

## **Report to Cabinet**

**16 November 2021**

### **West Sussex Youth Cabinet Update**

#### **Report by the West Sussex Youth Cabinet**

**Electoral division(s): n/a**

---

### **Summary**

The West Sussex Youth Cabinet has been invited to attend the Cabinet meeting on 16th November to provide an update on its activities and future plans. This paper has been provided by the Youth Cabinet to give some background information on its work.

### **Recommendation**

Cabinet is invited to receive the update and the Youth Cabinet's comments and is asked to consider and advise on the benefits to the Council and its residents of the work of the Youth Cabinet.

---

## **1 Background and context**

- 1.1 The Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament for West Sussex is an organisation made up of 56 young people, between the ages of 11 and 18, who are elected to represent the views of young people in West Sussex.
- 1.2 We work on various campaigns. Our main goal as a group is to empower all children and young people in West Sussex to use their voice in an effective and compassionate way and to make change to the community. Make Your Mark, a ballot open to all young people in the UK, helps us establish focus points for campaigns. Other focus areas are agreed upon by the Youth Cabinet, and what we feel is relevant to the young people of West Sussex, and the UK.

## **2 Our current campaigns**

- 2.1 **Youth Safety:** A campaign combining Knife Crime, Homelessness and Domestic Violence (the final two being this year's 'Make Your Mark' campaigns).

### Knife Crime

In March 2021 the Youth Cabinet came runners up for their knife crime campaign (which was focused around posters to deter young people from carrying a knife) in the National Crimebeat Awards. We were nominated for this award by Dr Tim Fooks - the current High Sheriff for West Sussex. Funding was awarded to the Knife Campaign by the National Crimebeat Awards which

will be shared between the three campaigns, with a main focus on a homelessness fundraiser planned for December.

### Homelessness

This campaign has three main goals: to reduce stigma, promote changes to legislation, and educate and fundraise to support the homeless. We have made positive contact with schools and charities in West Sussex to organise fundraisers and donation collections for local homelessness charities. In December students will be encouraged to wear something red to raise awareness of homelessness in exchange for a £1 or more donation to a local homelessness charity.

### Domestic Violence

The Domestic Violence campaign exists to support young people struggling in situations where domestic violence is occurring. We hope to educate people on the effects and conversations needed surrounding domestic violence and young people. By working with external organisations, we will be able to strengthen existing support for young people. The campaign lead has spoken at an event - 'Domestic and sexual violence and abuse: C-19 and beyond.' - emphasising the need for youth voice when dealing with these situations.

- 2.2 **Tackling Racial Inequality:** The goal of this campaign is to bring awareness to the issues of racism faced by individuals who live in the West Sussex area and the UK as well as provide support, comfort and understanding for those who experience it. Activity has included:

### Webinars

The Youth Cabinet ran a webinar series over a three-day period during Black History month in 2020. This received praise and positive feedback and is now available to watch on Youtube. The series has also been sent to schools to be used as a part of the curricular for PSHE.

### Faith awareness

A social media campaign was undertaken to educate young people and the wider community on the five major religions in the UK.

### Race awareness for teachers

The Youth Cabinet is helping to produce a training course for teachers on racial discrimination and how to deal with it as well as providing an opportunity for all West Sussex Schools to enable students to take a training course to become Equality Ambassadors which will be launched later this year.

- 2.3 **Environment:** In this campaign the main aim is to raise awareness about environmental issues that affect our planet to encourage people towards sustainable green solutions. The Youth Cabinet have been working closely with outside organisations including the Marine Conservation Society and Community against Gatwick Noise Emissions (CAGNE) and to raise awareness of climate change and plastic pollution.
- 2.4 **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing:** The youth cabinet and MYP recognise the impact that the pandemic has had on young people's mental

health. The Youth Cabinet continue an active social media campaign to educate young people on mental health issues; how to identify them and what young people can do to help others and themselves if they are experiencing issues. We have also begun collecting blog posts to be posted anonymously on our blog site about young people's personal experiences with mental health and, if applicable, how they overcame these issues.

- 2.5 **Transforming Education:** The youth cabinet continue to campaign on transforming education following a number of successful campaigns which aim to tackle reducing the digital divide in West Sussex, encouraging an inclusive curriculum and addressing poverty in education.
- 2.6 **Webinars:** The youth cabinet used webinars on Zoom as a way to engage with young people and political leaders in a period of lockdown due to Covid 19. The benefit of having these webinars online and recorded means that they are now being used in colleges in Worthing as tasters for studying politics.
- 2.7 **Podcasts:** Equally, podcasts allow social media engagement with young people, and podcasts have been created on subjects such as racial equality, political engagement, and the Palestine/Israel conflict.

### **3 What Next?**

- 3.1 As a Youth Cabinet, we want to continue to strengthen our working relationship with the County Council. Our attendance and participation in the Children and Young People' Services scrutiny committee and regular meetings with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People have proven beneficial to all the members of the Youth Cabinet. The Youth Cabinet also welcomes this opportunity to address Cabinet on its work on an annual basis. Youth Cabinet Elections will take place in Spring 2022, which will see a newly formed Youth Cabinet, who will then look to launch their manifesto and key campaigns in the Summer. As a Youth Cabinet, we look forward to continuing to engage with County Councillors in our campaigns as they progress.

### **4 Details**

- 4.1 There are no resource, risk, policy or legal implications for the County Council arising from this report by the West Sussex Youth Cabinet but we invite the Cabinet to consider whether the issues covered are in line with the policies and priorities the Council has set for itself.

**Contact Officer:** Katherine De La Mora, Senior Advisor – Democratic Services  
0330 22 22535

**Appendices - None**

**Background papers - None**