How to encourage young people to get involved in their community life?

And in which sectors is young peoples guidance and involvement vital?

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The Highland Youth Convener
About the Highland Project

• Highland High Life is an arms length organisation established by The Highland Council

• Employee a full time Youth Representative to sit on all relevant Highland Council committees and chair the Highland Youth Parliament as the Highland Youth Convener.

• Unique post in the United Kingdom and possibly Europe.

• Essential due to Highlands rural populations and mountainous geography and large landmass.
Highland Youth Voice

• Highland Youth Voice is an elected parliament of around 100 young people from all over the Highlands.

• Meets twice a year for sittings over three days at different locations across the Highlands.

• Each conference has a theme – for example transport or youth unemployment.

• Aim of the conference is to allow young people to voice their views to senior officials and elected members and to influence policy.
Structure of Youth Participation in Highland

- Highland Youth Convener
- Xec
- Highland Youth Voice
- Local Youth Forum
- Pupil Council
Has the project been successful?

• Highland Youth Voice and Youth Convener role has made a difference to young peoples relationships with Highland Council.
• Value placed on the youth parliament is high amongst council officials and leadership
• **However** – Engaging young people in politics and elections both local and national is difficult.
• Council are reacting to this issues – focusing on public engagement and involvement in their programme as they realise it’s a real issue.
In which sectors are young peoples guidance and involvement is vital?

• Highland Youth Voice engagement started in Schools and education and has become closely involved with Youth Work

• External organisations place value on seeking young peoples views through executive committee and Youth Voice conference – through this close links with NHS, Police and Highland Council Services has developed.

• Areas for further development include – Further and Higher Education, Environmental and Natural Heritage groups as well as charity and third sector groups.

• Vital that young people have a say in any aspect of life that affects them – move to intergenerational working.
The Highlands and Hedmark

Similarities:
• Close links with local council
• Regular Executive Meetings (Board Meeting)
• Speaking Rights at Council Meeting
• Political Neutrality
• Potential to develop future leaders and politicians
• Twice yearly meetings of full youth parliament.

Differences:
- Full time (paid) Youth Convener position
- Voting rights on council committees
- Specialist Committee Structure – Unsuccessful in Highlands