

Author: David Cohen (x38095)

Agenda Item No.6(e)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

14 January 2021

Report of the Executive Director for Children's Services

DERBYSHIRE YOUTH NETWORK

1. Purpose of Report

To update Cabinet on 'The Big Consultation' on youth democracy in Derbyshire and the development of the 'Derbyshire Youth Network.' The proposal was originally presented to Cabinet on 16 January 2020 and the consultation responses on 30 July 2020.

2. Information and Analysis

Context:

From 26 January to 17 April 2020, a countywide consultation was undertaken to ask young people and other stakeholders about the proposal to replace Derbyshire Youth Council with a strategic participation network. 78% of respondents agreed.

In July 2020 Cabinet agreed a proposal for the participation team to develop the network with school councils and community groups.

Update:

The participation team has been working to an implementation plan to ensure the network is up and running by the end of January 2021. Young people who were members of the Derbyshire Youth Council have remained as a focus group to support implementation and have proposed the name 'Derbyshire Youth Network'; reflecting the range of youth groups and schools who will be engaged. The network will also include the children in care council, care leaver's council and children's residential homes.

The model will initially be delivered virtually due to social distancing restrictions, but a hybrid model which includes face-to-face delivery is proposed as restrictions ease. A consultation question will be circulated to the network each term starting in January 2021, the first question considering how supported children have felt during the coronavirus pandemic. The questions will be formulated based on feedback from young people in the Big Consultation and areas the council wishes to consult young people on. The network will have an element of flexibility in order to synchronise consultation timings with council decision making processes and service planning.

Questions will be asked and responses analysed within the same term to ensure that timely feedback can be given to young people about the impact of their involvement. Technology will be used to record and deliver this information to ensure it is accessible to schools and community groups at a time which is convenient to their meetings.

Whilst termly consultations will form the basis of the network, the participation team will be able to facilitate additional focused consultations. This could be targeted at specific demographics, geographical locations or priority groups.

The participation team has currently had positive engagement with 31 mainstream schools (out of 45) and 6 special educational needs schools (out of 10) within Derbyshire. This currently gives the network access to democracy leads for over 21,000 children. Eight community groups have also signed up to the network across the county. Working in partnership with youth and community engagement officers, further community groups will be contacted to share information and encourage their involvement in the network. The response from schools and community groups has been overwhelmingly positive with none declining the offer of involvement to date.

Future Developments:

The network is aimed at young people aged over 11. In the future this could potentially be increased to include primary schools, however the resource implications would need to be considered.

Summary

The response from young people and adults that support them has been extremely positive with schools and groups keen to become involved in the Derbyshire Youth Network. Good progress is being made with implementing the new network in order to hear the views of as many young people as possible across Derbyshire.

3. Financial Considerations

None.

4. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal and human rights, human resources, equality and diversity, health, environmental, transport, property, crime and disorder, and social value considerations.

5. Key Decision?

No

6. Is it necessary to waive the call-in period?

No

7. Executive Director's Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet note the progress in relation to the implementation of Derbyshire Youth Network.

**Jane Parfremment
Executive Director for Children's Services**