

Title of Report	Hackney Young Futures Commission Report	
Key Decision No	CE S146	
For Consideration By	Cabinet	
Meeting Date	27th March 2023	
Cabinet Member	<p>Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Young People and Children's Social Care</p> <p>Cllr Susan Fajana Thomas, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Regulatory Services</p>	
Classification	Open	
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards	
Key Decision & Reason	Please select and delete the answer not required Yes	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Implementation Date if Not Called In		
Group Director	<p>Mark Carroll, Chief Executive</p> <p>Jacque Burke, Group Director Children & Education</p>	

1. Cabinet Member's introduction

- 1.1. Listening to Children and Young People is paramount to ensure what we do works for Children and Young People. With Hackney's population younger than the national average¹, and 27.6% of residents under the age of 24, Hackney is committed to putting the voices of children and young people at the heart of our decisions. The approach for this work came from the Mayor's manifesto commitment in 2018 to empower and provide opportunities for children and young people to shape their lives. The work

¹ Office for National Statistics, 2021 Census

the Young Futures Commission carried out prior to the pandemic was incredibly valuable in understanding the experiences of children and young people living in the borough and what the Council could do to improve them. I want to again thank our Co-Chairs Shekeila Scarlett and Jermain Jackman, and our Vice Chairs Georgina Appeageyi and Mishaque Jarrett.

- 1.2. The Commission's report put forward specific recommendations for the Council to adopt so that services and practice can permanently embed children and young people in its processes. Most importantly though, the report aims at influencing a culture shift in the way we engage with younger residents and how we involve them in policy making and decision making processes. Once all the Asks and recommendations are delivered upon, we will have a blueprint of what the involvement of children and young people in local decision making looks like. The report demonstrates that if you give Children and Young People a platform they can identify what the issues are and also provide you with resolutions.
- 1.3. Since the Commission's report was first published in November 2020, a considerable amount of work has been carried out to map what progress has been made on the Asks put forward.
- 1.4. We recommend the Commission's Report to the Cabinet and that Hackney commits to delivering upon its Asks and overarching objective as part of the Borough's commitment to improving the lives of children and young people in Hackney.

2. Group Director's introduction

- 2.1. This paper sets out the work that the Young Futures Commission carried out in 2019 and the report it published with a set of Asks to the Council, focused on improving the lives of children and young people in Hackney. The report explains the work the Commission carried out and how it co-produced its findings, which were endorsed by the Council when it was first published. This paper now seeks to have a formal Cabinet decision for its vision and strategic direction, taking into account the reflections and learning from the first year of its implementation phase.
- 2.2. The overarching aim of Hackney Young Futures is to embed children and young people in its decision and policy making processes. Since the Commission's report was first published, the Council has been assessing its position on the specific recommendations the report put forward. The implementation of the Asks has been a collective and collaborative effort across Council services in understanding how to work together and involve children and young people, to ensure that young people have the best experience possible in Hackney.

- 2.3. From the outset of the work of the Young Futures Commission, we have been clear that this piece of work is not about creating and financing new initiatives aimed at children and young people. Instead, it focuses on an inward reflective exercise to understand how we can work more effectively and more creatively together and with children and young people. This includes understanding all aspects of young people's lives and how their families and communities are also affected.
- 2.4. The Commission's report clearly states how the Council needs to communicate more clearly what it does for children and young people, and to be more open to contribution and challenge from children and young people. The Council endorsed the report immediately after publication and laid out a work plan to progress on the Asks submitted. The approach taken was a whole systems approach, recognising that the kind of sustainable change being sought needs this kind of approach . A group of Hackney Young Futures Legacy Representatives is working with us to advise services on how to further embed children and young people's voices and involvement. They are also supporting the Council in developing what the legacy of the Commission will look like.
- 2.5. Once the Commission's report is formally adopted by the Council, we will continue working with children and young people to ensure that their voices are heard and that all Hackney Council services actively embed them in their decision making, planning, designing and delivery.

