



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 29th September
2020

To the Chair and Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

MAKING DONCASTER THE MOST CHILD FRIENDLY BOROUGH IN THE COUNTRY – PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT THEME

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Schools	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of making Doncaster the most child friendly borough in the country, through the increased participation and engagement of children and young people in services across the council and partnership services.
2. The current Children and Young People's Plan, 2017 - 2020 set out the ambition to be the most child friendly borough in the country. Over the past three years, significant progress has been made in achieving this ambition. This report sets out a number of examples, which demonstrate how the involvement of children and young people has shaped services and had a positive impact on the lives of children and young people in Doncaster.
3. This report should be read in conjunction with the Doncaster Offer report that received approval from the Executive Board on 15th September 2020 and is another great example of how children and young people are leading on decision making and shaping what services are provided in the future.

EXEMPT REPORT

4. There is no exempt information contained in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. To consider the details of the report and explore options to expand the participation of children and young people in both the work of the council and its partners.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

6. There are many benefits to involving children and young people in decision making, one of these is that giving children and young people a voice promotes self-esteem, self-worth and increases the feeling of being valued and important. It also ensures services are delivered that reflect the needs of children and young people.
7. Children and young people can see the difference they are making and will see the importance of having their say, this will support children and young people to increase their interest in democratic processes including voting.
8. Participation and involvement supports the opportunity to increase inter-generational work at both a borough wide and local level.
9. Supporting children and young people to have their say can increase aspiration and a sense of belonging to both the community in which they live ,and the whole of Doncaster as well, increasing social responsibility.

BACKGROUND

10. Article 12 of the United Convention on the rights of the child, gives children the right to have their views given due weight in all matters affecting them.
11. The Doncaster Children and Young People's Plan committed to *"putting children and young people at the heart of everything we do"* It sets out three key aims - one of which was to 'Listen to what children and young people have told us is Important to them and Improve outcomes in these areas'. The other two being 'Adopt new ways of working that builds resilience in young people, their families and their communities' and 'Place a renewed focus on social mobility and how services enable young people to achieve and 'get on'.
12. The Participation and Engagement Strategy, which sat under the Children and Young People's Plan, set out the partnerships intent to strengthen the approach to involving children and young people and much of the work detailed in this has been achieved and in many cases surpasses it. An example of this was evident in the outcome of the very successful SEND inspection, which highlighted our partnership approach as a real strength in Doncaster. *"The local offer is informative and well considered. Children and young people are actively involved in its formulation and development. Indeed, local area leaders actively seek the views of children and young people with SEND. The Learning About Disability, Discrimination, Equality and Rights youth forum, and the youth council provide opportunities for the voices of children and young people to be heard"*.¹³ The Children and Young People's Plan has been evaluated over the last 2 year and an Impact Report produced in both 2018 and 2019. Both Impact Reports looked at children and young people's assessment of the impact of the plan including how much we had progressed against our ambition to be the most child friendly borough. In 2019 10 Young Advisors and 8 Young Commissioners were recruited.
13. Following engagement and consultation with children and young people, the 2019 Impact Report set out the eight child friendly ambitions, which would be the framework to measure against. The ambitions are:

1. **Connecting Young People & Doncaster**
A child friendly borough ensures that children and young people have access to the information that they need to make informed decisions and access the services and opportunities available within the borough
 2. **Building an Inclusive Doncaster**
A child friendly borough is thoroughly inclusive and takes steps to ensure that all children and young people feel like welcome and active members of their communities with equal access to opportunities and services, particularly disadvantaged young people
 3. **Creating a Happy & Healthy Doncaster**
A child friendly borough is one that promotes and facilitates the maintenance of good physical and mental wellbeing and ensures that young people are able to access services supporting those aims effectively
 4. **Providing opportunities for participation & engagement**
A child friendly borough ensures that children and young people have the opportunity to access activities and events across the spectrum of sports, arts and community groups regardless of their location
 5. **Ensuring a Community-Focused Doncaster**
A child friendly borough provides as many services as possible within the community and empowers these communities and the children and young people within them to have an active role in shaping their services and their future. Services will also ensure young people are signposted to other activity that may be delivered across the borough rather than within the local area.
 6. **Promoting a strong education & skills system**
A child friendly borough ensures that the education children and young people is effective and supports their development through into adulthood and employment with a focus on skills and aspiration
 7. **Delivering a Quality of Place in Doncaster**
A child friendly borough promotes sustainability, safety and makes sure that children and young people can be proud of where they come from.
 8. **Delivering high quality services**
A child friendly borough ensures that all of the supportive services that young people may need or wish to access are joined up, tailored to their needs, and highly effective
14. In order to ensure delivery against the child friendly ambitions, 5 participation principles have been developed to demonstrate and evidence how children and young people are involved and engaged. These are:
- **Inform** - children and young people are able to make informed decisions with information tailored too them.
 - **Involve** - children and young people are encouraged to be involved and share their opinions on services.
 - **Include** - children and young people from all backgrounds and circumstances are made to feel welcome and included.
 - **Inspire** - children and young people are given opportunities to develop skills, experience and to participate.
 - **Impact** - children and young people shape services and initiatives and are told about their impact on them.
15. Over the last 12 months a range of activity has been undertaken which demonstrates Doncaster is leading the way in developing best practice in the participation and engagement of children and young people;, taking the ambitions and participation

