

**FULL COUNCIL  
19 January 2016**

AGENDA ITEM 7

**Report of: The Mayor**

**Title: Youth Mayors Report**

**Ward: Citywide**

**Member presenting report: The Mayor and Neha Mehta and Thanushan Jeyarajah, Youth Mayors.**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Full Council note, consider and comment on the report of the Youth Mayors.

**1.Summary:**

1.1 Prior to our election onto the Bristol City Youth Council, we were internally elected as the Youth Mayors. Following in the footsteps of Rondene Vassell and James Gibson we have been working closely with Mayor George Ferguson to input our ideas and work on the Youth Mayor and Youth Council manifesto.

1.2 With the help of George Ferguson and members of his cabinet, our profile as Youth Mayors has been widely recognised by more people.

1.3 We have included a list of recommendations the council should consider to improve the future generations of this city by improving involvement, continuing the legacy of Green Capital and championing the Learning City initiative.

1.4 Our highlights, successes and failures have been listed to show the events we have attended and emphasise areas for improvement.

## **Appendices.**

**Appendix 1 - Background to electing the Youth Mayors**

**Appendix 2 - Policy Recommendations**

**Appendix 3 - The Role**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Appendix 1 - Background to electing the Youth Mayors**

1. Following the end of Rondene Vassell and James Gibson's term of office, an internal election was held within the Bristol City Youth Council prior to the Bristol Big Vote. Neha Mehta and Thanushan Jeyarajah were elected into the role of Youth Mayors.

2. Soon after the election, an annual timetable was arranged for meetings with George Ferguson and councillors. These meetings were scheduled well in advance to build and continue the relationship between the Mayor and Youth Mayors. This advance planning was recommended by the previous Youth Mayors.

3. Our manifesto of improving the prospect lives of young people through education was presented to George Ferguson:

#### **Campaign targets:**

- Challenge companies and organisations to offer more tailored work experience to young people around Bristol.
- Expose our peers to alternative vocational paths, in terms of their future for example apprenticeships.
- Do this by inviting more companies to set up careers fairs in schools to advertise their career and give advice to young people.
- Encourage schools to hire the necessary position of a careers advisor who will advise students, help them gain experience and act as a contact point to connect young people and companies/organisations.

- Create a network to connect 15-18 year old students to professionals so that they can get sufficient advice and necessary contact details for work experience to ensure they are making the right choices for the future.

## **Appendix 2 – Policy Recommendations**

After consolidation of our time in office, we have put together a list of recommendations to continue and improve on key areas:

1. The Youth Council needs to continue to advise the commissioning officer for Bristol Youth Links about what areas within Bristol needs to be focused on and where funding should go. We feel that we do not get to discuss these really important decisions with them or Bristol Youth Links providers enough so more meetings should be arranged in advance of any changes.
2. We would like to recommend that the learning city partnership board continue to include young people on their board so they are able to listen to the youth surrounding any decisions that are being made, for example employment, vocational schemes and the Passport to employability (PEBL) and engagement hub initiatives and we are very pleased to see that some of the funding for this has been agreed.
3. The Bristol City Youth Council should be more involved in the council's decisions about youth provisions as the Youth Council members are ambassadors for schemes targeting young people. This can be arranged by more meetings with key decision makers.
4. We would like to mention that the number of Youth Area Forums have decreased due to poor attendance and planning difficulty so with the combined effort of the Youth Council and Council, more area forums should be arranged. It is important that young people have these platforms to be able to convey their opinions. Therefore the profile and awareness of these opportunities needs to be raised as well.
5. With the help of the Learning City Partnership board, the council should continue to champion apprenticeships as an alternative to higher education. The stigma surrounding alternative vocational pathways needs to be tackled and support and advice should be continued to be offered to fit individual aspirations of young people. Work experience should be compulsory in all secondary schools and this can only be done by the influence of the Council. The enterprise zone in Temple Quarter will help combine businesses and young people but we should not stop being advocates of improved educational opportunities for young people after it is up and running.

