

## **Agenda item 3: Note on Matters Arising**

### **Update to Equalities Panel on the Youth Strategy progress**

On 26 February 2024 I visited to show our initial workings on developing a Youth Strategy for Cambridge. We discussed the rationale for the strategy and what the Council hoped to achieve by creating one. As a panel you challenged us to think more about seldom heard voices and how these were being captured and supported throughout this process. This paper provides an update on progress around the Youth Strategy.

The Youth Strategy and action plan drafts are now complete, with 5 core commitments that are:

- Supporting young people to be heard
- Access to play, leisure, sport and culture
- Helping young people to take part
- Helping young people feel safe and welcome in their city
- Using our assets to best effect

Following the election, we plan on doing some wider communications on the strategy.

### **Youth Assembly update**

Citizens UK has been commissioned to run a 1-year project to pilot an approach to youth engagement that culminates in a Youth Assembly event. They are working alongside a local schools and youth organisations. The assembly model includes leadership and skills training for young people and those working for the institutions who are involved in engaging young people. Initially Citizens UK will work with 8 schools, colleges and institutions with each committing to capturing 100 conversations. Common themes from the conversations will then be identified that will become campaigns or calls for action, ready for the Assembly event taking place on 12 November 2024 at the Junction in Cambridge. Local politicians, organisational leaders and those with ability to effect change around the calls to action/campaigns will be invited to join us to hear from the young people directly. Following this, the local schools and institutions will create action-groups to build momentum for change and local leadership.

The Assembly is a pilot; one model of engagement will not necessarily work for all groups of young people, particularly those who need additional support to engage. Schools will endeavour to include a wide range of voices from variety of

backgrounds. Moreover, the Olive Academy is taking part in the Youth Assembly work, which supports young people excluded from mainstream school.

### **Engagement with young people taking place alongside the Youth Assembly**

To work alongside the Assembly, the following has been arranged to engage seldom heard voices amongst young people:

- A funded programme of youth leadership will take place over the summer holidays, funded by the Integrated Care System.
- Dr Kelly Fagan Robinson a social anthropologist at University of Cambridge specialises in trauma-informed practice. She will train a cohort of local professionals and youth leaders in September. Offered to local youth organisations including those working with young carers, LGBT+ young people, care leavers or homeless young people, it will provide an innovative methodology that supports young people who have experienced trauma to share their experiences and voices, building skills and confidence for the youth leaders as well as participants. Outcomes will be shared with the Youth Strategic partnership board.
- An offer to engage with young people involved in criminal justice system is being followed up, as are further opportunities to engage other diverse equalities groups.
- Cambridgeshire County Council has launched their youth survey capturing data, feedback and experiences of services. Findings will be shared with the Assembly and Youth Strategic partnership board.

### **Next steps following the engagement activities and Youth Assembly**

After the Assembly has taken place, we'll be able to pull together a rich picture of experiences and issues from a wide range of young people. This will inform services and influence decision making, as well as enabling young people to get more actively involved in the action- group activities.

To support the work of the Assembly and Youth Strategy, a Youth Strategic Partnership Board has been formed. This includes leaders from local statutory partners, community and voluntary sector and the business sector. This group provides a critical friend approach, as well as holding the levers to effect change where larger systematic challenges are uncovered impacting on young people.

A task group of council-officers has developed an action plan to explore how we can make the strategy real and deliver on the core 5 commitments.

It is my intension to report back to the Equalities Panel in January 2025, following the Youth Assembly having taken place. By this time, we'll have a rich data set and evidence provided by young people on their key issues they wish to see action taken on, the challenges they face every day, and a better understanding of how the council and other stakeholders plan to respond to these challenges.

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