1.0 **Decision required**

Cabinet is requested to:

1.1 Note the activity undertaken by the Greenwich Young People’s Council (GYPC).

1.2 Approve the proposals to improve the interface between GYPC and elected members as stated in section 5 of the report.

2.0 **Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

2.1. This report relates to the Council’s agreed high-level objectives as follows:

- Promote excellence in education
- Ensure a healthy and safe living environment
- Social care and health

3.0 **Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

3.1. This report provides an update to Cabinet of the activity undertaken by Greenwich Young People’s Council (GYPC). It outlines how Youth Councillors are elected, how the group functions and the current group composition. It also outlines how GYPC currently engage with elected Members and makes proposals for increasing this engagement.
4.0 **Introduction and Background**

4.1. GYPC is a group of elected young people – youth councillors – which exists to represent the views of young people from across the borough and to influence decision-making within the council.

4.2. GYPC was set up in 1998 to give “young people a voice in the community” and this year celebrates its 20th Anniversary. Since its inception, GYPC have had some great achievements, including more recently:

- **2015**: Delivering a national award-winning youth conference with 85 Greenwich young people on the topic of tackling discrimination.
  - **Achievement**: 70% of participants reported they knew more about discrimination and how to deal with it and 76% of participants said they would pass on what they learnt to others. This event won a national British Youth Council award.

- **2016**: Developing a Young Apprentice programme for 32 young people, to enable them to develop business and enterprise skills.
  - **Achievement**: 94% of participants said they had better knowledge and understanding of the skills needed for the world of work and 87% of participants said they had developed key employability skills.

- **2017**: Supporting Takeover Challenge, to give young people an opportunity to “takeover” the roles of decision makers.
  - **Achievement**: 100% of participants said they enjoyed the day and 96% of participants said they would participate again.

- Over the past 3 years, GYPC have also been involved in numerous Chief Officer recruitment panels, commissioning panels and consultations about local services.

Former youth councillors have gone to achieve many things, including:

- Working as a participation officer, supporting subsequent youth councillors;
- Working as a youth worker in Royal Greenwich, supporting young people in our communities;
- Employment directly at the Royal Borough of Greenwich;
- Establishing a community-based youth debate group;
- Delivering a TEDx Talk on feminism and the role of rap music; and,
- Being elected Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

4.3. The group exists to raise awareness of and promote the active and meaningful engagement of young people in politics, democracy and citizenship. They do this by, for example:

- Running campaigns and events to give young people a voice.
- Taking part in consultations to influence decision-making.
- Attending regional and national events to promote the voice of young people in Greenwich nationally.

4.4. Youth Councillors are elected to represent schools, colleges and communities across the borough – and all schools, colleges and youth hubs are invited to participate.

We currently have 20 Youth Councillors representing:

1. Ark Greenwich Free School (2 reps)
2. Eltham Hill (2 reps)
3. Harris Academy Greenwich (1 rep)
4. Halley Academy (formerly Corelli College) (1 rep)
5. Newhaven (1 rep)
6. Plumstead Manor (3 reps)
7. Stationers’ Crown Woods (2 reps)
8. St Mary Magdalene (1 rep)
9. St Paul’s Academy (2 reps)
10. St Thomas More (1 rep)
11. The John Roan (1 rep)
12. Thomas Tallis (1 rep)
13. Willow Dene (1 rep)
14. Woolwich and Charlton (local area) (1 rep)

4.5. We are in the process of recruiting Youth Councillors to represent Royal Greenwich Trust School and have plans to recruit Youth Councillors from all other schools currently without representation in the 2018-19 academic year.

4.6. The election for the incumbent GYPC was held in December 2017. The election turnout was 69.4% – or 3,621 votes across 6 schools.

4.7. Youth Councillors are elected on 2-year terms and meet every week. At the start of the term, all Youth Councillors are invited to attend a 3-day residential to develop their knowledge, skills and teamwork. 17 of the current
cohort are working towards an AQA accreditation ‘Being a Royal Greenwich Youth Councillor’ for completion by the end of their term in 2019.

4.8. At July 2018, the composition of GYPC is as follows:

- 70% are women
- 80% represent black and minority ethnic communities
- 4% identify as having a learning difficulty and/or disability
- 0% currently identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
- 65% of publicly-funded schools are represented, covering 8 (47%) Council wards.

