



FULL COUNCIL - INFORMATION REPORT

Date Written	1 st August 2020
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Service Area	Community Wellbeing
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	7 th October 2020

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Update on Young People's Participation: Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) and Office of Youth Mayor

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report highlights the key pieces of work undertaken by Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) in relation to the participation agenda during 2019-20 and the work to be taken forward during 2020-21 in the context of the current pandemic.
- 1.2 Key highlights during the year include participation in the review of young person representation on Scrutiny committees; regional working and the development of the child on parent/carer domestic abuse animation, 'In My House'; continued success of the inclusivity and participation in the democratic process of electing a Youth Mayor.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Merthyr Tydfil has a long-standing and successful background in supporting young people to participate effectively in the decision-making process. There are a number of areas of good practice to support this assertion, for example, young person representation on Scrutiny Committees; development of regional working with organisations such as the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB) and the Mid Glamorgan High Sheriff and the continued success of young person involvement in the Youth Mayor elections.

- 2.2 The commissioning of young people's participation is now in its fourth year and has enhanced partnership working with young people. This independence from the local authority has strengthened their voice and enabled them to speak independently and challenge the local authority.
- 2.3 The work supports young people to participate effectively in the decision-making process around services at local and national level that affect them. The contract directly supports the office of the Youth Mayor and facilitates the Youth Cabinet and MTBWYF.

3.0 KEY SUCCESSES AND IMPACTS DURING 2019-20

- 3.1 Young people have participated in the review of co-opted membership of local authority Scrutiny Committee's, which has resulted in improvements to the induction, training and support for young members. Although, discussions around the receipt of confidential papers is ongoing.
- 3.2 As a result of involvement in the Neighbourhood Services, Planning and Countryside Scrutiny Committee, young people are members of a working group that is looking at achieving 'Green Flag' status for one of the local parks.
- 3.3 Membership of MTBWYF continues to increase and currently stands at 175, with representation from 23 local organisations. Improved use of social media platforms such as You Tube and Instagram have supported this outcome.
- 3.4 The improved Youth Mayor election process has seen the number of young people voting increasing annually from 37 in 2016 to over 3000 in 2019. Partnership working with Democratic Services and schools has enhanced this process and resulted in a more inclusive approach.
- 3.5 Members of the Youth Cabinet are on the awarding panel for Gwirvol funding and have been involved in decisions around allocation of funding to local organisations.
- 3.6 Members of MTBWYF have been involved in consultations at a local level. For example, the development of the local authority's Raising Aspirations Raising Standards strategy; shaping of the consultation questions for the local authority Youth Support Services plan; and the proposed creation of a 3-16 Roman Catholic school within the borough.
- 3.7 Regional working with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB) has taken place to develop a safeguarding animation, 'In My House', that looks at the issue of child on parent/carer domestic abuse. This has been shared widely and endorsed by various national organisations, e.g. Live Fear Free.
- 3.8 At a national level, members of the Forum have been involved in the design and development of Public Health Wales's (PHW) annual Youth Summit and are also active members of the PHW Young Ambassadors scheme. Through Children in Wales, two young people have also trained to become 'Youth Inspectors', which enables them to assess applications for the national Participation Kitemark.

- 3.9 In order to recognise and celebrate young people's achievement the young people of MTBWYF organised and hosted the Academy of Success 2020 in partnership with local organisations and also helped to organise the High Sheriff's regional Musical Extravaganza and hosted the local event at the Red House.
- 3.10 The Youth Forum has also actively raised the profile of the regional Mid Glamorgan High Sheriff's awards. As a result, local projects and individuals between them won in ten out of twelve categories. A special award was given during the evening to the Participation Officer of Safer Merthyr Tydfil for her inspirational work with young people.
- 3.11 Other notable pieces of work include the continued championing of cheaper parking for students attending the College Merthyr Tydfil and delivery of 'Young People Say' training to staff from six local organisations.

4.0 RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- 4.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has had a significant impact on the work of MTBWYF. However, the young people have re-shaped the way they work, with regular on-line planning meetings taking place. As a result, key pieces of work have been identified and will be taken forward during the year.
- 4.2 Following lockdown, members of the Youth Cabinet submitted a proposal to extend the office of the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor to May 2021 and to postpone the annual hustings and election for a year. The proposal was approved by the Chief Officer for Learning on the understanding that a review into the continued viability of the Youth Mayor extension be taken in November 2020.
- 4.3 During the lockdown period various projects were developed and delivered, for example, a recycling project and a competition to name the MYBWYF mascot.

5.0 AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT 2020-21

- 5.1 During this period, a longer-term work plan has been developed by the young people, with key themes identified for the forthcoming year.
- 5.2 Work will continue with CTMSB, with the official launch of the 'In My House' animation planned for Safeguarding Week 2020 and the development of an accompanying resource pack.
- 5.3 With support from the Council Leader and the Cabinet, a documentary film on the local impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will be produced.
- 5.4 Other pieces of work to be taken forward include completion of a homelessness financial toolkit; continuation of involvement in the 'Green Flag Parks' environmental project; promotion of, and involvement in, the 'Spread the Word' online literary festival; and a consultation with young people on their views on re-usable sanitary products.
- 5.5 In order to promote young people's participation, further work will be undertaken with organisations that have completed 'Young People Say' training to sign up to the national Participation Charter.

6.0 KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 The volume of requests from many sources, including local councillors and parents, for the involvement of members of the Youth Forum in a variety of projects, continues to be high. The young people themselves recognise that they need to manage these demands and balance this alongside other priorities in their lives.
- 6.2 In order to address this and to improve management and co-ordination of this process, the young people are developing a protocol, which outlines
- how requests should be submitted by partner organisations and individuals; and
 - how work is selected by the young people and followed up.
- 6.3 This will be shared with all relevant parties with the expectation that the protocol is followed and provides for a realistic workload for the Youth Forum to progress alongside their own work agenda.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

8.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	1 of 4	0 of 4	3 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics <i>(including Welsh Language)</i>	2 of 10	0 of 10	8 of 10
4. Biodiversity	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1

Summary:

The main positive impacts are that young people aged 11–25 are able to influence the services and issues that affect them through the work of MTBWYF and the office of Youth Mayor.

There are no negative impacts identified in this report.

**SUE WALKER
CHIEF OFFICER LEARNING**

**COUNCILLOR LISA MYTTON
PORTFOLIO MEMBER FOR LIFELONG
LEARNING**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.