

Report



Cabinet

Part 1

Date: 17th April 2019

Item No: 7

Subject Children's Charter – The Young Person's Promise

Purpose To propose a Young Person's Promise (Children's Charter) to Cabinet which has been developed through extensive engagement with young people.

Author Policy, Partnership and Involvement Manager

Ward City-wide

Summary The Council's Corporate Plan made the commitment to have in place a Children's Charter, to set out promises, to guide policy and decision-making. From the onset it was decided that the Charter (which will be known as the Young Person's Promise) would be developed by young people, with Newport Youth Council leading engagement with stakeholders. Following extensive engagement work, this report proposes a draft Young Person's Promise, attached as annex 1, for Cabinet's consideration.

Proposal Cabinet to:

- 1) Consider the draft Young Persons Promise and the engagement work undertaken;
- 2) Endorse the Promise as a set of commitments for how the Council will work with and for children and young people.

Action by All services - the Young Person's Promise has implications across all Service Areas and Council functions, and is not limited to traditional 'children's services'.

Timetable If agreed by Cabinet the intention is for a high profile public launch of the Young Person's Promise to raise awareness and build ownership. The Promise will then form an ongoing set of commitments to guide the Council's work with children and young people.

This report was prepared after consultation with:

Cabinet Members for Education & Skills, Community & Resources, Social Services
Aspirational People Board
Corporate Management Team
Strategic Director - People
Newport Youth Council
Various children and young people's groups (listed in report)
Newport school children
Looked After Children

Signed

1.0 Background

Context

The rights to which all children and young people under the age of 18 are entitled to are set out internationally in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC was drawn up in 1989 to ensure that universal rights of children are upheld throughout the world. It sets out fundamental rights in 41 articles covering the things that children and young people need to make sure that they are safe, that they need to survive and develop, and have a say in decisions that affect their lives. The Welsh Government adopted the Convention as the basis for policy making for children and young people in Wales in 2004. This means that Council's must give due regard to children's rights in the course of their business.

The Council's Corporate Plan 'Improving People's Lives' states the intention to have in place a Children's Charter which will set out commitments to children and young people and their families, including specific commitments to children in care and care leavers. A charter is a set of promises that help in decision making and policy development but do not replace laws. They set out the rights of children and young people when they use Newport City Council's services but also in what they can expect the Council to be doing for them. The Charter for Newport has been developed by young people for young people and includes the commitments which matter most to the young people of Newport.

In Wales, there are seven National Participation Standards to help organisations and individuals make sure all work involving the participation of children and young people is of a high standard and is a positive experience. The Standards identify the key issues that all workers should be aware of when working with children and young people in Wales. Throughout development of the Promise the National Participation Standards were adhered to and they will continue to guide its implementation.

Initial feedback from young people was that they preferred the term "Young Person's Promise" rather than the words Children's Charter. Therefore, throughout this document and going forward the Children's Charter will be referred to as the 'Young Person's Promise' or shortened to 'the Promise'.

