



Subject:	Belfast City Youth Council (BCYC) – Update and priorities
Date:	21 st May 2024
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Operational Director Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Mulholland, Children & Young People Co-ordinator

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an update on the progress and work completed by BCYC to date. • Update members of key priorities identified by BCYC which will inform future work. • Inform members of partnership with QUB and work on RADICAL programme.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of the report and provide any relevant feedback to help develop priorities.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Overview</u></p> <p>Progress to date:</p> <p>The new BCYC was launched on January 10th 2024. New members attended a launch event at City Hall with a celebration dinner with the Lord Mayor, Chief Executive and Youth Champions in attendance. The event was very successful with parents and young people excited about the opportunity of membership of BCYC.</p> <p>The young people meet every fortnight and have met ten times to date. The first number of sessions were very successful with a range of activities set up to develop relationships and build the capacity of the young people to be active members of BCYC. A residential will take place in the summer, when BCYC members have finished their exams.</p> <p>During the residential the young people will elect office bearers for BCYC including the roles of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. Along with these roles we will also use this time on residential to allocate members to sub teams to look at comms, social media operations and monitoring targets.</p> <p>There will be an article within the summer addition of City Matters highlighting work to date; the RADICAL programme and future work of BCYC. The C&YP Co-ordinator has been working with the corporate communications team to develop a social media presence for BCYC and a communications plan.</p>
3.2	
3.3	<p><u>RADICAL</u></p> <p>Following an approach from QUB, the young people decided to take part in the RADICAL programme. RADICAL (Respect and Disrespect in Children’s and Adolescents Lives) is a two year study that aims to develop theories of dis/respect that can better inform policies and interventions that impact the lives of children and young people. Montserrat Fargas (QUB)</p>

will attend the meeting with BCYC on 21st May to provide more detail on the study and answer any questions members may have.

3.4

Priorities for 24/25

The young people carried out an exercise to identify the key priorities that will inform their work for this year, in addition to their participation in the Radical programme. Further detail on emerging issues is provided below. The young people are currently developing a poll to select one key priority under each theme which they shall focus on over the next period.

1. Environment:

- Organise Climate Education Workshops + Use council resources & workshops
- Create an app that will raise awareness of environmental issues and show the benefits for the public of taking action to address climate change
- Encourage cycling/walking especially in schools for students that live close enough
- Make more green spaces where possible or organise public events to plant trees/plants

2. Education:

- Introduce initiatives to schools, beginning at primary level, that encourage reading and art
- Provide support to make transitions easier, especially when changing schools in Y8, this can be done through organising activities and making them engage as a class.
- Improve area learning communities (ALC)
- Explore the digital divide between marginalised communities e.g minority ethnic communities, , Asylum seekers and refugees, and the world at large. The result of digital poverty is that many struggle to access quality education and employment as a result.

3. Poverty:

- Provide more convenient access to free period products to lessen period poverty.
- Campaign to highlight the need for shelter for those in need, facilities for them to maintain their hygiene, receive education and help them start a new life.
- Seek opinions from the public and elected members about housing schemes that have stopped and poor housing conditions which leave people stranded.
- Focus upon free school meal campaign for vulnerable children.

4. Health:

- Support the initiatives of the mental health organisations through campaigns and rising awareness.
- Share information about ways to effectively get support for people and how to tell if people are struggling and how to approach them/ help them

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance addiction affecting mental and physical health and how to stop it <p>5. <u>Sectarianism & Inclusion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss a more diverse Political representation in Belfast/NI, Welcome people of all communities,, nationalities, gender and etc into the workplace, especially in politics. • Improve cross community relations and work to transform peace walls • Focus upon paramilitary recruitment/drug crime • Have a culture day annually in schools to improve knowledge and understanding of other cultures and traditions. <p><u>Other Ideas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Heritage Awareness, Discussion and Celebrations in schools and communities within Belfast • Accessibility- Remove hazards such as sloped paths, high curbs, uneven surfaces and potholes and some surfaces when wet can be dangerous, especially those with mobility aids • Discuss tactile surfaces in the city centre and how they have been implemented in EU countries such as Germany and France to assist those who are visually impaired. <p>3.5 Members will note that some of these areas relate to activity that council is already delivering on and in these cases the youth council will be provided with updates on what is being delivered and whether there is potential to develop new and/or existing pieces of work.</p> <p>As BCYC are developing their priorities it would be useful at this point to also get members feedback on any key areas of work that could inform the choice of priorities.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	N/A