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| COUNCIL | DATE 30 October 2019 | ITEM NO 12 |
| TITLE An update on progress made by Greenwich Young People's Council in 2018-19 | WARD(S) All | |
| CHIEF OFFICER Children's Services | CABINET MEMBER Children's Services and Community Safety | |
| DECISION CLASSIFICATION Non Key | IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes | |

1. **Decision required**

Council is requested to:

- 1.1. Note that the 2017-2019 term of Greenwich Young People's Council (GYPC) has now completed.
- 1.2. Note the activity undertaken by GYPC and the achievements made in the last year. Council will also receive a presentation from Youth Councillors at its meeting on 30 October 2019.
- 1.3. Note the plans for the 2019 - 2021 GYPC elections and manifesto development.
- 1.4. Note the opportunities available to Members for engagement with GYPC and our other youth voice groups.

2. **Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives**

- 2.1. This report relates to the 'A Great Place to Grow Up' high level objective.

3. **Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 3.1. This report provides an update on the progress undertaken by GYPC, their work and priorities, and next steps. It also presents options for Members to engage with GYPC and our wider youth voice programmes.
- 3.2. Members of GYPC will present an update on their work at the Full Council meeting on 30 October 2019.

3.3. In summary, the 2017-19 GYPC developed and delivered:

- 2 Mental Health projects: (see 5.2)
 - **Mental Health Champions** – to raise awareness of mental health issues, coping strategies and support services.
 - **Mental Health Young Researchers** – to get the views of 1,892 young people on mental health support in Greenwich.
- 2 Street Safety projects: (see 5.3)
 - **An Anti-Knife Crime Summit** – to raise awareness of knife crime and identify possible solutions to the issue.
 - **A series of Police Youth Think Tanks** – to raise awareness of specific street safety issues, including Gangs and County Lines.
- 1 Curriculum for Life project: (see 5.4)
 - **Takeover Challenge** – giving young people the chance to ‘takeover’ decision-makers’ roles and experience the world of work.

3.4. In July 2019, to recognise their work and contribution to the borough, all 18 Youth Councillors all received a nationally-accredited AQA Unit Award, “Being a Royal Greenwich Youth Councillor”.

4. **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. The youth council, now 20 years old, 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.

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

The 2017-2019 GYPC consisted of 18 active Youth Councillors representing:

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

- 4.4. The composition of the 2017-19 GYPC was:

- 61% aged 13-15
- 72% girls
- 89% who represent black and minority ethnic communities
- 6% who identify as having a disability
- 0% who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
- 55% of publicly-funded Greenwich schools represented.

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”.

- 4.5. 8 young people were elected to take on additional leadership responsibilities within the group. The Leadership Team comprised following roles:

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Member of Youth Parliament
- Member of London Youth Assembly
- Secretary
- Campaign Leaders (x 3)

- 4.6. Youth Councillors are elected on 2-year terms and meet every week.

- 4.7 The next GYPC election is taking place in the 2019 Autumn Term, to elect a new group of Youth Councillors who will serve a 2-year term of office.
- 4.8 For further background information, Members are encouraged to refer to our first report to Council GYPC on 12 December 2018.
- 4.9 In their presentation to Council, representatives from GYPC will talk about their experience of GYPC and provide a summary of their work this year.

5. Summary of Achievements

5.1. GYPC have been busy over the last year, delivering on their manifesto priorities. Here, we summarise what they achieved during their term:

5.2. Mental Health

5.2.1. GYPC developed 2 projects for this priority: Mental Health Champions and Mental Health Young Researchers.

Mental Health Champions

5.2.2. 17 young people from 10 schools were recruited to be Mental Health Champions. Our Champions were trained as peer educators, to increase their awareness and the awareness of their peers of Mental Health. This included learning about Mental Health conditions, coping strategies and services that offer support. We worked with colleagues in Children's Services, CAMHS and Kooth (online counselling service provider) to deliver this training, too.

5.2.3. At the end of the programme:

- 100% of participants left the project knowing more about mental health and mental health conditions;
- 94% of participants know at least 2 techniques for improving their own mental health and wellbeing;
- 88% can identify at least 4 mental health conditions.

5.2.4. All our Champions received nationally recognised AQA accreditation for their work, to recognise their active participation. Following the programme, they went back to their respective schools to informally share their knowledge with their peer groups. Some also delivered school assemblies to their year groups on the issues they covered. Our Champions came back

together for additional sessions to 'top up' their knowledge and share their learning with each other.

