

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM
REPORT TO CABINET
7 MARCH 2019
REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook
Children and Young People – Councillor Ann McCoy

BRIGHT MINDS BIG FUTURES – THE BIG PLAN

1. Summary

This report seeks Cabinet endorsement for The Big Plan, a plan prepared by the Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) initiative. The Big Plan is the culmination of a two year programme of engagement with young people, which was based on a specific focus on engagement and participation, using specific projects such as *SBC Correspondents*, *Takeover Challenge* and consultation processes to engage and connect with young people across Stockton-on-Tees. These findings, further research and the results of an online survey have enabled the initiative to gain a basic understanding of what it feels like to be a young person growing up in the Borough, hopes for the future, and therefore the details and proposals in The Big Plan.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Endorse The Big Plan;
2. Authorise officers to work with the Big Committee on its implementation;
3. Invite the Big Committee back in October 2019 to report on the first 6 months of implementation

3. Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

To ensure that the Council continues to demonstrate its commitment to engaging children and young people and to supporting their aspirations to ensure Stockton-on-Tees is a great place to grow up in.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in**

accordance with paragraph 18 of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse The Big Plan;
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What is Bright Minds Big Futures?

1. The Council's ambition is to make the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees a place which is both great to grow up and a place which will also create the right conditions for our young people to be successful and have a big future.
2. The vision for children and young people is of a commitment to ensuring children and young people are at the heart of the future of the Borough and to understanding what young people want from their perspective to make this happen.
3. In considering how to take this ambition further forward, an initial outline of an initiative 'Growing up Stockton' was developed as a means of engaging with children and young people. This was partially based around evidence from the Children's Society's model of a good childhood. We have developed and tested the approach through engaging and consulting with young people via BMBF. This initiative has evolved into a young person led movement focusing on:

- Supporting young people to achieve a sense of self
 - Ensuring there are stable and supportive relationships
 - Providing opportunities for young people to engage in and be supported by wider society.
4. Members will recall these priorities as now also sitting at the heart of the new Children and Young People Strategy 2019-23 which was agreed by cabinet on 14 February.
 5. The initiative developed its own identify and brand as Bright Minds Big Futures.
 6. The Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) initiative is now approaching its two year anniversary. The initiative began with a heavy emphasis on engagement and participation (as an alternative to existing representational models of engagement), using specific projects such as *SBC Correspondents*, *Takeover Challenge* and consultation processes to engage and connect with young people across Stockton-on-Tees.
 7. Securing the engagement of the first cohort of Correspondents was critical and this has allowed us to develop and nurture positive relationships gaining the trust of those young people involved. This group have in turn have brought along friends and family to join the 'movement' which continues to evolve and increase organically.
 8. The report provides details of the work carried out so far and sets out the next steps and recommendations.
 9. There have been a number of key developments worthy of note:
 - Young people led on the branding of the initiative, thus ownership from its inception.
 - Development in the early stages of a dedicated SBC webpage and social media pages (now fully managed by BMBF). And the shift from traditional forms of communication across a number of platforms between the BMBF group and Coordinator to the use of SLACK, a one size fits all system which meets the full communication needs of the group.
 - An increase in young people and schools visiting and engaging in works experience and taking part in *Takeover Events* within SBC.
 - BMBF young people are now working directly with SBC Officers and Elected Members on specific projects, including attending meetings and select committees.
 - SBC Correspondents are an integral part of all activities and events across SBC.
 - Frequent features within Stockton-on-Tees News, including a regular column in every edition written by a member of BMBF about their experiences growing up in Stockton-on-Tees.
 - Recruitment of a BMBF member to a fixed term position following 18 months of casual and voluntary work in SBC.
 - Young people taking responsibility for building community partnerships and developing their own events and activities (such as the Secret Sound gig at The Georgian Theatre).
 - Increase in the Make Your Mark votes from 2017 to 2018.
 10. There have been a number of key milestones and achievements:
 - The transition from Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA) to the Big Committee (following a proposal submitted by young people which included all of the existing active SYA Members).
 - The development of *The Big Plan*.
 - Winning two awards (*Youth Led Project of the Year* and *Individual Personal Development Award*) at the regional British Youth Council convention in January and shortlisted for the final in London on March 8th 2019.

The Big Committee

11. BMBF prepared a paper and presentation making suggestions on improving and developing the Stockton Youth Assembly (SYA) meeting and processes into a new format wholly designed, implemented and led by young people. These were accepted at the SYA, and changes endorsed by the Children and Young people Select Committee as part of its review into The Child's Journey, agreed by cabinet in February 2019.
12. Meetings are now held more frequently regularly along with a formal bi-monthly meeting which is also attended by the Leader, the Cabinet member for Children and Young People and the Director of Children's Services.
13. The BMBF members set the agenda and have redesigned the format of the minutes into a simpler format echoing their own style and branding.
14. The position of Chair and other roles have all been decided through a democratic voting process. The MYP no longer chairs the meeting, but attends in their formal capacity.
15. Members are recruited by the Committee as individuals not as representatives of institutions. They have full veto on all recruitment, selection and dismissal of Committee Members.
16. All Committee members sign up to a *Pledge* (to represent young people in the Borough), and a *Code of Conduct* and *Purpose/Procedure* (all devised by the Committee).
17. The Committee Members all have specific areas of responsibility which link to SBC services. They have the mandate to work directly with Officers, Elected Members, local MP's and external partners.

The Big Plan

18. The plan outlines the 'wish list' of young people in the Borough. The plan has been researched and written by the Committee in consultation with over 400 young people from schools and colleges.
19. The Big Plan covers the following areas and mirrors the roles of individuals on the Committee:
 - Young Peoples Services
 - Community Safety
 - Environment
 - Transport
 - Business and Regeneration
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Education
 - Fitness and Leisure
 - Diversity and Equality
 - Democratic Services
 - Our Priorities
20. Each area has a number of recommendations/requests and innovative project ideas. Some of the projects are already underway such as work with the Police, Public Health, SBC Social Care and Library Services along with their own initiatives such as 'Take One Leave One' (period poverty), environmental work with Cultivate Tees Valley.

21. It is envisaged that the Council will work directly with the Big Committee on the implementation of the plan, and will play a key role in engagement of other partners as required.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

22. The details in this report are explicitly focus on children and young people and therefore technically fall into the protected characteristic of 'age' in the Equality act. The entire focus of The Big Plan is based on ensuring that young people have a say, are listened to, engaged in decision making and actively involved in the co-production of solutions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Council's support to the Bright Minds Big Futures initiative has been supported thorough external funding for two years, and will now be absorbed into mainline budgets.

24. Specific issues and actions in the Plan will be subject to more detailed evaluations as necessary.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

25. There are no legal implications arising from this report

RISK ASSESSMENT

26. The Big Plan is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce the risk.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

27. The Big Plan potentially impacts across all Council Plan themes as opportunities have been identified across all Council departments.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

28. The Big Committee has been successful in forging links with the Let's take Action group (LTA) which provides the mechanisms for engaging with young people in our care.

29. The continued

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

30. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People have been consulted.

PROPERTY

N/A

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Background Papers

The Big Plan (February 2019)