament. In Highland the youth participation structure is made up of the following.

- Local Youth Forums
- Pupil Councils
- Highland Youth Voice (the Highland Youth Parliament)
- Highland Youth Convener
- Highland Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament

**Appendix 1** explains how the youth participation fits within the wider local context. The framework includes structures that operate at a Highland and local level and involves young people at both member and chief officer level.

- 2.2 The Highland Youth Convener is unique in Scotland and has received very positive local and national political support. The position is filled on an annual basis and it acts as a voice for young people. It has a vote at the HSC Committee and a central part of it is to represent the views of young people in need or at risk of exclusion.

### **3. Participation by Disadvantaged Young People**

- 3.1 The structure in Highland allows young people from all backgrounds to participate and be represented. At a local level, Youth Forum meetings are structured so that they are less formal. They are supported by youth workers who identify and support more vulnerable young people in conjunction with school, Health and Social Care and voluntary sector staff to take part.

- 3.1 Highland Youth Voice draws its membership from local youth forums and schools with vulnerable young people being supported to attend by youth work staff. At the last conference there were young people from the following groupings:

- Young carers
- Looked after young people
- Inward migrants
- People with additional support needs
- The Gypsy Travellers community

### **4. Involving Young People in For Highlands Children 4**

- 4.1 It is necessary to ensure that young people are fully involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of For Highlands Children 4. This involves staff working with the various structures mapped out in appendix 1 to ensure meaningful involvement throughout its development and implementation.

### **5. Implications**

- 5.1 There are no resource, climate or risk implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members :

1. note the presentation on youth participation by young people and the Northern Constabulary; and
2. agree that the Director of Health and Social Care work with the youth participation structures to ensure that young people are involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of For Highland Children 4.

Designation: Date: 11 March 2013

Author:

Background Papers:

# Appendix 1 – Highland Youth Participation Map

Supported by Highland-wide Youth Services Team who support Participation, Engagement & Achievement of young people.

