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***TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON  
ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG  
PEOPLE***

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## Section 1 - Introduction

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### Background

The Task and Finish Group to consider how Gloucester City Council engages with young people was proposed through a Notice of Motion at the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The Notice of Motion was moved by Councillor Tree Chambers-Dubus and the motion passed unanimously. The motion stated that:

*“This council believes that young people are important and recognises the positive contribution that young people make to the city.*

*Young people have ideas, views and opinions about things that affect their lives, their communities and their city.*

*Young people have a contribution to make to the life and development of the city and whilst there have been some initiatives in recent years there is currently no process or structure that enables the council to communicate and understand the views that young people have.*

*It is therefore time to revisit and review this important issue.*

*Council therefore resolves to:*

- *Review the processes and methods it uses to engage, involve and consult with young people.*
- *Request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a task and finish group to consider how the council engages with young people.*
- *Actively involve young people in this process.*
- *Make a report and recommendations to cabinet about how to engage and communicate with young people in future.”*

As a result of the successful passing of the motion by Council, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee formally established the Task and Finish Group and approved the membership on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

The following cross-party Members took part in the enquiry:



Councillor Tree Chambers-Dubus (Chair)



Councillor Andrew Gravells MBE



Councillor Anne Radley



Councillor Alastair Chambers



Councillor Brendon O'Donnell

The Task and Finish Group was supported by the City Council's Policy and Development Officer, Liam Moran, Community Wellbeing Officer, Isobel Johnson, and Democratic and Electoral Services Officer, Lauren Richards.

The Task and Finish Group held its inaugural meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022, to agree the scope of the enquiry. Members considered a series of questions, including what they wanted the focus of the enquiry to be, their objectives, desired outcome, timetable and initial next steps. The Task and Finish Group decided the following:

- Members decided that the focus of the Task and Finish Group Project should be on young people aged 25 and under. The Group were initially reluctant to set a lower-age limit as they felt that anyone with something to say should have a chance to have their voice heard regardless of age. This said, Members agreed that it would be sensible for the enquiry to focus on school-aged children up to young people aged 25.
- Members decided to focus on improving how the council can consult with young people in order to make it easier for young people to engage and share their ideas with the council.
- The Task and Finish Group noted that enthusiasm for local government issues, apart from climate change, seemed to have dissipated for young people. Members were concerned that those who feel disengaged at a young age are less likely to be actively engaged and involved within their local communities as adults.
- Members hoped that the Task and Finish Group might help promote a culture of two-way conversation between the council and young people.

### Scope and Areas of Focus

During the scoping session, Task and Finish Group Members identified five key areas under Gloucester City Council responsibility which particularly affect young people. These five areas were used to inform each of the 'deep dive' sessions, and lead Officers were asked to attend each session to answer questions from Members. The deep dive sessions focused on four topics explained in further detail below.

Members wanted the project to be comprehensive and evidence based. They opted to take a three-pronged approach to the Task and Finish Group enquiry:

1. Members decided that lead Officers in each service area should be present at their meetings to discuss and answer questions regarding the written information they submitted ahead of the meeting. It was decided that each session would focus on an initial service-specific question as to whether young people were engaging with the service area. Furthermore, Members agreed that they needed to establish whether the council engages with young people at present, and if so how, in order to establish a clear and comprehensive picture. Members developed a standardised set

of questions that were sent to lead Officers ahead of each deep dive meeting. The list of questions was as follows:

- What are the current efforts being made to engage with young people in the service area?
  - How would input from young people change or influence decision making in the service area?
  - Do you think the council's current efforts could be improved and if so, how?
  - What recommendations do you believe should be put forward to improve youth engagement in your service area?
2. In order to satisfy the element of the motion requiring young people to be involved in the process, Members decided to undertake a public consultation to engage directly with young people about each of the deep dive areas set out below. The public consultation was open to individuals aged 13 and above, who could respond online. The results of the public consultation are outlined and analysed in section 3 of this report.
  3. Members also committed to undertaking their own research by speaking with young people in their wards and at school or community group visits, to ascertain their views about the council and the issues which are most important to them. This research sought to encourage offline involvement from individuals under the age of 13 and to ensure the data sets were as comprehensive as possible. This research was undertaken anonymously and used as anecdotal evidence which is set out in further detail in section 4 of the report.

The four deep dive areas were as follows:

### ***Planning***

The Task and Finish Group decided to review development, regeneration and wider discussions around planning policy and open spaces, from the viewpoint of children and young people. Members wanted to find out whether young people are having an input on development projects in the city and having their say on wider planning policy issues and how community funding is allocated, for example with regards to open spaces, playing fields and parks. This topic was split into two separate sessions – the first focused on the Development Control aspect of Planning and consultation, and the second looked at wider Planning Policy and parks and open spaces within Gloucester. The first session was attended by the Council's Planning Development Manager, and the second session was attended by the Planning Policy Manager.