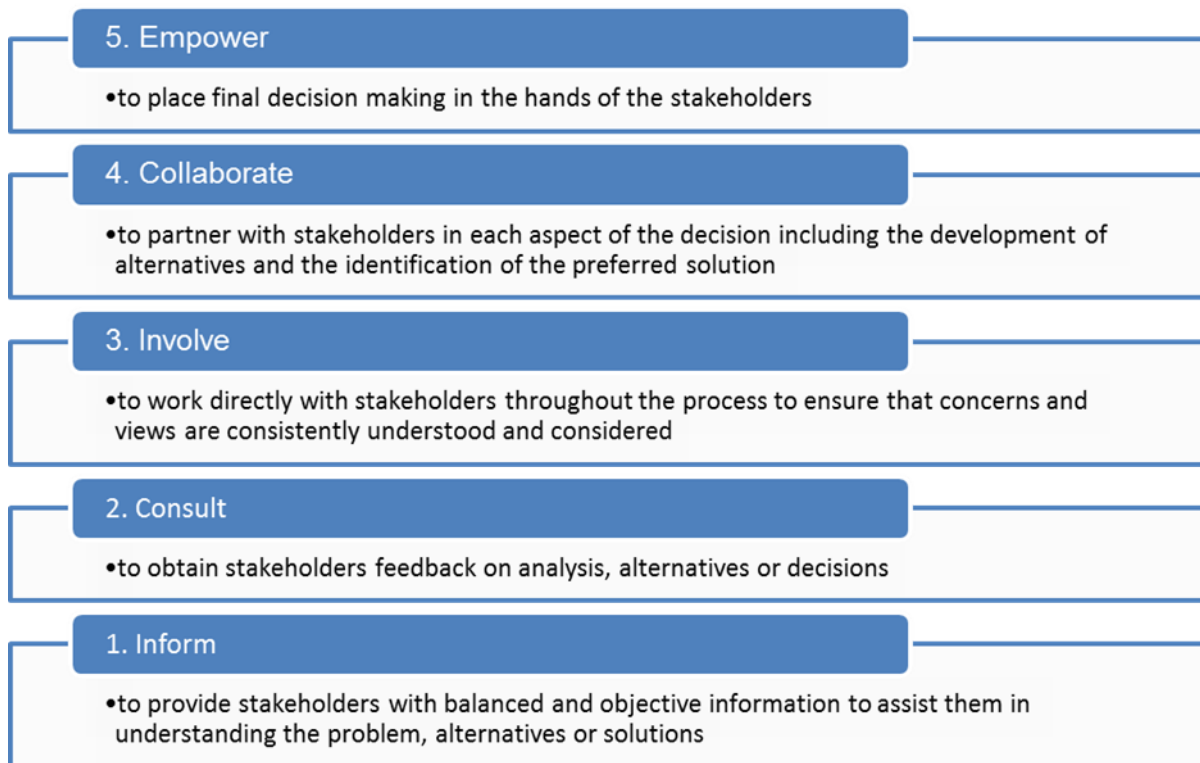
2.0 Engagement of young people

There has been extensive engagement with children and young people throughout the development process of the Young Person's Promise. The process has been young person led, and has included a series of workshops with Newport Youth Council as well as gaining feedback from School councils. In December an engagement event was held in partnership with a number of different agencies with Newport Youth Council taking the lead in organising and facilitating the event. This was an opportunity for young people across Newport to network, find out about what each other's organisations do and to work on the Young Person's Promise. The chair of the youth council introduced the Young Person's Promise, stating the importance of the Promise and what it means, this was then the start of a workshop to encourage involvement in drafting the charter and to build ownership.



This level of engagement is an example of empowering young people by allowing them to shape policy and would be regarded as “collaboration” on the Hart’s Ladder of Participation model, as shown below and referenced in previous engagement reports.

Hart's Ladder of Participation



The six commitments set out in the Promise also have a strong connection to the wellbeing goals and the sustainable development duty as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015. By their very nature their focus on children and young people takes a long-term and preventative view and involvement of young people has been a driving principle in their development.

Stakeholders involved in the development of the Young Person's Promise include:

Newport Youth Council – a youth participation group set up by Newport City Council to involve young people in decision making.

The Bigger Picture– an organisation who work with those who are considered potentially at risk of offending/re offending as well as young people who aren't otherwise engaging in any activities,

Newport Changing Minds – Mental health support for young people in Newport

Shaftesbury Youf Gang - who provide a positive link with the Police and youths in inner city Newport. The aim of the group is to provide a safe and secure environment, and build a positive relationship with young people, families and the local community.

