

## PRESS RELEASE

# Banbridge DPP consults with young people as part of Local Democracy Week 18-21 October 2004

### Banbridge Young People Voice Their Views

Monday, 18th October, 2004 -- Over 60 local young people aged between 16 and 18 from three schools and one college will experience education of a different kind this Thursday when they take part in a live 'Let's Talk' discussion with local elected representatives at the Iveagh Movie Studios in Banbridge. This event has been co-ordinated by Banbridge District Council in conjunction with Local Democracy Week (18th-25th October), which presents councillors in Northern Ireland with an opportunity to focus on young people and develop their interest in local democracy.

Councillor Ian Burns, Chairman, Banbridge District Council, said, "This is the first event of this kind to be staged in Northern Ireland during which young people will participate in direct discourse with local elected representatives. My fellow councillors and I welcome it because it gives our young people an opportunity to voice their views about local issues, as well as enabling them to increase their knowledge about the functions of the Council in local democratic affairs. It is important that our young constituents are encouraged to engage more with their local Council and to become more involved in local decision-making. Research shows that young people throughout Northern Ireland have a very limited understanding of Council functions and the relevance we have to their lives. Questions about many issues that affect the local community such as environment, recycling, economy, tourism, politics, urban development, community relations, council services, community safety and policing, will be put to the panel of elected representatives. I hope we have a very open and lively debate on the day and our young constituents find it very informative and interesting."

'Let's Talk – Banbridge Young People Voice Their Views' has been sponsored by the Community Relations section of Banbridge District Council and Banbridge District Policing Partnership. Bill Fleming, Banbridge Community Relations Project Co-ordinator, YMCA Ireland will chair the event. Following the live discussion, the young participants will enjoy lunch at the Civic Building where they will meet the full body of elected representatives along with senior Council officers.

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