

Subject:	Youth Participation		
Date of Meeting:	9th November 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director for Families, Children & Learning		
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Ward(s) affected:	All Wards		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 To provide information on current youth participation practice in the city and put forward a proposal that will further involve young people in making decisions on services in the city that impact on them

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee note and agree the action plan developed by young people that will increase young people's involvement in making decisions that impact on them

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Brighton and Hove City Council's 2020 to 2023 Corporate Plan outlines its commitment to giving young people a stronger voice in future services.

- 3.2 The benefits to young people being involved in decision making includes:

- Increased confidence, self-esteem and self-worth
- Working and communicating as part of a team
- Negotiating, decision making and leadership skills
- Planning and organisation skills
- Improved employability
- Sense of belonging
- Opportunities to have a voice on issues that matter to them
- The chance to facilitate positive change

- 3.3 Helen Baxter - Youth Coordinator from the Hangleton & Knoll Project stated that youth participation:

'supports the personal development of young people, gives them a sense of belonging and a community connection. It empowers young people to lead and take ownership in their communities. It also sows the seeds of change to enable them to deal with any challenges in their lives.'

- 3.4 Two young people from the Trust for Developing Communities, made the following points: -

- They feel more ownership and more proud and want to be more involved
- They get good experience which could lead to life opportunities
- The right amount of power at the right time can change someone's life
- Young people make better decisions about what they need, which means they are more likely to take part and stay involved
- Treats young people with the respect they deserve and you'll get the respect back

Other benefits include:

- Provides professionals with the understanding of the experiences, views and needs of service users, leading to greater insight into the services provided for young people and support any required change
- Improved services that are more responsive to the needs of users
- Young people are experiencing democracy, rather than taught it

- 3.5 3.5 There are several active youth participation groups in the city, both within the council and community and voluntary youth providers (see appendix in Youth Participation Action Plan)
- 3.6 In addition, feedback is regularly collated from young people from other Council services, such as, Social Work, Youth Employability Service, Integrated Team for Families, Adolescence Service and Brighton and Hove's Inclusion Support Service. This feedback is used to inform and change practice.
- 3.7 It was agreed at the Children and Young People's Committee on 13th January that a review of current youth services in the city would be undertaken and that the findings of this review to be presented back to Committee to be discussed and a proposal agreed.
- 3.8 As part of the review, an on-line survey was developed and was open for six weeks, during May and June 2020. In addition, 15 focus groups were held with young people, 50 young people attended from 12 different youth organisations. During the focus group they were asked following questions:
- Do you get involved with making decisions about what services are provided for young people?
 - If so, how do you get involved?
 - How could this be improved?
- 3.9 Young people fed back that they do have opportunities to be involved in decision making and their participation is generally good in the city with workers actively encouraging young people to take part.
- 3.10 The young people recognised that this is a good learning opportunity and a chance for their views to be listened to, heard and acted upon. They felt that more young people needed to be aware of participation opportunities, how to get involved and to recognise the potential benefits for them, other young people and wider community.
- 3.11 One of the recommendations of the Youth Review was to work alongside young people (via Youth Wise) to develop an action plan that will further the

involvement of young people in making decisions on services that impact on them.

- 3.12 To ensure all groups of young people have an opportunity and feel safe to have their voice heard, separate action plans may need to be developed for protected groups, particularly for BAME and LGBTQ young people and young people with special educational needs or disability.
- 3.13 Youth Wise met on 7th October and the focus of this meeting was to develop the action plan.
- 3.14 An action plan was written (see appendix) which focussed on promoting the current participation opportunities by:
- Improving links with secondary schools
 - Update and widely publicise both next year's Youth Council elections and Youth Wise
 - Update and widely publicise the Wheretogofor website
 - Find new ways of using social media to connect with hard to reach young people
 - Learn from other areas
- 3.15 Other actions include equality groups working on plans to further involve young people in decision making groups, young people reviewing the Youth Led Grant Programme framework and ensuring young people are actively involved in the Youth Service recommissioning process

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 As noted in this report there are many benefits to involving young people in decision making.
- 4.2 Young people very much value the current participation opportunities; however, it has been noted that there is more to do to improve and increase the visibility of these opportunities to ensure engagement from a wide range of young people, particularly those from protected groups

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation events, including young people's and stakeholders focus groups were held as part of the Youth Review that included consulting on young people's participation opportunities and gaining views on how this could be improved. A recent Youth Wise meeting took place recently where the focus was to develop this participation action plan.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed plan to improve participation opportunities for young people will result in increasing the opportunities for young people in the city to be more involved in influencing local and national strategies /policies, as well as improving services in Brighton and Hove that directly impact on their lives.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name: David Ellis

Date: 27/10/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Local authorities are responsible for securing, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer that is sufficient to meet local needs and improve young people's well-being and personal and social development. Young people's involvement in making decisions that impact on them in a range of areas is likely to improve the understanding of local needs and inform good decision making.

Lawyer Consulted:

Name: Natasha Watson

Date: 29/10/20

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Youth Participation Action Plan