### ***Climate Change***

Task and Finish Group Members predicted that Climate Change would be a key interest and priority for young people, given the increasing focus on addressing climate change and the role of young people beyond Gloucester in seeking positive change. Members wanted to find out the extent to which the council is involving young people in its efforts to address climate change, including in the development of Gloucester City Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. This session was attended by the City Council's Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead.

### ***Democracy***

Members sought to examine whether young people understand how and when to contact their local Councillors, and whether enough effort is being made to engage them in democratic processes. Queries which Members were most interested in exploring included whether, and how often, young people are involved in Council and Committee meetings, whether they submit questions to Council, and partake in public consultations. This session was attended by the Policy and Governance Manager.

### ***Culture***

The Task and Finish Group felt that the City Council would be missing a large target audience if young people felt excluded and disengaged with the cultural programming of the city. Members noted that this could be a concern, particularly as cultural development is an ongoing priority for the Council. They wanted to understand whether or not the council is doing enough to promote cultural venues, such as the Museum and Guildhall, to young people in Gloucester. This session was attended by the Cultural Development Manager.

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## Section 2 - Deep Dive Summaries

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In terms of the format of the deep dive sessions, lead Officers across the Planning, Climate Change, Democracy and Culture service areas were asked to provide written answers to the questions outlined in section 1 for circulation to Members ahead of the meeting. Members then had the opportunity to discuss the written answers in further detail during each evidence session and put any questions they had to the Officers directly. At the end of each session, The Task and Finish Group would discuss the findings, share their thoughts, and draft potential recommendations. These draft recommendations were refined towards the close of the Task and Finish Group project.

The following section will outline the key themes and issues arising from each meeting, as well as Members' conclusions.

### Planning – Development Control

The written response from the Development Control service confirmed that currently, although all residents are welcome to submit their views on planning applications, the service does not target any one specific age group when undertaking development consultations. It was also noted that it is not possible to ascertain the age of residents who respond to such consultations, as there is currently no requirement to request the age of those who respond to and engage with City Council consultations. This was a point of particular interest to Task and Finish Group Members.

During the deep dive session, Members were advised that Development Control concerns the latter stages of planning development, and that major consultation takes place earlier in the Planning Policy stage. The Planning Development Manager confirmed that the City Council's Development Control team comply with the statutory minimum requirements when consulting on planning applications, such as engaging with the environment agency and adjoining landowners, ensuring the presence of site notices, and press advertising. The Task and Finish Group was advised that attendance at planning application public meetings tended to be predominantly from an older demographic rather than young people, although it was noted that this might largely be due to adults being more likely to own or rent property.

In response to these findings, Task and Finish Group Members concluded that more efforts could be made to engage with young people in the planning application process. They queried whether the service could consider using innovative digital methods to engage with young people, given that many young people receive their news online via smartphones. Task and Finish Group Members felt that it was important that young people were engaged with directly in this area, particularly in relation to major planning applications and regeneration projects in the city.

## Planning Policy

The written response from the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that during the development of the City Council's Local Plan, efforts were made to engage with as wide a range of people as possible, including during in-person events at the University of Gloucestershire and at local fetes and fayres across the city. Members were advised that the Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategies are subject to their own consultation processes.

In terms of previous updates to the Open Spaces Strategy, which includes green space and parks, consultation with residents was undertaken through exhibitions and activities in a wide variety of locations with at least one event taking place in each City Council ward. There was an exception with the latest update to the Open Spaces strategy which took place in 2020 as Covid-19 restrictions were in place, and therefore consultation activity was undertaken primarily online.

With regards to the Council's Playing Pitch strategy, it was noted that most of the consultation and engagement tends to be kept at a sport club level, however new processes were put in place back in 2020 to allow Members to engage in planning applications which had the potential to lead to improvements to open spaces in their wards.

During the deep dive session, the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that it was likely that the City Council's Playing Pitch Strategy would be updated ahead of the Open Space Strategy. He explained that the Planning Policy team had regularly engaged with governing bodies and Sport England in the past and that the team were considering whether to progress an update to the strategy later this year, which might provide an opportunity to think about further community engagement.

In terms of engagement with young people specifically, Task and Finish Group Members highlighted that playing pitch sites in the city are not just used for sporting purposes, but also for other physical activities such as informal play. The Planning Policy Manager noted that there had been a noticeable shift in Sport England's priorities, away from focusing only on the delivery of formal sports. Members concluded that an update to the Playing Pitch Strategy might be an opportunity to consider the appropriate membership. A discussion ensued as to whether focusing any consultations on engagement with governing bodies was the best way of reaching young people. It was noted that there might be value in using grassroots engagement to deliver strategies, but that this would need to be married against budget and time constraints.

