

Report to Cabinet

29 November 2022

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 29th 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 and developments within its current manifesto.

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 and where it can offer counsel and support.

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament for West Sussex is an organisation made up of 51 young people, between the ages of 11 and 18, who are elected every 2 years to represent the views of young people in West Sussex through various campaigns. The last Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament elections took place in March 2022
- 1.2 Through our campaigns, we aim to empower all children and young people across the West Sussex area. We do this by using their voices in an effective and compassionate way to make positive change to our community. Make Your Mark, a ballot open to all young people in the UK, helps us establish focus points for campaigns - with 434,492 young people voting across the country in 2022 with 11,212 young people voting in West Sussex. 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 from Our Manifesto

Youth Safety

- 2.1 A decision was made at the end of the last term to combine Knife Crime and Homelessness into one campaign. The aim of the campaign is to ensure that

young people are being heard in regards to their safety, they are wholly informed on measures to keep themselves safe and feel overall just safer.

- 2.2 The Youth Cabinet has created a survey for young people to fill out to help inform us about what young people want us to focus on specifically for this campaign since it can be rather broad. The results are expected at the end of December.
- 2.3 The Youth Cabinet have also worked with the police, attended Independent Advisory Group (IAG) meetings and to give the input of young people
- 2.4 There are plans to create a series of social media posts in relation to the campaign, at key points during the year, such as during anti-bullying week. The campaign will make its presence known on social media and post information on where young people can get the help that they need.

Racial Equality

- 2.5 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 showcasing where support can be found as well as comfort and understanding for those who experience it. This is also another campaign we have decided to continue this term. Previously we have done webinars and have done social media campaigns in relation to religion and culture.
- 2.6 The Youth Cabinet has launched the Racial Ambassador scheme after two years of preparation, which has successfully been established in schools. They closely liaise with the school regularly to upkeep the programme. This scheme is where young people in various schools champion equality in relation to race, religion, culture and ethnicity. Opening room for conversations within schools and young people actively being involved with creating schooling spaces that are accepting of all. As of now we have 6 schools involved and are preparing for more to be involved from next September with a few already showing interest.
- 2.7 The campaign also has plans to do presentations in schools to educate young people on racial inequality and how to be more equal in school. We have already contacted schools and have 6 confirmed that they are happy to partake.
- 2.8 These presentations will also be adapted to present to primary schools which have already been confirmed by the schools in Crawley that they also want to partake in.
- 2.9 They also plan to host an in-person event in July 2023. Hoping to have a panel of speakers and presentations. Details and planning are currently underway.

Environment

- 2.10 In this campaign the main aim is to raise awareness about environmental issues that affect our planet to encourage people towards sustainable green solutions. This campaign is one of the Make Your Mark topics and also one that the Youth Cabinet has decided to continue from the last term.
- 2.11 The Youth Cabinet has 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.

- 2.12 They have carried out a beach clean during the summer at Worthing Beach - picking over 300 pieces of litter, on the hottest day of the year! They plan to have some park cleans in the spring too
- 2.13 They continue to plan to create and post 2 podcasts a month to educate people on the environment which are on all listening platforms. Podcasts include topics on fast fashion and also interviews such as the lead member of environment with more episodes planned and ready to come.

Health and Wellbeing

- 2.14 This campaign was voted the highest in 2022 Make Your Mark. The Youth Cabinet and MYPs recognise the impact that the pandemic has had on young people's mental health.
- 2.15 The aims for this campaign is to educate and reduce the stigma around mental health disorders, introduce sign language into the curriculum, combat period poverty and ensuring young people can continue to eat nutritiously during the current cost of living crisis
- 2.16 They plan on getting a survey sent out to collate information on how health can be improved later this year
- 2.17 From next year, they plan to having specialist teachers to teach the basics of sign language to young people
- 2.18 They also plan on introducing mental health walks during the summer months across several West Sussex locations
- 2.19 They also plan to create informative powerpoints and podcasts on mental health issues with guidance from specialists in the field.

3 What Else?

- 3.1 **Trip to Parliament:** The Youth Cabinet was invited to visit Parliament on the 22nd of August. We were shown around the place and got a better idea of the political sphere. We were also shown around by Tim Loughton MP
- 3.2 **Thursday Focus Groups:** Frequent focus groups to get the views of the young people in the Youth Cabinet, such as helping with Children's first plan 2022 - 2025, including picking a design layout for the plan and Education and Skills strategy.
- 3.3 **In Person Meetings:** After the whole last term of the Youth Cabinet being online, the Youth Cabinet has adopted a hybrid approach, with some meetings being online and others in person. This has proved especially beneficial during busy seasons like for exams in the Youth Cabinet.
- 3.4 **Campaign Day:** On August 3rd 2022, a day focused on pushing campaigns forward and having detailed plans on what to continue. Nigel Jupp came by and had lunch and a conversation with the Youth Cabinet members.
- 3.5 **Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel:** The Youth Cabinet attending and being involved with the panel.

4 What Next?

- 4.1 As a Youth Cabinet, we want to continue to strengthen the working relationship with the County Council. 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 the Cabinet on its work on an annual basis. The Youth Cabinet want to continue expanding and working on their campaigns to meet their end goal of empowering the voices of children and young people in West Sussex.

5 Details

- 5.1 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.

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Appendices - None

Background papers - None