



COUNCIL – 26TH JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT: ELECTION OF CAERPHILLY YOUTH CHAMPION

REPORT BY: INTERIM HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the support of Council to extend the 2 year term (2014-2016) of the current Caerphilly Youth Champion and support proposals to defer the election for the position of youth champion until after the Local Government Elections in May 2017.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Youth Champion helps young people to understand the importance of engaging with the democratic process and promotes the priorities of the Youth Forum within the county borough. This report seeks to extend the term of the current Youth Champion until post Local Council Elections in May 2017.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Youth Champion is a key initiative in discharging the Council's responsibility to increase the number of people who vote at elections and provides the link between young people in the county borough and elected members.
- 3.2 The Local Participation Action Plan for Children and Young People 2013-2016, recognises the role of the Youth Champion as a key aspect of promoting young people's right to have their voices heard on issues that affect them. Under Objective 2 – Promote children and young peoples right to be heard on a range of issues; the plan clearly outlines the role of the Youth Champion in ensuring the participation of Children & Young People.
- 2.1.2 – Information for professionals on how & where to take Children & Young Peoples feedback.
- 2.1.4 – Support and further utilise the role of the Youth Champion, expanding the remit of the role of the Youth Champion to Children & Young Peoples Champion.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 In previous years, and in order to elect a Youth Champion, the Council has taken part in a national event called "I'm a Councillor, Get me out of Here!!", which was a web based event and required the Candidates to post their manifestos online and take part in a 2-week question and answer session with young people from Caerphilly CBC. At the end of the "Getting to Know you week", a vote is undertaken at the end of each day, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated from the competition. This continues until the final remaining candidate is crowned 'Youth Champion'.

- 4.2 The Company that organised the “I’m a Councillor, Get me out of Here!!” competition has withdrawn its services, and as a result, in 2014, Caerphilly CBC hosted a Youth Champion Election in the form of a ballot. Ballot papers and ballot boxes were provided to participating secondary schools and youth groups, along with all materials required to conduct an election.
- 4.3 Across the county borough, 5 Comprehensive Schools and 11 Youth Groups took part in the election through the ballot boxes posted within their venues and 200 votes were placed online. After a count of the 3,412 votes, Councillor Mike Prew was elected as Caerphilly Youth Champion 2014-2016.
- 4.4 Since the last report to Council in 2014, the role of the Youth Champion has undertaken further development and during 2015, a highly successful ‘Caerphilly Youth Question Time’ was hosted, in which the Youth Champion acted as the host and ‘roving mic’, and young people from schools and youth groups were invited to ask a variety of questions to politicians such as an MP, AM, Police and Crime Commissioner, Council Leader and Local Councillor about the issues that affect them.
- 4.5 In light of the impending Local Government Elections in May 2017, it is proposed that the role of the Youth Champion be extended for further 12 months, subject to the approval of the Youth Forum at their Borough Wide Meeting on 21st January 2016. The extension of the term of the current Youth Champion will involve continued attendance and representation in Youth Forum Meetings, visits to Comprehensive Schools in the county borough for assemblies or surgeries, attendance at Youth Groups and continuing the work with the Youth Forum to develop involvement in projects such as Test Purchasing.
- 4.6 Subject to the continuation of the current Youth Champion within the role. It is proposed that, following the Local Government elections in May 2017, an election in the form of a ballot will be conducted within the participating Comprehensive Schools and Youth Groups, with an electronic voting system also available on the Youth website. The Youth Champion Working Group will continue to meet to consider the role and term of the Youth Champion and any further changes will be reported to Council for approval.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications directly associated with this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses, which have not been incorporated into the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and continue to support the work and development of the Youth Champion.

- 9.2 Members are asked to endorse the delay of the election of the new term for the youth champion until after the Local Government elections in May 2017 and the proposed extension to the term of the current Youth Champion, subject to the approval of the Youth Forum.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To promote the positive role and work of the Youth Champion in the County Borough.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006, Section 69.

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