## Climate Change

In terms of whether the City Council is engaging with young people in the development of the City Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (CCSAP), the written response from the Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead confirmed that at the time of the meeting (May 2022), young people had not been actively involved with the strategy development, however as they are likely to be disproportionately burdened with the future impacts of climate change, he confirmed that engagement work with young people would be included in the work programme for the forthcoming CCSAP. It was noted that this

engagement work could take the form of surveys, interviews, focus groups and panels or even a young people's climate commission. The view of the Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead was that engagement should initially be sought through schools in the first instance.

During the deep dive session, Members were advised that the CCSAP was still in the early stages of development, and work was ongoing to procure a third-party organisation to help deliver the strategy and Action Plan. The Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead reassured Members that he was very keen to hear the voices of young people in the development of the Climate Change Strategy. The Task and Finish Group and the Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead agreed that it was important not to assume that all young people are preoccupied with Climate Change, and all sides were keen to ensure that as wide a group of individuals as possible are engaged with this work. It was noted that Climate Change is likely to increasingly impact all aspects of young peoples' lives in the future, including work, transport, diets, and holidays. In their conclusions, Members acknowledged that engagement with young people in this service area was in the early stages and agreed with the Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead that unique approaches may be needed to engage differently with those of different ages. They were pleased to note that Engagement with young people in this area appeared to be very much planned.

### Democracy

The written response from the Policy and Governance Manager pointed out that young people engage with democracy in a broad range of ways, including avenues the City Council is not involved with, such as while young people are at school or at home. It was noted that Councillors as community leaders are key to involving all residents, including young people, in the wider democratic process, particularly as they are decision makers in respect of important decisions about Gloucester as a city. The Policy and Governance Manager confirmed that the ability to ask questions and present petitions at Council and Committee meetings is available to all residents, including young people. She confirmed that Council meetings are promoted on social media and noted that there has been more engagement from the public in general with meeting activity during the Covid-19 pandemic and since changes to the Council's procedure rules around question deadlines were put in place. Despite this, take-up of the Committee and Council meetings question facility has been limited amongst young people. It was noted that unitary or county councils may well have more engagement with young people than district councils as a result of the functions they are responsible for, such as education and social services.

The Policy and Governance Manager confirmed that during the annual Electoral Canvass, the Democratic and Electoral Services team specifically target resources at registering students living in the city, including 16- and 17-year-olds, as at this age they can be added to the electoral register as holding electors. Members were advised that some students are reluctant to register to vote in Gloucester as they do not consider it their home. Members were also advised that the Mayor and Sheriff of Gloucester meet with schools and community groups in the city, however this engagement tends to focus on the civic history and roles rather than democratic engagement specifically.

During the Deep Dive session, Members were mindful that resource is an important consideration when deciding whether to increase engagement through more formal mechanisms. It was noted at the time of meeting (June 2022) that the City Council does not have a designated youth services team where other councils do, and there are challenges in that the City Council would not have the direct routes into schools that unitary and district councils have in order to support engagement work. Members also discussed whether online platforms popular with young people might be options to explore to build a stronger Council presence on these channels, however resource would need to be a consideration and there are additional challenges with reaching young people who might not be old enough to use social media.

## Culture

In terms of engagement with young people within the Culture service, the written response to the Task and Finish Group confirmed that activities for children and young people are delivered across the service to enable them to experience and partake in the city of Gloucester's culture scene. The Cultural Development Manager explained that education visits frequently take place both at the Museum of Gloucester and in the Victorian school room at Gloucester Folk Museum, and the Museum offers 'loan boxes' which can be loaned to schools and youth groups directly for offsite learning. Members were advised that 426 children have engaged with the Museum of Gloucester's education programme in Quarter 1 of 2022. The written responses also explained that the Museum of Gloucester offers holiday and weekend activities, including history events, crafts, storytelling, and photography walks.

With regards to Gloucester Guildhall, the Cultural Development Manager confirmed that two regular gig nights take place at the venue which are aimed at young people, one of which is managed by a young promoter. There is also a hope to work with an organisation named 'Your Next Move' to support them in holding weekly workshops targeting young people to engage them in the hip hop and dance scene. Members were advised that the Culture team had at the time of meeting (July 2022) applied for National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding which if successful, would inject £250k per year for 3 years beginning in April 2023. This would be a significant resource to enable the Culture team to recruit a Steering Group for the venue to ensure target groups are being catered for, and they would plan to recruit a young person to sit on this group to help influence decision making. During the deep dive session, it was noted that the steering group might be something the Culture team could pursue even if the council was unsuccessful in the NPO bid. A detailed discussion ensued about the importance of training for the young people on the steering group and if at all possible, whether consideration could be given to more than one young person representative.

