

YOUTH COUNCIL TASK & FINISH GROUP

Notes of the Meeting held on **Monday 6 November 2023** at 4pm via Microsoft Teams

Present

Councillor G Meadows (Chair)

Councillors: J Aitman R Crouch
S Simpson R Smith

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk
Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Communications & Community Engagement Officer
Business Administration Apprentice

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Cllr G Meadows was elected as Chair of task and finish group.

2. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members were presented with the draft terms of reference which contained the objective, timeframe and constitution. The Youth Council should be ready to form between January – March 2024.

Resolved:

That, the terms of reference as presented, be agreed.

3. **WITNEY YOUTH COUNCIL SCOPING**

The Deputy Town Clerk recapped as to how the task and finish group had been created and what was needed to progress the reformation of the Youth Council.

Firstly, it was agreed a vision statement would help establish what the town council was hoping to achieve by having a Youth Council. This would also assist with communications and engagement with young people on what it should do and be able to achieve. The vision being,

Witney Town Council supports and empowers young people in Witney to be more involved in making decisions about issues and services that affect them in their futures. A Witney Youth Council gives children and young people a 'collective voice' that is listened to and helps influence actions by decision makers.

It was agreed a flexible framework should be created which would enable young people to have a say in how it operates once created.

Members heard about projects of the previous Youth Council (including fundraising for a water station) and that an external moderator previously attended their meetings; under

safeguarding, a responsible adult did need to be present at meetings and/or Youth Council mentors.

It was agreed that any communications should include positive actions of the previous youth council.

What the Youth Council could achieve would be dependent on personalities and on what ideas and suggestions they brought to the table. The Town Council could consult them on decisions and projects in the town which might affect them, but it should also have autonomy and be able to put its own ideas forward for consideration; this could be via the Stronger Communities Committee and then Full Council.

Communication with the schools was key at an early stage with specific community leads to begin with; there was some concern that if schools put forward members (from school councils), these may not incorporate harder to reach children and Members were keen to give everyone the opportunity to apply. For this reason, it was agreed a selection process should take place, facilitated by the schools.

Suggested Framework

- Young people aged 11-18 years of age
- 13 representatives in total, gathered from Wood Green, Henry Box, The King School, Bright Futures, Young Rotary and other appropriate youth organisations (delegated to officers). Possibly even nominations from PCSO's.
- Selection Process (via a form/Web form – parent details/consent)
- Quarterly meetings – March, June, September, and December to fit in with the Stronger Communities Committee meeting schedule
- Agendas & Minutes to be prepared by members of the Youth Council. This would be aided by potential British Youth Council induction training, introduction training by officers, meeting shadowing etc.

Members were provided with details of other Youth Councils which were operating successfully via town and parish councils; they generally ran under the format detailed above.

On funding, Members agreed the current annual budget of £500 was still appropriate to pay for administrative/fundraising costs. Officers would look into bespoke British Youth Council training and workshop costs and feedback via the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

For potential projects, Members advised funding was likely to be available from other sources such as West Hive at West Oxfordshire District Council.

Finally, the Group discussed engagement with young people regarding the Youth Council. Members agreed it was crucial to get a buy-in from young people and were happy to engage at Wood Green and Henry Box schools and in creating and promoting an online survey to run alongside this.

The purpose being to hear from young people as to what they would want to be able to achieve. The December Councillors @ The Café could also be highlighted for young people to come and speak to Councillors about the project.

Recommended:

1. That, the terms of reference for the group and timeline be agreed.
2. That, the vision statement above be agreed and used in any communications or engagement on the project.
3. That, a flexible framework for the project be agreed based on the comments above.
4. That, a list of organisations to offer representatives be delegated to officers to be completed ahead of the next meeting.
5. That, officers research training costs which may have a 2024/25 budget implication
6. That, engagement with young people takes place in schools, online and at the Councillors @ The Café meeting. Also, to include the use of Tik Tok.

The meeting closed at 5.00pm.

Chair.