**NB:** This data is collected from equal opportunities forms completed by young people. All the sections are optional, and some young people opt not to fully complete the form or respond with “prefer not to say”.

4.9. The current cohort have reported positive outcomes; of those completing feedback in quarter 2 of 2018/19 (7 youth councillors):

- 100% felt they had had opportunity to contribute to decision making
- 100% felt they had had an impact on decision making
- 100% had improved their confidence as a result of their participation
- 71% felt they had the right skills to successfully participate in decision-making

4.10. Some young people choose to stand in a further election to become a member of the Leadership Team, to take on additional responsibilities within the group.

The Leadership Team is comprised of the following roles:

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Member of Youth Parliament
- Secretary
- Campaign Leaders (x 4)

4.11. The Leadership Team meet once a month to plan meetings, review progress and develop their skills as young leaders to enable GYPC to be youth led.

4.12. Every year, we participate in the UK Youth Parliament – a programme coordinated by the British Youth Council. We elected 1 Youth Councillor to be our Member of Youth Parliament (MYP).
4.13. Our MYP is responsible for representing Greenwich’s young people on a national level. This includes taking part in regional and national events and attending the annual House of Commons debate in November.

4.14. Our current MYP has already been involved in many national projects, including being involved in the Youth Violence Commission, chaired by Vicki Foxcroft MP. We are also delighted that she has been selected as a keynote speaker at this year’s House of Commons debate – the only London MYP to be chosen.

4.15. Each GYP cohort debate and agree a set of priorities, which becomes their manifesto. These priorities are drawn from their own individual manifestos from their election – and involves a process of debate and deliberation. GYP are able to access and agree how to use a youth participation fund to pay for activities for young people that support the delivery of their priorities. (£15,000 per year shared between GYP and the Children in Care Council).

4.16. The current GYP have agreed the follow priorities for their two-year term:

1. Mental Health
2. Street Safety – this priority was elected by 80 young people who attended our School Council Conference in January 2018.
3. Curriculum for Life

4.17. Since then, the group have been brainstorming ideas for each priority and have agreed the following aims for each priority:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Aim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>To raise awareness of mental health, reduce its stigma and improve mental health services available for young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Safety</td>
<td>To raise awareness among young people of the dangers and consequences of carry a knife and of gang involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum for Life</td>
<td>To improve young people’s skills for life, to increase their employability and help them get ready for the world of work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engagement with Members

4.18. Currently, GYPC meet with the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Schools and the Director of Children’s Services once every 3-4 months, to share ideas, offer feedback and discuss areas for improvement. These often lively and discursive meetings have demonstrated a desire and need for further engagement with Members.

4.19. GYPC have previously presented to the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel to share their priorities, the work they have undertaken to progress them and the impact that being a member of GYPC has had on them and other young people.

4.20. GYPC also have the opportunity to “takeover” the role of Cabinet Members during the yearly Takeover Challenge event. Eight Cabinet Members have signed up to participate in 2018 event.

4.21. GYPC currently do not have a direct relationship with ward Councillors, either individually or as a group, except where they also Cabinet Members.

4.22. GYPC have, however, expressed interest in increased engagement with their local ward Councillors, as well as having an opportunity to meet other Cabinet Members and Chairs of Panels, to learn more about how decisions are made and have an opportunity to share their ideas and give feedback.

5.0 Proposals

5.1 Children’s Services commissioners and the provider of the borough’s Youth Participation Service will continue to present a report to the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Panel on the provision and performance of the commissioned service, as requested.

5.2 GYPC and Children’s Services suggest the following proposals to increase their engagement with Members, to ensure discussion is ongoing and has influence over decisions that are made at the political level of the Council’s decision-making. We have shared and discussed these proposals with ward councillors and they have received support.

5.2.1 GYPC to present to Council three times over their 2-year term of office at the following milestones:

- At the start of their term, to present their new priorities;
• Midway through their term, to update Council on their progress;
• At the end of their term, to present a report of their activity.

