

# Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting: 20 April 2023**



**Portfolio:** Wellbeing & Community Partnerships (Councillor Aniket Patel)

**Subject:** Annual review of the work undertaken by Epping Forest Youth Council (EFYC)

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**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (564470)

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives an annual progress report on the work undertaken by the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team with the Epping Forest Youth Council.

## **Report:**

Epping Forest Youth Council is a high-profile national award-winning Youth Council, comprising 23 young people, representing 8 Epping Forest secondary schools and the New City College (Epping Forest Campus). There is also one independent Youth Councillor who is schooled online. These young people represent the views of their peers and wider school communities. The current cohort will stand down in May 2024. Member support has enabled the Youth Council to continue creating youth friendly projects to engage with and benefit our communities.

On Thursday 20 April the Youth Council will make a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee highlighting their excellent work over the past year. They have been meeting weekly with the Young Persons' Officer, building on their training programme, taking part in consultations, learning about their local community from guest speakers and creating new projects.

The Youth Council will refer to the key areas of work undertaken in their first year.

### 1. EFYC project 2022/23 'Repair My Pocket'

EFYC's latest youth project for 2022/23, focuses on the cost-of-living crisis. The Youth Councillors designed a 12-question survey and conducted street interviews at the Essex Police and EFDC, community day of action. The survey has been shared with all EF secondary schools to complete. The aim is to assess how young people are being affected by financial pressures and to get a better understanding of how services can help them. The findings will be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### 2. Jack Petchey Foundation Funding

The Youth Councillors received £1k from the Jack Petchey Foundation to help educate young people about scammers. They purchased 800 of the 'Little Book of Scams' and arranged a presentation to Year 10 and above in their own school during the spring term and distributed the resources. The book has been produced by Thames Valley Police and is a valuable resource to avoid being scammed and losing money.

### 3. Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Safety Survey

Three Youth Councillors attend the Brentwood and Epping Forest IAG. A survey was conducted over December 2022 – January 2023 with Davenant Foundation school pupils, to identify how safe young people are feeling in their area and in their schools. It covers safety, including speeding, inappropriate parking, street lighting, scams and crime. The survey was conducted with Roding Valley High pupils in February and with all schools by the end of the spring term. The results will be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### 4. MiLife Blue (legacy project)

Due to the success of the schools' MiLife C19 mental health project which was designed by the 2021/22 cohort of Youth Councillors, EFDC and The Red Balloon Foundation worked on a new model to update the resources. The project remains available to EF schools in the new format and to schools outside the EF district at a cost. The project renamed MiLife Blue, supports a trauma informed response to young people dealing with mental health issues. This will sit alongside the inaugural award winning MiLife Green project which relates to more general mental health awareness.

### 5. EFYC Training

EFYC have completed their intensive induction training, covering professionalism, team building, leadership, presentation skills and public speaking. Their training continues to address projects such as Dementia Friends, Hate Crime, Gaming and Gambling addiction, the environment, Ride London and positive mental health.

#### **Reason for decision:**

It was agreed that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would receive an annual update on the work undertaken by the Community, Culture and Wellbeing Team with Epping Forest Youth Council.

#### **Options considered and rejected:** N/A

#### **Consultation undertaken:**

A range of consultations are taken with the Youth Councillors about current issues which inform future projects that will benefit young people in our communities, engaging, educating and signposting them to ensure the environment they live in is a healthier, happier place. These will be included in the presentation.

**Resource implications:** There has been no change to the core funding for day to day support and running costs of the Youth Council. However, there is no additional funding for Youth Council project work in 2023/24. This will be sourced through external funding where required.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:** N/A

#### **Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:** N/A

#### **Background Papers:** N/A

**Impact Assessments:** Equality Impact Assessment completed

#### **Risk Management:** N/A

**Equality:** Equality Impact Assessment completed