- 5.2.5. They are now supported to continue utilising their skills and knowledge in other similar opportunities. These include Children's Services Mental Health Young Ambassadors and the new Mental Health Ambassador programme, delivered by Imago as part of the voluntary sector commissioning framework.

Mental Health Young Researchers

- 5.2.6. 8 young people were recruited as Young Researchers, to undertake a research project to look at what's good, needs improving and missing from Mental Health support services for young people in Greenwich.
- 5.2.7. Our Young Researchers achieved an amazing 1,892 responses from young people who live or study in the borough. They then conducted data analysis, identified key themes and came up with some tangible recommendations.
- 5.2.8. In August 2019, our Young Researchers presented their report and recommendations to professionals in Greenwich who commission and deliver support for young people's mental health, including the CCG, CAMHS, Schools, the Youth Service and Council officers. Their research is being used to inform the further development of mental health support services in the borough, including the redesign of CAMHS.

5.3. Street Safety

- 5.3.1. GYPC developed 2 projects for their priority: an Anti-Knife Crime Summit, jointly with Children's Services and Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT), and a series of Police Youth Think Tanks.
- 5.3.2. GYPC worked with teams in Children's Services and CACT to host an Anti-Knife Crime Summit for young people across Greenwich on Thursday 14 February 2019. Their aim was to provide an opportunity for young people to come together to explore the issue of knife crime further, learn more about it and think about how we can tackle it together. This was facilitated through a series of workshops and a panel discussion.
- 5.3.3. 65 young people from 14 schools attended the Summit, which was led and supported by 15 Youth Councillors and 2 young people who work with the Youth Offending Service. At the end of the Summit:

- 95% of participants told us they had fun and would participate again;
- 90% told us they felt they know more about the laws around knife crime;
- 85% told us they felt they know more about the real facts about knife crime;
- 66% told us they felt they had the opportunity to contribute their ideas about how to prevent knife crime.

5.3.4. Ideas and feedback from attendees of the Summit were fed into the updating of the Serious Youth Violence and Knife Crime plan and into the wider work plan of the Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Task Group.

5.3.5. GYPC designed and delivered a series of Police Youth Think Tanks (PYTTs) during the Summer Term (April to July). These were educational, fun and engaging workshops to bring young people and decision makers together to discuss key street safety topics. They planned and facilitated 3 sessions on 3 different topics: County Lines; Gangs; and Stop and Search. We worked with the Police and CACT's Street Violence Ruins Lives to deliver the sessions.

5.3.6. 80 young people and 16 professionals participated in the PYTTs, which took place in 3 locations across Woolwich and Abbey Wood. 100% of participants told us they learned something new, and across the sessions:

- 100% of participants could correctly define County Lines.
- 73% of participants could correctly identify what a Gang is and what the warning signs are.
- 83% of participants could correctly identify acronyms that could help them if Stopped and Searched.

5.3.7. The PYTTs have opened up new avenues for GYPC (and young people more broadly) to work with the Police locally – including direct contact with new Youth Engagement Officers, whose role it is to engage young people in the local Policing agenda.

5.4. **Curriculum for Life**

5.4.1. GYPC supported the annual Takeover Challenge event in November 2018. 30 young people and 25 decision-makers participated in the event. Takeover Challenge gives young people the opportunity to 'takeover' the roles of decision-makers across the Council and is endorsed nationally by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England.

5.4.2. At the end of the day:

- 100% of participants said they would take part again;
- 82% reporting that they had the opportunity / opportunities to contribute to decision-making on the day;
- 100% of participants said they left the day feeling more confident in the workplace environment.

5.4.3. GYPC decided not to pursue this priority further. They felt their other 2 priorities were much bigger issues and wanted to dedicate more time to them.

5.5. **Additional activity**

5.5.1. In addition to their core work programme, members of GYPC represent the borough's young people on the UK Youth Parliament and newly-formed London Youth Assembly.

5.5.2 Youth Councillors have also been involved in staff recruitment panels, commissioning panels, including the re-commissioning of the Participation Service itself, and a number of consultations, including most recently on our Borough of Culture bid. The group also meet regularly with the Director and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to discuss key issues and offer mutual feedback.