Unity - Newport City homes youth forum for tenants

Go Girls – housing association - a young person forum for young women to discuss issues that are important to them

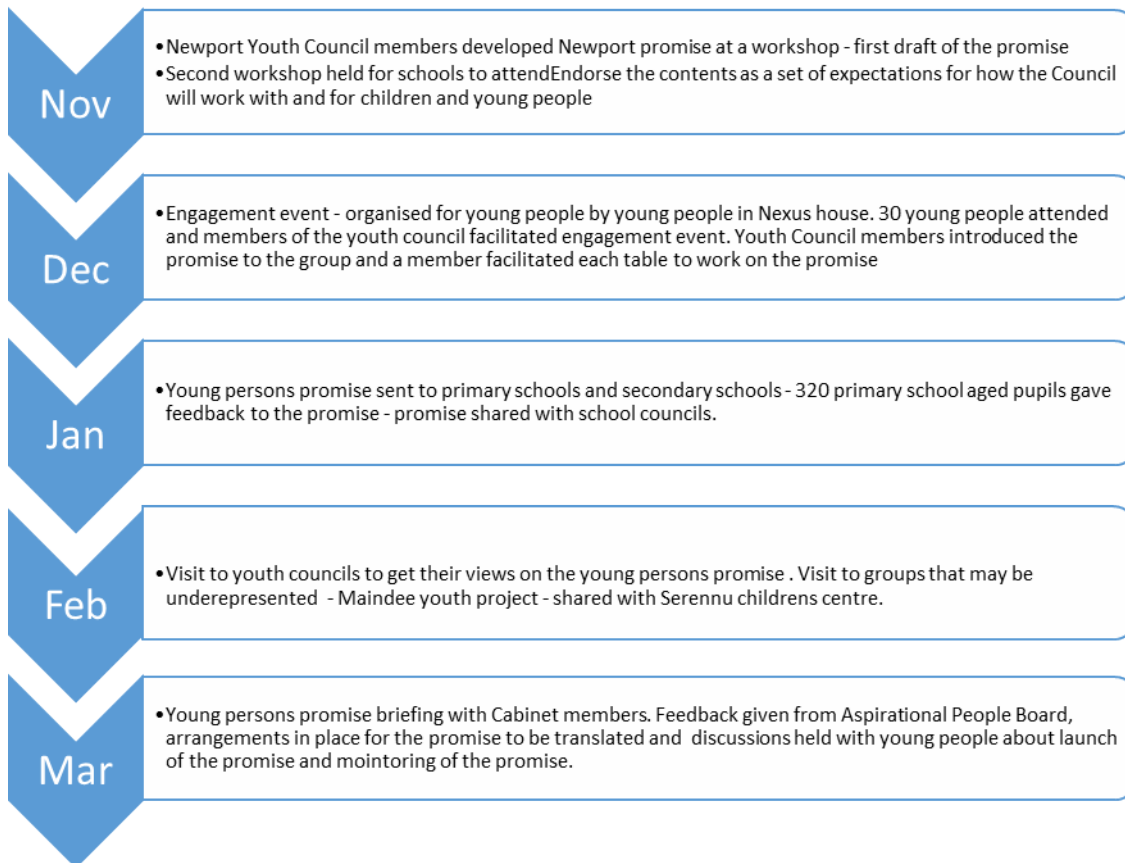
The Brothers – housing association – a young person forum for young men to discuss issues that are important to them.

Barnardo's –young carer's service

Newport Youth Service - Newport's youth information service offers qualified youth workers to provide information, support and guidance to young people aged 11 – 25 in a friendly and informal setting.

Schools – the Pupil Participation and Learning Network has given feedback on the Promise and over 320 pupils have been involved in its development.

Timeline



Looked after children/ children in care

There have been three focus groups with children in care/ looked after children to gain their insight into the charter and to gain views and priorities from their perspective. However as the Young Person's Promise is 'universal', a set of specific commitments for children in care/looked after children will be included in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, which is currently also in development.

Through the development of the Promise there has been monthly feedback from senior officers at Aspirational People board meetings to ensure that the Promise is on track for delivery and to gain any other feedback.

3.0 The Newport Young Person's Promise

Following the extensive engagement work described above the young people came up with a six point Promise, reminiscent of the six points of the People's Charter, historically associated with Newport. The Promise, attached as Annex 1, does not try to cover all of the established rights of young people (e.g. UNCRC rights of the Child) but instead focusses on a smaller set of key expectations young people want Newport City Council to deliver. They also relate to a range of statutory duties e.g. Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, safeguarding regulations, and key moral obligations.

