

NNDC Youth Council

Summary: The Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 sets out an ambition of ‘improving democratic engagement and participation by people of all ages, but particularly through working with schools and colleges’. For the past two years, educational establishments have focussed on managing the impact of the pandemic on the curriculum and their students and it was felt that the establishment of a new youth council would not be a priority for them and so the project was put on hold. With the pandemic starting to ease, it is now proposed that this should be progressed, with the aim of establishing a youth council from Spring 2022 – broadly in line with the municipal year.

Options considered:

1. That the Council sets up the Youth Council and engages with schools and youth organisations, using existing staff resources and with no external support or guidance.
2. That the Council engages the support of an established organisation, with experience and knowledge in this sector to assist with the setting up of the Youth Council

Conclusions: To optimise the success of the Youth Council by putting the best model in place and working with schools to encourage engagement from the outset, it is proposed that we commission the British Youth Council to provide support. As the experts in this field who have helped establish many successful youth councils across the country, they are best placed to advise on how to establish and maintain a successful youth council.

Recommendations:

1. That the British Youth Council provides support to assist in the establishment of a Youth Council
2. That £10,000 is allocated from the Delivery Plan Reserve to cover the cost of this service together with the provision of training members of the youth council, officers and elected members.

Reasons for Recommendations: To deliver the Corporate Plan objective of improving engagement with young people across the District.

Cabinet Member(s) Cllr L Shires	Ward(s) affected All
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 sets out an ambition of ‘improving democratic engagement and participation by people of all ages, but particularly through working with schools and colleges’
- 1.2 For the past two years, educational establishments have focussed on managing the impact of the pandemic on the curriculum and their students and it was felt that the establishment of a new youth council would not be a priority for them and so the project was put on hold. With the pandemic starting to ease, it is now proposed that this should be progressed, with the aim of establishing a youth council from spring 2022 – broadly in line with the municipal year.
- 1.3 Having previously engaged with schools on a debating competition, it is imperative that we offer them something that clearly benefits their students and which requires very little administration from their end. If the schools are not interested and uptake is low, then the Youth Council will struggle from the outset and will probably fail within a relatively short period of time.
- 1.4 Whilst undertaking research into existing youth councils across the country, it became clear that the national organisation, the British Youth Council (BYC) had provided the initial support for establishing many of them – including Breckland District Council’s youth council which is very successful. To ensure that the Council uses the best model of youth council / advisory board for North Norfolk, and so that it engages young people and continues to thrive and develop in the long-term, it is suggested that BYC provide support to NNDC in the first year of the project. There is a one off cost for this service (see Appendix 1).
- 1.5 It is also proposed that NNDC becomes a member of the British Youth Council. This provides additional benefits, particularly for the members of the NNDC Youth Council who will have access to national events and awards schemes. There is an annual cost of £70 for this

2. Youth Councils – an overview

- 2.1 A youth council is a democratic organisation created, run and developed by young people for young people. Their role is to represent the views of young people at a local level, giving young people the opportunity to have a voice, discuss relevant issues, engage with decision makers and contribute towards improving the lives of other young people in their local communities.
- 2.2 The membership of a youth council should be inclusive and diverse, whilst maintaining some form of formal structure. Approaching local schools and colleges is a good starting point but other youth groups should be considered – particularly those that cater for harder to reach young people. This will ensure that it is representative and its activities reflect the interests of as many groups as possible.

Existing models of Youth Council – key points

2.3 Models of youth councils / advisory boards:

- Most models are set up through a register of interest/application process, or democratically elected.
- Multifaceted application process written/audio/video ensuring accessibility
- Successful youth councils tend to have a budget, and budgetary responsibility.
- It is important to outline clear expectations, a formal structure, and boundaries in the decision making process
- A viable link and engagement with Full Council, and Council meetings, as well as, joint ventures and projects
- Website/social Media to promote the Youth Council and projects

2.4 Size and Membership:

- Schools/young person groups/young people living or studying in the area/Advertising to reach all young people in the district
- 11 – 18 year olds
- 12 – 20 members
- Sub-groups for key projects
- Two year term
- 2 officers, 2 elected members providing support
- Single point of contact for questions / support

2.5 Meetings:

- Hybrid – mainly online since the pandemic, usually in the evenings
- Feeding into Full Council – as required, including presentations on the projects the Youth Council has been working on
- Agendas and minutes, roles to cover these can be elected to (with support provided by Democratic Services)
- Engagement with external events – through the British Youth Council
- Opportunities for partnership working, including with neighbouring youth councils on national or county-wide issues

3. The British Youth Council

3.1 The British Youth Council is the National Youth Council of the UK. A youth-led charity, it supports young people to get involved in their communities and democracy locally, nationally and internationally – including making a difference as campaigners, decision-makers and leaders. A guidance note produced by BYC on running an effective youth council is attached at Appendix 3.

3.2 BYC runs a number of youth-led networks and programmes - including the UK Youth Parliament, Young Mayor Network, Local Youth Council Network, League of Young Voters, NHS Youth Forum, National Scrutiny Group and Youth Select Committee

3.3 BYC offers a consultancy service. As the experts in this sector, with a good

record of establishing successful youth councils across the country, they would be ideally placed to support NNDC's youth council.

BYC provides the following:

- i. Reviews of existing youth participation structures in your area
- ii. Facilitating links between an advisory groups, schools councils and youth councils: *'We can develop links between existing support structures so that meaningful information flows between these groups. We will ensure that there are opportunities for consultation and active involvement in decision-making which will support the citizenship curriculum'*.
- iii. Development of a rolling advisory group or forum: *'Would you like to develop a continuous stream of information to and from young people? We can help you set up a group to provide continuity during the roll out and development of your project, as well as create a pool of young people to engage in future activities. We have experience of developing advisory groups and can provide a range of different support levels, from developmental advice, through training in participation'*.

3.4 Following a discussion with BYC about the provision of support, they have sent through a proposal (Appendix 1). They will work with the Council on the best model, recruitment and maximising engagement and participation. There will be quarterly check-ins with them to help with any challenges or issues that we may have. There is also the option of training provision, for members of the Youth Council and the officers and elected members providing support to it. Providing this, would be attractive to schools as it gives their students an opportunity to learn new skills at no additional cost to them.

4. Corporate Plan Objectives

4.1 The establishment of a youth council is set out in the Corporate Plan under the Customer Focus theme. It is part of a broader agenda of engaging with the wider community, alongside the establishment of a Town & Parish Council Forum, which is in the process of being formalised. The Corporate Plan states that the Council will seek to 'improve democratic engagement and participation by people of all ages, but particularly through working with schools and colleges'.

4. Medium Term Financial Strategy

This proposal does not directly link to the MTFs.

5. Financial and Resource Implications

There is a cost implication to commissioning the British Youth Council to provide support. It is suggested that this is covered by the Delivery Plan Reserve, which was set aside for delivery of the Corporate Plan.

6. Legal Implications

The Youth Council will need to be properly constituted with agreed terms of reference setting out the membership, lines of reporting etc. These can be drawn up following input from BYC regarding size, model etc and agreed by Full Council.

7. Risks

The main risk is reputational. The Youth Council could fail due to lack of engagement from schools.

8. Sustainability

9. Climate / Carbon impact

Travel will be minimized by holding meetings of the Forum remotely.

10. Equality and Diversity

The Council will ensure that the Youth Council reflects the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

None.

12. Conclusion and Recommendations

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Recommendations

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