6. We would like to recommend that more councillors take part in the Shadow councilor scheme to gain a better insight of what is important for young people and so that we have a better knowledge of how the council works
7. The Green Capital Programme has given Bristol an amazing platform to be innovative and champion sustainable development. However we still need to build on the foundations that have been put in place. This means inspiring the younger generation, working even harder to ensure a sustainable future and continuing the legacy of Green Capital.
8. We would finally like to recommend that the future Mayor of Bristol retains the role of the Youth Mayors as we feel that not only has it been an amazing personal experience but it also gives young people a direct link to the Mayor.

The Mayor and the appropriate Cabinet members should consider these policy recommendations, which have been formed on the basis of youth forums, held in all areas in the city, as well as the manifestos of Youth Councilors directly elected by local students.

### **Appendix 3 - The Role**

As the third pair of Youth Mayors, many more people have recognised the existence of the role and our involvement within the community has been increased. This amount of recognition has helped us approach decision makers and share our thoughts and opinions. We list some of the successes of the role:

- Being, given the opportunity to be a part of the Learning City Partnership Board. As members, we were able to create networks with others on the board, to help us with the Youth Mayor manifesto.
- We have also been at the heart of Green Capital and have attended many remarkable events such as the Bristol whale launch, Arcadia and the Bristol Business Summit to name a few.
- The opening of Filwood Business Park really amplifies the long lasting legacy of European green capital, as it offers young people in less privileged areas of Bristol the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and move forward in life.
- The Felix Road Adventure Playground & Invisible Youth Fundraising Fayre was another event that we thought showcased the importance of coming together and working towards something that benefits everyone in the community.

- Some of the other events we have attended are the naming of the Airbus A400 Aircraft, civic interfaith celebrations, the young hero's award and the Youth Green Summit day.
- These events have given us the opportunity to meet so many amazing people and it has opened our eyes up to the hard work and meticulous planning that goes on behind the scenes.
- We have regularly met once a month with either Mayor George Ferguson or Councillors to continue to update them on the work we have been up to and also gain their help to improve our manifesto. This has enabled us to develop a network of people and strengthen the relationships between Councillors and the Youth Council.
- We feel honoured to have spoken at many events such as the Mayor's Annual Lecture, the Uncertain World Summit and a full council meeting. We have also had the chance to represent young people in the local media.
- In our role and as part of the youth council we have had the opportunity to meet with young people from other youth councils across the South West and have started discussions with young people from Bordeaux about a youth Ambassadors exchange.
- Our time in office has allowed us to engage with local communities and witness the outcome of the hard work put in by youth workers, local heroes and active citizens.
- The support from Bristol City Council, Bristol City Youth Council and our Youth Workers cannot be credited enough as their inspirational ideas has shaped and improved our manifesto and is what has made our time in office such a success.

#### Improvements:

- Communication between Youth Mayors and other members of the Council officers, including boards, needs to be improved as sometimes we were unsure as to when, where and what times meetings were.
- Overall the forward planning of meetings enabled us to meet with a lot more councillors than last time. However there were still a few occasions where meetings were cancelled or rescheduled at the last minute and this meant that we could not meet all councillors we were scheduled to meet.
- The Youth Mayors, members of UKYP and Youth Council should be given a greater voice in the Mayor's Cabinet. This includes key decision makers

contacting and meeting with us more often to discuss the provision of youth services and ideas.

- Furthermore due to the numerous events we attended it was difficult to focus and develop our Youth Mayor manifesto. Therefore more achievable goals should be set and events relating to the manifesto should be prioritised over others.

To conclude our term has been a success as we feel that the amount of recognition we have received has helped us continue to develop our role as Youth Mayors. As we come to the end of our time in office we notice there are areas of improvement but overall we see how far the role of the Youth Mayors has developed. We would like to thank everyone who has helped us and we are excited to see the future Youth Mayors build on what we have worked hard on.