The commitments in the Promise are as follows:

- 1 *All young people are listened to and are included in decisions that affect them*
- 2 *All young people have access to education and learning opportunities*
- 3 *All young people have the same opportunities to reach their potential regardless of race, gender, religion, (dis)ability, LGBTQ+ status, language preference (Welsh)*
- 4 *Newport Council will work with other services to help keep young people safe*
- 5 *All young people's mental, physical health and wellbeing are considered in decisions that affect them*
- 6 *All young people have access to safe spaces to play and socialise*

The Promise is intended to be universal and relevant to all children and young people in Newport. The age-range of the Promise is 0-18, however, whilst some of the commitments will apply to all children and young people e.g. keeping them safe (promise 4) others are likely to be more relevant to older children e.g. involvement in decision making (promise 1).

The final text and design of the Young Person's promise shown in Annex 1 will be reviewed by Newport Youth Council before the launch of the document.

Launch of the Newport Promise

A number of discussions have taken place with young people about how they would like the Young Person's Promise to be launched. Some of these suggestions have included visibility using key buildings such as the Civic Centre clock – this would ensure that the Promise is far reaching as possible and would be a part of social media campaign.

Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation plan is being developed in order to monitor the outcomes from the Promise and to ensure that the Council are fulfilling the commitments. An indicative monitoring plan is shown in Annex 2. There will be an annual monitoring process which members of Newport Youth Council will take part in to ensure that the Promise allows young people to continue to hold the Council to account.

The action plan will be promoted on internal staff communications and all new staff will be informed about the Young Person's Promise as part of their induction.

The intention is that the Promise will be monitored through the Strategic Equalities Plan and through the Council's performance management arrangements.

Financial Summary

	Year 1 (Current) £	Year 2 £	Year 3 £	Ongoing £	Notes including budgets heads affected
Costs (Income)					Funding for launch activities will be found from existing Partnership, Policy and Involvement Team Budgets, which are designated to support the Youth Council.
Net Costs	To be confirmed est £1,000 for launch activities				
(Savings) Net Impact on Budget					

There will be minimal costs relating to the launch of the Promise, this is a set of principles for services to work to, and as such no specific costs to be considered.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Awareness of the Promise is not wide enough	Low	Low	Work with Communications Team and partner organisations to publicise and promote widely	Partnership, Policy and Involvement Team
Promise does not bring about positive impact	Medium	Low	Monitoring of outcomes through Strategic Equalities Group and other performance management arrangements	SEG Aspirational People Board

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The Young Person's Promise is a stated commitment of the Council's Corporate Plan (one of the commitments by 2022).

The Promise runs alongside specific commitments to looked after children/children in care to be set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The Promise also relates to various safeguarding duties, play provision duties, participation and equalities duties all aimed at improving the wellbeing of children and young people. The Promise therefore contributes to the delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and Council wellbeing objectives primarily:

- To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities
- To enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient
- To build cohesive and sustainable communities

Options Available and considered

- 1) Endorse the contents as a set of expectations for how the Council will work with and for children and young people;
- 2) To revise the Promise commitments;
- 3) To instruct that further development work be undertaken with young people.

Preferred Option and Why

- 1) Endorse the contents as a set of expectations for how the Council will work with and for children and young people. This piece of work is an example of citizen empowerment and has been young people led. The commitments are in line with existing Council policies and duties.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There is a small cost estimated to be incurred with the launch activities related to this proposal which will be funded through existing Partnership and Policy Team budgets. This is a set of principles for services to work to, and as such have no direct / specific costs in in itself though any resulting policies and service developments may have and will need to be considered at that point.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report. The Young Person's Promise is consistent with the Council's legal duties under the UNCRC, the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and other statutory duties relating to the provision of services for children and young persons. The promises and standards set out how the Council will engage with young persons and have regard to their rights when taking decisions in relation to service delivery and policy development. Although the Promise will not create any additional legal duties or obligations, it does give a commitment to take into consideration the rights and interests of children and young person's when discharging existing statutory functions. The Promises is also consistent with the Council's well-being objectives and the five ways of working under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

The Young People's Promise will deliver one of the Council's key Corporate Plan commitments. In doing so it will recognise the importance of young people's rights and interests, our duties to secure their wellbeing and will enable and empower them to take part in public life. It is noted that the development of the Promise has been led by young people, and the Youth Council's work on this, in particular, should be acknowledged. Service areas will now need to embed the Promise commitments in policy and service delivery.

