

Area Board Briefing Note Overview of Wiltshire Youth Council

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| Date prepared: | <i>July 2024</i> |
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Introduction

This briefing note provides an overview of the Youth Council's role and outlines what Councillors can expect from this body. The Youth Council is a crucial initiative aimed at fostering youth engagement in local governance and community development.

This year 13 Youth Council members were elected, and they meet together on a monthly basis; facilitated by the Voice & Participation Team, within Families and Children Services. The council is made up of young people aged 11 to 19 from across Wiltshire.

Role of the Youth Council

Our Youth Council serves as an advisory body, providing valuable insights and recommendations on issues affecting young people in our county. Their unique perspectives can help shape policies and programs that better address youth needs.

The Youth Council ensures that the voices of young people are heard in decision-making processes. It acts as a bridge between the youth community and Wiltshire Council, representing the interests and concerns of young residents.

Through participation in the Youth Council, members gain leadership and advocacy skills. This experience prepares them for future roles in civic and community life.

The Youth Council plans and executes 3 community projects, contributing to local development and addressing specific community needs. These projects can range from environmental initiatives to social programs.

The Youth Council engages with the broader youth population through forums, surveys, and social media. This helps ensure that the council's activities and recommendations are reflective of the wider youth community.

Members participate in national and regional initiatives, such as the British Youth Council and the United Kingdom Youth Parliament.

Expectations from the Youth Council

Councillors can expect termly updates from the Youth Council on their activities, projects, and key issues. This will be in the form of termly newsletter and presentations at council meetings where considered appropriate.

The Youth Council will provide informed recommendations on policies impacting young people. Councillors can expect well-researched and practical suggestions that address the specific needs of the youth demographic.

Youth Council Members will have the opportunity to attend a Council meeting to observe.

The Youth Council may seek to collaborate with councillors on initiatives and projects. This will include co-hosting events or supporting council-led programs aimed at youth development.

Councillors will often seek feedback from the Youth Council; this is most effectively achieved through engagement with the collective Youth Council and not through engagement with individual representatives. Similarly, the Youth Council will seek feedback from councillors on their initiatives and proposals. This two-way communication helps ensure that their activities align with broader county objectives and benefit from the experience of elected officials.

Councillors can expect the Youth Council to actively advocate for youth-related issues within the community. This includes raising awareness about challenges facing young people and promoting positive initiatives.

Conclusion

The Youth Council is a vital asset to our county, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the table. As county councillors, your support and engagement with the Youth Council will be instrumental in maximizing its impact. By working together, we can ensure that the voices of our young residents are heard and that their contributions lead to meaningful improvements in our community.

Thank you for your attention and support.