

Agenda Item No. 6 (f)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

8 June 2017

Report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services

**Update on Derbyshire Youth Council Activities April 2016 - March
2017 – (Young People)**

Purpose of Report

To inform Cabinet about the priorities and activities of the Derbyshire Youth Council (DYC) and development of a Participation Strategy for Derbyshire Children's Services.

That Cabinet notes that the elected member with responsibility for young people will be seeking to meet with DYC to discuss their priorities further.

Information and Analysis

Participation Strategy

The participation strategy has been developed in collaboration with children and young people and their families, NHS colleagues, colleagues across the Local Authority and the Independent and Voluntary Sector, including Healthwatch, The Blend Youth Project, Fairplay, Safe and Sound and Umbrella.

Its vision is that children, young people and their families will be at the heart of everything we do, and that Children's Services will develop collaborative relationships to support a culture of "doing with, rather than being done to". Participation is everyone's business and happens when:

- Children and young people are involved in decisions which affect their lives.
- Children and young people have a say in shaping the services that they need and receive.
- Children and young people's rights are understood and upheld.

- Children and young people feel safe and happy and are given opportunities to positively contribute to their future.

The participation strategy sets out how Children's Services in Derbyshire will seek to involve children and young people and their parents and carers in decision-making about the development and delivery of services they receive. Cabinet is invited to note the Participation Strategy which is at Appendix 1. The Strategy will be published on the Derbyshire County Council Youthinc Something to say page http://www.derbyshireyouthinc.com/something_to_say/

A realistic and achievable action plan will be developed to support implementation of the strategy and ensure that a consistent approach to participation can be evidenced across children's services.

The DYC

The 2014-16 Derbyshire Youth Council (DYC) completed its term in office in March 2016. The 2016-2018 DYC has now been in office for more than 12 months and this report provides an update on its key priorities and activities.

The four key aims of the DYC are:

1. To improve the lives of young people in Derbyshire, particularly through the improvement of services offered to young people by Derbyshire County Council.
2. To ensure that young people are directly consulted on all issues that are likely to have a significant impact on their well-being, and providing a system through which this consultation can occur.
3. To encourage more young people to become involved in their local community.
4. DYC Manifesto Pledges: To promote the views held by young people about wider issues, such as Mental Health, tackling Racism and Discrimination, votes for 16 and curriculum for life in schools.

Over the past year, the DYC has been engaged in the following activities:

Buddy Mentors in Schools for Young Carers

- The DYC has agreed to offer 'Buddy Mentors' in each school to support Young Carers. 'Buddies' are now awaiting Safeguarding Training from the newly-commissioned service provider Derbyshire Carers Association in May 2017 to enable them to fulfil their role.

Designated DYC Seat for a Young Carer Representative

- A further proposal for the 2016/18 DYC and future DYCs is that a designated seat is created for a representative of Young Carers, a young lady has been elected in January 2017

Youthinc – We Grant scheme

- The Youth Grants report of 15 December 2015, which was approved by Cabinet, authorised the setting up of an earmarked reserve to use to fund projects in Derbyshire (monies collected from subscriptions from young people's projects)
- The scheme has supported the development of young people's projects throughout Derbyshire and was administered by the Participation Team and local Youth Forums and their Leads for local projects. Any Countywide projects required approval from the DYC.
- 36 projects were allocated funding with a total spend in 16/17 of £35,445, the remaining balance of £14,555 is held as an earmarked Reserve for Youthinc (as authorised by Cabinet on 15th December 2015) and is available for a further round of Grants.
- The December 2015 Cabinet report also approved the use of the existing Red book balances to support Youthinc We Grant scheme in future years, at the 31st March 2017 these balances stood at £46,602.
- Evaluation reports are being collated for May/June 2017 to inform a further report to Cabinet.

Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge Day

- The DYC set up a steering group to approach organisations to enable the youth councillors to take part in taking over the roles and responsibilities within different organisations on 18th November 2016 and subsequent months.

This was a hugely successful and exciting engagement project which saw organisations across England open their doors to children and young people to take over adult roles. It put children and young people in decision-making positions and encouraged organisations and businesses to hear their views. Children gained an insight into the adult world and organisations benefited from a fresh perspective about their work.

The DYC had offers from: Derby Museum, The Silk Mill, Police & Crime Commissioner's Office, Libraries and Chesterfield Borough Council, Elected Members and Strategic Director of Children's Services.

