

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

18 October 2023

Title	Reading Youth Council Constitution 2023-24
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Brian Grady, Director of Education
Lead Councillor	Ruth McEwan, Lead Councillor for Education and Public Health
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That Committee note the work of the Reading Youth Council in 2022/20232. That Committee endorse the Reading Youth Council priorities for 2023/20243. That the revised Constitution of the Council is agreed by Committee

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on how the Youth Council operates in Reading. It provides an overview on how the Youth Council is run and the various roles and responsibilities of different positions within the Youth Council.
- 1.2. The Reading Youth Council Constitution has been refreshed and is attached to this report. The constitution will inform future recruitment, to ensure a wide representation of young people.
- 1.3. The reviewed constitution clarifies the roles, responsibilities and associated procedures of Reading Youth Council

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Reading Borough Council has a strong track record of celebrating young people and championing the voice of Reading young people. Reading Youth Council is a strong elected voice, representing the young people of Reading. It has a track record of enabling young people to communicate with decisions makers, to have their say and have influence on decisions which affect them and other young people.
- 2.2. Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee considered and agreed a new Constitution for Reading Youth Council in October 2021. The reviewed constitution clarified the roles, responsibilities, and associated procedures of Reading Youth Council, and it was agreed to review the Constitution again in 2023.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. Reading Youth Council have had a successful year. As we have emerged from the pandemic period, young people have been able to engage more actively with Reading Youth Council and Youth Council members have been able to engage more actively and directly in their roles. This officer report will be accompanied by an update from

Reading Youth Council members themselves, setting out the successes of the year and priorities for 2023/2024.

- 3.2. The Reading Youth Council annual conference was a highlight of the year. 100 Reding pupils attended from 9 state schools and 1 independent school in Reading; a significant increase on previous years.
- 3.3. The work that young people attending did on the Reading Youth Council campaigns was very productive. The work on mental health and wellbeing continues to inform our mental health support services for Reading children. The work on climate action will feed into our Reading-wide work on climate action, including maximising the engagement of Reading children in the annual Reading climate action festival.
- 3.4. The annual conference debates were thought provoking and shone a light on changing considerations and concerns of young people in Reading. Threats of international violence and world events were very prevalent in the top concerns of attendees; a change from previous years. The wish to establish democratic voting rights from 16 was similar to previous years. The third priority debated was around censorship and free speech, where misogyny and current debates about equality, safety and respect occurring in schools was explored further.
- 3.5. The debates resulted in priorities which were fed back into schools by school leader attendees through PSHE and relationships health and sex education, and are informing the support and guidance on offer to schools from Brighter Futures for Children).
- 3.6. The revised Constitution has been informed by the work of the Youth Council over the past year, and the results of the Annual Conference. In particular, the Constitution confirms the appointment of two Campaign Commissioners to lead the two areas of concern identified by most young people engaged in the Council's work over the past year:
 - Campaign Commissioner for Homes, Money and Opportunities
 - Campaign Commissioner for Environment

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

- 4.1. Reading Youth Council have been active in campaigning on issues young people are passionate about in Reading, aligned to the Corporate Plan of Reading Borough Council.
- 4.2. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
 - Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy
- 4.3. These themes are underpinned by "Our Foundations" explaining the ways we work at the Council:
 - People first
 - Digital transformation
 - Building self-reliance
 - Getting the best value
 - Collaborating with others
- 4.4. Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

- 4.5. For 2023/24, Reading Youth Council priorities have been further aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan, as set out in the revised Constitution, with the appointment of a Campaign Commissioner for Environment and a Campaign Commissioner for Jobs Homes Money and Opportunities. The Youth Council are also committed to increasing youth representative at Reading Borough Council meetings and are reviewing with the Director of Education and Reading Borough Council Democracy team committee meetings attendance for the academic year ahead.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. Reading Youth Council have prioritised campaigning on Climate Emergency action and engagement of young people in a call to action in response to the Climate Emergency. The revised Reading Youth Council Constitution confirms the appointment of a newly designated Campaign Commissioner for Environment to further progress the campaigning undertaken by the Council.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Youth Council members were fully involved in the developing and revision of the constitution. Youth Council members will be in attendance at Committee to share an update on the activities undertaken by Youth Council, and priorities for the year ahead.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision to agree the revised Reading Youth Council Constitution.
- 7.3. The Reading Youth Council is intended to create a positive differential impact for young people with protected characteristics, in terms of age, but also by championing the experiences of Reading young people with protected characteristics of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are no additional relevant considerations regarding this report.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. There are no legal implications regarding this report.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. The proposed Budget for Reading Youth Council is included in the Constitution.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. The revised Reading Youth Council Constitution is intended to be implemented immediately following ACE Committee consideration.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. Draft Reading Youth Council Constitution 2023-2025