

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 102

Subject: Youth Participation update

Date of meeting: 22nd January 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Youth Services

Contact Officer: Name: Gemma Doughty Youth & Commissioning Service Manager
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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 Following the decision to move to a Cabinet system, the Youth Council has worked with council Officers to review its operating model to be better aligned with the council. This report sets out the proposals from representatives of the Youth Council to move to a Cabinet system.
- 1.2 The report also sets out proposals for a Youth Takeover Day to take place during 2026.
- 1.3 The Youth Council remodel proposals link to Outcome 3 of the Corporate Plan: A better future for children and young people. We will put young people at the heart of decision-making through development of our youth participation and engagement arrangements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Youth Council remodel proposals as below:
 - The Youth Council to move to a Cabinet system of operation and to meet with relevant Cabinet members and senior officers as appropriate
 - The Youth Council to present to Corporate Leadership Team biannually and to meet regularly with the Corporate Director for Families Children & Wellbeing.
 - The Youth Council to present an update of its priorities and work to Full Council on an annual basis
 - Officers to explore the Youth Council being located in council offices.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The Youth Council is formed of elected volunteer members from schools and colleges in Brighton and Hove. This is a two-year elected term for children and young people ages 11-19 (up to 25 with SEND).

- 3.2 The purpose of Youth Council is to amplify the voice of children and young people across the city and share this with decision makers to create change via a manifesto, campaigns, consultations and representation in UK Youth Parliament.
- 3.3 During a youth-led review in March 2025, young people identified priorities which included closer ties with decision makers, campaigning, council integration, training, and broader representation.
- 3.4 The review raised the following issues:

How do we ensure Youth Council is front and centre without additional budget?

Proposals from youth council:

- 10 annual consultations embedded in council strategy.
- Quarterly meetings with Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing.
- Biannual Corporate Leadership Team presentations.
- Annual Full Council presentation.
- Open invite to Councillors and senior officers to meet with youth council representatives.
- Co-location of an office space for the youth council in council offices.
- Support collaborative working across council and youth voice networks.

How do we ensure we are capturing a wide range of voices including those from harder to reach communities?

- Targeted consultations for young people in underrepresented groups.
- Citywide consultation with young people to broaden representation.
- Host listening events focused on diverse issues of young people.
- Provide youth council representatives with portfolio roles to elevate marginalised voices.
- Develop ambassador roles with focus on marginalised voices.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The Youth Council is committed to representing the voices of children and young people across the city. The proposals outlined in this report provide the opportunity for closer links with Cabinet Members and senior officers to be established, and for the Youth Council to have meaningful involvement in and influences over decisions that directly affect them.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The remodel proposals are based on findings from a youth-led review in March 2025. Young people identified their priorities which included closer ties with decision makers, campaigning, council integration, training, and broader representation. The Youth Council wish to adopt a structure that reflects the Cabinet model of Brighton and Hove City Council.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, there may be some additional

costs relating to the bi-annual listening event and funds will need to be identified to support this initiative. In addition, there are requirements for the use of council space and additional passes, although these will not need funding to be identified.

Name of finance officer consulted: David Ellis Date consulted 17/12/2025:

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Youth Councils are voluntary advisory groups which assist Councils in meeting their statutory duties to involve young people in shaping services. There is no regulatory framework which governs how they should run. Councils are therefore able to define their procedures and practices.

Name of lawyer consulted: Serena Kynaston Date consulted 18/12/2025:

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 No risk associated with the proposed Youth Council model

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 This question has been fully considered in the proposed Youth Council model, ensuring a wide range of voices, including harder to reach communities, are captured through the proposals in the report.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 No impacts identified

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Based on the Youth Council review completed by young people it is proposed to remodel the youth council as outlined in the report to ensure a clear pathway between the voices of children and young people and council decision makers.
- 11.2 A Youth Takeover Day will be set up in 2026. This will support the Youth Council to feel more involved with the work of the council.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Youth Council Remodel Proposal slides

