

Update of the Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture

Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee - 18 January 2024

1. Purpose of the Cabinet Member update

- 1.1 This paper provides a short round of updates from across the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture. It presents an opportunity for the cabinet member to speak directly to the CSF Scrutiny Committee and highlight key pieces of work, both to share successes and identify challenges and opportunities in the coming months.
- 1.2 The Committee are invited to consider the information below and ask questions of clarification at the meeting, subject to the Chair's discretion. Requests for additional information can be addressed to the relevant director/s outside of the meeting. The Committee may also use the cabinet member updates to inform their scrutiny work planning for the coming year.

2. Youth safety

- 2.1 The Youth Safety Steering Group held its final meeting for the year on 5th December 2023. We began with a tour of the Honest Grind project, our radical social enterprise funded by the Youth Justice Board. Youth Employability Manager who runs the scheme took the group through the coffee making process and explained how the project is supporting vulnerable young people to access work experience. Honest Grind is a great example of the innovative work we do supporting young people aged 16+ who are NEET (not in employment, education or training) and providing them with skills and experience they can use on their CV to access future job opportunities.
- 2.2 The main meeting was held at the Somers Town Youth Centre on Chalton Street. The meeting agenda included an update from the Evolve team (part of Camden's Integrated Youth Support Service) on the support they provide 18-25 yr olds who are at risk of or involved in youth violence. The group heard directly from a young person sharing his lived experience of how the service had supported him to turn his life around and set up a business. His story demonstrated the unique approach of the Evolve service and the importance of bridging the gap in support as children reach 18 and transition into adulthood.
- 2.3 The future governance arrangements of the steering group for 2024 were discussed. After 5 years of hard work and commitment Abdul Hai (former Councillor and Cabinet Member, founder of the youth safety taskforce) and Keir Starmer QC (MP Holborn and St Pancras Ward, founder of youth safety taskforce) will step down from their co-chair roles and move to become Special Ambassadors. As Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture, I will become the Chair of the Youth Safety Steering Group, and Daisy Srblin (CEO, Young Camden Foundation) will become Vice-Chair. The Steering Group agreed these changes as well as a change to the format of meetings: moving to two workshop style meetings a year, regular email updates and the option to call a special meeting should there be an incident or serious concern.

3. Honest Grind Coffee wins award

- 3.1 I am thrilled to announce that Camden's Youth Justice Service (part of the Integrated Youth Support Service) has won the AYM (Association of Youth Justice Managers) [John Hawkins award](#) for the Honest Grind Coffee project (HGC). We are the first London borough to receive the award, which is decided by children from the previous year's winners. The award is presented annually to a youth justice service recognised for innovation and creativity in youth justice practice.
- 3.2 The £500 prize will be used to pay the young people on the HGC wages in actual money and put towards marketing and promotion of coffee sales.

4. Step into Our Shoes – Camden's annual public health report launch curated by young people

- 4.1 This year's [annual public health report](#) on adolescent health was recently launched at an event coproduced by Camden young people. 'Step into Our Shoes' took place at LABS in Bloomsbury in November and was curated by *Camden Youth: Tell Them*, a group of local young people aged 16-21. Also launched at the event was a [graphic novel of the same name](#) created by the young people to show the key findings of the report. At the event *Camden Youth: Tell Them* invited local decision makers and health partners to take a walk in young people's shoes, and to commit to working together to improve adolescent health in Camden. Activities included an interactive exhibition, performances and a panel discussion in which local decision makers in health were held to account by the young people on the themes that matter to them. Over 100 young people, decision makers and health partners attended the event.
- 4.2 I was invited to participate as a panel member and answered questions on the report findings from the chapters on safety and violence and education, employment and training, as well as providing the Council view on these important issues for young people.
- 4.3 Step into Our Shoes was coproduced with young people as part of a communications and events training programme funded by the Council and delivered in partnership with creative agency Break Comms. It was established in response to the findings of the annual public health report which highlights the importance of quality training and employment for adolescents' short and long term health.
- 4.4 We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the event with 100% of attendees surveyed said that they had learned something new about adolescent health and 100% of professional attendees agreed to make changes in their job to support young people's health.

