Item 3

18th April 2024

Glasgow City Council

**Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities,
Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee**

Report by Colin Edgar, Director of Communication and Corporate Governance

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Youth Participation:
Engagement in Council Civic and Democratic structures

Purpose of Report:

- To propose an approach for endorsement to youth participation in the activities of the committee
- To outline current work ongoing to develop Youth Participation by Chief Executive Department, Education Services and the wider council family, including the ongoing development throughout 2025 of the council wide Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy under the Glasgow 850 Programme.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Note the report;
- Endorse the proposed approach to youth participation in the activities of the committee;
- Note the work ongoing to develop Youth Participation by Chief Executive Department, Education Services and the wider council family; and
- Note that further updates will be brought to Committee as appropriate, including the ongoing development throughout 2025 of the Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy under the Glasgow 850 Programme.

Ward No(s): All	Citywide: ✓
Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ✓	consulted: Yes ☐ No ✓

1 Introduction

1.1 Following the Wellbeing, Equalities, Communities, Culture and Engagement City Policy Committee on 21 September 2023, which concentrated on youth related matters, a development day was held for members focusing on engaging with young people. This provided the opportunity for elected members to hear about a range of Council initiatives that involve young people, and involved a range of youth groups across the city who work with what are often seen as hard to engage young people.

1.2 Learning from the development day recognised the work being done to support young people developing and thriving and highlighted the value of youth work and the opportunity for embedding young people's experience of the work of the Council and their voices when creating council policies.

1.3 It was noted at the February meeting of this Committee that an update would be provided to Committee on proposals for further young people's engagement, which will include interaction with committees, and the democratic and decision making functions of the Council.

1.4 Today's paper will focus in particular on the work being scoped by Chief Executive Department and Education Services to look at how to engage young people in understanding and appreciating how the Council's democratic processes function; and the importance of the Council's decision making in the day to day lives of the City's citizens, and young people. The paper will also note some of the wider work which will be reported back to the Committee in due course as appropriate.

2 Wider Context: Youth Participation

2.1 There are a number of areas of work underway that have youth participation as a key strand of work:

- Glasgow 850 Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy
- Open Government
- Centre for Civic Innovation
- Lord Provost & Education Services youth heritage and civic engagement
- Community Empowerment (Appendix 1 provides further detail)
- Engagement in Council Civic and Democratic structures

2.2 The Glasgow 850 Programme, led by the Leader of the Council, has been asked to create a council family wide year long Citizen Participation Programme in 2025, of which a key part will be activities to engage with young people and create ways of doing so that develop and improve for the future. This Programme will act as the catalyst for a new council family wide Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy which will bring together the new work undertaken as part of G850, the strands noted in this report as well as other

areas of activity from across the council family. This work is supported by the cross party Strategic Group for G850 and progress will be reported back there and to this committee as appropriate.

2.3 With regard to the council's award winning Open Government work[1]; one of the key strands of work is around the theme of Including Young People's voices; and partnership work has been conducted with the Village Storytelling Centre ensuring marginalised and excluded young people in Greater Pollok are involved in and lead the development of their community through the delivery of a pilot project which places their voices at the centre of change. This explored and facilitated the inclusion of young people in community development and service design using applied storytelling and design-led approaches.

2.4 The Centre for Civic Innovation (CCI), who work closely with Corporate Policy on Open Government matters, have been developing a model for participation in local neighbourhoods. Young people are a key stakeholder in both the city now, and in the future. CCI have a pipeline of projects from across the Council family that are invested in meaningful and active participation by young people. CCI are currently collaborating with Education Services and multiple teams in Neighbourhoods and Regeneration Services. For example, CCI is working with NRS Planning department to develop a creative, engaging and empowering participation model to capture the data required for the Play Sufficiency Assessment – an essential element of the City Plan – which will be discussed at the Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee on 23 April 2024.

2.5 Education Services have worked with the Lord Provost Office to welcome primary school pupils into the City Chambers to learn about the architecture of the building and as a place of work. To complement this a digital learning resource designed to enable school children to explore architecture, design and social heritage, 'Our City Chambers', was developed with Glasgow City Heritage Trust. Feedback from the events has been positive and demonstrated an appetite by children and young people to learn more about their city and participate in its civic life.

2.6 The Communities team within the Chief Executive's Department are working to draw together the range of youth focused civic engagement. This includes drawing from the benefits of utilising the Strategic Youth Partnership for the city; which is a network of local and citywide youth providers, encompassing both the public and third sector. This work is ongoing, and a brief summary is provided at Appendix 1.

2.7 Specifically, an approach to Engagement in Council Civic and Democratic structures for young people, including this committee, is highlighted below.

[1] Glasgow's Citizen Power work has been recognised in the Inspirational Reforms category at the 2023 Global Open Government Awards

3 Chief Executive Department's work with Education Services

3.1 One of the key areas of focus has been around youth participation and engagement in the Council's Civic and Democratic structures.

3.2 It is important to encourage young people to understand and feel part of the democratic processes that impact their lives as young people and will continue to impact their lives as they reach voting age. It is a well observed fact that civic engagement is often weakest in the most socio economically deprived areas of the city, and health and income inequality are consistent predictors of voter turnout in Scotland[2], therefore in line with our Grand Challenges there are opportunities across the Council for more joined up work.

3.3 To this end it is proposed to run a pilot with the senior phase Modern Studies classes in the city; and in conjunction with the Chief Executive Department, to provide an annual scheduled calendar visit to learn how the Council's decision-making structures operate, and to also potentially see them in action as part of Committee observation and dialogue with Elected Members.

