



## Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee

17 November 2022

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| <b>Title</b>                   | <b>Barnet Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassador Scheme 2022</b>   |
| <b>Report of</b>               | Chair of the Committee, Councillor Coakley Webb   |
| <b>Wards</b>                   | All   |
| <b>Status</b>                  | Public  |
| <b>Urgent</b>                  | No  |
| <b>Key</b>                     | Non-key   |
| <b>Enclosures</b>              | None  |
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### Summary

The Barnet Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassador schemes provide opportunities for young people in Barnet to work with their MPs, decision makers, councillors, officers and local youth groups on the issues that are important to young people in the Borough. This report provides a summary of the activities of these two initiatives.

### Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee is asked to note and provide comments on the Barnet Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassador Scheme 2022**

#### 1. Why this report is needed

- 1.1 Our child participation and family involvement strategy, My Say Matters, is for all children, young people and their families especially those from racially minoritised communities, migrant families, LGBTQ+, children with disabilities and any other

marginalised groups whose voices may not be heard as often. We have made a commitment in this strategy to sure that everyone is supported to share their voice and express themselves fully. This report outlines some of the participation centred around the Barnet Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassador's Scheme.

## **2. Reasons for recommendations**

- 2.1 Members of Youth Parliament are 11–18-year-olds elected to represent young people across the borough for a two-year term, and work with their MPs, decision makers, councillors, and local youth groups on the issues of greatest concern to their constituents. Youth Parliament Members take part in a national scheme run by the British Youth Council which includes a national debate in the House of Commons chamber where two national priorities are selected for the following year.
- 2.2 Barnet's Youth Ambassadors work to identify the needs of local young people and chair Barnet's Youth Board where council officers and partners attend to consult young people and gain their views and involvement in policy making. They also attend Children Education & Safeguarding Committee (CES) to represent the young people of Barnet as well as to provide feedback from the work of Barnet Youth Board.
- 2.3 Earlier in 2022, young people across Barnet voted to elect their Members of Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassadors for the 2022 - 2024 term. A total of 38 candidates from 14 schools stood for election and over 7,700 young votes were cast. Votes came from across 26 establishments including three primary schools that invited former pupils, who were candidates, to come back and speak. Candidates also took part in online debates where they presented their campaigns, which included a range of topics such as knife crime, mental health and education gaps caused by COVID-19. This is a clear sign of young people's interest in having an influence over issues that affect them and their active citizenship. The results were announced at a special ceremony evening at Avenue House, Finchley on 24 March 2022.
- 2.4 Elected members:
  - Barnet's Members of Youth Parliament are:
  - Elysse Adil, age 11, Belmont Preparatory School
  - Isaac Reuben, age 16, JCOSS
  - Barnet's Youth Ambassadors are:
  - Ania Siad, age 14, Ashmole Academy
  - Deetya Pardasani, age 13, Mill Hill County High school.
- 2.5 The four elected members presented their campaigns during the election period and are now in the process of refining these. They will present their updated programme of work verbally to CES on 12 September 2022. An indicative summary is provided below:

- Elysse Adil – Preventing Knife Crime: Concern about the number of incidents involving knives and young people, need for education in schools for all age groups, promoting resources for schools that will help prevent knife crime
- Isaac Reuben - Welcoming LGBTQ+ students in schools: Ways students can feel safe to be their true selves, access to gender neutral toilets and pro-noun use, discussions with students and SLTs.
- Deetya Pardasani - Drug Awareness and Prevention: Youth led schools and community based initiatives to break the cycle of peer pressure, drug use and crime. Reporting mechanisms for young people to raise concerns so support can be targeted where needed.
- Ania Shah – Promoting Good Mental Health: Making sure the rewards system in schools is not biased against those with additional needs, ensuring fair access to school trips and enrichment activities. Developing a greater range of school trips and learning experiences that support career options and healthy lifestyles.

- 2.6 Barnet's Members of Youth Parliament attended the residential Youth Parliament Annual Sitting in July 2022 at the University of Hull, where Members of Youth Parliament representatives from across England came together to take part in workshops, debate and created a national manifesto policy. The event was opened by the House of Commons Speaker and the NHS Youth Forum. The 'Big Debate' involved Members of Youth Parliament submitting a policy motion which was then presented and debated before being voted on for inclusion in the current manifesto. Some of the policies debated included Tackling Racism and Hate Crimes, Violence Against Women and Girls and Barnet's Youth Parliament member Elysse Adil, presented her motion on Knife Crime.
- 2.7 Members of Youth Parliament also started to prepare for the House of Commons sitting where representatives are invited to debate in the Commons Chamber; this will be taking place for the first time in three years and will select the two priority campaigns for the forthcoming year.
- 2.8 Barnet Youth Board took a break in May due to exams and is now in recess for the summer holidays, it will resume in September. Recent activity includes working with Public Health on various food plans and offering support to the planning of focus groups with young people to gather their views to inform Barnet's Children and Young People's Plan due to be published in 2023.
- 2.9 Barnet Members of Youth Parliament and Youth Ambassadors have also been involved in the creation and delivery of the work that sits within the My Say Matters Child Participation & Family Involvement Strategy for example planning the launch event in May 2022 and writing the speech which was read out by young people who opened the first full council meeting of the new administration on 26 July 22.

### **3. Alternative options considered and not recommended**

- 3.1 None

### **4. Post decision implementation**

4.1 None

## **5. Implications of decision**

### **Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 Family Friendly is a key part of the Barnet Plan for 2021-2025 with the vision of “Creating a Family Friendly Barnet, enabling opportunities for our children and young people to achieve their best”.

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

5.2.1 There are no resource implications

### **5.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

5.3.1 Local authorities have specific duties in respect of children under various legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004. They have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area and, if 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. They should do this in partnership with parents, in a way that is sensitive to the child’s race, religion, culture and language and that, where practicable, takes account of the child’s wishes and feelings. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must consider how the child or young person can be supported to facilitate their development and to help them achieve the “best possible educational and other outcomes”.

5.3.2 Under the Council’s Constitution Article 7 (Committees, Forums and Partnerships) the terms of reference of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee includes the ‘responsibility for all matters relating to children, care experienced (up to the age of 25), schools and education.’

### **5.4 Insight**

5.4.1 N/A

### **5.5 Social Value**

5.5.1 This is a programme designed to proactively include young people in making decisions and providing their views about council activities that promote their safety and wellbeing.

### **5.6 Risk Management**

5.6.1 Specific risk management is being carried out for Children and Young People’s Plan. Any Family Services risks are recorded on the Family Services Risk Register and monitored each quarter by the Senior Leadership Team with escalations to CMT if necessary.

### **5.7 Equalities and Diversity**

5.7.1 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

5.7.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services

5.7.3 Equalities and diversity considerations are a key element of social work practice. It is imperative that help and protection services for children and young are sensitive and responsive to age, disability, race and ethnicity, faith or belief, sex, gender reassignment, language, maternity / parental status and sexual orientation. We continue to closely monitor this, as report appendixes notes, in our performance data.

## 5.8 **Corporate Parenting**

5.8.1 In July 2016, the Government published their Care Leavers' strategy Keep on Caring which outlined that the "... [the government] will introduce a set of corporate parenting principles that will require all departments within a local authority to recognise their role as corporate parents, encouraging them to look at the services and support that they provide through the lens of what a reasonable parent would do to support their own children.'

5.8.2 The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and;
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## **5.9 Consultation and Engagement**

5.9.1 This has been developed as part of My Say Matters, the Family Services consultation and participation programme.

## **5.10 Environmental Impact**

5.10.1 None

## **6. Background papers**

6.1 None