

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Communities (Introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Social Justice, and Wealth Building)	Cabinet	16 November 2022

Youth Engagement Action Plan and Youth Council Update

(Is this report confidential?)	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a narrative to the Youth Action Plan at Appendix 1 which proposes projects to support young people within South Ribble.
2. To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress made to date within the Youth Council project
3. To present plans and governance, proposed by Youth Council members.

Recommendations to Cabinet

4. Cabinet approve the proposed projects in the Youth Action Plan.
5. Cabinet approve the proposal to allocate the 'Mental Health for Young People' budget to support work outlined in the action plan.
6. Cabinet approve the proposed approach to engaging the Youth Council and young people within South Ribble in local decision making.
7. Cabinet approve the proposed governance and roles of Youth Council members, including the role of Youth Council Mayor.
8. Cabinet acknowledge and approve the Council's commitment to providing personal development opportunities for young people who engage in the Youth Council.
9. Cabinet acknowledge and approve the priorities identified by Youth Council members, along with the proposed approach to project delivery.

Reasons for recommendations

10. Projects contained in the action plan have been discussed and decided upon with Lead Member for Youth and portfolio holder for Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building.
11. The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building has given Youth Council Members the autonomy to decide how the Youth Council should operate. The recommendations within this report reflect the thoughts of Youth Council members following consultation within Youth Council meetings.
12. Projects in the action plan reflect thoughts of Youth Council members following consultation within Youth Council Meetings.

Options considered and rejected

13. The council does not have a statutory duty to carry out the proposed projects, however, now has full-time permanent resource in a Youth Engagement Officer, to support the young people across South Ribble to thrive. If the council do not commit to a focused action plan, this resource will not be used effectively, and therefore outcomes amongst young people will be limited.
14. Continue to deliver the Youth Council project without approving the recommendations. This option is not recommended as it would lead to the project progressing without clear direction.

Corporate priorities

15. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

Youth Engagement Action Plan

The council's commitment to youth

16. The Council has made a commitment to work closer with young people across South Ribble, by recruiting a full-time permanent Youth Engagement Officer.
17. This post will work closely with youth partners, with an aim of providing more opportunities, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or experiencing challenges within education, whilst also engaging young people them in local decision making and community projects.
18. This report presents an action plan that has been developed with the Lead Member for Youth and sets out the council's Youth Agenda. The action plan and this section of the

report covers all youth related activity, other than the Youth Council. The Youth Council will be covered in a separate section within this report.

What we already do

19. South Ribble Borough Council currently funds and delivers a range of youth provisions, both inside and outside schools, including; health and wellbeing activities delivered through the Active Health team, the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, Lancashire Youth Challenge's 'RESTORE' programme, and Lancashire Mind's 'Bounce Forward' programme.
20. Active Health officers work with schools across South Ribble, delivering a wide range of sporting activities, from school games coordination to cycling proficiency.
21. The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) provides free to access activities for young people up to the age of 16 throughout school holidays, supporting 1,342 children over this year's school summer holiday period.
22. Lancashire Youth Challenge's 'RESTORE' programme involved mental health/emotional resilience workshops with three secondary schools; Lostock Hall Academy, Penwortham Girls, and Worden Academy. These workshops were co-designed through feedback from the Youth Council. This was then followed by two 7-week programmes, focusing on building confidence, self-belief, and aspirations, as well as delivering a social action project. The programme with Lostock Hall Academy was completed at the end of the 2021/22 school year, and the Worden Academy programme is currently ongoing, and set to be completed in November 2022.
23. Lancashire Mind's 'Bounce Forward' is a preventative programme aimed at primary school aged children, focusing on building emotional resilience. This project is set to commence early 2023.
24. South Ribble Borough Council's re-engagement in the town twinning partnership with Kreiss Schleswig – Flensburg is a key project to provide bespoke development opportunities for the existing Youth Council and wider youth in the borough. The addendum to the Town Twinning partnership agreement - first signed April 1980 - re-affirmed the commitment to strengthen the youth exchange opportunities both digitally and face to face.
25. In October 2021, the Youth Hub was opened in the Civic Centre. South Ribble Council worked in partnership with Department of Work and Pensions and provided a dedicated space in the Civic Centre to enable young people in the borough to access employment support locally. Going forward, it has been mutually agreed that the space will be available to the Youth Employability coaches on an ad-hoc basis at no cost.

