

Report of **Director of Adult Social Services**

Report to **Executive Board**

Date: **22nd January 2014**

Subject: **Deputation to Council**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. A group of people with learning disabilities, supported by Mencap, made a deputation to full Council on 13 November 2013. The purpose of the deputation was to thank Leeds City Council for the Question Time event held on 26 July 2013 and to make two requests resulting from the event.
2. Two requests were made within the deputation.
 - a. Would the council support the group who made the deputation to go to Sheffield and find out more about the Sheffield People's Parliament?
 - b. Would the council help the group to set up a Leeds People's Parliament to involve Leeds people with a learning disability in democracy?
3. The recommendations in this report contribute to Leeds City Council's the Health and Wellbeing Strategy's priority of giving people choice and control over their

health and social care services. In addition the recommendations will contribute to the objective of ensuring high quality public services by enabling vulnerable people to better influence the way services are delivered. The recommendations also fit into the Commission for the Future of Local Government, contributing to the creation of a new social contract whereby citizens are reconnected to democracy and given more autonomy.

Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended to:

- (a) Note the success of the Question Time event that was held in the Chamber on 26 July 2013 and the importance of people with learning disabilities being involved in local democracy.
- (b) Support the Asking You! Reference Group to share learning with the Sheffield People's Parliament
- (c) Support the Asking You! Reference Group to look at regularly using the council chamber for their meetings and to consider changing the name of the group, if they so wish, to reflect the links with local democracy

The Joint Commissioning Manager will support the Asking You! Reference Group to take the recommendations forward.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information relating to the deputation received by Full Council on the 13th of November 2013 entitled 'Learning disability event with the Speaker of the House of Commons at Leeds Civic Hall, 26 July 2013.'

2 Background information

- 2.1 The Question Time event followed on from the two previous 'Council take over days', run for people with learning disabilities. The latest event which was organised by Mencap took place on 26 July 2013 in the Council Chamber. The audience was

made up of people with learning disabilities, carers and representatives from organisations that provide services for people with learning disabilities. The event, like previous events, was also well supported by various Councillors including the Leader of the Council, Cllr Wakefield, and the Executive member for Adult Social Care, Cllr Ogilvie.

- 2.2 The event was chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Honourable John Bercow MP who talked about how people with learning disabilities could be more involved with MPs and Councillors.
- 2.3 The group making the deputation in November thanked Councillor Ogilvie for helping them to organise the event, Councillor Wakefield for his welcome speech on the day and the other Councillors who attended the Question Time event.
- 2.4 The people with learning disabilities who made the deputation are a part of the Asking You! Reference Group. Leeds City Council has a long-standing contract with Leeds Advocacy for the Asking You! Project. The project is about getting people with learning disabilities involved in the services they use. As part of this work, the Asking You! Project supports a reference group for people with learning disabilities.
- 2.5 The Asking You! Reference Group is open to all people with a learning disability in the Leeds area aged 18 and over. It meets every 6 weeks and about 40 people attend. The Asking You! Reference Group talks about issues which people with learning disabilities have said are important to them. A number of people from the Asking You! Reference Group sit on the Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board to represent the views and opinions of people with a learning disability in that forum.
- 2.6 The co-chair of the Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board co-chaired the Question Time event. A number of people spoke about the importance of MPs and councillors working with everybody, including those with severe and complex disabilities.
- 2.7 The event was open to people from outside of Leeds and a representative from Sheffield spoke about the Sheffield People's Parliament. The Sheffield People's Parliament is open to all people with a learning disability aged 18 and over. It meets

