

	<p><b>Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee</b></p> <p><b>Monday 13 September 2021</b></p>
<p><b>Title</b></p>	<p>Annual Report on the work of the UK Youth Parliament members, Youth Ambassador, Barnet Youth Assembly and Barnet Youth Board and Youth Engagement</p>
<p><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff</p>
<p><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Key</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p>None</p>
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<p><b>Summary</b></p>	
<p>This report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an update to the committee on the work of UK Youth Parliament members, Youth Assembly, Youth Board and other youth engagement activity delivered in 2020/21</li> <li>• Provides an outline of the adaptations made in response to Covid-19 restrictions to enable youth engagement to continue</li> <li>• Asks members and the committee for their continued to support for young people as they share their hopes for Barnet and positively engage with the council.</li> </ul>	

<b>Recommendations</b>
1, Committee notes the impact of the campaigns of the UK Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassadors
2. Committee notes the resilience that young people have shown to adapt to changes with programmes and opportunities by continuing engaging in forums, consultations, coproduction, and engagement activities
3. Committee notes and considers the issues highlighted in 8.2 in wider policy decisions

## **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

1.1 This report provides an overview to the Children, Education and Safeguarding (CES) Committee on the work and campaigns carried out in 2020/21 on the following areas:

- The election of the Members of Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassadors for Barnet
- Make Your Mark Ballot
- Barnet Youth Assembly
- London Youth Assembly and
- BING – Barnet Inclusive New Generation, Barnet’s SEND youth voice forum.

1.2 Young people have identified common themes across the spectrum of activities undertaken, highlighting and debating issues that are relevant to them and their peers. Members are asked to note the themes highlighted in this report and consider how they can be built into future policy decisions.

## **2. REVIEW OF THE 2020-21 UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT AND YOUTH AMBASSADOR FOR BARNET**

2.1 The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) provides a platform for children and young people to voice their opinions on issues affecting them and their peers across the UK to bring about social change. Each Member of the Youth Parliament (MYP) and Youth Ambassador has campaigned on an issue that is important to them.

2.2 In 2020, the role of deputy members of Youth Parliament was replaced with two Young Ambassador positions for Barnet. This enables the Youth Ambassadors to focus on representing the voice of young people in Barnet on a local level and at

Youth Parliament on a national level. The Youth Ambassadors chair Barnet Youth Board and work closely with the Members of Youth Parliament and London Youth Assembly members ensuring there is a link on a local, regional and national level.

2.3 The 2020/21 Member term of office was extended from one to two years due to missing out on a large portion of the Youth Parliament programme whilst the British Youth Council re-worked the programme to virtual meetings. (four weekend conventions, two residentials and a House of Commons sitting were all cancelled). Despite the challenges caused by the pandemic and resultant personal impact, the Members of Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassadors have remained committed to the programme and have taken part as often as they have been able.

2.4 The Youth Ambassadors have also had the opportunity to attend British Youth Council events alongside the Members of Youth Parliament

2.5 In response to the Covid-19 pandemic:

2.5.1 Tani, Member of Youth Parliament was involved in hosting the “Covid vs. Young People” Q&A live with Dr Nick Dattani and Dr Elliott Roy-Highley, which gave young people the opportunity to have their questions answered by medical professionals.

2.5.2 Elected young people were also involved in the production of a video to encourage children and young people back to school and were engaged with vaccination publicity.

2.5.3 Two members contributed to an international research project looking at the impact of Covid-19 on young people’s lives.

2.5.4 They also attended a Webinar organised by the UN Envoy on Youth in Partnership with WHO and UNICEF on “#copingwithcovid”.

2.6 Members of Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassadors attended Anti-racism in London’s Recovery event chaired by Debbie Weeks-Bernard, London’s Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement. This event explored practical interventions to combat racism bringing together perspectives from the UK, North America and Europe.

2.7 Members of Youth Parliament attend fortnightly meetings with Youth Ambassadors and London Youth Assembly members to share what they are learning and leading on with their own groups on a local, regional and national level. This ensures the voices of the young people in Barnet are heard at all levels and that opportunities and feedback is shared with young people across the borough. Some campaigns and priorities i.e. Mental Health have been common to the Youth Board, Youth Assembly and London Youth Assembly.

However, each group has worked on different areas chosen by the elected youth representatives who have worked together to avoid duplication and share resources and training opportunities.

### 3. MAKE YOUR MARK BALLOT 2020

3.1 The UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark gives a unique opportunity to reach all young people aged 11-18 across the UK and give them the chance to have a say on the biggest issues facing them. Issues are selected for the ballot paper by all Members of Youth Parliament. (The ballot paper is made up of 5 UK issues and 5 local/ England issues)

3.2 Make Your Mark is run by the British Youth Council who responded to the pandemic by changing the voting system from physical ballot papers to an online system. In 2020 there were 2,704 votes cast, compared to 12,783 in 2019 which reflects a significant reduction in young people taking part. The reduction was noted nationally and is a likely impact of the disruption caused by Covid-19, in particular to education settings where the ballot is usually promoted.