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1. **That Cabinet adopts the Hackney Young Futures Commission Report.**
- 3.2. **That Cabinet endorses the Council to make appropriate changes to ensure that how the Asks are met reflects the current needs expressed by children and young people.**
- 3.3. **That Cabinet supports the Council to work on the legacy of Young Futures to permanently embed children and young people's voices in policy making and decision making processes.**

4. **Reason(s) for decision**

- 4.1. The Young Futures Commission was born out of a pledge in the Hackney's Mayor's Manifesto in 2018 aimed at maximising the voice of young people in the decisions that shape their lives and ensure they can actively shape the opportunities available to them. It was set up in February 2019 as a commission independent of the Council led by young people (but organised, funded by and accountable to the Council), with the ambition to reach out to young people across Hackney and give them a space in which their voices could be heard. The Commission was made

up of young people, people who represent the community, academic partners, experts and councillors.

- 4.2. The [Valuing the Future Through Young Voices](#) report was published in November 2020. It urged the Council to listen to, learn about, and commit to act on the real experiences and aspirations of children and young people growing up in Hackney. The report stressed how important it is for Council's services to commit to putting children and young people's voices at the forefront of planning, engagement, responses and decision-making.
- 4.3. The Commission's report has been endorsed by the Council and Cabinet, and work has begun to deliver on its Asks. However, it was not taken through a formal decision process when first published. This paper formalises the Council's commitment to delivering upon the Commission's findings relevant to the whole of the borough.
- 4.4. Emerging themes resulted from the Commission's engagement exercises were grouped in the report into **six themes**: a **Bright Future** (Education, Training and Employment); a **Secure Future** (Housing and Advice); an **Active Future** (Spaces, Places and Activities); an **Inclusive Future** (Inclusive economy and Regeneration); a **Safe Future** (Crime and Safety); a **Healthy Future** (Health and Well-Being).
- 4.5. Within the six themes, **19 Asks** were formulated to the Council, which formed the basis of detailed proposed solutions. The Asks arose during the second phase of the Commission's work during which young people led workshops between representatives from local organisations, council services and Cabinet Leads. The Asks are more generic requests that the Council was asked to endorse and commit to:
 1. Reduce the Number of Rough Sleepers in the Borough.
 2. Improve the Quality of Social Housing and the local area.
 3. Increase Access to Housing and Advice Services.
 4. Review Young People's Mental Health Services.
 5. Review Foster Care Placements.
 6. Increase access opportunities to places, spaces and activities.
 7. Include Young People in the Regeneration of the Borough.
 8. Promote Intergenerational Dialogue.
 9. Support Young People and the Night Time Economy.
 10. Improve Communication to Young People.
 11. Reduce Serious Youth Violence and other forms of crime.
 12. Reduce the impact of the Fear of Crime on Young People.
 13. Improve the Relationships between Young People and the Police.
 14. Increase Access to Employment Opportunities.
 15. Provide Educational Support.
 16. Improve the Quality and Consistency of Alternative Provisions for Excluded Young People.

17. Reduce the inequality in Educational Attainment and Number of School Exclusions.

18. Amplify and Include Student voices in Decision making.

19. Develop Young People's Skills for Adulthood and Life.

- 4.6. The report also outlines **73 Recommendations**, or 'Hows', which suggests activities or actions that meet the spirit of the Asks for the overarching aim of embedding young people's voices in decision making processes.

An easy read summary of the Themes, Asks and Recommendations can be found [here](#).

- 4.7. Overall, the work of the Commission highlighted the changes the Council needs to invest on to address its style of engagement and response to issues as generally perceived by young people.

The Commission reported how young people perceive that:

- There is a **disconnect** between what the Council says its is doing and the lived experience of young people;
- There is **culture of defensiveness** from the Council when ideas or services are challenged or alternatives are presented;
- That despite a stated desire to change, there is an **underlying unwillingness to commit to real change**.

- 4.8. The Commission laid out what the Council needs to do after the publication of the report:

- Hackney Council and its Partners to reflect on the findings and accept the "Asks" made by the Commission;
- Hackney Council, together with the Commission, provide feedback to young people in the borough about how the Council and its Partners are going to respond to this report in a timely way;
- Hackney Council to identify how they will continue to engage and involve young people in decision-making in the future, post-Commission.

