

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 18 January 2018

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Renfrewshire Youth Voice: Youth Commission Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 Community Learning and Development is a key driver for raising ambition, widening opportunities and improving communities in Renfrewshire. The Community Learning and Development Strategy Implementation Plan 2015-2018 provides a three year plan which sets out key actions and outcomes that contribute directly to the Council and Community Planning Partnership priorities, and feeds into the re-aligned Children's Service Improvement Plan 2017-2022.
 - 1.2 As part of Children's Services, Youth Services has a continuing role in tackling inequalities and ensuring opportunities for all, by supporting young people to have a voice, take part in decision making and make a contribution to the community.
 - 1.3 Over the past six months, Youth Services has supported the formation and development of a Youth Commission focusing on young people and mental health. This report provides a summary of the work and achievements of the Youth Commissioners to date, and identifies the next stage before they give their findings and recommendations to council and key partners.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to note:
 - [a] the progress made by the Renfrewshire Youth Commission; and

- [b] that a report will be provided to a future meeting of the Board containing draft recommendations from the Youth Commissioners on how young people's mental health can be safeguarded and improved in Renfrewshire.
-

3 Background

- 3.1 Youth Services carried out a review of Youth Voice and a paper was submitted to the Education Policy Board on 15th January 2015. Existing Youth Voice programmes and opportunities and methods of engagement were evaluated. The following recommendation was included in this report:

“ the establishment of a Renfrewshire Youth Voice Assembly that enables young people to work together to identify the most important issues, make decisions on what action to take and engage with decision makers”.

- 3.2 An initial planning meeting with representatives from key council departments and local youth work organisations advocated that the Assembly would be modelled on the Youth Services Community Planning Conference held in February 2013. The conference was co-designed with young people and provided a platform to highlight important youth issues and council service plan priorities, and decide collectively on future campaigns and action.
- 3.3 It was agreed that this model would encourage wider access and participation in Youth Voice and result in increased representation. The conference and subsequent assembly meetings would also give an opportunity to influence decision-makers; e.g. Children and Young People Board, Children's Champions Board, Integrated Children Services Planning, and community planning partners
- 3.4 Renfrewshire's first Youth Assembly was held on 29th November 2016 in Paisley Town Hall. The event was planned by a core group of 30 young people drawn from existing Youth Voice projects and aimed to encourage young people to share and explore key themes that matter to them; informed by previous youth consultations, action points from the Children and Young People Thematic Board in August 2015 and representations to the Children Services Service Conference in November 2015. The key themes were:
- Education, jobs and training,
 - Social and Cultural issues,
 - 2021 City of Culture Bid,
 - Health and wellbeing, and
 - Youth Voice - Having a say in what happens in your community.

- 3.5 Each of the themes was explored, and opinions were shared with feedback to the Assembly as recommendations for action and positive change. Renfrewshire's "Assembly" programme also offered workshops on social action which covered a mixture of creative methods including: upcycling and zero waste, digital skills with a positive message, making gifs, hate crime and disability discrimination, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Scottish Youth Parliament's "Speak Your Mind" Campaign, healthy and active lifestyles and planning a campaign to raise awareness using digital media.
- 3.6 On the day 300 young people aged 12-25 years participated, and the event included 10 partner organisations. Senior service managers, councillors and members of thematic boards were invited to attend to hear what young people had to say. The Assembly voted on the key theme that presented the biggest challenge in Renfrewshire, with 65% of young people voting for Mental Health as the key issue, therefore setting the agenda for a Youth Commission to take forward into 2017.
-

4 Youth Commission Update

- 4.1 Following the Youth Assembly, young people were invited to form a Youth Commission to take forward further research and investigation into Young People's Mental Health in Renfrewshire. A core group of 20 Youth Commissioners have been meeting on a fortnightly basis running up to a two day Commissioners Camp during the Spring Break. The group participated in an initial workshop in defining what a Youth Commission is, and how it can provide insight and make recommendations for change. They designed a Youth Commission Action Plan which took effect from April 2017 laying out the nature and scope of their investigation into Mental Health needs and responses.
- 4.2 The Youth Commission have achieved the following outcomes as part of their Action Plan 2017-18:
- a) Young people participated in co-design training workshop delivered by Youth Services and Young Scot during a Youth Commissioners Camp to set the ground work for the process of strategic change aimed at bettering services to young people. To achieve the co-design objective, Youth Services advocated for opportunities where the Youth Commissioners could have discussions and debate with key services and decision makers and practitioners via a variety of mechanisms.
 - b) The Youth Commissioners received "Aye Mind" training and Mental Health Awareness Training delivered by the NHS Health Improvement Team. This training equipped the group with skills to become effective peer educators, and provided them with tools and methods to deliver peer led workshops on mental health awareness.