3.3 Campaign priority topics are usually selected at a House of Commons debate, where the top 5 issues are chosen for the UK and England. As this was not possible due to the pandemic 3 topics were chosen instead, Stop Plastic Pollution, Free University Tuition and Mental Health.

- **Stopping Plastic Pollution:** Climate change and plastic pollution were both in the top 5 devolved/UK issues for 2020. UK Youth Parliament will be campaigning to address climate change at the UK level with a particular focus on making sure we stop non-essential single-use plastics by 2025
- **Mental Health:** A movement for change - UK Youth Parliament will be campaigning alongside Young Minds to build a movement for change and ensure that children and young people's mental health is at a heart of the government's approach to the pandemic recovery. They will work towards creating a blueprint for children and young people's mental health and setting up local mental health support hubs.
- **Transforming Education:** Young people voted for free university tuition as one of the top three priorities for the coming year. UK Youth Parliament will be campaigning alongside the National Union of Students to create a campaign for free, lifelong and inclusive education and advocate for the Government to adopt it as they move forward in the Covid-19 recovery.

## **4. BARNET YOUTH ASSEMBLY**

4.1 The Chair of the Barnet Youth Assembly says “Barnet Youth Assembly is a forum for young people from across the Borough who discuss how Barnet can be improved for young people. It is a platform for young people to raise issues, discuss solutions and oversee projects that will create positive change for the wider community. Each Assembly focuses on matters that are significant and essential to young people. Through discussion, debating motions, collaboration and action, Barnet Youth Assembly is the driving force behind ensuring that young people’s voices are heard in the decision-making processes”.

4.2 With the onset of the pandemic all meetings of the Assembly were suspended until suitable arrangements could be put in place. Despite it being challenging to establish what the Assembly would look like in a remote and safe on-line setting, meetings were able to re-commence in November 2020 and held once a month via Microsoft Teams.

4.3 Barnet Youth Assembly is chaired by the London Youth Assembly members who are voted for by the current cohort of Barnet Youth Assembly members. Interviews with the Chair and Deputy Chair have been published in Barnet First Magazine.

## **5. BARNET YOUTH BOARD**

5.1 Barnet Youth Board has been chaired by the Member of Youth Parliament. During the pandemic meetings have been run virtually, this has had some success and is likely to influence a move to hybrid meetings in the future as they enable more young people to be able to take part

5.2 During the pandemic young people have been affected by the stress of lockdown restrictions, online learning and other pressures from Covid 19 which has meant engagement with formal meetings wasn’t always consistent. We have adapted our youth engagement practice to make meetings interactive and enable members to still share their views in other ways if they were unable to attend the live sessions.

5.3 Youth Board members have made contributions to and helped to shape the following;

- Life Chances Strategy

- Public Health impact assessment looking at how young people were affected by shielding (either themselves or someone in their household)
- Transport Strategy
- Hendon and Edgware Planning Consultation
- Education and Inclusion Strategy
- Barnet's Corporate Plan

5.4 Youth Board members have worked with a variety of services from across the council. An example of this is a safeguarding workshop on 'Healthy Relationships and Domestic Abuse'. The findings from the workshop were then shared by young people as guest speakers at the Professional and Young Peoples Forum.

5.5 Two young people have been involved in the interview panels assisting the recruitment of a Youth Engagement Officer for the Barnet Integrated Clinical Services and a Service-user Development Officer in Family Services. It is planned that young people are provided with training to aid their participation in a broader range of interviews for roles across Family Services.

5.6 Members from BING (Barnet Inclusive New Generation, Barnet's SEND youth voice forum) and BOP ("Barnet on Point" Child in Care Council) are included in any consultation or co-production activities which the Youth Board take part in. Adaptions and support are offered as appropriate. Whilst challenging during the pandemic, creative ways to enable young people to take part have been found using a range of on-line platforms and by introducing virtual meetings.

5.7 Youth Forum members were involved in naming and creating content for the Barnet Youth Instagram page which has been rebranded to attract stronger young people engagement.

## **6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND**

6.1 Children and Young People with SEND told us that they wanted to meet monthly and work with Barnet services and professionals to ensure there is co-production with young people and they are enabled to have their say in decisions, policies and strategies which affect children and young people with SEND

6.2 Barnet Inclusive Next Generation (BING) (formerly Barnet Development Team Youth, BDTY) is a group of children and young people aged 11-25 years old with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), who want to be part of a supportive group where they have the space to express their views, share what is important to them, and make sure they are involved in decisions about their lives. BING has 6 active members who represent young people with a range of special

needs including: autistic spectrum conditions, learning difficulty, physical disability, and multiple health needs or chronic illness.