3.4 This work will be evaluated and see how the WECCE committee and others could support the learning of other senior phase pupils of History, Geography etc., and wider teaching strands like Learning for Sustainability could benefit.

3.5 Opportunities will also be identified to further include young people through local youth groups who may have better reach with easy to ignore young people, and, as evidenced by the recent development day will engage with the Council when the circumstances have been created to do so.

3.6 It is proposed that this work is taken forward by Chief Executive Department and Education Services. And outline of the proposed approach is provided at Appendix 2.

[2] https://fraserofallander.org/inequalities-in-voting-and-volunteering-who-participates-in-scotland/

4 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	None
Legal:	None
Personnel:	None
Procurement:	None

Council Strategic Plan:	GRAND CHALLENGE ONE - Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities Mission 2 - Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families before and through school Mission 3 - Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities GRAND CHALLENGE FOUR – Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative and efficient way for our communities MISSION 2: Run an open, well governed council in partnership with all our communities

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.	Yes, Service users are provided with information accessible to them on services provided by the Council Family
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	It is potentially increasing awareness and access to information about Council Services
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	Voter turn out and civic engagement are often weakest in the most socio economically deprived areas of the city when cross related to local Poverty levels

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	No direct impacts noted at this time

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	No direct impacts noted at this time
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	No direct impacts noted at this time
Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	No data protection impacts noted

5 Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Note the report;
- Endorse the proposed approach to youth participation in the activities of the committee;
- Note the work ongoing to develop Youth Participation by Chief Executive Department, Education Services and the wider council family; and
- Note that a further updates will be brought to Committee as appropriate, including the ongoing development throughout 2025 of the Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy under the Glasgow 850 Programme.

Appendix 1

Communities Team

For the last two years, the Communities Team (Community Empowerment Services (CES) as was) has been supporting an informal citywide community engagement working group, comprising of council/family officers and the community and third sector. The group has developed a work plan based on working together in partnership and improving practice across the city. One of the challenges for the group has been the volume and depth of engagement (across the spectrum from consultations to more co-productive methods) coming outwards from the council to communities. Some of this engagement will be due to statutory requirements, some others will have come about because it is considered good practice.

The recent service reform of CES, forming the Communities Team, has highlighted the need and the opportunity to take a joined-up approach to this, as in other areas. Part of the role of the new senior officer (communities) will be to look at the internal community engagement requirements and practice across GCC and family**,** with the clear aim of co-ordinating our engagement practice and finding ways to work together, so that we can make better use of our resources and make participation easier for communities. Another element of the role will be to look at the training and development needs for this work, not only within the Council, but across the partners, as we work in a more collaborative way.

To start this process, a workshop is planned for mid-April, bringing together senior managers with those who have an operational responsibility for community engagement or those whose work can have an impact on communities across the different service areas. This will help us agree priorities and identify projects where we could use existing workstreams to test out different ways of working together in engaging with communities. The intention is to develop a citywide community engagement plan based on practice, that is developed in partnership with communities.

It is important that this work starts with doing the work together in communities, rather than rushing to write the plan first. That way, we can be sure that the ambition of the plan is grounded in reality: that is, the capacity and resources of both officers and the community. It is anticipated that the group will decide on a few key areas for collaboration over next year.

One of the aspects for consideration by the group will be how people with protected characteristics participate in community engagement projects. For example, it is well known that certain groups, such as BME or disabled people, are far less likely to engage in place-based projects. We will need to think about targeted approaches until this engagement is more mainstreamed.

Young people are one of the groups that are less likely to engage with public services and consultations. There are formal structures such as the Scottish Youth Parliament with its local MSYPs. Education services have clear routes and forums for pupil participation, and as evidenced by the development day, are flexible and committed to working with partners within the Council and outwith to promote youth voices.

The **Strategic Youth Partnership (SYP)** for the city is a network of local and citywide youth providers, from both the public and third sector. They want to develop a new plan that mainstreams young people's issues and maximises their participation in civic life.

It is therefore an opportune time to look at youth participation in tandem with this community engagement work and think about how young people are engaged in wider areas, such as place based work.

Appendix 2

Chief Executive Department & Education Services

Outline of Youth Engagement Proposal: **Our City, Our Learning, Our Future.**
A meaningful civic engagement offer to link young people within the Senior Phase, to local democratic structures and decision making.

Proposed Pilot with Modern Studies Senior Phase Pupils:

A range of learning experiences are provided across our schools which support the development of research, analytical, evaluating and critical thinking skills.
During their learner journey our young people develop an understanding of the democratic process and complex political issues, social and economic issues/context at local, Scottish, national and international levels.

Young people learn how policy development and decision making can support societal needs and tackle issues around inequality and equity.
They consider and reflect on different views about the extent of state involvement in society and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

The proposed offer is embedded in our rights based practice across the Council and our focus on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
It strengthens our work on engagement, participation and inclusion of our city's young people, providing genuine opportunity to meaningfully take part in civic democratic processes.

Secondary Schools' Modern Studies Departments would be offered an annual calendar of visits to their City Chambers.

Visits could be booked by schools, for groups of young people in the Senior Phase. The offer would be open to but not exclusive to those young people taking modern studies qualifications.

Visit Content would include:

- a brief tour of the City Chambers;
- policy and Democracy in Glasgow – an introductory dialogue session within the City Chambers with Policy Manager;
- identification of a Committees from annual calendar to observe on the day of the visit; and
- dialogue with elected members after the committee on processes and decision making.