

## Youth Question Time

- A question was asked to the panel about how the image of young people could be improved.  
The panel replied by saying that the role of the media, local and national newspapers do not help the situation and that the young people should have the confidence to complain about any issues that they have. Also the young people should try to build inter-generational relationships, to reduce the stereotyping of young people.
- Another question which was posed was about having kerbside collecting of the plastic so it can be recycled.  
The panel replied by saying that NHDC is looking in to it but currently the cost is too high and plastic banks are a compromise.  
In Ireland it was talked about how they have to pay for all their plastic carrier bags if they need them and in Japan they have a separated kerbside collection.  
The panel said no doubt kerbside collect more than plastic banks, and that the best practices were being looked at elsewhere.
- Can the bins be emptied more often and can we have more bins for litter and recycling was a question which was asked to the panel.  
Their reply was that local money is being spent on putting in more bins, and that this has had a massive change in the culture in which we live in.
- An interesting question that was posed to the panel was about banning smoking in homes with young children.  
There were mixed reviews on this question within the panel and within the young people in the audience.  
The panel said that the smoking ban in public places has improved things, but the ban in homes may affect civil liberties but would be a general move towards recognising that smoking is bad. There will be more money to be spent on advertising the health risks that can occur due to smoking, and that they can try to educate on the risks of smoking. They also said that policing the ban in homes would be very difficult.  
One of the young people mentioned that with adopted children, their families are not allowed to smoke so why can it not happen with everyone else. Another young person said that children who live in a house where family members smoke have the right to remove themselves out of the room where the smoking happens, so it is not so bad if they smoke in the house.
- With the thought of the Olympics coming in 2012 to London, a question was asked whether there will be any extra educational or work opportunities within the area.  
The young people were told that the National Bodies, County Council and NHDC were all supporting the Olympics, as is the job centre to help create more opportunities. Also that there would be a lot of commercial opportunities as were quite local and that it would be a boost for the environment.  
As we are quite local and have good connections into London via the train, it will create good job opportunities and the service industry and the construction industry will create opportunities also.  
The panel also said that we should try and encourage other people to come to North Herts to visit and to spend their money within North Herts.

Money has been invested in 'Ready for Winners' getting the community involved and involving volunteers, hoping to join everyone up. There is also a careers days in schools where young people can talk about their future.

- Another question asked was about the money being spent towards the changes in Letchworth, could it be better spent elsewhere such as for the elderly or other services.

The money that was used to improve Letchworth came from the Heritage Fund and could not be diverted anywhere else.

Baldock town was changed to be rejuvenated and Letchworth is going through the same phase, this is to hopefully bring new shops in to the town and get more people to shop locally.

This discussion evolved into whether the Council should have the right to make decisions that go against the public opinion. Could there be better information provided about why the decisions need to be made.

- An additional question concerning young people about what the Council are doing to stop young people causing trouble on the streets was answered by the panel saying that Youth Connexions have got clubs and street workers, and that a website called Channel Mogo has been set up for the young people. When the young people were asked whether they had heard of this website half said they had, but when asked if they had actually used it only about one or two said that they had.

The feedback from Youth Connexions was that the young people said that they did not need weekend activities but things through the week

The young people said more consultation was needed with them to find out what they really want and that it was just a perception that young people cause trouble, and they also said that the lack of communication and information was an issue.

- Why is street lighting so poor in Royston was asked and the panel suggested that you feed your issues through to your local councillor or the town council.
- Another question about lighting was to do with Bush Springs, why it was only on once a month and that it did not cover enough of the area to allow young people to carry on playing football at night.  
For issues like this you have to ring the street light fault reporting line.
- An additional question asked about sport, this time to do with the 2018 World Cup bid was asked if Hertfordshire was doing anything to specifically support the bid. The panel replied by saying the best thing to do is support a local football team so they can become bigger and better.