6.3 The young people at BING are supported by professionals from Barnet Education Learning Service (BELS) SEND and Inclusion Team and the Voice of the Child Team. The group meets monthly and invites professionals and services within Barnet Council and the Health Service to listen to young people's experiences and make changes for young people. As a result, young people have influenced a number of aspects of service delivery including:

- The Local Offer website review – a Young People's Zone and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Zone have been launched and revised based on young people's feedback on layout and content.
- Barnet SEND Information Advice and Support Services (SendIASS) consultation – young people gave their feedback on how to improve access to this service and support online, using platforms and chats, as a result of the pandemic.
- The Surveying Autistic Young People Project – this will ask children and young people about their experiences of secondary school. The Autism Advisory Team will develop the survey under the guidelines of children and young people. This project aims to change the way professionals create surveys for autistic CYP moving forward.

## **7. EFFECTIVENESS, FEEDBACK AND FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED**

7.1 The pandemic has had a significant impact on the landscape of youth participation. There has been a decrease in usual activity during 2020/21 due to lockdowns and social distancing requirements. However, it is important to acknowledge that officers have enabled these forums to continue and have made good use of technology to undertake engagement activities safely and productively. Young people have remained committed to youth engagement programmes and continued to raise issues of importance to them. They too have shown resilience and flexibility in the face of the challenges presented by Covid-19.

7.2 Adaptations implemented during the pandemic have provided opportunities for future engagement, particularly using technology i.e. on-line polling and the use of virtual or hybrid meetings alongside face to face events. The hiatus has also provided an opportunity to review and refresh the programme and undertake work to develop the membership base for the year ahead. Liaison has taken

place with 5 specific schools to encourage young people with a range of diverse characteristics and circumstances to take part in the Youth Assembly and Youth Board. This is already looking promising with considerable interest being shown by potential new members.

## **8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Despite the pandemic Barnet's youth representatives, including the Barnet's UK Youth Parliament members, the London Youth Assembly and the Barnet Inclusive Next Generation have worked hard on their campaigns, co-development work and engaging their peers. Barnet Council should recognise their achievements in 2020/21.

8.2 There are noted themes that have been raised across the different youth forums in which Barnet young people participate. These include anti-racism, climate change, mental health and the impact of the pandemic. Members are invited to consider these important issues in wider policy decisions.

## **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

Not applicable.

## **10. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

The continuation of support for children and young people's voices to be heard through the various youth engagement fora referred to in this report.

## **11. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **12.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

Work by the UK Youth Parliament, London Youth Assembly and other youth representatives are incorporated into the decisions made by Barnet, which incorporates the views of young people across the borough and this feeds into the council's priorities, the Corporate Plan 2021-25 and the Children and Young People's Plan.

The Youth Assembly will enable young Barnet residents to have a voice and engage with the council to highlight issues that are important to them. This resonates with the commitment in the Corporate Plan to help residents help themselves. It provides a

platform for developing skills such as public speaking and critical thinking, which positively contribute to the future of young people.

## **12.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Funding for the UK Youth Parliament is contained within the existing budgets within Family Services.

## **12.3 Social Value**

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

## **12.4 Legal and Constitutional References**

Council Constitution, Article 7 (Committees, Forums and Working Groups) states that the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee is responsible for ‘...all matters relating to children, schools and education.’

The Council has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and it this is consistent with the child’s safety and welfare, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing services appropriate to the child’s needs.

## **12.5 Risk Management**

Any risks relating to the reformulated Barnet Youth Assembly, or other Barnet youth representation network will be identified and managed by the Voice of the Child and Governance Teams.

## **12.6 Equalities and Diversity**

The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public-Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies **to have due regard** to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

Officers responsible for youth engagement will consider how:

- Children and young people are encouraged to put themselves forward for the Youth Assembly, UKYP or London Youth Assembly, so that a range of young people from different backgrounds are represented.
- The best ways to communicate with all children and young people, to ensure that they are informed about what is happening, and the opportunities to contribute.

### **12.7 Corporate Parenting**

UKYP and Youth Ambassador election was promoted with children in care with the support of the targeted Voice of the Child Participation Officer.

A close working relationship between the Universal Voice of the Child Participation Officer and the Targeted Voice of the Child Participation Officer for Children in Care has enabled opportunities and tailored support to be offered to the members of the Children in Care Council to participate in local, regional and national events.

### **12.8 Consultation and Engagement**

The different local youth forums (including student councils and voluntary and community groups) and Members of Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassadors for Barnet will be the key bodies to engage the views of all children and young people to shape strategy and co-produce work. Youth representatives will have regular consultations and engagements with the Voice of the Child Participation Officer. The officer will support the development of their campaigns and projects while working closely with them throughout their term in office. During the pandemic this will include both virtual meetings and where possible face to face events.

### **12.9 Insight**

Young people's feedback will be a key part of future insight into what children and young people think of living in Barnet and shaping services that work for them. This will include the youth participation survey.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[The Barnet Corporate Plan](#)

[The Barnet Children & Young People's Plan](#)