

<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>22 January 2020</b>
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<b>Report title</b>	#YES – improving how we engage with our children and young people (CYP)	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Emma Bennett, Director of Children’s Services	
<b>Originating service</b>	Children and Young People	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Andrew Wolverson	Head of People
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Directorate Leadership Team	28 November 2019
	Strategic Executive Board	17 December 2019
	Children and Young People	15 October 2019
	Scrutiny Board	

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**Recommendations for decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Youth Engagement Strategy, #YES, and the priorities identified by our children and young people (CYP).
2. Approve funding to deliver #YES including:
  - A new, city-wide youth engagement team to better connect CYP to opportunities
  - A new fund for CYP to co-produce activities and events
  - Better access to information and signposting for CYP and families.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report sets out a new Youth Engagement Strategy (#YES), developed with the views of 12,000 city children and young people (CYP) at its heart. It also sets out the funding required to drive this strategy forward as part of a wider plan to deliver a better deal for CYP in our city.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Giving CYP the best possible start in life is one of the City of Wolverhampton Council's key priorities.
- 2.2 The Council also has a statutory duty to 'secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people' and to give them a say on how this is provided.
- 2.3 Despite the significant challenges faced by the Council in providing youth services – largely due to Government funding cuts and increased demand - the Council has responded and reprioritised investment.
- 2.4 Over £3.5 million was invested in the city's 'The Way', Youth Zone supported by an additional £600,000 funding between 2019-2022. The Way provides first-class facilities and integrates youth services with other crucial support available for young people and their families, targeting limited resources towards those that need them most.
- 2.5 The Council also invested to pilot WV Holiday Squad, coordinating 350 activities in the 2019 summer school holidays. This successful initiative saw over 16,000 young people take part and West Midlands Police reported a substantial 48% decrease in recorded anti-social behaviour in the city.
- 2.6 Both the Council and partner agencies recognise that CYP are the city's future. To help them fulfil their full potential whilst ensuring they have fun and positive experiences, we will improve how we engage and listen. Our Youth Engagement Strategy #YES, gives us the foundation to build on.
- 2.7 #YES has been co-produced with CYP from across the city and coordinated by the city's Strengthening Families Board (SFB).

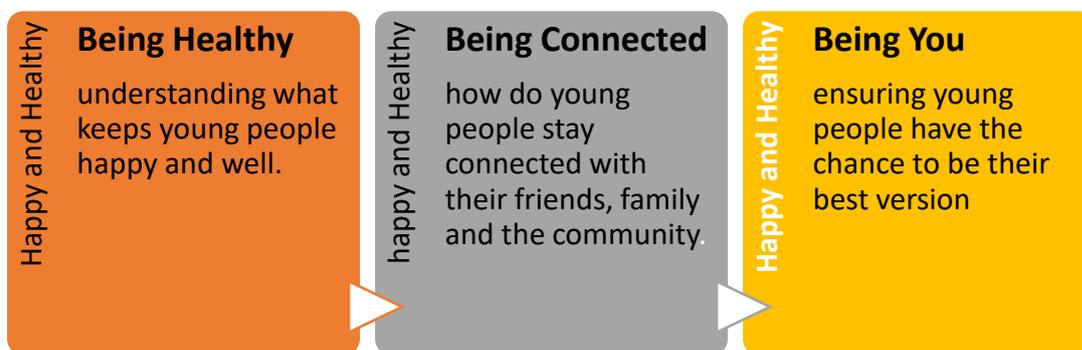
## **3.0 #YES – a new conversation with our young people**

- 3.1 #YES is an ambitious strategy that puts CYP at its centre. It's been developed following extensive consultation and feedback from 12,000 young people carried out between July and September 2019. It included both on-line and paper-based surveys.
- 3.2 Over 1,800 #YES and 9,800 'Make your Mark' surveys were completed by young people and parent/carers. The views of another 300 young people were gathered at 30 different locations and events.
- 3.3 Following analysis, some of the key findings and emerging themes include:

- more needs to be done to encourage active lifestyles.
- having more opportunities and access to youth workers in communities, increased levels of participation.
- more spontaneous activities appeared to work better.
- parent's safety concerns affected their views on where they would allow their children to go or play.
- young people want more than just being asked for opinions and views. They want to be actively involved in making, implementing and monitoring decisions. Organisations working with CYP reinforced this point.
- Professionals working with special educational needs and disability (SEND) CYP described a lack of opportunity. This was attributed to a mixture of poor coordination across the system and a lack of focus on an individual's needs.
- Consultation showed that young people and parents feel they do not receive enough information on what services and activities are available. Marketing needs to be improved to reach young people on the information channels they use. When activities are promoted, young people and families do attend.
- During WV Holiday Squad in the summer, family sessions were best attended echoing the consultation findings of valuing 'family time.'
- The consultation highlighted the need for continued detached/outreach youth work with a locality presence throughout the year.

#### 4.0 Feedback shaping priorities and core resources #YES

4.1 Based on feedback, three strategic priorities will underpin the Council's work in the future:



4.2 The Council and its key partners are currently developing a more detailed action plan to deliver the Strategy. However, three key building blocks will help us to deliver #YES and wider, more ambitious plans and services for young people.