- 4.9. Mayor Glanville, Cabinet and the Council have committed to take time to absorb the feedback from children and young people through the Commission, consider the recommendations and identify the legacy of the Young Futures Commission as a way to permanently put the voices of young people at the heart of decision making and policy making in Hackney.

The 2022-2026 Hackney Labour Manifesto commits to delivering the recommendations of the Young Futures Commission, to publish a report on the Council's progress and to revisit the Commission in 2025 to explore

its impact and what young people wish to happen next.

- 4.10. Hackney Young Future is now in its implementation phase with the overall aim of changing the way the Council works with and for young people in Hackney. Hackney Young Futures' delivery plan outlines the system changes that will need to be put in place to systematically embed children and young people's voices in decision making and policy making in Hackney.
- 4.11. There are a number of related programmes of work that are led or supported by the Policy and Strategic Delivery including:
- Development of a Children and Young People Partnership Plan (led by Children and Families, supported by Policy and Strategic Delivery).
 - Reducing Harm and Trust and Confidence in Policing.
 - Improving Outcome for Young Black Men programme.
 - Inclusive Leadership and Workforce Diversity.
 - Anti-racism Action Plan 2022-2026.

To ensure that synergies and connections are made, resources have been identified in officers' capacity to lead on the delivery of the Asks and Recommendations. The key officers are:

- Strategic Lead for Policy and leads on most of the work outlined above will take overall lead responsibility;
- Strategic Delivery officer supporting the management trainee on delivery and day to day development of the legacy mode;
- Management Trainee role dedicated to the implementation of Hackney Young Futures.

As well as Council's officers, the Hackney Young Futures implementation phase recruited a group of young people employed by the Council as Hackney Young Futures Legacy Representatives to:

- Support the implementation phase of work to ensure that it continues to be steered by young people;
- Meet regularly as a group and with the management Trainee for reflective sessions where they share progress and learning;
- Act in an advisory capacity to Services, helping them to ensure that the voices and viewpoints of young people are considered in their service planning and delivery;
- Act as a link between Council services and other groups of young people across the borough (they have all been recruited from existing groups);
- Use the Young Futures communications channels effectively to reach young people and update them on the progress of the delivery of the Asks and any opportunities to get involved.

The Hackney Young Futures Legacy Representatives are recruited from young people's groups and organisations and are aged between 17 and 25 years old.

- 4.12. The Governance of the Hackney Young Futures implementation phase has a clear cycle of regular reporting to an Oversight Group chaired by Jacquie Burke, Corporate Leadership Team and Cabinet Oversight. In the interim, it also provided a space for the planning of Hackney's Children and Young People Partnership Plan.
- 4.13. The implementation phase started in January 2021 with a mapping exercise to understand how Council services were embracing and actioning the Asks and Recommendations relevant to them. The HYF Legacy Representatives who were also recruited to support the implementation phase worked as an advisory board to services on how to best embed young people's voices. The group agreed on prioritising working on recommendations related to education, mental health services, housing and improving the relationship between the police and young people.
- 4.14. From the first year of implementation of Hackney Young Futures, the Council has made good progress in progressing on the Asks and Recommendations. Fifty of the seventy-three recommendations have been marked as business as usual and in progress, meaning that either the recommendation is now part of regular Council's services or is in good progress. Fourteen recommendations have been marked as achievable, where services have indicated that they are able to action them but have not yet had the opportunity to do so. Finally, eight recommendations have been marked as lacking clarity or not achievable directly by the Council: four of these require additional funding and the Council is looking at what else could be done in the spirit of the Ask within current resources; one is unclear and will require further engagement with children and young people; three will be advanced through the existing work with the Police and rely on decision made by the Central Metropolitan Police Service.

5. **Details of alternative options considered and rejected**

- 5.1. **Do nothing:** this was rejected as there is a clear commitment from the Mayor and the Council to put the voices of children and young people at the heart of decision making and policy making in Hackney. The implementation of Hackney Young Futures has already begun and there is a need now to formulate what its legacy will look like.