The need to work closer with young people

26. In 2021, 23% of all anti-social behaviour (ASB) in South Ribble was youth related, and in 2022, residents have voiced their growing concerns regarding repeated youth related ASB in Bamber Bridge, Lostock Hall and Leyland Central.

27. Some local businesses have anecdotally expressed to the Investment and Skills team that they feel young people are not 'work ready' when they leave education. There is an identified skills gap and need to provide young people with access to develop key employability skills such as: communication, teamwork and behaviours to support young people to be work ready.
28. The impact the pandemic had on young people in South Ribble is evident in 2020/21, in which the borough had one of the highest percentages in Lancashire of 16 to 17-year old's not in education, employment or training. The Corporate Strategy identifies a reduction in this percentage as a key performance indicator for their commitment to create a fair local economy that works for everyone.
29. South Ribble Borough Council has existing links with local businesses; schools; public services and community facilities. The Youth Action Plan identifies the need to further strengthen and utilise these links to facilitate the delivery of the projects proposed and create a clear pathway of youth provisions for young people to engage with. This would consequently broaden the opportunities available to youth in the borough to develop new skills.

The gap in youth provision

30. The challenges that young people face within South Ribble are varied, however are more frequent and complex for those within areas of deprivation. These areas can be found in Bamber Bridge, Lostock Hall, Penwortham (Middleforth/Kingsfold), and Leyland (Seven Stars, Broadfield, Earnshaw Bridge, and Moss Side).
31. A recent review of community assets and provision identified that infrastructure for youth provision exists within areas of deprivation in both Leyland and Penwortham, however, does not in Lostock Hall and Bamber Bridge.
32. The Council has acknowledged the need to address challenges posed by locality and have pledged to deliver activities that close the gap between communities were there a difference in wealth, health and learning opportunities.
33. The proposals outlined as part of this report reflect the need for varied level of initiatives and interventions in order to support the broad landscape of young people and make progress against the desired outcomes.

Proposals

34. The proposed projects detailed in the Youth Action plan will be delivered on an ongoing basis. The plan remains 'live' and will be updated as projects are completed.
35. Cabinet is advised that elements of the Youth Action Plan may require approval at a future Cabinet or Council meeting, as appropriate. These items will be added to the relevant Forward Plans.

36. The projects in the Youth Action Plan aim to:

- Engage with a diverse range of young people through intervention and referrals; with a key focus on those identified at risk of not engaging with education; training or employment.
- Consult with partner organisations and young people to inform plans and projects.
- Deliver a holistic approach to youth engagement and development to encourage lifelong positive behaviour changes in a supportive and safe environment.
- Deliver a broad range of skills development opportunities to suit the needs of the young person – ranging from transferable skills such as teamwork and communication to sector specific skills such as digital marketing and horticulture.
- Streamline and structure the youth offer in the borough in a clear and accessible format to ensure schools, young people and the wider community can understand what youth provision are available to engage with.
- Engage and collaborate with existing and established youth provisions and partnerships to create a strong and sustainable offer which limits the amount of duplication.
- Provide young people with a voice in the community, primarily via the Youth Council.

Budget

37. There is currently £28,000 remaining in the mental health for young people / youth support reserve. This reserve was carried over from the 2021/22 financial year, where it was previously attached to the 'Mental Health for Youth People' project within the Corporate Strategy.
38. It is proposed that this reserve is allocated to supporting work within this action plan, along with wider work that supports young people within South Ribble.
39. This is a one-off budget; any additional funding required will require a new business case to be presented to Cabinet for approval.

Youth Council Update

Overview

40. The Youth Council was originally incepted in response to the lack of input from our young people on matters that impact them, such as mental health treatment, extracurricular activities, and the quality of leisure facilities.
41. The Youth Council project aims to engage the young people of South Ribble in local decision making, whilst also providing development opportunities to those that engage, creating young leaders and leaders of the future.
42. The Youth Council was established in November 2021 and has been a project within the Council's Corporate Strategy for both 2021/22 and 2022/23.
43. The project has now achieved its core objectives of establishing a Youth Council and securing permanent resource to manage and develop it. Because of this, the project will no longer be monitored within the Corporate Strategy and will instead become business-as-usual for the Community Development team.
44. Youth Council meetings take place bi-weekly on Monday evenings (4:30pm – 6:30pm) at the Civic Centre.

