

Scrutiny Briefing Note

The Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel have asked to monitor progress on the following issues. This briefing contains the latest position as at 10th November 2020.

Subject:

Your Voice Your Vote 2020

Your Voice Your Vote is the annual consultation to find out what young people aged 11-19 feel are the priority issues for them. This has been in place since 2019 and is the localised version of Make Your Mark which we used annually when we were part of the UK Youth Parliament. We continue to share the views of young people on our local version through the regional and national groups our young people are engaged with.

Youth Action group have again lead on the 'Your Voice Your Vote' for 2020. Given the restrictions in place since March, including the closure of schools and colleges, cancellation of events and huge shift to online connections the group decided that they would still like to run the consultation and held many conversations about how we might do this.

The outcome of these discussions was the decision to run the consultation using an online approach. To restrict the amount of 'paper' touched by different people we did not issue ballot papers this year and asked schools and colleges to use a tally sheet process. Young people would carry out discussions about what they can vote for, how to vote and what happens with their vote. They then cast their votes in their bubbles within school/college. In addition, we had an individual online voting option via a link to a 'questionpro' survey where they could cast and submit their vote. This option was also shared widely to be promoted to young people in the community.

The voting was open from 1st September – 25th October 2020 to allow schools and colleges to plan the voting in at any point during the first half term back. We expected that some of our schools and colleges may have issues with fitting this into their plans and that their focus would be on catching up with content that might have been delayed during lockdown.

To avoid schools and colleges receiving multiple requests to involve their young people we worked in partnership with the OnSide Youth Zone Young People's Development Group to vote for the name and brand of the forthcoming Youth Zone in Grimsby. Voting options and information was sent out in one email and suggested that the schools and colleges would do both votes in one session to save them time whilst optimising the opportunity for young people to vote. This received over 1600 votes and the name/brand launch will be held early in December.

The voting options were sent to all secondary academies and colleges via email, two follow up emails sent as well as follow up calls made to ask if there was anything we could offer in support of the young people being able to vote. The voting options also went out through the Sector Support newsletter for our voluntary and community sector projects, to all crime



reduction funded projects, to lead staff in youth projects such as Duke of Edinburgh, Street based, Youth offending children in care and young carers and sent to all family hubs for them to promote and encourage voting.

The individual online voting option was in the main used by Franklin college students as they chose to send the link to students via their college email addresses and encourage them to take part. There was not much of a take up of this option by young people in the community or via youth groups.

We received **3676** votes this year which is around 500 lower than last year and there were 4 schools and both colleges involved which is down from 7 schools last year. However, given the circumstances and impact of the Covid-19 virus and restrictions related to this we feel it was still positive.

We hope that the process used this year could be used in the future as almost all the school who took part saw an increase in their turnout for voting. The academy that saw a decrease was due to the voting taking place during a time where many of their students were self-isolating.

The results show that **mental health** is still the most important issue for young people with one in five choosing this. this is a consistent proportion of the votes based on previous years. Second top issue was again reduce **knife and violent crime**

What happened over the last year?

- In January 2020, Youth Action planned and delivered an event called 'Youth Voice Matters' to bring young people and decisionmakers together. This event involved 30 young people and adults who discussed actions and prioritised what we needed to do. As a result, there is a plan to involve young people in influencing, creating and promoting safe places and spaces in our area.
- Young people have been integral in developing the Onside Youth Zone coming to Grimsby through the Young People's Development group. This group have been meeting weekly since January and have developed the name and brand options for the Grimsby Youth Zone as well as giving presentations to board meetings, potential funders. They have created films and been interviewed by the press all sharing the progress and encouraging others to get involved with the development.
- Young people are creating a 'Young Advisors inspection team' project to give young people's perspective on how safe services places and spaces are in the area. This will report to the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. The first inspection is around mental health.
- Mental Health Support Teams are helping support young people's mental health in our area and young people have worked with them to create a local name and branding for the service 'Compass GO, helping you find your way to wellbeing'



- Young people are currently working with Compass GO to inform a range of short animated films to support young people's mental health and trying out some well being workshops for young people.
- Young people through Covid – 19 restrictions have been reducing the sense of loneliness and isolation through projects including writing postcards to care homes.

What next?

- Youth Action will be action planning for the future work with key services based on the results of 'Your Voice Your Vote'.
- Youth Action will be working with the team involved in the Adolescent Lifestyle survey and other key consultations to ensure that the messages and actions are communicated with young people across the borough.

Discuss and decide how we might engage the voices of more young people with decision makers in our action planning in a different way to last year's

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