Ask Directors to directly respond to relevant recommendations: this was rejected as, without adequate strategic coordination, it would have

been more challenging to identify synergies and opportunities for collaboration across the Council.

Ask Young Hackney to lead on Hackney Young Futures: this was rejected as it needed a strategic approach across the Council that also included older young people, which Young Hackney currently does not have scope for.

6. Background

6.1. National to local context

- 6.1.1. Currently, there is a lot of local activity, change and transformation work happening within and between services and systems in the borough, as well as a backdrop of national policy and legislation around improving the lives of children and young people in the borough. With this, comes the opportunity of involving children and young people in the decisions at a service level so that the delivery is directly informed and shaped by the voices of children and young people. Notwithstanding, we must acknowledge the challenges faced by Local Authorities and its partners within the context of the pandemic recovery, rising costs of living and possible cuts to public spending. All of these place limitations on what can be fully achieved without governmental commitment and resource allocation.

The Local Government Association (LGA) published 'A Child-centred Recovery'² in September 2020 outlining, amongst other things, how councils and the Government can implement more child-centred approaches to policy and decision-making, to make sure that children are at the heart, and highlight how the entire population would benefit from it. The report recommends going beyond capturing the voices of children and young people and using these to influence the policies and services directly impacting on them, and suggests that councils look at how all council decision making can be framed through their lens.

The NHS long term plan³ 2019-2024, outlines how it is rethinking some of their services for children and young people, with a specific focus on mental health services. Between the ages of 16-18, young people are more susceptible to mental illness, undergoing physiological change and making important transitions in their lives. The structure of mental health services often results in gaps for young people undergoing the transition from children and young people's mental health services to appropriate support including adult mental health services. The MHS mental health services will gradually move to a '0-25 years old' service acknowledging the period of transition young people go through between the ages of 19

² LGA, September 2020: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/child-centred-recovery>

³ [NHS Long Term Plan](#)

to 25. Hackney Young Futures, because it engaged with children and young people aged 13 to 25 years old, gathered a unique perspective in the specific challenges faced by older young people.

- 6.1.2. There are a number of initiatives and policies in the Council that aim at improving the lives of children and young people: Hackney Youth Parliament; Improving Outcomes for Black children and young people; Hackney Wick through Young Eyes; Change and Transformation Team in Children and Families Service; Hackney as a Child Friendly Borough; Anti-Racism Action Plan 2022-2026.

There are also a number of other Local Authorities working towards embedding children and young people's voices in decision making and policy making that the Council will be able to interact with in its work.

- 6.1.3. Most of the findings outlined by the Young Futures Commission resonate with the work carried out through the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men (YBM) programme, aimed at tackling inequalities for black boys and young black men. The HYF implementation phase built on the learnings from the YBM model of delivery by involving young people and utilising their lived experience to advise service delivery. The recommendations that are being drafted to ensure the legacy of the Young Futures Commission also build on the learnings from the YBM programme in exploring the necessary changes to permanently embed children and young people's voices in policy making and decision making processes.
- 6.1.4. The Anti-Racism Action Plan 2022-2026 that is currently being finalised builds on the recommendations from the Children and Education Anti-Racist Action Plan. This recognises that by making early years, education and early help inclusive and anti-racist, children and families will receive the most appropriate support. The majority of recommendations from the Young Futures Commission relate to education and delivery upon them will be reinforced by the Anti-Racism Action Plan 2022-2026.

6.2. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.2.1. The Council launched the Young Futures Commission into the experiences of young people in Hackney, how they view the borough, respond to its challenges and how they feel about Council services. The commitment was stated as a key action in the [Single Equality Scheme 2018-2022](#) that was developed to identify the proactive work needed, informed by a [detailed analysis of demographics and of inequality](#).
- 6.2.2. The Asks and recommendations put to the Council through the Commission's report were co-produced with children and young people and embedded an equality lens throughout its approach. The overarching aim was to understand how to tackle the inequality experienced by children and young people and what role the Council could play. At the

heart of the Commission's work and the Council's efforts in implementing its Asks, is to promote increased equality of opportunity and cohesion for children and young people. The report touches on most aspects of children and young people's lives and aspires to make the Council's services more accessible.