principles and making them tangible. Below details some of the work that has been delivered over this period.

16. A key element to achieving a child friendly borough is ensuring there is a range of **consultation and involvement activities**. These include:
17. **Make Your Mark** has been delivered in Doncaster over a number of years, in 2019 Doncaster gained the highest votes in Yorkshire and Humber. Young people voted the top three issues as: **1. Protect the environment 2. Knife Crime and 3. Mental Health**. The table below shows the number of young people votes across the region.

Yorkshire & Humber

	Protect the Environment	Votes@16	Tackling Hate Crime	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child	Welcome Refugees	UK Topics Total Votes
Barnsley	4,825	1,603	1,768	563	840	9,599
Bradford	242	120	121	48	156	687
Calderdale	2,425	628	1,003	458	505	5,019
Doncaster	5,704	2,224	2,320	1,431	1,429	13,108
East Riding of Yorkshire	23	23	16	13	7	82
Kingston upon Hull, City of	530	191	203	84	131	1,139
Kirklees	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leeds	5,085	1,956	2,149	1,034	1,604	11,828
North East Lincolnshire	-	145	-	-	-	145
North Lincolnshire	4,068	1,185	1,401	544	762	7,960
North Yorkshire	2,661	741	515	228	392	4,537
Rotherham	2,621	1,093	1,515	457	612	6,298
Sheffield	5,304	1,432	1,442	620	1,152	9,950
Wakefield	767	391	670	342	407	2,577
York	3,286	701	643	336	602	5,568

18. **Junior Make Your Mark** - In October 2019, the first Junior Make Your Mark campaign took place. Doncaster was the first and the only Local Authority to hold a Junior Make your Mark, ensuring that primary children also get the opportunity to have a voice. **Over 5,000 local children** voted for an issue that was most important to them and the issue that received the most votes was to 'improve the environment'. Since then, work has been undertaken with local schools to support them to improve their own school environments and the first '**Primary Network Conference**' was held with special guest, Ed Miliband MP.
19. A **cycle of consultation** with children and young people to improve the look, feel and content of the **Local Offer**, Family Information Service and SENDIAS webpages has been established. As well as co-production with children to produce a short video to promote the Family Information Service. This work was highlighted as an area of strength in the 2019 SEND Local Area Inspection.
20. **Key campaigns** are one-way children and young people have been involved in how we communicate important messages out to children, young people and families, as well as the wider community. Key campaigns have included the following:
 1. In early 2020, young people worked with the Clinical Commissioning Group on the mental health campaign as part of the new **With Me in Mind** service. Young people had an input on the design of the service, website, logo and created resources for children and young people, including a young person led piece of work, which was the **Super Sam Story Book** - <https://adobe.ly/2qDyTIB> a resource book for primary school Children. Each Primary school in Doncaster

and Rotherham received one copy of the book. They also wrote and supported the production of a **Mental Health Film** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxrY0ZnC0jk>, a powerful 4-minute film focusing on some common mental health issues young people face including anxiety, depression, body image and exam stress. This received regional coverage and has been described as best practice by NHS England. The film was shown in Vue cinema over a 4 week period from 7th Feb-5th March to approximately 20,000 people. It has also provided a great foundation for Doncaster to bid for wave 5 of the mental health trailblazer funding, which we see the scope broaden to all educational settings in Doncaster. To note Doncaster is currently the second largest trailblazer site in England, bringing in around £3million of extra funding into the borough and accelerating the approach to supporting children and young people.

