



Visit of Queen's Park School children to Queen's Park Community Council, 24 April 2019

Five young representatives of Queen's Park Primary School visited the Community Council on Wednesday 24 April 2019. They spent time in discussion with the Chief Officer and then subsequently attended part of the Council's formal meeting.

The young people had each prepared a short request in a written message to Council. These were read and discussed with the Chief Officer before two of them were read to the assembled councillors. This perfectly mimics the way that some policy issues get raised: an individual brings a point or question to the Council via the officers to see if it would be appropriate, it may then be refined and presented to Council. In this case, it is certainly likely that their concerns will continue to resonate although specific requests for more safe green space may be hard to bring about.

- The children appeared to understand fully the way the Council works, i.e. the combination of independent residents elected to contribute voluntarily, with paid officers who are there to advise Council and carry out its decisions.
- They understood where the Council's funding comes from and how a small amount from each household can generate a large amount of money that can be applied in the collective interest.
- They understood that there are formal rules governing what Council can decide to do, and the extent to which an individual councillor can influence that.
- They understood that individual residents can't just do anything they like, because their actions can affect other people's quality of life, and therefore the Council has a role, along with the law, in determining what is permitted.

The young people will have gained invaluable insight into the role of elected representatives and professionals in public life, and how it relates directly to their neighbourhood. Their understanding of the notion of governance will be developing as a consequence of the visit. Similarly, they showed some appreciation of the necessity for dull formal procedures in the use of funds to which their parents had contributed, and this appreciation can be built on.

Crucially, they have learned that the Council is approachable and can be engaged with.

Through their level of interest and engagement, and their competence in discussion, they were a credit to themselves, to their parents, and to the school.

Kevin Harris
Chief Officer

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30 April 2019