- 6.2.3. There are risks with not being able to deliver some of the specific recommendations, in particular those where the Council has limited agency over. Through partnership working, nevertheless, we seek to influence the changes put forward by children and young people in order to make adequate progress. Another risk is that some of the recommendations may feel out of date and need updating to reflect the most up to date feedback from children and young people. We recognise that this is something we will need to continue to review and adapt to. In this case, the service accountable with that Asks will work with children and young people to adapt the recommendation in line with a shared and up to date vision that is achievable.

6.3. **Sustainability**

- 6.3.1. Climate change is the greatest threat facing people and the planet today. One of the structural changes that is needed to avert the climate emergency requires children and young people to be at the heart and centre of actions to move into a climate neutral economy and protecting biodiversity. Today's children and young people are the first generation to feel the rapidly growing impacts of climate change and are the last generation to be able to mitigate its worst consequences.
- 6.3.2. As Hackney Young Futures seeks to embed children and young people's voices in decision making and policy making, it ensures that they will have a key role in [Hackney's commitments](#) to doing everything in their power to deliver net zero emissions across Council functions by 2040.

6.4. **Consultations**

- 6.4.1. There is no legal requirement to produce an overall engagement programme aimed at children and young people other than the statutory consultations exercises carried out for specific projects.
- 6.4.2. From February to August 2019, the Young Futures Commission conducted a wide reaching engagement programme, and spoke to over 2,500 children and young people living in Hackney. This marked the most comprehensive youth engagement exercise the borough has ever seen. Engagement activities included face to face peer led interviews, school assemblies, online forms, social media polls, roundtables, appearance at related events amongst others. The engagement exercise aimed at

looking into the experiences of young people in Hackney, how they view the borough, respond to its challenges and how they feel about Council services. The discussions revolved around three key questions: 'What is your favourite thing or place in Hackney and why?'; 'What is the biggest issue or problem affecting your life in Hackney and how does it affect you?'; 'If you were Mayor of Hackney, what would you do to make things better for children and young people aged 10-25 years old in your community, and how would you do it?'.

The Commission looked into the experiences of three distinct age groups:

- older children (ages 10 to 12)
- teenagers (ages 13 to 18)
- young adults (ages 19 to 25)

6.5. **Risk Assessment**

- 6.5.1. Engaging with children and young people is carried out in different ways and for different purposes. Stages of engagement are designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the residents' role in any public participation process. These are typically categorised as to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower. Some activities carried out by the Council may not be appropriate for some of the stages, resulting in limitations when engaging with children and young people.
- 6.5.2. There is a related risk that misunderstanding different types of engagement may affect the delivery of the Asks outlined in the Young Futures report and the overarching aim of embedding children and young people's voices in decision making and policy making. Ensuring that there is a consistent approach to engaging with children and young people across the Council will mitigate that.
- 6.5.3. There is an overall risk that if the Council does not address the findings of the Commission's report, children and young people's views on the Council will become more negative and disenfranchised, and negatively affect trust in public services.
- 6.5.4. There is an overall reputational risk in not formally adopting the Commission's report after public acknowledgment of its value and the political and corporate commitment to delivering it.

7. **Comments of the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.**

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Any recommendations requiring resources to implement will need to be contained within existing budgets.

7.2. Any further recommendations would be subject to detailed business cases in order to assess the financial viability of each proposal and considered as part of the Council's overall budget setting process.

8. Comments of the Director of Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

8.1. The Cabinet consists of the Elected Mayor and appointed Councillors who have the authority in accordance with Article 5.5(ii) and (viii) of the Councils constitution to set priorities that contribute to the life and development of the borough and promote and improve the economic and social wellbeing of the residents of the borough. The recommendations as set out in the Hackney Young Futures Commission report actively support, promote and encourage children and young people to be part of decision making processes affecting their lives.

Appendices

None

Background documents

None

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