5. Regent's Park Guardians Winter Wellbeing event

- 5.1 A winter wellbeing event was organised on Wednesday the 6th of December 2023 by residents who are part of Community Champions and Guardians project on the Regent's Park Estate. The aim of the project is for residents to address the issues that impact health and wellbeing positively in the area, as well as residents being able to address key issues facing them and their neighbours and being connected to appropriate services. The event was well attended by residents with an estimated 150 attendees. My colleagues and ward councillors Cllr Nadia Shah and Cllr Nasim Ali have been supporting the Guardians project and attended the event.
- 5.2 A variety of activities and games were delivered including a safe spaces map and information stall (in partnership with Community Safety team). The aim was to complete a mapping exercise on spaces that residents feel safe/unsafe on the Regents Park Estate. The Guardians explored the idea of creating "safe spaces" and asked the residents to identify spaces, organisations and business that young people and communities can turn to in the event of an emergency. Information gathered from the mapping exercise will be shared with colleagues across the Council and Met Police. The Guardians will be approaching business and organisations to sign up to the safe spaces scheme and will create a training package for professionals which the Guardians will delivery in early 2023. Watch this space!

6. Camden Celebrates National Youth Work Week

- 6.1 Each year, the UK celebrates National Youth Work Week. This acknowledges the positive impact that youth work has on the lives of young people. This year's theme, "Youth work in every place and space," emphasised the variety of settings where youth work takes place, including schools, youth clubs, community centres, and online spaces. As a testament to the vibrant youth work scene in Camden, the Camden Integrated Youth Support Service, in collaboration with the Young Camden Foundation, organised a fantastic event at Camden Town Hall on 7th November 2023. The event provided a platform for organisations to showcase their services, connect with the young people who have benefited from their offerings, exhibit their work, and foster a spirit of collaboration.
- 6.2 The event was attended by over 15 organisations/ teams including Kooth, Roundhouse, Somali Youth Development Resource Centre (SYDRC), Camden Detached Team, FWD (Drug and Alcohol Service), KCBNA, and Somers Town Youth Centre. Both the Mayor of Camden and I participated at the event, and it was wonderful to see the enthusiastic young minds and dedicated staff from various service providers. Our Youth Council skilfully guided the event, organising an engaging programme that included inspiring stories, first-hand accounts of personal growth, and captivating performances. Young individuals from across Camden shared their transformative journeys, highlighting the multitude of youth programmes offered by both the council and its invaluable voluntary sector partners.

- 6.3 Guests were shown [a new film](#), which highlights the huge range of activities and opportunities available for young people in Camden, and also heard about some of the fantastic work going on in our local youth centres, including a recent [international volunteering programme](#) led by Somers Town Youth Centre.

7. Youth mission session

One of our four missions is focused on young people and outlines our vision that by 2025, every young person has access to economic opportunity that enables them to be safe and secure. Building on the momentum from the Youth Mission Member session in June, we held the second quarterly Member session in November. Once again I chaired the session and it was run in a workshop style attended by the Head of Service Leads for each of the priority cohorts. Our 5 priority cohorts are care-experienced, young people with EHCPs, school non-attenders, disabled young people and young people in the Youth Justice system. Colleagues also discussed Camden's universal offer for all young people. The session was a welcomed opportunity for Members, heads of service, and strategy colleagues to come together for the first time to discuss in detail what we are already doing and what more we can do to support young people in Camden. Next steps include a deep dive into our data on the cohorts and how we can use this to identify areas of need and targeted support. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for March 2024.

8. Youth MPs Football event

On the 1st December, I attended a football tournament event organised by the Mental Health and Support Subgroup of the Camden Youth Council. The group received £1000 from Camden's Social Action Fund (and were sponsored by LABS) to create an awareness raising campaign on mental health. The group led by Camden Youth MP Samir Qurashi organised a football tournament targeting sixth form students called "The Camden Cup", featuring teams from across Camden Sixth Forms - Regent High, Camden School for Girls, Maria Fidelis, LaSwap and Somers Town. The event was supported by The Hive, Tavistock and Portman and Kooth UK who talked to the young people about the services they offer. The winning team were Regent High.