5.6. **Next steps for GYPC**

5.6.1. There will be a borough-wide election to elect a new group of Youth Councillors to represent young people across Greenwich in October-November 2019. The process and planning for the elections began in the Summer. We anticipate the results announcement event will take place in November. **Members would be welcome to attend to show their support.**

5.6.2. Following their election, there will be a number of induction and training sessions with the new group of Youth Councillors. These sessions will include meeting members of our other Youth Voice groups, Children's Services Officers, our Cabinet Member and the Leader of the Council; as well as training in representation, public speaking and team building.

5.6.3. Between January and March, the new GYPC will develop and agree its manifesto for their 2-year term. This will involve identifying 2 or 3 key issues for young people in Greenwich and building a programme of work around these areas. Their new manifesto will be made available to Members and published widely. The manifesto development process will include

opportunities for input from School Councils and our other Youth Voice groups.

5.6.4. Once their new manifesto is agreed, as outlined in our previous report to Council, **relevant Cabinet Members will be invited to meet with the group** to discuss, flesh out and support the development of their work plan.

5.6.4. GYPC members will also be supported to join on a new Youth Voice Leadership Group, alongside other representatives from our other Youth Voice groups in the borough, including our Young Commissioners and ACE (Action, Change, Equality). This group will act as an advisory group to the Children's Services Participation Strategy and Action Group, who oversee the delivery and ongoing development of the borough's Children and Young People's Participation Strategy.

6. Opportunities for Members

6.1. Following the previous report to Council, we are pleased to be able to offer the following opportunities to Members to engage with GYPC and the other Youth Voice groups that are supported across the Council:

- **Takeover Challenge / 'Shadow a Councillor'** (date TBC) – best suited to those Members with special responsibilities, this is an opportunity for a young person (or young people) to 'take over' your role for the day, to find out more about being a Councillor and learn about Council decision-making.
- **GYPC Manifesto 2020-22** (tbc) – after publication of the new manifesto, we would welcome Members' support and contributions to help GYPC make a real difference and impact on decision-making. Following publication, we will plan in opportunities for Members to engage with GYPC, including through **Youth Voice walks, 'Tell Us events' in schools and school assemblies**. This will help ensure GYPC's engagement with Members is really meaningful and specific to delivering on their manifesto priorities.
- **Promoting GYPC** (ongoing) – we would love your help in promoting GYPC among the community; their priorities, their work and their achievements. GYPC will publish their new manifesto in March 2020 and we would appreciate your support sharing it far and wide, through social media and via community channels and networks.

- **Youth Voice Conferences** (twice annually) – from September 2019, we will be hosting 2 conferences in each school year; to help us shape GYPC’s manifesto and priorities, and to help influence the wider youth voice agenda across Royal Greenwich. Members would be welcome to attend and contribute to these events.

6.2. In addition, we are in ongoing discussion about how GYPC can engage with the Council’s wider **community engagement work**, including through the new programme of Better Together sessions.

6.3. If Members have additional ideas or suggestions for how they wish to work with GYPC and our other youth voice groups, we would encourage them to get in touch with us.

6.4. If Members propose on visiting schools or youth group settings as part of their work with the GYPC, 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 the Council.

7. Available Options

7.1. Council is asked to note the report.

8. Preferred Option

8.1. It is recommended that Council note the report and the proposals approved by Cabinet.

9. Reasons for Recommendations

9.1. The recommendations seek to ensure Members are informed of the activity of GYPC and how they will work more with elected Members.

10. Consultation Results

10.1 GYPC themselves have developed their presentation to Council and the proposals for engagement.

11. Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

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

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---|---|--|
| Legal including Human Rights Act | <i>There are no legal implications arising from this report</i> | Cynthia Erove Senior Lawyer, Planning and Procurement. 02/09/19 |
| Finance and other resources including procurement implications | <i>The contract for the Participation Service is £80,141 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.</i> | Carolyn Knowles Head of Accountancy and Business Change – HAS/CS 03/09/19 |
| Equalities | <i>GYPC provides a mechanism for the voice of young people in the borough to be represented.</i> <i>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.</i> | Louise Mackender de Cari, Assistant Director Strategy, Performance & Commissioning, Children's Services 29/08/2019 |

12. Appendices

None

13. Background Papers

[Council \(December 2018\) Greenwich Young People's Council Priorities Report](#)

[Cabinet \(November 2018\) Proposal for improving the interface between Greenwich Young People's Council and Elected Members](#)

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