

Midlothian Council Meeting

Tuesday 27 December 2024

Inclusion of Local Youth and School Parliaments in Council Meetings

This Council recognizes the importance of engaging young people in the democratic process and fostering a sense of civic responsibility from an early age. To this end, the motion before you proposes Officers take steps to foster greater engagement and involvement of representatives from local youth and school parliaments in Council meetings.

Also recognising that while we cannot co-opt onto the Council and they would therefore not be voting or privy to private papers, their views on Council reports would provide valuable additional perspectives.

Rationale:

1. **Youth Engagement:** Involving young people in Council meetings will provide them with a platform to voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas, ensuring that their perspectives are considered in local governance.
2. **Civic Education:** Participation in Council meetings will serve as a practical educational experience, helping young people understand the workings of local government and the importance of civic participation.
3. **Community Representation:** Youth and school parliaments represent a diverse cross-section of our community. Their inclusion will enhance the representativeness and inclusivity of Council decisions.
4. **Future Leaders:** Encouraging youth participation in local governance will help nurture the next generation of community leaders.

Proposal:

1. **Regular Participation:** Representatives from local youth and school parliaments will be invited to attend Council meetings on a regular basis, with opportunities to present their views on agenda items.
2. **Mentorship Program:** Establish a mentorship program where Council members can guide and support youth representatives, helping them to effectively contribute to discussions.
3. **Feedback Mechanism:** Create a structured feedback mechanism to ensure that the contributions of youth representatives are acknowledged and considered in Council decisions.
4. **Facilitating Midlothian wide pupil voice:** Provide representatives of Midlothian Secondary Schools' Scottish Youth Parliament/Pupil Voices, the opportunity to use the Council Chamber each term, to discuss and debate any ideas or issues they have. These could then be presented through a paper to full Council for consideration. Support will be provided by the Education Cross Party Working Group.
5. **Annual Review:** Conduct an annual review of the program to assess its impact and make necessary adjustments to enhance its effectiveness.

Conclusion:

By including local youth and school parliaments in Council meetings, we can foster a more inclusive, representative, and forward-thinking local government. This initiative will not only benefit the young people involved but also enrich the decision-making process of the Council.

Proposed by: Cllr David Virgo



Seconded by: Cllr Ellen Scott

