

**Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee** 3 September 2024

Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Education and Director of Housing and Communities

## **Youth Strategy and Local Youth Partnership**

### **Summary**

1. This report provides an update on the development of a Youth Strategy for the city. The report builds on the scrutiny report received in March 2024 and covers activity since that time including:
  - i. The drafting of the Youth Strategy – ‘Young People Belong in York’.
  - ii. Work with local partners to develop a Local Youth Partnership.
2. The views of this committee will be shared with the Executive to be held on 10 October 2024, at which Members will consider a final proposed Youth Strategy and the development of a Youth Partnership.

### **Background**

3. Every young person deserves to grow up in a place where they feel safe, supported, and inspired to achieve their dreams. We want York to be a place where young people know they belong. We believe in the power of youth work and the importance of having places to go and things to do, all supported by people who genuinely care.
4. Our new Youth Strategy will help us to focus on what really matters for young people in our city. It will ensure that we listen to their voices, understand their needs, and work together to provide the best opportunities for them.
5. The local authority has a responsibility under section 507b of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Education and Inspections Act 2006) to secure, so far as reasonably practical, sufficient educational and recreational activities which are for the improvement of young

people's wellbeing, personal and social development, and sufficient facilities for young people aged 13 – 19 (or up to 25 for young people with additional needs).

6. By developing a Youth Strategy, we are also meeting our responsibilities to make sure every young person has access to the support and resources they need. This is not just about meeting statutory expectations; it is about showing that we care and are committed to making a positive difference in their lives.

### **Developing a new Youth Strategy**

7. In 2023 and 2024 Children's and Community services have worked closely with the current youth network of providers in the city. This network is a broad and informal network of partners working across the city from a range of different sectors.
8. We have also worked alongside young people to understand their experience and what they would want to see from a Youth Strategy. From working with young people, we know that some feel they do not belong in York. Also, that the city does not provide opportunities to socialise with their friends, or when they do they feel stigmatised.
9. We also know from working with youth providers some of the challenges they face. Short term funding, venue costs, inflationary pressures, competing with partners and paying for training were identified as barriers to sustaining or growing youth provision locally.
10. There are actions we can collectively take to help tackle these challenges and to realise the opportunities that exist locally.
11. The first is the development of the city's Youth Strategy to set out a shared and ambitious vision for how we want our city to be. In direct response to feedback from young we have placed 'belonging' at the heart of our developing draft strategy.
12. Our draft strategic ambition is that:
  - i. York is a place that young people belong.
  - ii. Young people in York have places to go, things to do and someone to talk to.

13. Our draft strategic priorities are:
  - i. Young people have safe places to be with their friends.
  - ii. Young people have a range of activities to do.
  - iii. Young people are supported by people with the right skills.
14. The Youth Strategy will set out clearly the expectation for all partners to work together to make sure the strategy is for all young people in York. The strategy will also provide a focus for reaching those who need support most through Targeted Youth Support.
15. We know that some young people might need extra support or may be missed by services. That is why we will work hard to identify those most in need and in order for them not to miss out. By focusing our efforts where they're needed most, we can ensure that all young people in York have the chance to thrive and succeed.
16. To help us identify plan our work we will understand what young people need. We will do this by:
  - i. Working with and listening to young people - with a clear understanding of those who need us most.
  - ii. By working with communities and elected members to understand need at a local level within different neighbourhoods.
  - iii. Finding those that need us most - By working together to share insight and knowledge about areas of need and risk. In particular:
    - a. Where young people may be exploited.
    - b. Where young people are engaged in or impacted by anti-social behaviour or crime.
17. During August and September we have been working with partners to pull together a needs assessment to inform our understanding. This has included reviewing neighbourhood action plans, input from children's services and mapping of available data. We will use this needs assessment to work with local youth partners to develop and seek funding solutions that can meet those needs.
18. Working with the York Youth Network we are also exploring the development of a bid to the Mayoral Combined Authority to support this work and align it with existing proposals related to the development of

Cultural Passports for young people and a potential youth zone in the city.