every two months in the Sheffield Town Hall and about 40 people attend. The People's Parliament talks about the big issues that people with learning disabilities have said they care about. Members of the People's Parliament represent Parliament's voice on Sheffield's Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and in other places.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The Deputation was very well received by full Council on 13 November 2013, with Members showing their appreciation by way of giving an ovation for the group.
- 3.2 It is incredibly important that people with learning disabilities have an opportunity to be involved in local politics and have a clear understanding how they can work with councillors and local MPs in an attempt to get people more engaged in local democracy.
- 3.3 Leeds City Council has a longstanding contract with Leeds Advocacy for the Asking You! Reference Group whose terms of reference indicate that it has a very similar role and function to the Sheffield People's Parliament.
- 3.4 As the group of people with learning disabilities who gave the deputation are all in the Asking You! Reference Group, it is recommended that Leeds City Council support the Asking You! Reference Group to share learning with the Sheffield People's Parliament. The aims of this joint working will be to:
 - 3.4.1 To understand the details of how the Sheffield People's Parliament operates, and if/how this differs from the Asking You! Reference Group.
 - 3.4.2 Understand the best practice in each City for involving people with learning disabilities in local democracy and how this can be replicated.
 - 3.4.3 To consider new ways of working and how future involvement of people with learning disabilities in local democracy can be strengthened and increased.
 - 3.4.4 To enable vulnerable people to have a positive input as to the way services are delivered in their community

- 3.5 The Asking You! Reference Group may also wish to consider changing their name to reflect the links with local democracy
- 3.6 Following the extremely positive reception accorded to the deputation by the Council as a whole, consultation has taken place with the Lord Mayor in relation to the use of the Council chamber for the purposes identified in this report. The Lord Mayor has confirmed his support for the group and to the offer of the council chamber to the Asking You! Reference Group to hold up to four of their meetings per year. If they chose to do so, this will both enable the group to establish a physical link with local politics and also utilise a civic asset for the benefit of the wider community in Leeds.
- 3.7 There are other examples of people becoming involved in local democracy who have historically been excluded, such as projects like highly successful Leeds Youth Council where Members share news, issues and resources from their schools and groups as well as campaigning on locally identified issues. There is also a UK Youth Parliament project which has five Members of Youth Parliament for Leeds. The UKYP campaigns on national issues and links with the local youth council.
- 3.8 The contribution that the Asking You! Reference Group make to the Learning Disability Partnership Board and other groups in Leeds is incredibly valuable and has had a very real impact on the way services are planned and delivered. Leeds City Council is appreciative of this work and would be supportive of any changes in the name or location to reflect the links with local democracy.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Consistent and effective consultation and engagement of people with learning disabilities is essential to the planning and delivery of services. The Asking You! Reference Group has an important function of collecting the views of many people with learning disabilities and supporting people to represent them in different forums.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The on-going work of the Asking You! Reference group has a positive impact on the involvement of people in the democratic life of the city who have historically been excluded from such processes.

4.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The Asking You! Reference group continues to contribute to the Health and Wellbeing priority of giving people choice and control over their health and social care services and increasing a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities. It also fits into the Commission for the Future of Local Government, contributing to the division of a new social contract whereby citizens are reconnected to democracy and given more autonomy. The group also provides valuable feedback to service provision and therefore contribute to the delivery of the Council's aim to deliver high quality public services.

4.4 Resources and Value for Money

4.4.1 The Question Time event received national recognition and good publicity for Leeds. It provided a positive experience for people with learning disabilities. The Asking You! Reference Group has a long standing contract with Leeds City Council, under which these recommendation can be taken forward.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 This report does not contain any implications in relation to the above.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 This report does not contain any implications in relation to the above.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The continued engagement of people with a learning disability in the decision-making and democratic life of Leeds is welcomed and encouraged. It is recommended that Leeds City Council support the Asking You! Reference Group to share learning with the Sheffield People's Parliament. The Asking You! Reference Group may also wish to consider changing their name to reflect the links with local democracy and look

into the possibility of holding regular meetings in the Civic Hall to establish physically the link with local politics.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to:

- (a) Note the success of the question time event that was held in the Chamber on 26 July 2013 and the importance of people with a learning disability being involved in local democracy.
- (b) Support the Asking You! Reference Group to share learning with the Sheffield People's Parliament
- (c) Support the Asking You! Reference Group to look at regularly using the council chamber for their meetings and to consider changing the name of the group, if they so wish, to reflect the links with local democracy.

6.2 The Joint Commissioning Manager will support the Asking You! Reference Group to take these recommendations forward.

7 Background documents ¹

7.1 N/A

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.