- c) The Youth Commission created an on-line consultation survey and series of questions for focus groups to gather young people's perceptions of mental health and to scope out the depth of issue and areas for improvement.
 - d) The Youth Commission planned to co-ordinate and deliver a series of community-based events across Renfrewshire to showcase methods of sustaining of a positive mental wellbeing and to raise awareness. The aim of these events was to create a lasting legacy whereby communities would have an understanding of supporting agencies available to help themselves and family, and community members. This has partially been realised and will continue into 2018.
 - e) A well-being activity aimed at promoting positive mindfulness was organised – a walking activity taking young people, and others, around Paisley to key spots to take time to stop, reflect and take care of themselves and each other. The activity was piloted during the Youth Services Spring Break programme, and then repeated in October as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Film Festival.
 - f) Following training, the group delivered GIF making workshop (image files that supports both animated and static images) and a youth consultation activity at the 2021 UK City Of Culture event "You Matter Always".
 - g) During the October school holidays, the Youth Commissioners were involved in outreach and wider public consultation carried out alongside Youth Services in Paisley Town Centre, using the Year of Young People Young Scot Trailer. A social media campaign - #FollowYourFeet - was launched aimed at engaging young people and the wider public in creating and sharing positive wellbeing messages.
 - h) The Youth Commission held a Youth Symposium on Mental Health in the Renfrewshire Council Chambers, inviting key service managers, elected members and youth representatives to discuss and explore influencing factors and impacts on young people's mental health.
 - i) Youth Commissioners are now visiting community clubs delivering workshops and consultation to community based youth clubs and projects, and will continue this into early 2018.
-

5 Links to Youth Voice Strategy

- 5.1 Underpinning the work of the Youth Assembly and the subsequent development of the Youth Commission is the ongoing efforts of Youth Services to ensure young people's voices are heard and to promote youth participation.

- 5.2 Renfrewshire Youth Voice has achieved charitable status and continues to explore the possibility of developing a town centre youth facility and hub, including services to support health and wellbeing and promoting positive mental health. RYV received funding from the Scottish Foundation Trust to explore good practice examples of “youth hubs” and to further investigate the need and feasibility of developing similar provision in Paisley.
- 5.3 Following the involvement with 2021 UK City of Culture Bid, Youth Services will continue to use arts and culture to engage young people in their communities in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them, promoting youth culture and contributing to the re-generation of their town.
- 5.4 Further inclusion and anti-stigma work will include the development and support for LGBT+ group, supporting a regular meeting time and space, seeking wider representation and outreach to young people on the margins across Renfrewshire.
- 5.5 In 2017, Youth Services facilitated the Scottish Youth Parliament elections in partnership with schools, college, university, and community partners. The aim has always been to increase the number of young people taking part in these elections. In the 2011 election, 2858 young people voted which was a turnout of 11%. At every election since, there has been an increase, and in 2017 voter turnout was 7053 which translates as a 23.2% voter turnout.

Newly elected MSYPs have been offered training and support to take up their role and responsibilities of their office, and beginning to engage others on national campaigns focussing on Youth Rights, and responding to local concerns by submitting a Youth Motion to Board on the review and development of PSHE offer in schools.

- 5.6 Youth Services encourages and supports community based Youth Forums and Councils where young people can get active in their local communities helping to plan local youth events and activities based on what young people want and need.
- 5.7 Youth Services staff also offer support to school-based youth voice projects, including pupil council and youth leadership training to senior transition pupils. Partnership work to support the MVP programme and to offer accreditation for peer educators who volunteer and provide peer led services in schools and in the community.

6 Priorities for 2018

- 6.1 Youth Services will continue to support Youth Commissioners to carry out the outstanding actions including a number of outreach sessions to community clubs and targeted youth groups. This will identify the key factors for step change in Young People’s Mental Health in Renfrewshire.

- 6.2 The Youth Commission will draft a number of proposals and recommendations for Council and partners to consider. The final Youth Commission Report will be presented back to Youth Assembly in May/June 2018.
 - 6.3 Alongside this, Youth Services will advocate that Renfrewshire's Youth Commission be included in the newly announced Young Scot National Youth Commission into Young People Mental Health to Scottish Government. This would allow the Youth Commissioners to use their experiences and skills learned to share their work and findings from a local perspective.
 - 6.4 Youth Services will continue to engage with the Scottish Government National Improvement Service and Young Scot to explore ways in which rewards and discounts for National Entitlement Card holders can relate to and promote positive mental health and Raising Attainment.
 - 6.5 As link agency with Young Scot, Youth Services is best placed to lead on the Year of Young People 2018, with RYV, Youth Commission and the Youth Assembly as key youth work actions as part of the year of celebrating young people.
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Youth Voice development is delivered within core Youth Service budgets. Additional funding applications submitted to LACs, on behalf of the Youth Commission to fund additional community based consultations and anti-stigma awareness raising events were not successful. However commitment was made from Children Services budgets to continue to support the Youth Commission actions and enable them to report back to Assembly and Council on findings in 2018. RYV have sought to be included in the LAC review and in particular discussions around young people's fund.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the report details a range of activities which reflect local community planning themes.
4. **Legal** - None.
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because for example it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health and Safety**- None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** - Risks related to the delivery and management of services are regularly monitored and included in the Children's Services Risk Register.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **Cosla Policy Position** –Priority 11: Respect and Behaviour in School and review of Anti-bullying Policy and practices.

List of Background Papers: None

FT
14 December 2017

Author: Fiona Taylor, Youth Services Manager
Tel: 0141 889 1110: email: fiona.taylor@renfrewshire.gov.uk.