

## News story: Minister Hopkins urges politics students to have their say

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The Northern Ireland Office Minister gave the pupils a first-hand account of life in central and local government, drawing on his experience as a minister in central Whitehall departments and as leader of Bradford City Council.

The minister's visit was an opportunity to hear the views of Northern Ireland's young people about the current political impasse. Mr Hopkins was also keen to emphasise the vital role that politics and public service has played in making Northern Ireland a peaceful and prosperous place.

Mr Hopkins said:

"My message to the pupils today is simple: you can shape the future so get involved and have your say! Their energy was fantastic and it is good to see them engaged in the Northern Ireland political debate and showing a great interest in current affairs.

"With significant challenges facing Northern Ireland politicians it was instructive to hear the students' desire for a stronger society and a politics that works.

"It is vital we listen to their views. They are the next generation who will make a difference to the lives of people here and help build a brighter future for Northern Ireland."