The DYCs have had some really positive feedback from the 'Take Over Day' organisations/partners:-

- The Strategic Director of Children's Services commented *'Iona's contribution was really insightful and helped us a lot in our thinking'*
- The Library staff commended the group on their contribution to the day and identified that their involvement had enhanced other young people's experiences during the day
- The Curator commented that the young people's involvement had informed them about what young people expect from a Museum and was crucial to informing the vision of the Museum to *'youth proof'* the exhibitions.
- The Police and Crime commissioner was *'very impressed by the confidence and enthusiasm showed and we are all grateful for their input into the day'*. The PCC concluded that the young person involvement in the day demonstrated that Derbyshire young people are interested in what happens in their communities and are trying to make a difference.
- Organisations who took part pledged to continue to involve young people in their design and delivery of their services.

NHS England Youth Forum

- The British Youth Council worked with NHS England on a pilot project - to create a brand new NHS Youth Forum, to help shape health services and to hold NHS England to account. Rosie G (Special Educational Needs & Disability representative) and Oliver S (Member of the Youth Parliament) were elected and have both been working tirelessly in their roles to improve patient services for young people within the NHS. This is a really exciting and prestigious opportunity for both of our DYC councillors.

DYC Priorities

- The DYC has discussed the national "Make Your Mark" campaign priorities and identified two of these priorities that they wish to campaign for locally. These are votes for 16 year olds and curriculum for life in schools.
- It is recommended that the elected member with responsibility for young people meets with the DYC to discuss their priorities further.

Electing the DYC 2018 – 2020 Big Vote Process

The Big Vote planning process is underway for the 2018 – 2020 elections. A time line is attached as Appendix 2.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: - human resources; financial; legal and human rights; equality of opportunity; prevention of crime & disorder; health, environmental, social value, property and transport considerations.

Key Decision

No

Strategic Director's Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Note the priorities and activities of the Derbyshire Youth Council (DYC) 2016-18 and development of a participation strategy for Derbyshire Children's Services;
- (ii) Note that the elected member with responsibility for young people will be seeking to meet with DYC to discuss their priorities further.

Jane Parfremment, Strategic Director for Children's Services



Children's
Participation
~
Derbyshire's
Strategy



Article 12 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): Children have the right to be listened to and to have their views taken seriously in the decisions that affect their lives.

Foreword

The 'Participation' definition and what it means to me – 'participation refers to different mechanisms for young people to express opinions – and ideally exert influence – regarding political, economic, management or other social decisions'

It is extremely important for young people to be able to participate in everyday council business, as the decisions that employees of the council make on a daily basis, can have huge implications in both the short and long term future for individuals and different groups of young people.

By enabling young people to work with the decision makers and inform them about their views and opinions, not only does this strengthen the council's commitment to listening to the voice of young people, but empowers the young person's voice to be heard throughout the delivery of services that ultimately will affect them and in turn effect the necessary changes.

Realistically, not all young people can participate directly in the participation process that Derbyshire County Council offers however, it is inspiring for other young people to see their peers being accepted and listened to, having a good working relationship with the decision making adults and having a Participation Strategy that is inclusive and equitable.

This Participation Strategy will underpin Participation in Derbyshire and ensure young people are involved in the council's core business and partners and agencies will be able to work meaningfully with groups to ascertain their views and use this information to improve the services they provide for young people and their families.

Tom Ephgrave Derbyshire Youth Council Member 2014-16

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1. What our Young People told us about Participation

We asked members of the Derbyshire Youth Council what Participation means to them.

They told us that participation:

- Is a right for all children and young people
- Should be accessible and inclusive
- Should be built into the values, structures and procedures of all organisations providing services
- Is based on respect and honesty
- Is a dialogue to influence change
- Is good for everybody
- Is everyone's responsibility

They also provided us with the following top tips to make sure we get it right:

- Respect us
- Involve us from the start
- Listen to us
- Be open and honest with us
- Make it fun
- Involve all of us
- Support us to make our own decisions
- Give us time
- Make sure we get something out of it
- Prove you are listening to us

They described good participation as:

- Making sure consultations are followed up with more information about next steps in the process
- Listen to what has been said, take on board the different feedback given
- Don't assume how a young person would speak. Ask us!
- Don't ignore us or treat us as a 'tick box' exercise!

They described bad participation as:

- Arriving with a finished product; tell us well in advance so we can actually make a difference
- Adults trying to sound like young people! using words in a way that we wouldn't
- Ignoring young people's input, into relevant Consultations

- Using young people's groups to come and 'speak at', not asking us for our input and just delivering a presentation because it is part of the process.