2. In 2019, Members of Youth Parliament have been working on environmental issues and have a seat on the Climate Commission board chaired by RT Ed Miliband MP. They were integral to the success of the 'Sound the alarm for Climate change' campaign. This campaign was led by Mayor Ros Jones and Ed Miliband MP. A member of Youth Parliament was invited as a guest speaker. Another member of Youth Parliament has undertaken Carbon Literacy training and is now a climate champion.
 3. In response to knife crime being in the top three issues identified in Make your Mark, and in partnership with South Yorkshire Police the #LivesUpKnivesDown campaign was developed, this included an extensive social media campaign to promote Doncaster as a safe place for Children and Young People. This included a film showcasing the positive impact of children and young people in Doncaster. The 2019 Impact Report showed a 12% reduction in knife crime (source: South Yorkshire Police)
21. **Forums** are very strong in Doncaster and traditionally this has been the **Doncaster Youth Council, Youth Parliament** and the Children in Care Council. In Doncaster there is also the **LGBTQ Forum, Young Carers, SEND, Primary Networks, LADDER group, Young Advisors** and **Young Commissioners**. This has seen an Increase however the number of children and young people involved in forums and the number of forums have grown significantly over the last 12 – 18 months.
1. The recruiting and retaining of **10 Young Advisors** to support how Doncaster engage and involve a wide range of children and young people in our work has continued to progress over the last 12 months. These are paid posts, so as well as supporting services it also enables young people to gain valuable skills and work experience. Examples of the work undertaken have included the Mental Health work above, highlighting the dangers of nitrous oxide use through the detached youth work programme and leading the work around the framework for the participation principles.
 2. **Special Educational Needs and Disability Forum** – meets on a termly basis, to enable young people with special educational needs and disabilities to have their voices heard. This group also feeds into the Youth Council as there are now dedicated seats for young people with SEND.
 3. A recent **Youth Advisory Board** has been established to lead the development and delivery of the **Doncaster Offer**. This is captured in the Doncaster Offer report to be read in conjunction with this report.

22. As well as ensuring children and young people have a say on issues that are important to them, a key element to becoming a **child friendly borough** is to **celebrate** children and young people of Doncaster. In 2019, **The Civic Mayor Awards** was launched to recognise the amazing achievements of children and young people across Doncaster. The event was to return in 2020, unfortunately it was postponed due to Covid-19. This will take place as soon as practicably possible.
23. The role of the **Junior Civic Mayor** was revived in September 2019, and a new Junior Civic Mayor was appointed. This role raises the profile of children and young people, and supports the Civic Mayor at events, as well as championing the views of children and having key priorities for their term in office. The current Civic Mayor's term of office is extended due to the disruption caused by Covid-19.
24. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of involvement activities had to be paused. However, **the Partnership and Engagement Team** continued to have regular communications with children and young people through social media. This work focused very much on **emotional help and wellbeing**.
25. Over the summer holidays as some of the restrictions were lifted, engagement with children and young people was focused on **detached youth work**. This work was targeted in areas of increasing tension or anti-social behaviour, as well as areas where young people congregate. Intelligence for this work was shared by the DMBC communities team. This work focused on relaying messages to children and young people, distributing facemasks and signposting to the **Summer Staycation** activities.
26. **Post Covid-19**, and over the next 12 months it is crucial that the number of opportunities available to engage and involve children and young people increase, especially in regards the recovery following Covid-19.
27. Children and young people will be involved in the new recovery governance arrangements through the mechanisms of the Local Office of the Children's Commissioner.
28. In 2018, a Young Commissioner pilot took place. In 2019 15 Young Commissioners were recruited and trained. Their sole purpose to shape and influence the commissioning process on services that affected children and young people. This was to ensure that children and young people's voice was heard and acted upon. The next six months will see the role of the Young Commissioners expand and focus on localities. A group of commissioners will be assigned to each area. This is a change from a current centralised model. This will ensure that children and young people can influence how services are delivered in the communities where they live.
29. 2021 will see the next Children and Young People's Plan, and for this plan the aim is to have a greater focus on the eight Child Friendly Ambitions and ensuring there is a secure framework for measuring the impact of these, which will focus children and young people's voice.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

30. To continue to deliver the range of activity detailed in the report to realise the ambition to be the most child friendly borough.
31. To agree that it would be appropriate to report to CYP O&S on an annual basis.

