



**Children and Families
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
20 October 2010**

**Report from the Director of Children and
Families department**

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Report Title:
Outcomes of the Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) Media Summit
'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression'**

Forward Plan Ref:

1 Summary

- 1.1 Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) organised a media summit 'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression' in August 2010 to improve the impression of young people and their portrayal in the press and other media.
- 1.2 This report provides members with an overview of the BYP campaign and details of the media summit. It finishes with a summary of outcomes of the campaign and the summit. This includes the pledges made by the guests that formed the summit's panel.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to:
 - Note the outcomes achieved from the BYP media summit
 - Help to ensure that the members of the media summit's panel deliver on their pledges.

Detail

3 Background to the media summit

- 3.1 BYP members democratically voted to make breaking the negative stereotypes of young people as their campaign for 2008-2010. The main focus of the campaign has been to combat the negative perceptions of young people in society. The

campaign publicised the good work that young people get involved in locally and nationally.

- 3.2 In November 2009 BYP, planned and hosted a youth conference that brought together young people from across the borough with local and national decision makers and media representatives to find ways of breaking down the negative stereotypes of young people and promoting positive images of young people.
- 3.3 Between October and November 2009, BYP conducted the nationwide 'Break the stereotype, Fix the impression' survey across Brent. This gathered local data from all ages about how young people are perceived. The results helped BYP members to gauge the way society as a whole views young people today. The survey questionnaire asked respondents' views on a range of topics relating to young people including: discipline and behaviour; respect and support from parents; cultural differences. It asked young people about their awareness of their rights and how seriously they take their social responsibilities.
- 3.4 In total 2,242 surveys were completed by members of the public, with 62% of respondents stating that they either live, work or study in Brent. The highest number of respondents were young people aged ten to 19 years old, who accounted for over 71% of the respondents. The survey's main findings showed that over 50% of respondents thought that the media did not show young people in a fair light.
- 3.5 The outcomes from the youth conference and survey informed BYP's planning and organisation of its first ever media summit. The summit would tackle the issues that had been identified, namely the negative portrayal of young people in the press. It took place on 12 August 2010 and included representation from the council, police, youth organisations and local media.

4 The media summit

- 4.1 The aim of the media summit was to create a long term strategy to build positive relationships between young people and the media that will help to create a better environment within the community by changing the way young people are perceived today.
- 4.2 The event was planned and delivered by BYP members. At the event BYP members first presented examples of negative media portrayals before questioning a specially invited panel. The panel discussion was chaired by a BYP member and its members were: Cllr Roxanne Mashari (Co-chair of BYP); Sarah Teather MP (Minister of State for Children and Families); Matt Gardner (Brent Borough Commander); Andy McCorkell (News Editor, Willesden and Brent Times); Andy Hamflett (Chief Executive, UK Youth Parliament).
- 4.3 The following questions were put forward to panel members, by young people and adults in the audience:
 - What is the balance between negative and positive images of young people in the media?
 - How do panel members recruit young people locally into their organisations?

- How can BYP help support panel members to combat the negative stereotypes of young people?
- How does the stereotype of young people affect community cohesion?
- What panel members have done in their area of work to portray positive images of young people?

5 The pledges made at the summit

- 5.1 At the event the BYP member chairing the discussion, asked the panel members to make pledges to help move the campaign forward. Cllr Roxanne Mashari agreed to promote positive images of young people and to help make services more transparent in Brent. Matt Gardner committed to inviting BYP members to join and chair the local 'stop and search' forum. In addition, he offered young people in Brent the opportunity to volunteer with the Metropolitan Police.
- 5.2 Sarah Teather MP agreed to recommend the commander's plans for the chairing of the 'stop and search' forum to the Home Secretary as innovation that she might want to monitor with a view to rolling out nationally. Sarah Teather MP also stated that she would encourage other government ministers to focus more on young people's positive contributions and activities.
- 5.3 Andy McCorkell agreed to engage directly with young people in the running of the newspaper by giving BYP members first-hand experience of the newsroom. This would entail a monthly column in the newspaper written by young people that presents positive items relating to young people or current local and national issues affecting young people. Andy Hamflett agreed to carry on working closely with BYP to ensure that there is more positive publicity about young people.

6 The outcomes achieved to date

- 6.1 Following the summit several outcomes have been achieved. However, this is just the beginning and further outcomes will follow as BYP builds on the newly formed positive relationships between young people and the local media.
- 6.2 There has been major coverage before and after the media summit in a range of media including: the BBC; Willesden and Brent Times; Wembley and Kingsbury Times; Kilburn Times; London 24; Children and Young People Now magazine; Community Newswire; Media Trust; The Brent Magazine; the Children's Commissioner's blog; Twitter.
- 6.3 A follow up meeting took place between BYP members and the News Editor of the Willesden and Brent Times. This resulted in the BYP logo being promoted on the Willesden and Brent Times' website homepage and the creation of a dedicated BYP online page: www.wbtimes.co.uk/byp
- 6.4 The newly established partnership with the Willesden and Brent Times will allow BYP members to be the project coordinators in the borough for the regular monthly column for young people. This includes being able to regularly publish articles on the dedicated BYP web-page. The Brent Youth website page is now linked to the Willesden and Brent Times to enhance its promotion amongst young people and the BMyvoice website is being promoted in the newspaper.

- 6.5 BYP has set up a meeting with the Brent Borough Commander to take forward young people's participation in and chairing of, the stop-and-search forum. The Metropolitan Police has invited two BYP members to attend its CO 11 interactive presentation 'The situation has changed' on 20 October. This presentation will be an interactive moving set of scenarios that takes the audience through all the processes involved in a public order incident, from the initial application process to dealing with incidents of disorder. The meeting aims to address some of the issues arising from the public's response to the policing of the G20 summit.
- 6.6 BYP is utilising its newly formed partnerships with the media in addition to existing channels to publicise the BYP election that takes place in October 2010.

7 Future plans

- 7.1 BYP will build on the positive relationships it has created with the media and the police to engage the wider community of young people within Brent, and provide them with a platform to publicise their views and good work.
- 7.2 BYP will continue working with the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) to influence national policy. The Children and Families Department will continue to support and build on BYP's achievements. The longer objective is to further increase the proportion of children and young people in Brent given opportunities to influence local decisions whilst ensuring that young people have a voice to influence policy and decision making at every level.

Background Papers

Overview of the work of BYP report, 13 July 2010

Summary results of the BYP campaign survey 'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression' report, presented to the Executive on 12 April 2010

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