2. Our Response to what they told us

2.1 Our Vision

'Working creatively together to inspire and empower children, young people and their families and communities to be the best they can be: safe, healthy, happy, learning and working'

This Participation Strategy has been developed in collaboration with children and young people and their families, NHS colleagues, colleagues across a range of children's services and from both the Local Authority and the Independent and Voluntary Sector, including Healthwatch, The Blend Youth Project, Fairplay, Safe and Sound and Umbrella.

We are committed to involving children and young people and their families in decision making. We endeavour to work collaboratively with children and young people and their families to develop and sustain quality services, providing challenge and scrutiny to ensure the services we offer are supporting great outcomes.

Our vision is for children, young people and their families to be at the heart of everything we do and for us to develop collaborative relationships to support a culture of "doing with, rather than being done to".

We believe participation is everyone's business and happens when:

- Children and young people are involved in decisions which affect their lives.
- Children and young people have a say in shaping the services that they need and receive.
- Children and young people's rights are understood and upheld.
- Children and young people feel safe and happy and are given opportunities to positively contribute to their future.

This Participation Strategy sets out how Children's Services in Derbyshire will seek to involve children and young people and their

parents and carers in decision making about the development and delivery of services they receive.

2.2 What we mean by Participation

It is important to establish a shared understanding of what participation is. We believe participation is not a one-off, event-based undertaking or an end in itself but a **guiding principle** to build a meaningful, effective and ongoing dialogue between children, young people and their families and staff. Children and young people's experience of participation should be monitored and structural and systemic barriers should be identified and addressed.

Participation should be relevant, informed, voluntary, safe, respectful and transparent. Children must not be pressured into participatory activities and independent advocacy support should be sought where appropriate. There is no minimum age at which children can participate and younger children should be offered appropriate support, in line with their evolving capacities, to play an increasingly informed and active role in their community and in issues which affect them.

We know that effective Participation happens when:

- It is recognised, valued, planned and resourced.
- There are clearly described roles for children, young people and parents.
- It is evident at all stages in the developing, planning, delivery and monitoring of services.
- There are strong feedback mechanisms to ensure that children, young people and parents understand the impact participation is making.

2.3 Why we promote Participation

**“If the people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of change do not know it is happening – then it is probably not happening.
Lord Herman Ouseley, former Chair of the Commission for Racial
Equality**

For children and young people, knowing that they have the right to be heard in decisions which affect them boosts not only their sense of

security but also their self-confidence. This opens the way to developing and applying the skills, language and concepts that empowers them to claim their rights and to advocate for the rights of children everywhere.

There is a raft of legislation and policy guidance which provides a framework to ensure that children and young people participate in decisions which affect them and issues in their communities. They are evidence-based from actively listening to children and young people and will help them to feel valued, keep them safe and ensure that the support they are given is meeting their needs. Summary details of key legislation and policy guidance is available in appendix 1.

We are committed to promoting and working in a collaborative way to improve outcomes; we want the child or young person's journey to be seamless and to ensure the child's voice is heard and acted upon whenever possible

2.4 The Benefits of Participation

We believe that participation can provide:

Benefits for children and young people

- Children and young people can build on existing skills and develop new ones, increasing confidence and self-esteem
- Children and young people will be able to better understand organisations that support them and how to influence them
- Children and young people benefit from new and better services that have changed and improved in response to their needs
- Children and young people are active participants in their own support
- The wishes and feelings of children and young people are given due consideration by decision-makers, enabling children and young people to make a positive contribution.
- Children and young people are able to express their views freely

Benefits for parents and carers

- Parents and carers can build on existing skills and develop new ones, increasing confidence and self-esteem.
- Parents and carers better understand organisations and how to influence them.
- Parents and carers have a better understanding of the decisions that are made by organisations that affect their families.
- Parents and carers benefit from new and better services that have changed and improved in response to their needs.
- Parents and carers are active in their own support and the support of their children/young people.
- The wishes and feelings of parents and carers are given due consideration by decision makers, parents and carers feel they are making decisions that take account of their feelings and wishes.
- Parents and carers feel informed about organisations and empowered to make decisions with or on behalf of their children and young people with increased confidence.
- Parents and carers become aware of the complexities involved and challenges faced by professionals in bringing about change.
- Parents and carers share knowledge that enables professionals to understand families better, and parent and carers have confidence in the professionals they work with.
- Parents and carers become aware of the 'professional view' and will come to understand this better.

