

Update on Cambridge City Council's Youth Strategy 2024-27

Report produced January 2025 by Caroline Gill (Senior Community Development Officer for Children, Young People and Families)

- The strategy is due to be sent off to committee in mid-February with intended adoption in March.
- The first Youth Assembly has been held, which was jointly commissioned with Cambridgeshire County Council.
- Progress has been made on building the momentum of the Strategic Youth Partnership Board.
- The Youth Strategy focuses on 5 objectives:
 1. Supporting young people to be heard
 2. Access to play, leisure, sport and culture
 3. Helping young people to take part (championing routes to health and employment)
 4. Helping young people to feel safe and welcome in the city
 5. Using our assets to best effect

Youth Assembly

- To honour the first objective, the City Council joined forces with Cambridgeshire County Council to commission Citizens UK to host the first Youth Assembly for Cambridge city, held at the Cambridge Junction on 12th November.
- The Assembly was a pilot comprising of 16 institutions made up of young representatives from local schools, colleges and youth institutions.
- After a 6-month listening exercise with fellow students and colleagues, the young people whittled their concerns down to 4 key issues. Each one was backed up with testimonials and came with a request to the council and other decision makers to support them with specific projects or campaigns.
- Here is a link to a video on YouTube about the day:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEYTcVUozFQ>

4 key issues raised by young people at the Youth Assembly

Lack of safe spaces and activities

- Students highlighted a lack of safe places to socialise outside of school and home. This was accompanied by additional challenges in finding out what was already in existence that they could access.
- To help address this, Cambridge City Council committed to researching ways which better support young people to find out what's going on. In addition, the

council committed to work with the young people on a feasibility study to investigate the potential for a 'Youth Zone' to be developed in the city. The national charity that supports Youth Zones [OnSide - A national youth charity that's here for young people](#) will be presenting to the young people and to the Strategic Youth Partnership Board on 13th February on this.

- This issue resonates with objective 2 & 4 within the Youth Strategy illustrating that our objectives are in accordance with young people's concerns on the ground. It was also recognised within the Cambridge City Youth Survey led by Cambridgeshire County Council which highlighted that much of young people's social connectivity was limited to online interactions with peers outside time spent at home with their families. Having safe spaces to go was ranked second in importance to physical & mental health. *(Please note that the full analytical report on the Youth Survey findings is in development to be published in the coming months)*. Research recently commissioned by the City Council undertaken by 'Women in Sport' also highlighted concerns for young girls around safety in local parks, and the importance of green spaces in supporting mental wellbeing and physical activity. Here is a link to the report: [CCC Community Development - Women in Sport Research - All Documents](#)

Diminishing green spaces

- Primary school children raised concerns about the diminishment of local green spaces and natural habitats.
- To address this, Cambridge City Council is working with Kings College to support a campaign to preserve and increase the city's wild spaces.
- Milton Road primary school is leading a campaign encouraging local schools to plant wild meadows on their school grounds. Milton Road is leading the way on this with their meadow laid on their school ground at the end of last year.
- Concerns around the climate and environment was also highlighted in the Cambridgeshire County Council Youth survey (ranked 6 out of 10 as an issue of importance).
- Although environmental issues are not directly mentioned in objectives in Cambridge City Council's Youth Strategy, there is potential for the council to support this initiative through objective 5 by utilising its assets to support wild planting in our grounds and green spaces. Importance of parks acting as safe accessible spaces for teenage girls' physical and mental health was also highlighted by the 'Women in Sports' research, as mentioned above.

Work experience and part-time work

- Students highlighted concerns around accessing work experience, especially in a part time capacity.

- They asked businesses and employers to explore opportunities for students to better access a range of work experience opportunities.
- Cambridge Ahead committed to bringing partners together to meet the young people to explore the issue further.
- This falls within objective 3 of Cambridge City Council's Youth Strategy and was again highlighted within Cambridgeshire County Councils Youth survey ranked third by young people as an issue of importance.

Local bus services

- The final issue raised at the assembly related to the infrequency and unreliability of local bus services, along with problems with the app.
- Students asked the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to support a campaign for better services. This was matched with an 'ask' for him to explore extending the Tiger bus pass scheme out to all young students studying in the city, along with more youth representatives on the oversight board that oversees the bus companies.
- The Mayor agreed to meet with the students to learn more about how he could help.
- This falls within objective 3 of Cambridge City Councils Youth Strategy and was ranked 7 out of 10 as an issue of importance within the Cambridgeshire County Council's Youth survey.

Next Steps

- A Strategic Youth Partnership Board is in place to support young people in championing their requests made at the assembly.
- It's hoped this board will be able to commission work in the future and act as a strong foundation for supporting the objectives within the strategy.
- Information gleaned from the recent Youth Assembly, Cambridgeshire County Council's Youth Survey and the 'Women in Sport' research gives us good data to base direction of travel going forward for Youth Strategic Board to act upon.
- Cambridge City Council is currently developing an Action Plan that sits alongside the Youth Strategy, demonstrating how the council is meeting its objectives.
- The youth assembly format will be reviewed and its outcomes to determine if/when future assemblies may take place.