

FULL COUNCIL - INFORMATION REPORT

Date Written**	4 th August 2021
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Service Area	Learning
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	8 th September 2021

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 outlines the work undertaken in relation to Young People's Participation and provides examples of how the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) and the Youth Mayor have been supported to undertake their work through a commissioned service with Safer Merthyr Tydfil.
- 1.2 The focus for the last year has been on the continuation of activities during the pandemic and how that was achieved through partnership working.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The local authority continues to support young people's voice and enable young people to participate in the decision-making around issues that affect them. Aspects of this work are sector leading, such as young person involvement in Scrutiny committees and more recently, the local authority's Education Partnership Panel (EPP).
- 2.2 The commissioning of the service to Safer Merthyr Tydfil has facilitated independence from the local authority. The impact of this is that young people's voice has been strengthened and enabled them to speak independently and challenge the local authority.

- 2.3 These duties are undertaken in line with the statutory requirement of Extending Entitlement 2002 for young people to 'be consulted, to participate in decision making, and to be heard on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives'. It also complies with Article 12 of the United Nations Commission on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015.

3.0 KEY SUCCESSES AND IMPACTS DURING 2020-21

- 3.1 MTBWYF and the Youth Mayor, facilitated by Safer Merthyr Tydfil, continued to operate effectively during long periods of lockdown and have successfully maintained their work plan and undertaken some additional key pieces of work over the last year in order to respond to the pandemic, as outlined below.
- 3.2 The young people led on the development of a young person's version of the local authority's Raising Aspirations Raising Standards (RARS) Strategy and a corresponding animation. This was an integral part of the launch in May this year. As a result of this piece of work, there is now young person representation on the EPP in order to keep young people informed of developments.
- 3.3 Young people continue to have a direct input into having a voice in Merthyr Tydfil by their involvement as members of Scrutiny panels. The members of MTBWYF have continued to review the roles and responsibilities of their members. This includes age appropriateness for the role of a scrutiny member; and they continue to raise questions about being treated fairly and equally in relation to age and access to confidential papers. This is an ongoing discussion, facilitated by the Children's Champion, and has recently been escalated to the Chief Executive.
- 3.4 In order to improve the management and co-ordination of work requests the young people developed a protocol implemented over the last year. The result is that there is a clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities and expectations of young people and partners are more effectively managed.
- 3.5 Other local consultations that young people were involved in include a consultation on home schooling during lockdown and their views were fed back to Headteachers, highlighting concerns around equality of access to IT. This supported a consistent approach across the Borough and provided evidence for the provision of IT equipment for children and young people who were digitally excluded.
- 3.6 Literacy was an area that young people identified in their work plan for last year and members of the Youth Forum, led by the Youth Mayor, were actively involved in the design of the Reading Festival, which took place in August 2020 and was undertaken in partnership with the Stephens and George Charitable Trust.
- 3.7 Other Youth led pieces of work include the lead on decisions around the postponement of the annual hustings and election of the Youth Mayor, and the annual inauguration. In light of the current restrictions this has led to the reshaping of the Academy of Success, which was an online event that took place in July 2021.
- 3.8 The Covid 19 documentary is in the final stages of production and is intended to be an historical account of the experience of local people during this period.

- 3.9 'Youth News' was developed during lockdown and this enabled the Chairperson of MTBWYF to update young people via social media platforms about the First Minister's updates, Covid-19 regulations, returning to school and votes at 16 registration.
- 3.10 At a regional level, and with support from the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB), workshop resources have been developed to accompany the 'In My House' animation that was launched during Safeguarding week in September 2020 to raise awareness of child on parent/carer domestic abuse.
- 3.11 There was active promotion of the make 'Your Mark Campaign' which resulted in Merthyr Tydfil recording the highest number of votes across local authority areas in Wales and also 'Votes at 16' in preparation for the Senedd elections in May 2021.
- 3.12 There has been some success this year in relation to the embedding of young people's participation with three local organisations signing up to the Participation Charter. This has been a challenging area of work to take forward as 'Young People Say' training has been suspended for the past 18 months due to the pandemic but will resume when Covid restrictions permit.
- 3.13 The good practice and commitment of our young people has been recognised with first place in the 'Incorporating a Children's Rights Approach' category at the National Youth Excellence Awards 2020.

4.0 PLANNED WORK FOR 2021-22

- 4.1 The Youth Forum has developed a work plan for 2021-22 and have identified key pieces of work they intend to take forward.
- 4.2 Through working with officers in the local authority, work will commence on young people's involvement in the Active Travel consultation with the production of a short promotional video and involvement in the 'Green Flag Parks' work will continue after being delayed due to the pandemic.
- 4.3 The new RARS strategy remains a key focus for MTBWYF and young people will be fully involved in the 'Spotlight on Education' week in October 2021. Planned involvement includes charring of the 'Question Time' event; engaging schools in a consultation about what children and young people aspire to be and sharing the responses via social media platforms.
- 4.4 In order to promote and encourage young people's involvement with MTBWYF when they turn 11 years of age, the Youth Forum will pilot a participation project with Year 6 pupils in a small number of local primary schools.
- 4.5 In order to improve sign up to the National Participation Charter, the Youth Forum will explore alternative training formats.
- 4.6 Regional and national working will focus on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board's Communication and Engagement Toolkit and the Public Health Wales Young People's Covid Scrapbook.

4.7 Other continuation projects include the bullying awareness 'Step On It' project and completion of the Homeless Financial Toolkit (boardgame) to help young people at risk of homelessness to understand their rights.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Neutral/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 (including Welsh Language)	2 of 10	0 of 10	8 of 10	
4. Socio-economic Disadvantage	1 of 6	0 of 6	5 of 6	
5. Consultation and Engagement	Undertaken	Due to be Undertaken	Not Required	
	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1	
6. Data and Evidence to inform the proposal	Yes		No	
	1 of 1		0 of 1	
7. Biodiversity and the resilience of Ecosystems	Maintained	Enhanced	Reduced	Neutral/Not Applicable
	0 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1
Summary				
The main positive impacts are:	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.			
The main negative impacts are:	There are no negative impacts identified in this report.			

SUE WALKER
CHIEF OFFICER (LEARNING)

COUNCILLOR LISA MYTTON
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL/ CABINET
MEMBER FOR 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?		No

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