Progress to date

45. Youth Council members were recruited through attending school assemblies, local parks, and council events, with ages ranging from 13 to 17.
46. Youth Council meetings have developed into a relaxed, informal, and safe environment, where individuals can speak openly and voice their opinions without fear of judgement.
47. To date, the following has been achieved:
 - Completion of SHOUT training: focusing on public speaking and debating.
 - Key themes for projects and social action identified by Youth Council members, more specifically; mental health, poverty, equality (BAME), knife crime, and veterans.
 - Visit to the Knife Angel sculpture in Blackburn.
 - Letter sent to all secondary schools in South Ribble to raise awareness of period poverty and dignity.
 - Establishment of roles for members within the Youth Council.
 - Acted as a feedback mechanism for Mental Health workshops that were delivered to secondary schools in South Ribble, delivered by Lancashire Youth Challenge.

Governance and roles within the Youth Council

48. The Youth Council is facilitated by and affiliated to South Ribble Borough Council, however, operates with autonomy, led by the Youth Council members.
49. The project is managed by the Community Development team and led by the Youth Engagement Officer.

50. Along with the wider Youth Agenda within the Council, the Youth Council is championed by the Council's Lead Member for Youth, Cllr Colin Sharples, as well as the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Social Justice, and Community Wealth, Cllr Aniela Bylinski Gelder.

51. Youth Council meetings take place fortnightly at the civic centre on Mondays, 4:30pm – 6:30pm.

52. The format to each meeting is as follows:

1. Introduction (if new members are present)
2. Recap from previous meeting
3. Topical debate (15-20 mins)
4. Engagement in local decision making (if there is a topic to consult on)
5. Focus on chosen priority/theme
6. Summary of agreed actions from next week

53. Key points and decisions from each meeting are recorded and shared with Youth Council members.

54. Youth Council members were asked what roles they would like to see for members. They identified the below.

Role	Description
Chair	Chairs the Youth Council meetings. This is a development opportunity for managing meetings and public speaking.
Vice Chair	Chairs the meeting if the Chair is not present.
Project Lead	The lead for a specific project or initiative delivered by the Youth Council.
Youth Council Mayor	This is an elected role by Youth Council members and is the public face of the Youth Council. Elections will take place annually, allowing the role to rotate across different members.

55. The current age bracket for the Youth Council is 13-17, and the existing Youth Council members are aged 16 and 17. It would be unfortunate to lose engaged young people due to the existing age bracket. Because of this, it is proposed that the additional roles below are established for those that turn 18.

Role	Description
Ambassador	Those that turn 18 and still want to be engaged in the Youth Council. Ambassadors will take on a more senior role within the Youth Council, supporting the facilitation of sessions, and supporting the recruitment of new Youth Council members.
Alumni	Those that turn 18 and are now ready to leave the Youth Council. Alumni will be welcomed back to speak with the next generation of Youth Council members about what they have achieved since leaving the Youth Council.

Involving the Youth Council and young people in local decision making

56. The Youth Council will operate as a feedback mechanism for decision making within the Council, representing the voice of young people within South Ribble.
57. Bi-weekly Youth Council meetings will be the primary channel for consultation with Youth Council members, however, other consultation methods can be followed when appropriate.
58. Following recommendations being agreed by Cabinet, an update will be provided to all officers via Core Brief, informing them of the option to engage the Youth Council in any upcoming consultations.
59. If projects that have an impact on young people or the future of South Ribble are presented to SMT and have not previously received input from the Youth Council, SMT can recommend the Youth Council's involvement.
60. If a consultation with young people is to go wider than the Youth Council, the Youth Council along with the Youth Engagement Officer will work with youth partners (i.e. schools, youth clubs, sports clubs) to carry out these engagements.
61. The Youth Council will work towards participating in the development in the Council's budget and priorities. This will start next year, in preparation for the 2023-24 financial year. This provides 12 months for Youth Council members to gain insight into local decision making, ahead of this process.
62. Although the Youth Council will be the Council's primary method of consultation with young people, this will not be the council's only method. Some consultations will be delivered to a wider audience to ensure the voice of young people is representative.