There are no direct human resources implications in this report.

Comments of Cabinet Member

The Cabinet Members for Education & Skills, Community & Resources, Social Services have approved the report for consideration by Cabinet.

Local issues

None.

Scrutiny Committees

Scrutiny Committees have considered the Corporate Plan and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee have considered public engagement and advocate a progressive approach in line with the Hart's Ladder of Participation outlined in the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

A fairness and equality impact assessment is in place for this policy. The Promise is intended to bring about equal opportunities, strengthen community relations, contribute to fairness and sustainable development. Commitment 5 relates to the importance of the impact assessment of decisions which affect children and young people.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

This piece of legislation requires that children and young people are involved in the decisions which affect them. The Young Person's Promise not only exemplifies this by being young people led, but also sets out commitments for further involvement in decision making; and the need to consider young people's wellbeing when decisions are made.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- Long term: The Promise represents a set of commitments to improve the wellbeing of young people who will be future generations. The commitments are relevant to younger children and relate to preventative work such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) agenda.
- Prevention: As above work to support the wellbeing of children and young people can help to avoid problems in the future e.g. generational cycles of poverty
- Integration: The Promise contributes to Council wellbeing objectives and also national wellbeing goals. The most relevant Council wellbeing objectives are: to improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities; to enable people to be healthy, independent and resilient; to build cohesive and sustainable communities.
- Collaboration: The commitments set out in the Promise will generally be delivered in partnership with other public services including, health, the Police, representative groups and third sector organisations.
- Involvement: The Promise has been developed with involvement of young people as a guiding principles and it sets out commitments to further develop participation going forward.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Promise is not directly about crime prevention however work that supports young people's wellbeing and promotes positive participation will contribute to this.

Consultation

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with stakeholders and is outlined in this report.

Background Papers

Annex 1: The draft Newport Young Person's Promise
United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child
Newport City Council – Improving People's Lives

Dated:

Newport City Council promise...

 @YouthNewport



1) That all young people in Newport are listened to and are included in decisions that affect them

3) That all young people have the same opportunities to reach their potential regardless of race, gender, religion, (dis)ability, LGBTQ+ status, language preference (Welsh).

5) That all young people’s mental, physical health and wellbeing are considered on decisions that affect them

2) That all young people have access to education and learning opportunities

4) That Newport City Council will work with other services to help keep young people safe

6) That all young people have access to safe spaces to play and socialise



Annex 2 Indicative monitoring and evaluation plan

Promise	Monitored by
<p>1. That all young people are listened to and are included in decisions that affect them</p> <p><i>Note: Engagement of young people does not detract from the Council's democratic mandate and final responsibility in decision-making.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how data relating to young people is considered in decision making • Monitoring whether and how young people were consulted on decisions that may affect them • Survey young people to ask if they feel they are listened to
<p>2. That all young people have access to education and learning opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people not in education, employment or training. • School attendance • Exclusions data
<p>3. That all young people have the same opportunities to reach their potential regardless of race, gender, religion (dis)ability, LGBTQ+ status, language preference (Welsh)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitored through policies across services e.g. physical access to schools, educational attainment of minority groups and through the Strategic Equalities Group
<p>4. That Newport City Council will work with other services to help keep young people safe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on safeguarding and child protection performance. CSSIW reports • Strategic work to improve community safety e.g. Serious Organised Crime programme
<p>5. That all young people's mental, physical health and well-being are considered on decisions that affect them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of Fairness and Equality Impact Assessments to evaluate whether they take account of impacts on young people's health and wellbeing • Community Well- being profile to include specific data on Children and Young People's health and Well- being
<p>6. That all young people have access to safe places to play and socialise</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe routes to schools – Cleanliness and condition of parks and public spaces. Location of crime data. • Perception Surveys – asking young people if they feel safe in City centre/ local area