5.2.2 In their first presentation to Council, to be arranged following Cabinet decision, representatives from GYPC will:

• Show a short GYPC promotional film.
• Talk about their experience of GYPC so far.
• Present their three priorities and their plans to deliver them.
• Highlight their proposals on how to work more with Members.

5.2.3 GYPC will continue to meet regularly with the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services & Schools and the Director of Children’s Services; in addition to Cabinet Members responsible for GYPC’s manifesto priorities, to maximise opportunities to influence decision-making (see table below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GYPC Priority</th>
<th>Proposed Cabinet Member Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>Adult’s Social Care, Health &amp; Anti-Poverty (Cllr Averil Lekau)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Safety</td>
<td>Community Safety &amp; Integrated Enforcement (Cllr Jackie Smith)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum for Life</td>
<td>Economy, Skills &amp; Apprenticeships (Cllr Denise Hyland)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wider engagement with Members

5.2.4 GYPC have expressed an interest in holding a ‘Shadow a Councillor’ programme each year and could include Cabinet Members, Chairs of Panels and ward councillors, so youth councillors can get to know more about how the Council works and how decisions are made. This could take place on the same day as, and as part of, our annual Takeover Challenge in November.

5.2.5 GYPC have also asked for increased engagement with their local ward councillors, to increase their influence locally. Activities could include:

• #YouthVoice walks – youth councillors take their ward councillors on a tour of the areas around their schools, sharing feedback on how to improve the area for young people, from a young people’s perspective.

• ‘Tell us’ events in schools – for youth councillors and their ward councillors to visit schools during break and lunch times to speak to
young people directly about things we could improve or do better. This could offer a great opportunity for joint-work with School Councils.

- **Assemblies in schools** – for youth councillors and their ward councillors to jointly deliver assemblies about local politics and democracy; to increase the profile of the roles of both GYP and local ward councillors.

- **Community engagement sessions** – plans are already in place for GYP to be involved in the Council’s wider community engagement programme throughout the year.

5.2.6. If Members propose on visiting schools as part of their work with the GYP, advice for Members is available if they wish to apply for a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check. If this is an option Members wish to utilise, then the cost of the check would be paid for by Greenwich Council.

6.0 **Available Options**

6.1. Cabinet is asked to note the report. Cabinet may agree to accept the proposals, reject or agree alternative proposals.

7.0 **Preferred Option**

7.1. It is recommended that Cabinet note the report and agree the recommended proposals or suggest amended proposals.

8.0 **Reasons for Recommendations**

8.1. The recommendations seek to ensure Members are in agreement with an improved interface with GYP. The proposals were identified by GYP. Consultation has taken place with ward councillors who have supported the proposals.
9.0 Consultation Results

9.1 GYPc have developed their presentation to Council and the proposals for engagement.

9.2 The Leader and the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Schools have offered suggestions directly to Greenwich Young People’s Council about how to develop their work further. These suggestions have been incorporated into this report and are being explored with the group.

10.0 Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

10.1 There are no specific, identified crosscutting implications that need to be considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Sign-off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal including Human Rights</td>
<td>There are no legal implications arising from this report</td>
<td>John Scarborough, Head of Legal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and other resources</td>
<td>The contract for the Participation Service is £80,000 per annum, which includes £15k per annum specifically for youth participation activities. This is met from the Children’s Services General Fund budget. There are no financial implications arising from this report.</td>
<td>Mala Dadlani, Children’s Services Finance Manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equalities</td>
<td>GYPc provides a mechanism for the voice of young people in the borough to be represented. The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no apparent equality impact on end users.</td>
<td>Louise Mackender de Cari, Assistant Director Strategy, Performance &amp; Commissioning, Children’s Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.0 **Appendices**
None

12.0 **Background Papers**
None

Report Author:  Josh Harsant, Youth Participation Service Lead
The Participation People (Commissioned Service)
Tel No. 020 8921 6053
Email. josh@participationpeople.com

Reporting to:  Louise Mackender de Cari, Assistant Director
Children's Services (Strategy, Performance & Commissioning)
Tel No. 020 8921 3461
Email. Louise.MackenderDeCari@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Chief Officer:  Florence Kroll, Director of Children’s Services
Tel No. 020 8921 8230
Email. Florence.Kroll@royalgreenwich.gov.uk