
UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Committee is recommended to consider whether it wishes to make a grant of £100 towards the formation of a youth parliament or to sponsor delegates to attend the proposed parliament.
- 1.2 The provision of a grant/sponsorship is not a statutory function.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A request has been received from Unison that the Council consider making a grant towards the formation of a Youth Parliament. Information about the project is contained at the appendix to this report.

3 A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION OR SPONSORSHIP?

- 3.1 Unison has indicated that for a Council the size of Rochford, a grant of £100 would be appropriate to reflect the Council's commitment to the project. Alternatively, the Council may wish to consider making a sum available to sponsor one or more delegates to attend meetings of the Parliament. At this stage it is envisaged that the Parliament may meet three times year with at least one meeting taking place in London. The cost of sponsoring each delegate is therefore likely to be in the region of £150 to cover travel and other out of pocket expenses. Local secondary schools could be invited to nominate one or more delegates.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The project is aimed at involving young people in governance and determination of issues of concern to them. This involvement is in accordance with the aims of the Council's Community Safety strategy.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 These are set out at 3.1 above. Given the sums involved this could be met by way of virement from existing budgets provided that the number of sponsorships is small. f

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has power to grant aid projects that will have a benefit to its residents.

7 RECOMMENDATION

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- 7.1 The Committee is invited to consider and to **RESOLVE** whether it wishes to provide a grant or sponsor one or more delegates to the proposed UK Youth Parliament. (HAMS)

Andrew Smith
Head of Administrative and Member Services

Background Papers:

Letters from Unison dated 28 March and 14 April 2000.

For further information please contact Andrew Smith on (01702) 318135



UK Youth Parliament

The UK Youth Parliament is designed to provide a nation-wide forum for young people to communicate key issues of concern to political leaders, including members of the British government, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly.

The YPP website is the 'virtual' site for the UKYP, and provides two key facilities in the initial stage of planning and development for this ambitious project.

- A consultative, and developmental, input programme to ensure that the structure and organisation of the UKYP is an outcome of the widest possible consultation amongst all those whom it will represent.
- A facility to develop a series of web-conferences focused around the most important issues identified through the consultation process.

Input Programme

This takes the form of a questionnaire. If you wish to take part in the UKYP consultation, please first of all complete the free registration form. It's important that you do this so we can build a profile of users, which will be used to demonstrate the representativeness of the UKYP 'voice'. Once you have completed the registration, do go on and 'post' your responses to the questionnaire. Further questionnaires will be developed in the light of overall responses, and these will progressively help to establish the final shape of the UKYP. The site will provide information updates on this consultation.



Web-Conferences

Once the input programme consultation has been completed, a series of web-conferences will be developed, centred on the top five key issues identified as being of most interest and concern. You will be free to take part in as many of these as you like, and the purpose will be to refine and develop UKYP perspectives on these topics for consideration by delegates to the first UKYP conference which will be held sometime in the year 2000.

Up-to-date information about progress of the UKYP can be found on the [YPP newspages](http://www.ypp.org.uk/ukypp/bottom.html)





An important message from Andrew Rowe MP:
With your help, July 2000 will see the launch of the first ever
United Kingdom Youth Parliament

Citizenship education, National Grid for Learning, Youth Service Review, Curfews,
Truancy, Drugs, Student fees, Teenage pregnancies, Literacy hours, Employment.

How should government consult young people? They happily change the laws in areas such as education and employment, or law and order, to regulate the way young people live, but have no recognised mechanism for seeking young people's views.

Did you know?

- Young people aged 10-20 comprise roughly 20% of the British population.
- 25% of young people said that they would not vote in the 1992 General Election - the highest abstention rate amongst all age groups. This rose to 32% in the 1997 Election (*The British Election Study*).
- Only 12% of young people are quite interested in politics (*1994 British Social Attitudes Survey*).
- 84% of young people do not believe politicians listen to their concerns, and 79% do not believe their interests are well represented in Parliament (*British Youth Council Survey, December 1997*).
- The average age of MPs in this Parliament is almost 51.