## **Local Youth Partnership**

19. To make our youth strategy a success, we need everyone to work together. This includes the youth sector, the police, schools, local communities, and the council. By teaming up, we can create a supportive network that listens to and values young people. With the combined efforts of these partners, along with health services, local businesses, and families, we can build a stronger, safer, and more exciting future for all young people in York.
20. As shared in the previous update to this Committee we have been working with key partners to explore a Local Youth Partnership. Local Youth Partnerships are developing in a number of areas across the country. How they work in each area is unique to the local context and partners. We are committed to working together to develop a youth partnership that works for York.
21. Working together also means being brave in sharing the resources that each partner has. By moving away from a traditional funder-provider model to one of true partnership and collaboration, all partners can work together to grow and sustain our capacity to meet the needs of young people.
22. The regional youth work unit has been supporting us to develop our local youth partnership through a series of face-to-face sessions in recent months. This has shown there is real appetite for partners to work together but it is really important to note that the exact nature of the partnership and how quickly it develops must be led by partners themselves. Separate to the development sessions partners organised a 'speed dating' event which is an important part of developing the relationships and trust needed for partnership working.
23. Through the development sessions partners have identified a number of important things for how they want to work together. Below is a summary taken from the most recent sessions with partners:
  - i. 'We envisage a hopeful & inclusive future where all young people are valued, heard and engaged in activities that inspire them to fulfil their potential and to thrive within their communities.'

- ii. 'The purpose of coming together is to expand the opportunities available to young people. Engendering a culture of collaboration with young people, with communities and each other.'
  - iii. 'The partnership (name to be decided) work together to tackle specific issues, to learn and grow through open & honest connected conversation, partnership working, and taking positive action making collaboration the norm.'
24. Developing the partnership will take time. From reviewing local youth partnerships in other areas it can take years in some cases to become fully developed. Locally partners have wanted to move into taking some practical action that will help the partnership to develop. This includes:
- i. More opportunities to build relationships with each other – for example activities like the 'speed dating' session.
  - ii. Planning for real in response to the needs assessment. Working together to develop solutions in response to need.
  - iii. Planning joint events and sessions across the city to build momentum and bring people together.
25. In September we will join the partnership in beginning to plan some practical action that will allow the partnership to take its first steps together. It will take time to develop and requires sustained commitment. It is also important to not set unrealistic expectations over how quickly and how far a Local Youth Partnership can transform support for young people. We are hopeful this model can help all parties and in particular young people.

## **Consultation**

26. The Youth Council helped us to develop the approach, draft ambitions and priorities as outlined in this report and which will be the focus of the Youth Strategy. Their input has been really important in making sure our strategy is something that young people have shaped and help us to deliver:
- i. The Youth Council welcomed the approach to developing a Strategy and shared they felt it was really needed.
  - ii. They liked the idea of everyone in the city working together.

- iii. The Youth Council want young people to have a seat at the table when decisions are being made and in holding partners to account for delivering the Strategy.
- iv. They shared the experience of young people sometimes feeling marginalised and they want the Strategy to promote inclusion and belonging.
- v. Young people said the Strategy needs to link with transport and that moving to different parts of the city can be difficult.

## **Council Plan**

- 27. One City, for all, the City of York Council's Council Plan (2023-2027), sets a strong ambition to increase opportunities for everyone living in York to live healthy and fulfilling lives. This recognises the need for young people to feel connected to the city as valued citizens who have the right to contribute to the city and their communities and opportunities should be provided to enable this.
- 28. In April 2024 we launched our new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). This sets out the overarching ambition for all children and young people in the city over the coming years and should be complemented by the Youth Strategy.

## **Risk Management**

- 29. At the heart of the Youth Strategy will be the importance of working together. We can see from other areas how by developing Local Youth Partnerships local providers have been able to attract more funding, share resources and improve their sustainability. It is very important to recognise that there is no single version of what a Local Youth Partnership should look like. It is the choice of the youth providers in York how they want to work together and that this is likely to develop over time.
- 30. The council must be a trusted and reliable partner of youth providers but it is important to understand the council does not control the youth partnership. Where Local Youth Partnerships are working best is where partners are agreeing how to work together and working collaboratively.

## **Recommendations**

31. To note and comment on the development of the York Youth Strategy and associated Local Youth Partnership.

Reason:

To support the successful development and implementation of the York Youth Strategy.

## Contact Details

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Report  
Approved



Date 18 August 2024

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Background Papers

Youth Strategy Update Children Culture and Communities Scrutiny  
Committee report, 5 March 2024

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s173629/Youth%20Strategy%20Update.pdf>

## Annexes

None.

## Abbreviations

CYPP – Children and Young People’s Plan