Development of Young People

63. In addition to engaging young people in local decision making, the Youth Council should provide those that engage with opportunities for personal and professional development.
64. These opportunities will come in the form of experiences, the management and delivery of projects, mentorship, and courses/skill sessions.
65. Project management, marketing, and public speaking have all been identified as area that the young people would like to develop.
66. Development outcomes of Youth Council members will be measured through case studies.

Approach to identifying priorities for social action and delivering projects

67. Youth Council members were asked to identify priority areas for project delivery and social action. The following five areas were identified:
 - Poverty / cost of living
 - Mental health
 - Equality
 - Knife crime
 - Veterans

68. To ensure that each priority is focused, and impact is not diluted, the Youth Council will focus on one priority at a time.

69. For each priority the Youth Council will do the following:

- Learn from a guest speaker
- Go on an educational trip/excursion
- Debate about a topic relating to this theme
- Choose a project to deliver
- Provide an overview of what they're doing on Radio Leyland (to raise the profile of the Youth Council)
- Produce a themed newsletter to share with schools, partners, and the council (to support recruitment of new members and raise the profile)

70. When choosing a project, we will firstly look at what projects the Community Hubs are already working on (or are in the pipeline) and explore whether there is an opportunity for collaboration. If there isn't, the Youth Council will lead on a separate project, with support from the Youth Engagement Officer.

71. The length of time that they spend on each priority will be determined by the length and size of the project that they choose to deliver.

72. Each project will have a project lead. This will be the Youth Council member(s) with the most enthusiasm to develop experience in that given theme.

73. The Youth Council have chosen poverty / cost of living as the priority that they focus on first. This will include a trip to a local foodbank/community shop, with an overview and demonstration of how it works from those that run it.

Recruitment of new members

74. The recruitment of new Youth Council members will be always be an ongoing activity. This ensures that the opinions and views within the group remain fresh, and that the size of the group does not dwindle as older members leave.

75. Youth Council members will continue to be recruited through schools, youth clubs, and sports clubs.

76. The Youth Engagement Officer will regularly visit schools to promote the Youth Council and other youth related initiatives. When available, Youth Council members will accompany them, creating a relatable peer-to-peer approach.

77. Leyland Radio will be used to raise the profile of the Youth Council, offering regular slots for Youth Council members to have shows that promote the work that the Youth Council is doing.

78. The Youth Council will write a newsletter when they come to the end of each priority, with each member writing a different section. This will then be shared with schools and on social media to raise the profile of the Youth Council and recruit new members.

79. A promotional video will be developed throughout the delivery of the first priority, capturing everything outlined in point 69. This video will then be shared with schools and on social media to raise the profile of the Youth Council and recruit new members.

Budget

80. For the 2022/23 year, the Youth Council project has been allocated a £5,000 revenue budget. It is proposed that the same budget is allocated for 2023/24.

Climate change and air quality

81. These projects do not have a direct impact on improving climate change or air quality, however, future projects delivered by the Youth Council and young people within South Ribble may have a positive impact.

Equality and diversity

82. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Youth Council project. This ensures that the way in which the Youth Council operates, and the projects that they deliver do not negatively impact any of the protected characteristics and identifies potential for positive impacts.

83. Each of the areas of priority identified by the Youth Council aim to reduce inequality, especially the equality (BAME) priority.

84. Projects contained within the action plans are designed to be inclusive, accessible and bring communities together.

85. An equality impact assessment will be carried out for each project, therefore ensuring that protected characteristics are not negatively impacted, and that any positive outcomes can be identified.

Risk

86. A full risk register has been completed and is logged in the Grace risk management system for the Youth Council project.

87. Each of the projects contained in the action plan has an element of risk; through the scoping process an assessment will be carried out as to the level of risk and potential actions that can be taken to mitigate the identified risks.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

88. The expected costs of the actions noted for the Youth Council will be within the existing revenue budget of £5,000.

89. As detailed the funds available for the Youth Engagement Action Plan are from a reserve created in prior years.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

90. There are no concerns with this report from a Monitoring Officer perspective. The Youth Council can be very useful as body to consult with whenever any council proposals may have an impact on young people.

Background documents

91. There are no background papers to this report

Appendices

92. Appendix 1 – Youth Engagement Action Plan

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