#### **A new universal youth engagement offer**

- 4.3 The detached youth worker engagement during WV Holiday Squad was a big success and young people said provision needs to be all year round.
- 4.4 This report recommends universal provision across the city, all-year-round, to re-connect young people to existing opportunities, support them in having fun and positive experiences and provide another important conduit to nurture and develop new ideas, activities and events.

- 4.5 The universal offer will build on the work of the Community Safety Team who currently commission detached youth work in a number of targeted areas: Whitmore Reans, Lunt, Bilston, East Park, Scotlands and Low Hill.

#### **Funding co-production, giving our CYP a greater say**

- 4.6 The Council is committed to changing its relationship with young people, giving them a voice and listening to and acting upon the feedback.
- 4.7 This report proposes a new fund for young people so they can commission the activities that they want to see and get involved in.
- 4.8 Supported by Council employees, young people will be given responsibility to identify activities, develop specifications and award funding. HeadStart Wolverhampton used a similar and successful 'Dragon's Den' approach to commission activities, owned and managed by young people.
- 4.9 This also supports the Council's 'crowdfunding' approach, empower local communities to organise local events. Public Health and Headstart have been working together to support local communities to set up activities, recruit volunteers to run events, reclaim derelict sites and close off streets for fun days (Play Jams). The new fund will build on this success.
- 4.10 Importantly, the new fund will also include a specific allocation targeted to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in the city so that they too can enjoy the wide range of activities, events and opportunities the city has to offer.

#### **Better information, signposting and marketing**

- 4.11 Building on the success of the WV Holiday Squad summer activities, and feedback from young people and parents on the difficulty they had finding out details about activities, we will invest in a new database and website to promote events, encourage participation and engage CYP.
- 4.12 This will be developed, in collaboration with a range of partners across the city, to provide a one-stop-shop of all events, activities and opportunities in the city for young people.
- 4.13 Based on consultation feedback, this will include a better offer for the city's teenagers.
- 4.14 Although there may be opportunities to commercialise the website in the future to generate income to cover costs, the primary purpose at this early stage will be to connect young people to events relevant to them.
- 4.15 There is also a strong, local social value case for the proposed new website. During WV Holiday Squad, providers reported an increase in the uptake of their services and attendance at their activities. Parents also commented on how easier it was to plan days out and overall people could see the diverse range of activities on offer.

## 5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

5.1 Whilst a number of alternative options were explored, the proposals set out in this report best balance the importance of this key strategic priority with the council's financial challenge. Proposals also directly respond to key points raised during the consultation.

## 6.0 Measuring success

6.1 This report proposes a number of key performance indicators to measure success including:

- Increasing the number of young people participating and engaging effectively in their communities.
- Ensuring young people and their families have access to the right information and advice to make their own choices.
- Increasing engagement and participation, voice and influence of young people
- Encouraging physical activity and healthy eating.
- Improving outcomes for CYP with special educational needs and/or disability.
- Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing for all CYP.

## 7.0 Reasons for decision

7.1 The recommendation to implement #YES will promote wellbeing, better connect young people to the city and give them a voice in shaping future opportunities.

## 8.0 Financial implications

8.1 There are financial implications associated with the delivery of this three-year strategy. Some of the work will build on existing structures that currently deliver co-production activity such as the Youth Council and Children in Care Council.

8.2 The table below summarises the implementation costs:

Activity	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
	£000	£000	£000
Universal youth engagement offer	328	328	328
A new co-production fund	279	279	279
Improved information and signposting	70	21	16
Total Cost	677	628	624

8.3 This will be funded from a combination of existing resources, including efficiencies found from within services, grants and contributions from reserves. This will leave a potential growth requirement of £150,000 in 2020-2021 rising to £350,000 by 2022-2023.

- 8.4 As detailed in the Council Tax Base and Business Rates (NDR) Net Rate Yield 2020-2021 and Provisional Finance Settlement report (agenda item 6 also presented to Cabinet at this meeting), the Council's provisional settlement for the Social Care Grant has been announced at a total of £6.3 million for the Council. It is anticipated that this will be used to support the growth requirements in 2020-2021. Funding to support future years will require resources to be re-prioritised. These financial implications will be reflected in the Final Budget Report to Cabinet on 19 February 2020.  
[NM/14012020/M]

## **9.0 Legal implications**

- 9.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.  
[TS/24102019/Q]

## **10.0 Equalities implications**

- 10.1 By offering earlier support, the strategy aims to ensure young people have opportunities to thrive and succeed in life. By targeting those young people, families and communities who are likely to have poorer outcomes, this strategy contributes to narrowing the gap and reducing inequalities.
- 10.2 The performance framework will collect equalities information about service users. This will help identify gaps and inform future commissioning intentions.

## **11.0 'Climate change and environmental implications'**

- 11.1 In the development of the implementation plan consideration will be given to climate change and environmental implications.

## **12.0 Human resources implications**

- 12.1 When the implementation plan is developed there may be human resource implications.

## **13.0 Corporate landlord implications**

- 13.1 There have been some preliminary investigations into potential sites for the hub. The one identified will require extensive work to make it fit for purpose.

## **14.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 14.1 #YES will have a beneficial impact on children, young people and families by providing opportunities for them to engage in positive activities thereby improving wellbeing, having a sense of community and raising aspirations.

## **15.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 15.1 None

## **16.0 Appendices**

- 16.1 Appendix 1 - #YES Youth Engagement Strategy Document  
16.2 Appendix 2 to the #YES Youth Engagement Strategy Document.