32. To discuss and comment on the approach taken to participation.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

33. In order to ensure further progress is achieved against our ambition to be the most child friendly borough, all of the above options are essential.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

34.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better access to good fulfilling work• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish• Inward Investment	<p>Through the forums and mechanisms in place for participation and engagement, the children and young people gain valuable work experience and essential life skills. As well as in the case of the Young Advisors, give young people paid employment.</p> <p>It also boosts young people's aspirations, self-confidence and self of belonging.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster• More people can live in a good quality, affordable home• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean• Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage	<p>The voice of children and young people has a positive impact on how we deliver services both borough wide and in local areas.</p> <p>Children and young people can contribute to the vision to develop Doncaster into a vibrant town.</p> <p>The key campaigns, such as climate change are examples of the positive impact participation has on the lives of not only children and young people but the wider community and borough as a whole.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school	<p>The range of participation activities supports the wider learning opportunities for children and young people.</p> <p>Children and young people are able to gain essential life skills, as well as opportunities to gain qualifications.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>A key aim of the participation work is to expand the opportunities for children and young people to work with adults and share their lived experiences.</p> <p>A key element is also ensuring there are opportunities for all to be involved, and therefore there are a range of activities and forums to support our more vulnerable children and young people to access.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>Participation can have a positive impact on the delivery of services as well as delivering value for money, by ensuring the services delivered are in the right places, delivering the right services. Therefore reducing costs as the services are right the first time.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

35. One risk associated with this work is that it does not continue to progress and therefore do not achieve the ambition to be the most child friendly borough; this could have reputational risk as we had promoted this work extensively over the last three years. However this can be mitigated through a partnership approach to the revised Children and Young People's Plan. There will be refreshed governance arrangements, which will monitor the progress against the ambitions to ensure milestones are met.
36. Due to the positive outcomes for children and young people associated with participation and engagement, there is a risk that these will not be achieved, however if we progress with the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan and the participation principles we can ensure positive outcomes for those involved.

37. If works does not continue to involve and engage children and young people, there is a risk that the issues that are important to them are not raised and the services that are delivered on their behalf are not fit for purpose. This could have financial implications and therefore through involvement and consultation there are opportunities to reduce cost by getting services right the first time.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [HMR Date: 14/09/2020]

38. A local authority has a number of specific statutory duties to children and young people. S17 of the Children Act 1989 provides that it shall be the general duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [SB Date: 16/09/2020]

39. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

For information purposes the Partnership & Engagement Team hold one off budgets during 2020-21 for the areas detailed below. These areas are all funded from one off grants and contributions.

Civic Mayor Awards	£4k
Sendias Service	£28k
Young Advisor Roles and Resources	£43k
Summer Staycation	<u>£171k</u>
TOTAL	£246k

The Service also hold a general fund budget of £7k specifically Youth Council activities.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [CR Date 15/09/2020]

40. There are no direct HR Imps in relation to this report, but if in future staff are affected or additional specialist resources are required then further consultation will need to take place with HR.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW Date 15/09/2020]

41. There are no specific technology implications in relation to this report. Any technology requirements to support the ambition to be the most child friendly borough would need further consultation with ICT and Digital and consideration by the Technology Governance Board, where applicable.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [SN Date 15/09/2022]

42. Young people's participation in meaningful activity can impact on a number of factors affecting general health and wellbeing including connectivity, mental wellbeing and aspirations. The consultation and involvement activities listed demonstrate meaningful contributions young people make in shaping the services that affect them and issues that are important to them. Public Health continues to ensure youth voice

is integral to the work programme. The Public Health commissioned Pupil Lifestyle Survey includes questions relating to participation opportunities, the latest results (2018/19 survey year) found young people reporting positively on these themes with 4/5 pupils feeling they are 'sometimes' or 'always' listened to when people are making decisions about them. Strengthening and widening opportunities for participation are welcome as the survey results suggest variation in response amongst different groups.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [RM Date 14/09/2020]

43. A key principle of a child Friendly Doncaster is equity and inclusivity and therefore the premise of the establishment of the Office of the Children's Commissioner is to ensure this is fulfilled. This will be verified by the cycle of consultation established to measure the impact of the work. Also work is established to ensure the voices of children and young people with protected characteristics is captured and where needed championed on their behalf.

CONSULTATION

44. As detailed consultation is a central element in terms of participation, however specific consultation was not undertaken in the drafting of this paper.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

45. Children and Young People's Plan 2017 -2020
Impact Report 2018
Impact report 2019
Participation and Engagement Strategy

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