

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Gedling Borough Young People Survey

**Date:** 20 May 2021

**Author:** Head of Communities and Leisure

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Purpose**

To update Cabinet on the findings of the Gedling Borough Young People Survey and seek endorsement of these.

To seek Cabinet approval:

- To work with the Council's key partners to improve communications with young people by developing a Gedling Borough young people's digital engagement and information portal
- To support a cross council approach to youth engagement and consideration of young people issues
- To support the use of data and insight about young people in the Borough to strengthen the Council's advocacy role to influence the appropriate delivery of services by partners.

### **Key Decision**

This is a key decision, as it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.

<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
<b>THAT:</b>
1) <b>Cabinet note the findings of the Gedling Borough Young</b>

## **People Survey.**

- 2) Cabinet approve working with the Council's key partners to improve communications with young people by developing a Gedling Borough young people's digital engagement and information portal**
- 3) Cabinet to support a cross council approach to youth engagement and consideration of young people issues.**
- 4) Cabinet to support the use of data and insight about young people in the Borough to strengthen the Council's advocacy role to influence the appropriate delivery of services by partners.**

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 For many years the Council has committed to offering young people a local voice to share their view's and concerns through the Gedling Youth Council. Supporting the Youth Council and using their feedback to shape and inform policy has also become embedded in the Gedling Plan as a corporate action, alongside the on-going development of other representative Forums such as the Senior's Council. Annually the Youth Council participates in the Children's Takeover Challenge presenting their action plan to the Council's Senior Leadership Team.
- 1.2 In March 2019, the Youth Council delivered an Intergenerational Event involving both its members and representatives from the Gedling Senior's Council. The outcomes from this event were wide ranging providing the Council with a useful insight into the issues facing both young and older people at that time and focused around school, bullying, loneliness, prejudice and discrimination, mental health and knife crime.
- 1.3 Later that year, a new Cabinet portfolio was created with the remit to advocate and oversee issues relating to equalities and also young people. This role was strengthened further by the appointment of a supporting Policy Advisor for Equalities and Young People. In addition a corporate action has been adopted within the Gedling Plan as follows:
  - Undertake targeted youth engagement to seek their views in order to influence provision of services.
- 1.4 The new Portfolio Holder for Equalities and Young People was allocated a one-off budget to plan and deliver a Borough wide consultation to identify the issues facing young people locally and develop a subsequent action plan to build on the engagement work done previously with the Youth

Council. This also included embedding engagement with young people as part of the Gedling Conversation consultation undertaken to inform Gedling Plan development. While plans to consider a commissioned piece of work early in 2020 commenced, these were suspended due to the Covid-19 outbreak in Spring that year.

- 1.5 In September 2020, plans re-commenced to develop a survey of the Borough's young people to identify their feelings and experiences regarding the everyday issues that affected them, what it is like to live in the Borough and their thoughts about the Council's parks and open spaces.
- 1.6 During this time the Gedling Youth Council started virtual meetings in accordance with the Coronavirus restrictions in place. The Portfolio Holder, supported by the Policy Advisor, led discussions with the Youth Council which informed the proposed Young People Survey questions.
- 1.7 Given the ongoing restrictions on meetings and gatherings it was agreed that an on-line winter survey would be most appropriate, hosted on the Council's website. The survey went live from December 2020 and was subsequently extended to run until February 2021, given the exceptional circumstances of the national lockdown that came into force in the New Year period. In order to obtain a positive level of response to the survey, a direct marketing and social marketing approach was used:
  - Local academies were contacted directly informing them of the survey and asking them to share with their school communities.
  - Council officers worked in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Service who facilitated 30 vulnerable young people to complete the survey at the Borough's local youth settings.
  - Both organic and paid for social media marketing was undertaken with the aim to extend the reach of the survey. Appendix A provides some analysis of the reach from social media posts.
  - The Council's e-newsletters were used to promote the survey pushing out the link to those signed up to these platforms.
- 1.8 In total 236 young people responded to the survey. This is considered a good response rate for the consultation, particularly given it was conducted during a period of national lockdown due to Covid-19. By comparison, a peer led Nottinghamshire wide consultation on the mental health of young people, "MH:2K", received 166 responses when conducted during 2020.
- 1.9 A full summary of findings and feedback is available at Appendix B. Key

issues were identified by the respondents around bullying, COVID-19, getting a job, mental health, people being treated fairly and the environment/climate change. In addition 80% of respondents thought it would be useful for the Council to create a social media platform dedicated to promote Young People's services and opportunities and Instagram was most frequently selected as the preferred option to do this.

1.10 In April 2021, the Portfolio Holder and Policy Advisor, reported back the findings of the survey to the Gedling Youth Council. The feedback from that meeting's discussion identified issues to inform the development of a local action plan to support the Borough's young people structured around the three key aims highlighted in Table A. At the heart of the plan is the development of a communications portal to enable better information, signposting and engagement with our young people, who have expressed through the survey and Youth Council discussions that information currently out there is not accessible to them.

