

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 25th January, 2022

## SPECIAL REMOTE MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Cobain (Chairperson);  
Councillors Black, Bunting,  
de Faoite, Flynn, M. Kelly and McAteer.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Mrs. G. O'Hare, Community Development Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Belfast City Youth Council Members:

Tomas Murphy (Chairperson)  
Sejoud Barry;  
Laura Blackledge;  
Laura Brannigan;  
Eva Bradley;  
Katie Cochrane;  
Hana Hassan;  
Shuaib Jeetun;  
Adam Mills;  
Alyaa Mohamed;  
Weam Mohamed;  
Kaila Patterson; and  
Ahmed Razak;

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were recorded on behalf of Councillors Garrett, McReynolds, Mulholland and Smyth.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were recorded.

### **Introduction and Welcome to Belfast City Youth Council Members**

The Committee was advised that representatives from the Belfast City Youth Council (BCYC) were in attendance to provide an update.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed the representatives to the meeting.

**Recruitment Update**

The Committee was advised that, following the recent recruitment drive for Belfast City Youth Council, an Expression of Interest exercise had been undertaken, this had been widely publicised throughout the city and 50 applications had initially been received. These 50 applications covered the following DEAs:

<b>Balmoral</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Court</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Lisnasharragh</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Collin</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Old Park</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Black Mountain</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Ormiston</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Titanic</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Botanic</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Castle</b>	<b>3</b>

The Members noted that regular social media posts promoting the recruitment drive had been pushed by both the Council and BCYC, an Eshot had been sent to all on BCYC mailing list and specific contact had been made either by email or telephone to the following groups / organisations to ensure there was a diverse range of applications, specifically from areas/groups which had traditionally been underrepresented on the Youth Council. These included:

R City Street Beat Shankill Alternatives North Belfast Alternatives Common Youth Transgender NI ACT Initiative Rainbow Project	EA Youth Service NIYF NICCY Extern Volunteer Now All post primary schools Belfast Met Cara Friend
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Information on the recruitment had also been distributed internally to colleagues within the Council to circulate to any young people, youth workers or youth groups in Belfast who might have been interested. These included:

- Community Services Unit Managers, CDOs and ACDOs;
- Good Relations;
- Peace IV;
- Neighbourhood Integration Managers; and
- Richard McLernon (FAO Belfast Climate Commission Youth Subgroup)

- Information on the recruitment had also featured in:
  - Interlink;
  - Your Say Belfast;
  - Press Release on 20th Sep;
  - Community NI; and
  - Be Collective Platform with Volunteer Now.

The Corporate Communications Team had compiled a range of short videos, mainly for social media, which included a wide range of promotional photographs to promote BCYC. For a period of two weeks there had been boosted posts on Facebook and age targeted advertisements on Belfast Live to promote the recruitment drive.

All applicants had been invited to attend an information session and subsequently a short informal interview over Microsoft Teams.

In total, 38 young people had attended for an interview and were successful in obtaining a place on Belfast City Youth Council.

The Members were advised that the breakdown in relation to DEA's of these young people was as follows:

Balmoral	3
Court	3
Lisnasharragh	4
Collin	4
Old Park	6
Black Mountain	5
Ormiston	3
Titanic	2
Botanic	6
Castle	2

The Committee was asked to note that the BCYC members would be agreeing their new areas of new work over the coming months. It was also anticipated that they would carry on some work on the previous legacy campaigns such as 'Elephant in the Room' mental health research, 'Any Use?' research into RSE in Belfast and 'Minor Choices, Major Voices' research into the experiences of BAME young people in Belfast.

Noted.

### **Rebranding Update**

The Members were reminded that, at the previous joint meeting held in June 2021, with the then 'Belfast Youth Forum', it had been agreed that Belfast Youth Forum would rebrand to become 'Belfast City Youth Council'. At this meeting it had also been felt that the benefit of this rebranding had the potential to make the group's position at a city level more distinct and would provide a better linkage and connection with Belfast City Council.

Subsequently, the rebranding had taken place under the guidance of the Corporate Communications Team. New logos and social media graphics and handles had been created and were now in operation. This had been promoted on both the BCC and BCYC social media platforms, on interlink, in City Matters and in a press release which had featured the rebranding and the recruitment campaign. Any branded merchandise, communications and published reports going forward would feature the new graphics.

At the meeting, it had also been agreed that a celebration event would be held for new and previous Youth Council members and their families to celebrate the rebranding and to welcome the new members. Due to current legislation around social distancing for Covid-19 and the limited use of some of the rooms in City Hall, this had not been possible. Currently, the BCYC had use of the Reception Room once per month for campaign work and would hold their Youth Council meetings, which would have previously been held in the BCC Chamber, over Microsoft Teams. This arrangement was in place for all of 2022 (or until Covid-19 restrictions relaxed.)

Noted.

### **Update on Youth Champions**

The Members were reminded that, at the previous joint meeting, it had been agreed that there was potential to improve communications and co-operation between Councillors, officers and the Belfast City Youth Council and that this would be achieved via the nomination of one representative from each political party who would take a leadership role in working and engaging with the Youth Council on issues and/or motions which relate to young people. At that time, the Neighbourhood Services Manager (NSM) had agreed to progress this through the Party Group Leaders.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager apologised that unfortunately, due to her recent absence, this had not been progressed but advised that it would be being progressed now that she had returned to work.

Noted.

### **Introduction by New Belfast City Youth Council Members**

Several of the new Youth Council members took the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Committee and to outline their personal reasons for joining the Youth Council which included raising the awareness of issues such as mental health, bullying, social isolation and inequality, racial discrimination, and sex education.

A number of the Members commended the young people for advocating for such important issues and stated that they looked forward to working and learning from them throughout their term and to hearing more about their proposed work.

Finally, a number of Members stated that they were keen to ensure that the necessary support was available and encouraged them to make contact directly if they wished to discuss specific areas within their DEA.

Noted.

Chairperson