Benefits for organisations

- Information can be gained from children and young people as citizens about their changing attitudes and needs
- Parents, carers, children and young people can bring fresh perspectives and new ideas about services
- Services and policies can be designed, delivered and commissioned on actual rather than perceived needs.

Benefits for the wider community

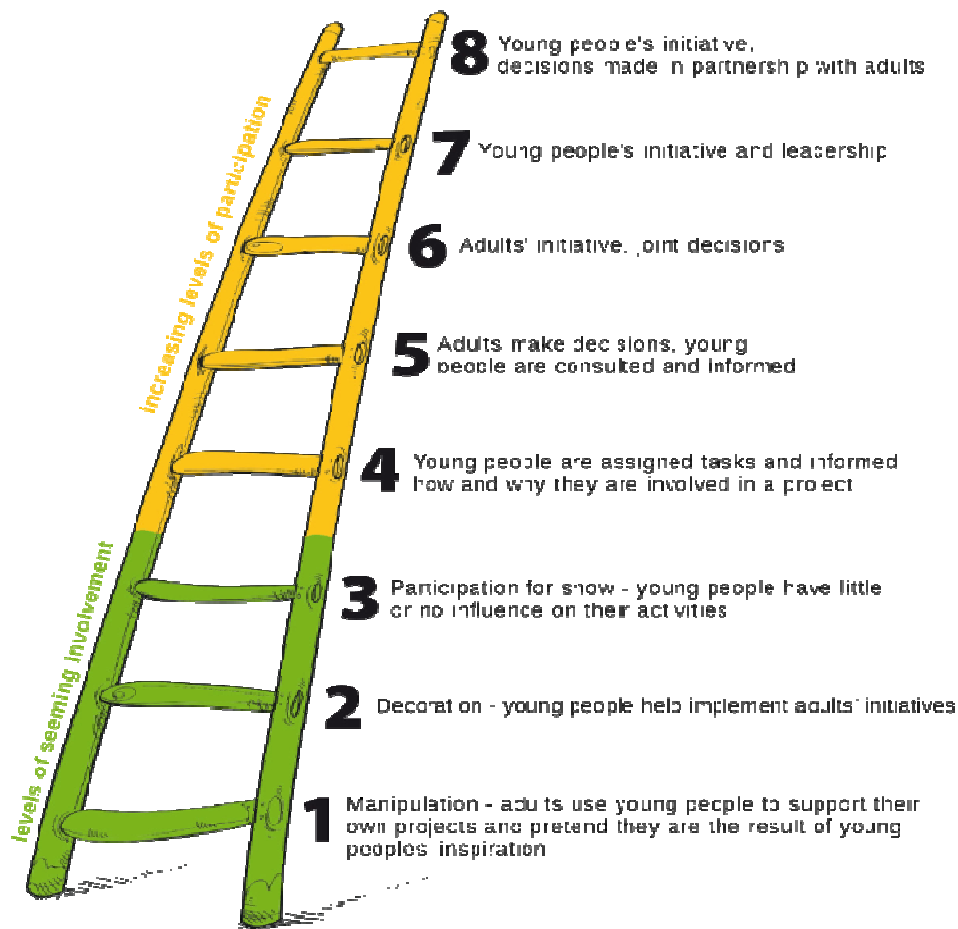
- There is a more vibrant and healthy local democracy through the active involvement of children, young people and families
- Community cohesion is fostered through inclusion in local decision-making
- There is an empowering environment that raises aspirations among children and young people and the wider community
- Children, young people and families are pro-actively involved in shaping their communities

2.5 Models for Participation

There are a number of different models of participation. Some models take a hierarchal view of an ideal level of participation whilst others see participation as a process that offers a choice from a range of involvement. All good practice models recognise the importance of reaching a constructive, safe balance between the principle of listening to a child's wishes and feelings alongside the principle of the promoting the best interests of the child.

In Derbyshire we have adopted Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation. We believe that this model will assist us to develop a self-assessment tool to identify how successfully we enable participation within our organisation and what we need to do next.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation provides a means of evaluating the quality of participation with children and young people across eight levels. Levels show an incremental increase in active participation with level 1 being the lowest in terms of children, young people and families having very little influence on decisions, to level 8 illustrating true participation.



