



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

YOUTH

Stevenage Borough Council

Youth Co-operation in Stevenage

Over the past 12 months, Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) has worked with the town's Youth Council to further develop opportunities for young people to influence the council. This initiative would play a key role in the plans for the future of the town.

In 2018, the SBC community development team began working with the youth council on further enhancing and empowering the ability of the group to reflect the town and the needs of younger residents. Working with the young people and the elected Youth Mayor, a structured work plan for the youth council was developed. The plan focused on the following: to increase membership, creating a stronger voice on issues affecting young people and driving empowerment to make decisions. Split into these three core areas, our restructure alongside youth council members has led to the following key outcomes during 2018/19.

Increased membership, diversity of representation and a role for every member

Over the past year, the youth council had doubled in size to 18, bringing a wide diversity of young people into decision-making process. For the first time this has included young people who are home schooled through partnerships with the local home school networks. In addition to this increase in size the youth council now works on new system of full meetings and working groups, with all young people having a role in one of four core working groups; Finance; Schools and Youth Work; Media and Communications; Events and Trips. These groups work alongside the elected Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the youth council.

The launch of our Co-operative Youth Work Fund

To ensure the youth council had the ability to improve the lives of other local young people, the council created a brand-new Co-operative Youth Work Fund with decisions made by the youth council. This new fund aims to build capacity around grassroots youth activity across the town, determined by young people's priorities. This is a move away from traditional top-down service provision. The Youth Mayor also oversees a dedicated Local Community Budget to support youth and community initiatives.

Young People and Council Decision Making

The Youth Council has developed its work programme to closer align with Stevenage Borough Council's decision-making processes. Council services are held to account by the council's executive if they have failed to effectively engage with children and young people over plans or decisions which will impact upon them. The Youth Council has started to help to inform some of the exciting new plans for Stevenage Town Centre. The council also held its first awards ceremony dedicated to young people, Making a Difference in October 2018. The success of this work has been down to a better understanding of young people and their hopes and aspirations for the town, recognising the active role they can play in the spirit of true co-operation.

For further information contact:

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