The 1996 Gulbenkian Foundation Inquiry 'Effective Government Structures for Children' cited strong evidence that children's and young people's alienation from politics and democratic society is growing: "They lack the vote, or any direct political power. They play no significant part in the political process and their views barely permeate central government".

"The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is pleased to be able to support the establishment of the UK Youth Parliament. The Government has acknowledged for some time, the need to include young people in the consultation process of making decisions, including young people in the role of government both locally and nationally, and to encourage their participation in society as a whole - that is why we are giving increasing importance to the teaching of Citizenship in schools.

The DfEE hopes that by supporting the UK Youth Parliament, young people across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will realise that their views matter and that their voice can and will be heard by the decision makers. The UK Youth Parliament will give young people the opportunity to develop an interest in both their own parliamentary system and wider community issues, whilst learning key skills in public speaking and presentation, debating, resource use and assisting in the development of self-esteem and confidence."

Charles Clarke Esq. MP The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for School Standards, DfEE

For the sake of a vibrant future democracy, our 'mother of parliaments' needs a way to hear the voice of the next generation. We all have an interest in helping to create a Youth Parliament that will:

- Consult young people and take their views into account.
- Recognise their capacity to play a responsible part in decision-making.
- Promote their active participation in civil society.

The first sitting of the UK Youth Parliament in the summer of the year 2000 will create a **Manifesto for Action** that will be presented to the Cabinet and opposition party spokesmen. The UK Youth Parliament will ask that:

- the manifesto be used across government to inform its discussions and decisions on all matters that affect young people;
- the government make a full response to the manifesto.

The exact nature of the UKYP has yet to be determined. In the coming months as we prepare for the first sitting of the Parliament, young people will have the chance to say just how they think it should be organised and run. We will use the website to develop discussion about this, including a developing series of questionnaires. How many will be involved, how they will be selected, what age they should be and what subjects will be on the agenda - these and many other questions are still to be decided.

It is going to be a huge task to organise one of the most unique events of the millennium year. But I am sure you will agree that it is an exciting one. We need contacts, and the help of people with skills and experience, as well as financial support. You can be involved by:

- logging onto our website (see below);
- adding your name in support of the UK Youth Parliament by writing, or by sending an e mail to me at the address given below;
- telling your colleagues, friends and contacts about the UK Youth Parliament by passing on their contact details to me;
- sending a donation however small towards our total costs of £500,000 made out to the National Children's Bureau 'UK Youth Parliament Account' (Charity No. 258825).

Where we are at

- We have the support of the DfEE and the main political parties.
- There are a number of young people on the steering group that I chair.
- We have our own website: <http://www.ypp.org.uk>, now live on line.
- The UKYP will take place in the year 2000, Thursday 13th - Saturday 15th July.

Our Website

This will enable young people to contribute directly to the development of the parliament's agenda. It will have five talkboards for virtual debates prior to its first sitting. The participation by the widest possible constituency of young people will be encouraged through the hypertext links on the website with the National Grid for Learning. The work of the parliament will also be linked to the DfEE's recently announced requirements for Citizenship Education.

The UK Youth Parliament already has the support of over 300 MPs and the following organisations:

Article 12	British Youth Council	Carnegie Young People's Initiative
Children's Rights Office	Children's Society	Citizenship Foundation
Community Service Volunteers	Council for Education in World Citizenship	Croydon Dialogue
DfEE	Essex County Council	Hansard Society
Institute for Citizenship	Kent County Council	Lembit Opik MP (Lib Dem)
Llin Golding MP (Labour)	Local Government Association	National Children's Bureau
National Union of Students	NCVO	NCVYS
NSPCC	Save the Children	Scottish Community Education Council
UNICEF UK	Birmingham Young People's Parliament	YMCA



You can contact me, Andrew Rowe MP, and the Youth Parliament steering group, by post at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, or by e mail at: ryanh@parliament.uk

Also, don't forget to visit our website: <http://www.ypp.org.uk>