There are other models which are useful when developing and reviewing participation practice. These models can be used by themselves or together to evaluate and improve participation. Three notable models for reference and consideration are:

The National Youth Agency Hear By Right Standards Framework

This sees participation as a framework that can influence all aspects of an organisation. Hear by Right is based on the established Seven S model of organisational change. To read more about Hear by Right click here: [Hear By Right](#)

Participation Works

Is a partnership of six national children and young people's agencies that enable organisations to effectively involve children and young people in the development, delivery and evaluation of services that

affect their lives with Models, toolkits and resources are available to download. To read more about Participation Works click here: [Participation Works](#)

Shier's Pathway to Participation

Youth participation is a process rather than a specific event or project. Shier's pathway to participation model is useful in assessing organisational readiness and commitment to the youth participation beyond individual projects. The model offers a set of questions to help organisations work out where they currently stand and identify the areas they need to improve. To read more about Shier's Pathway click here: [Shier's Pathway](#)

2.6 Our strategy

Our strategy seeks to develop a new relationship with children and young people and their families founded on “doing with, rather than being done to”; we are seeking to develop a whole system approach which is person-centred and feels less bureaucratic.

- [We will listen to the views.](#) wishes and feelings of the child, young person and their parents and/or carers.
- We will ensure that children and young people and their families are able to participate as fully as possible in decisions and are provided with the information and the support necessary to help them in those decisions.
- We will be respectful, inclusive and empower children and young people and their families to participate
- We will use straightforward, clear, jargon free language that is understood by all
- We will use a collaborative approach in everything we do.
- We will seek to develop honest, positive and productive working relationships with children and families.
- We will encourage staff to seek new and creative ways to engage and help young people participate in their communities
- We will ensure the views and experiences of children and young people and their families are at the centre of service design and influence development and strategic thinking.

- We will set out what we need to do in an action plan and regularly monitor and review our effectiveness to ensure all children and young people and their families are able to participate as fully as possible

2.7 What have we done so far

Derbyshire Youth Council

Derbyshire has valued the voice and involvement of young people aged 11 to 19 years old in shaping services since 2002 through the establishment of the Derbyshire Youth Council.

The youth council is made up of elected members aged from 11 to 19 who are elected through their school, academy or special school in the “Big Vote”. We also have co-opted seats for young people who are in care, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, a health representative and a young carer seat. In the 2016-18 Council 50% of Derbyshire’s Special Schools are represented. The full council meets for a full day conference every two months to work on projects and issues important to young people.

Every two years there's an election when new members can join the youth council and get involved in making decisions about things that are going on.

Children in Care Council

When a child or young person comes into care their local authority becomes their 'corporate parents', this means they have to make sure that everything a parent would normally do to look after their child still happens.

Derbyshire’s Children in Care Council is a place where children and young people in care can share their experiences of the care system and decide what they think needs to change. This helps their 'corporate parents' know how to improve things for children in care.

Children in Care Council meetings take place about every six weeks and we have meetings across the whole of Derbyshire. We also have some fun days. We are always looking for new Children in Care Council members.

We still want to hear from you if you've something to tell us about your experience of being in care, but meetings aren't for you.

Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice

Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice represents Derbyshire parents and carers of children and young people with SEN or disabilities. They work closely with other established parent support groups to ensure their views are represented.

Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice works alongside Derbyshire County Council, education, health and social care services and other service providers to ensure the services we commission, plan and deliver meet the needs of children and families with SEN or disabilities in Derbyshire.

3. Safeguarding

When organising events to facilitate the participation of Children and Young People and their families, we have a duty to ensure that these events are safe for everyone and that the appropriate safeguarding and risk assessments have been undertaken. It is important that you follow your own organisation's policies and procedures.

For more information: [Click Here](#)

Appendix 1 – Summary details of key legislation and policy guidance relating to Participation

i) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

‘parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with age and maturity of the child.’

This right is reinforced by Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Children Act 1989, which requires services to ascertain the ‘wishes and feelings’ of children and give due consideration (with regard to the child’s age and understanding) to these when determining what services to provide, or what action to take.

To read more [Click Here](#)

ii) The Children and Families Act 2014

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (the Act) places new duties on Local Authorities and their partners, including Health and Well-being Boards, with regard to how children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are assessed and supported from September 2014.

The Act is supported by a revised special educational needs and disability code of Practice: 0-25 years January 2015. The legislation and accompanying guidance calls for the participation of children, young people and their parents and carers to be involved both in the individual decisions made about the support they need and in the development of local services.

