

Report of:	Helen Watson, Executive Director of Children’s Services Cllr. Barrie Cooper, Executive Member for Children’s Services
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Submitted to:	Executive - 21 January 2020
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Subject:	Voice of the Child and Middlesbrough Youth Council
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)

This is an informative report. No decisions required.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?¹
<i>Information</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	Not applicable	<i>Guidance - Only non-urgent</i>

Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan

Business Imperatives	Physical Regeneration	Social Regeneration
Not applicable	Not applicable	This report provides an update on the participation work across Middlesbrough and an update on progress regarding the development of Middlesbrough Youth Council.

Ward(s) affected

Children and young people in all wards are affected by the report.

What is the purpose of this report?

1. It is essential for the delivery of high quality services that children and young people who are residents and service users are fully involved in the design and scrutiny of the Council’s activities.
2. In the spirit of the Voice of the Child the Council is seeking to engage children and young people as fully as possible in all of our services through initiatives such as

the Children in Care Council and young person's representation with regard to recruitment.

3. Specifically having a Youth Council provides a medium for communicating young person's views and a forum for community engagement where young people can ensure that their voices are heard.
4. This report is intended to update members on participation work across Middlesbrough and the development of Middlesbrough Youth Council.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

5. This report is for information purposes only.

Report Background

6. Youth Council:

The Voice of the Child Manager for Children's Services is working with the Empower Programme Manager to develop and deliver an action plan to launch Middlesbrough Youth Council by January 2020.

Key updates on progress:

- **Staffing:** Funding for a participation worker to drive the Youth Council and wider participation work was agreed and recruitment to the post was successful. The candidate took up post in November 2019.
- **Marketing:** Middlesbrough Youth Council is being promoted on social media on the Youth Voice Middlesbrough page. A leaflet has been developed to showcase the need for a Youth Council, the commitment involved and how to be involved. The School Inclusion Apprentice has been distributing leaflets and discussing the development of the Council at River Tee Multi Academy Trust and inclusion consultation sessions with all schools and alternative provisions. A large number of young people were also reached at the Youth Focus North East event at Laycock's park and the Festival of well-being at My place.
- **Recruitment:** We are currently planning a recruitment event for Youth Council members aged 11-18 to take place **January 2020** (*this is working alongside Democratic services time scales for an election of MYP – February 2020*). Invitations will be sent to all schools and youth groups to ensure a true representation of the children and young people in Middlesbrough. This event will be in the evening and will involve gathering all the young people who have expressed an interest in the Youth Council together to consult about the role going forward. At this event we will explain to the young people the responsibility involved with being a member of the Youth Council, the time commitments involved and ensure that they understand the role fully before committing.
- **British Youth Council:** Membership for the British Youth Council (BYC) already exists. Middlesbrough Youth Council will attend regional events organised by the BYC which lead to an annual trip to the House of Commons to represent the young people of Middlesbrough.

7. Mind of my own app (MOMO).

MOMO is an app which was launched in Children's Services in March 2018. It supports an alternative means to gain the voice of the child and support their participation in developing their plans and the services they receive. The Mind of My Own working group meets monthly to drive progress.

Key updates on progress:

- **Participation:** As of 04/11/2019 279 staff members have accounts and 101 young people have accounts.
- **Marketing:** The mind of my own app is promoted to children and young people using social media, leaflets, posters and information about the Mind of My Own app is in the young person's guide to being looked after. It is being promoted to the staff team by email, voice and influence team briefings, notice boards and leaflets.
- **Support and Training:** In order to encourage usage of the mind of my own app within the workforce a prompt is to be added to LCS/EHM to prompt workers to give children and young people the opportunity to share their views through the app. Monthly data reports are also provided to team managers to monitor the use of the app within teams.

Additional training for staff and foster carers has been developed and launched.

The voice and influence e-learning has been live since March 2019. 340 staff have completed this training to date. This training is accessible via MBC Learns.

8. Brightspots Survey for Looked After Children:

In October 2018 the Brightspots survey took place for all looked after children and care leavers in Middlesbrough. The findings from this survey were launched at a frontline practitioner conference (March 6th 2019) and an action plan is being driven by the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership Participation sub-group which reports to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Key updates on progress:

- The 'About me' booklet has been developed and added to Tri-X and circulated with staff to allow staff to get to know the child/young person better. This compliments the child and staff PEN profiles that have been created.
- A foster carer welcome pack has been created and circulated with the foster carer network and the fostering team to ensure children and young people feel prepared to move placements.
- Every looked after child will now receive a Young Persons guide to being looked after. This guide helps a child/young person to understand the process of being looked after in a child/young person friendly way. It explains the timescales, has information about NYAS, Mind of My Own, Mini CICC, CICC & Care Leavers forum. It has the EDT number and has a space for the child/young person's worker to add

some information about them. We will have 1000 copies printed for workers to hand out and it will be added to Tri-X.

9. The Inclusion working group.

The inclusion apprentice has been employed to go into schools and alternative provision to consult with children and young people about inclusion. To date 47 children and young people have been consulted with. A quarterly report highlighting key themes, good practice and recommendations will be shared with the Inclusion leads and will be actioned by the provision.

10. Young Commissioners.

The Young Commissioners group is led by a commissioning officer and supported by the Voice of the Child Manager. This group will be trained to be involved in the commissioning and procurement processes and the recruitment process. Young person friendly training has been developed so the young people feel confident and equipped. Their first project will be the recommissioning of the advocacy service in Middlesbrough.

11. Voice and Influence champions.

Across Children's Services we now have 37 voice and influence champions. The role of the voice and influence champion is to embed the importance of the voice of children, young people and families into practice. The voice of children, young people and families underpins everything that we do and it is our job to support others to recognise this and evidence this in practice. The voice and influence champions have created the worker PEN profile to be done with a child/young person as a piece of direct work.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

12. This report is for information only.

Why is this being recommended?

13. As above

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

14. As above

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

15. Not applicable

Legal

16. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Financial

17. Funding of £20,000 has been allocated from the eMpower social regeneration funding for a participation officer driving forward the Middlesbrough Youth Council.

18. Further initiatives described in this report are covered by budgets within Children's Services established for this purpose.

Policy Framework

19. No policy framework implications have been identified

Equality and Diversity

20. The Youth Council will have diverse representation of children and young people of different ages, gender, cultural background and will include children with particular needs.

Risk

21. The improvement of child, young person, and parent and carer participation is part of the improvement plan and the wider social regeneration agenda.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

22. Children's Services will ensure the progression of all the initiatives above.

Appendices

23. Not applicable

Background papers

24. No background papers were used in preparation for this report.

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