**Table A: Proposed Gedling Borough Young People's Action Plan**

<p>Communications portal for young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated web space to signpost to key young people services.</li> <li>• Dedicated Instagram account and other identified communication and marketing routes.</li> <li>• A project management approach to identify aims and objectives and resources.</li> <li>• Commitment to work with the Council's key partners to develop the new portal.</li> <li>• Marketed as a 'young people's brand and hub', the portal will offer information and dialogue with the Borough's young people on the key themes identified with the Youth Council:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Activities for young people</li> <li>➤ Health and wellbeing, including mental health</li> <li>➤ Employability and entrepreneurship</li> <li>➤ Addressing inequalities</li> <li>➤ Young people's safety</li> <li>➤ Sources of support</li> <li>➤ Environmental sustainability</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Examining</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance our advocacy work with</li> </ul>

services to young people; advocating improvements	<p>partners to influence the provision of services that meet the needs of the Borough's young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by data and insight from our local engagement and surveys, but also by developing access to up to date and timely young people data from our partners such as Nottinghamshire County Council and local NHS organisations.</li> </ul>
Cultural change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organisational cultural shift with regards to youth engagement.</li> <li>• A cross council approach to ensuring we reach out to young people on the key issues identified through the survey such as job prospects, mental health, equalities and climate change.</li> </ul>

The next steps over the coming Summer months will be to scope out the proposed work programme further in collaboration with our key partners and the Youth Council.

- 1.12 The Council is planning its Gedling Conversation consultation during the summer of 2021. Showing an on-going commitment to gauge the views of young people, and given the exceptional lockdown circumstances when the Young People's Survey went live earlier this year, it is being proposed that the on-line survey will go live again concurrently with Gedling Conversation Survey. This proposal is considered in a separate report to this Cabinet meeting on the Gedling Conservation. The results from this additional engagement with young people will further strengthen the development of the Young People's action plan and give a useful comparator between the Covid-19 lockdown and post-lockdown mood of our local young people.

## 2 Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- 1) Note the findings of the Gedling Borough Young People Survey.
- 2) Approve working with the Council's key partners to improve communications with young people by developing a

Gedling Borough young people's digital engagement and information portal.

- 3) Approve a cross council approach to youth engagement and consideration of young people issues.
- 4) Approve the use of data and insight about young people in the Borough to strengthen the Council's advocacy role to influence the appropriate delivery of services by partners.

### **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Cabinet to not endorse the findings of the survey and not to agree to use these to inform a local development action plan for further youth engagement and advocacy of young people issues. This would mean the Gedling Plan action to undertake targeted youth engagement in order to influence the provision of services will remain unmet. It is considered that the survey and its findings not only provide the foundation to develop such an action plan, but has also fostered a positive partnership working relationship between the Council, Youth Council and local youth services.

### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Although a £5,000 one-off revenue budget allocation has been made to support youth engagement, the revised plan to conduct the on-line survey during the Covid-19 pandemic and work in partnership with the Youth Council and local youth services has meant there has been no budget expenditure required for the delivery of the survey other than a negligible cost for Facebook social media advertising.
- 4.2 The development of an action plan may require some financial support. This would be determined by taking a project management approach to developing the concept of a communications web and social media platform for young people that would identify key partners and resources required for project development and sustainability. At this stage it is proposed that the original one-off £5,000 youth engagement allocation is used to support this, alongside approved and established revenue budgets with the Communities and Leisure Service Area. Any additional finance required would need to be subject to a revenue development bid as part of the annual budget process.

### **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The work to undertake the Young People Survey and further engagement is directed by Gedling Plan actions. The survey responses were anonymous, therefore no safeguarding or GDPR issues have arisen in terms of the on-line responses. The targeted engagement for both the Youth Council and young people in local youth settings has been

supported by qualified Nottinghamshire County Council youth workers and governed by that organisation's safeguarding practice.

- 5.2 Any project development work to consider a young people's communication portal would need to consider relevant legal implications in terms of GDPR, safeguarding and also contractual obligations should third party support be required to deliver this. In such circumstances legal advice will be sought.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 Age is a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act 2010. Conducting target youth engagement and consultation and using the findings to shape services is considered to have a positive impact on young people in the Borough. The survey also explored and captured young people's views on whether each protected characteristic defined by the Act is treated fairly. These findings will be used to inform further work within the proposed action plan.
- 6.2 As part of the summer re-run of the Young People's Survey, it is proposed to capture further demographic profile information of the young people who respond. This offers the opportunity to further analyse responses in accordance with how the young people identify themselves in line with protected characteristics. This analysis will be used to identify any positive or adverse impact on certain communities.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct carbon reduction issues from conducting the survey, however the environment and climate change was identified as a top issue for the Borough's young people. This will inform the proposed action plan and may involve sharing environmental sustainability messaging and conversations with our young people.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix A: Gedling Young People Survey Social Marketing Evaluation
- 8.2 Appendix B: Gedling Young People Survey Results

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 None

## **10 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 10.1 To deliver the Gedling Plan corporate action of "Undertake targeted youth engagement to seek their views in order to influence provision of services",

but also to support the delivery of a number of other Gedling Plan actions relating to community and health and well-being.

- 10.2 To follow the Gedling Plan value of being “A co-operative council that listens to, involves and responds to the concerns of its citizens, partners and employees.”
- 10.3 The Borough’s young people have identified that information on key services and advice is currently not accessible for them. Developing a digital communications portal with partners will enable signposting to this key information in a more suitable format for their needs.
- 10.4 Developing the communications portal and accessing relevant data will further enhance the Council and its partners understanding of young people needs and further strengthen the roles of the Youth Council and Youth Mayor.
- 10.5 Better data capture of young people’s issues will enhance the advocacy role of both the Portfolio Holder and Policy Advisor for Equalities and Young People, and that of key Council officers, to influence and inform our partner’s service provision to ensure it meets the needs of the Borough’s young person population.
- 10.6 The findings from the survey reflect a number of Gedling Plan actions regarding employment, equalities, health and the environment, therefore a corporate culture to youth engagement is deemed an appropriate response to this.

**Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by: Alison Ball**

**Date: 04/05/21**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by: Francesca Whyley**

**Date: 10/05/21**

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**