To access the Young Persons guide to the Children and Families Act 2014 [Click Here](#)

iii) **'The voice of the child: learning lessons from serious case reviews'.**

This thematic report of Ofsted's evaluation of serious case reviews from 1 April to 30 September 2010', highlights five main messages with respect to the voice of the child:

- The child was not seen often enough by the professionals involved, or was never asked their views and feelings
- Agencies did not listen to adults (such as advocates or teachers) who tried to speak up on behalf of the child and who had important information to give
- Parents (or carers) stopped professionals from seeing and listening to the child
- Workers paid too much attention to the needs of the parents, and not enough on the needs of the child
- Agencies did not understand well enough what was going on to protect the child

To read more on "The voice of the child: learning lessons from serious case reviews" [Click here](#)

iv) **Working Together 2015**

Working Together states that effective safeguarding arrangements in every local area should be underpinned by two key principles:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- a child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

To read more on Working Together 2013 [Click here](#)

v) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and children missing from home, care or education.

‘Make sure that local strategies and plans are informed by the opinions and experiences of those who have been at risk of or have suffered from child sexual exploitation’

To read more on “The sexual exploitation of children, it couldn’t happen here?” [Click here](#)

vi) Positive for Youth

‘Positive for youth’ (December 2011) is a cross-government policy for young people aged 13-19. This paper urges national and local authorities to listen to the voice of young people and engage them as partners in decision making.

The British Youth Council is the Government’s key partner in promoting Youth Involvement and has produced a self-assessment toolkit ‘The Youth Voice Vehicle toolkit’

To read more about the “British Youth Council Youth Voice Vehicle” [Click here](#)

vii) Wider reading including:

Youthinc Derbyshire Something to Say [Click here](#)

Children’s Rights Learn More [Click Here](#)

Children’s Participation in decision –making survey of participation workers [Click Here](#)

Derbyshire’s Local Offer [Click Here](#)

How to Engage Young People in the Local Offer [Click Here](#)

Changes to the special educational needs and disability support system: easy read guide for children and young people. [Click Here](#)

Equality Act 2010 Advice for Schools [Click Here](#)

Mental Capacity Act: Making Decisions [Click Here](#)

Appendix 2

Big Vote Time Line – Key Dates

March 21 st / 22 nd	Head Teacher Conferences x 2 to inform them about the Big Vote Process
March 22 nd 2017	Meet with Communications re Nomination Booklets/Teaching Guide formulation/amendments with a view to go to print after DYC meeting.
March 25th 2017	Review current Nomination Information with Derbyshire Youth Council at meeting ready to print
May/June 2017	Attend Extended Leadership Team/Locality/Multi Agency Team Managers meetings to inform of process/roles & Responsibilities ask for nominated leads in localities.
June 2017	Information goes onto Youthinc Something to Say Page / Staff Bulletin / Press Release.
June 2017	Press Release out via Communications informing young people of forthcoming Big Vote
6th June 2017	Publicity, Teaching Guides, nomination forms out into schools in plenty of time to aid school planning.
June 2017	Multi Agency Team Managers to let Ruth Peat (Integrated Youth Support Officer) know Lead worker names in localities
1st August/September 2017	Press Release out via Communications to let young people know nominations are opening with time line
5 th September 2017	Publicity reminders out into schools with letters identifying lead workers with contact details.
11th September 2017	Nominations Open
20th November 2017	Nominations Close
4th – 15th Dec 2017	Collation of Nomination and information about candidates
18 th Dec - 8 th Jan 2018	Ballot Papers printed by Digital Print
December 2017	Lead Youth Workers to arrange Local Youth Forum Dates and let Ruth Peat (Integrated Youth Support Officer) have them for inputting onto Youthinc Something to Say page.
8th Jan – 16th Feb 2018	Hustings and Canvassing in schools supported by Lead Workers from Multi Agency Teams
5 th – 16 th Feb 2018	Ballot Papers into schools by the Orange Van/post distribution Service
5th – 9th March 2018	Voting week – votes to be counted and verified by schools/Lead workers results to be sent to Ruth Peat (Integrated Youth Support Officer) by 9th March at 5pm.
w/c 12th March 2018	Nominated young people onto the Derbyshire Youth Council invited to an Induction Evening on the 23rd March with Elected Members, current Derbyshire Youth Council and staff.
w/c 12th March 2018	Young people not nominated to the Derbyshire Youth Council are invited to geographical ‘Satellite’ meetings in local areas to meet with the Lead Youth Workers with responsibility for the local youth forums. At these meetings they will be given more detailed information about the local forums, Local Area Committees, Parish Council Meetings etc., and the work that they do. Young people will be encouraged to attend these meetings to bolster the attendance of interested enthusiastic, community minded young people to make sure the ‘voice of local communities’ are heard at county level.