During the deep dive session, much of the discussion focused on the importance of working with partnership organisations to deliver projects to make connections and build trust with young people. It was noted that both Museums are already doing well with engaging with young people through work with local schools and the Guildhall had significant potential in terms of how the City Council could engage with young people. A further point of interest was the prevalence of apprenticeships within the Culture service, with the Cultural Development Manager confirming that the team hosts a number of apprentices across the

service who work with officers to gain experience and expertise in marketing, technical and event management. It was noted that the Culture Team are at the beginning of the journey in terms of engaging with young people, however it was evident that this service clearly has engagement with young people at the forefront across the cultural venues and festivals and events. The launch of Kings Square included activities for children, such as circus workshops, and annual events including Tall Shops and Gloucester Goes Retro are targeted towards families.

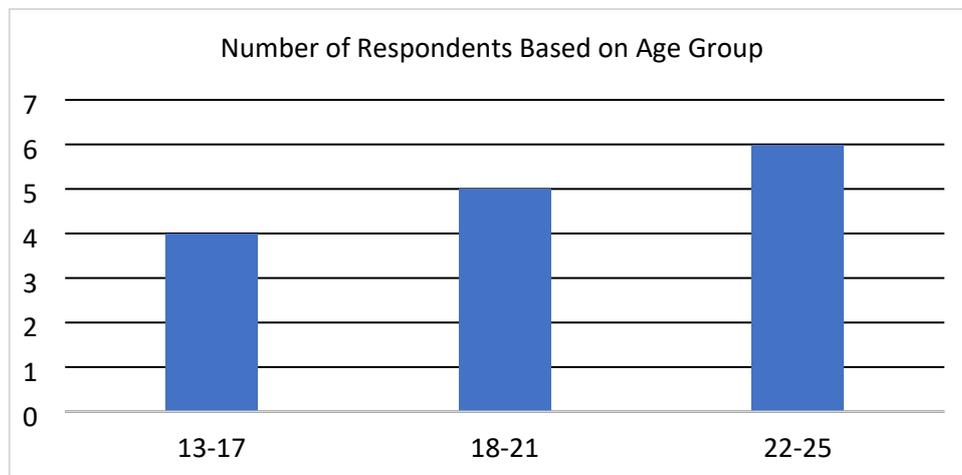
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## Section 3 – Public Consultation Findings

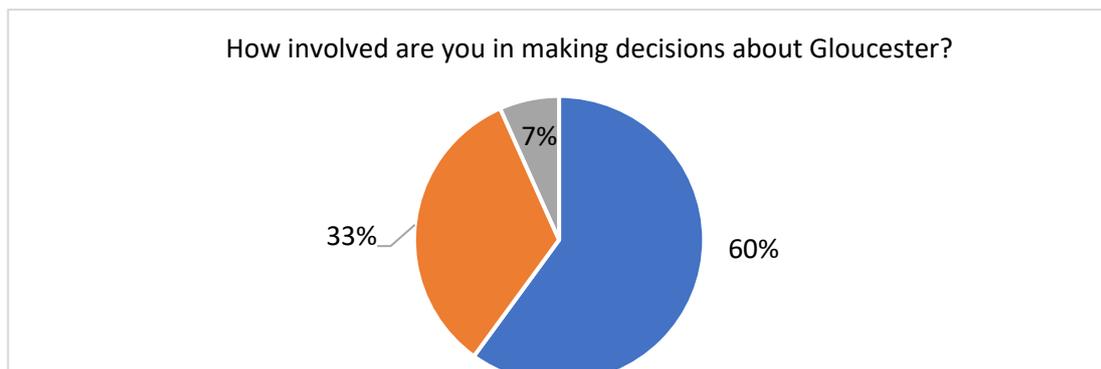
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In order to fulfil all aspects of the motion on engaging with young people, Members undertook a public consultation. The intention of the consultation was to discover more generally, whether young people feel engaged with the Council and what issues were most important to them. Due to data protection constraints, Members agreed that the target audience for the consultation should be individuals aged 13 and above. The public consultation consisted of 7 fundamental questions in addition to generic demographic questions, and was promoted on the City Council’s social media, shared with Councillors through the Members’ Bulletin communication, and circulated to the University of Gloucestershire, Hartpury University, Gloucestershire College, and local youth groups across the city. The results are set out below.

The total number of respondents to the consultation was fifteen, however the majority of respondents were aged 22-25, showing that oldest of those consulted were more likely to engage with the council by virtue of responding to the consultation. It is also important to note that 73.3% were aged 18 and above and this may be due to the fact that those over the age of 18 are eligible to vote and perhaps more engaged with society’s political institutions.



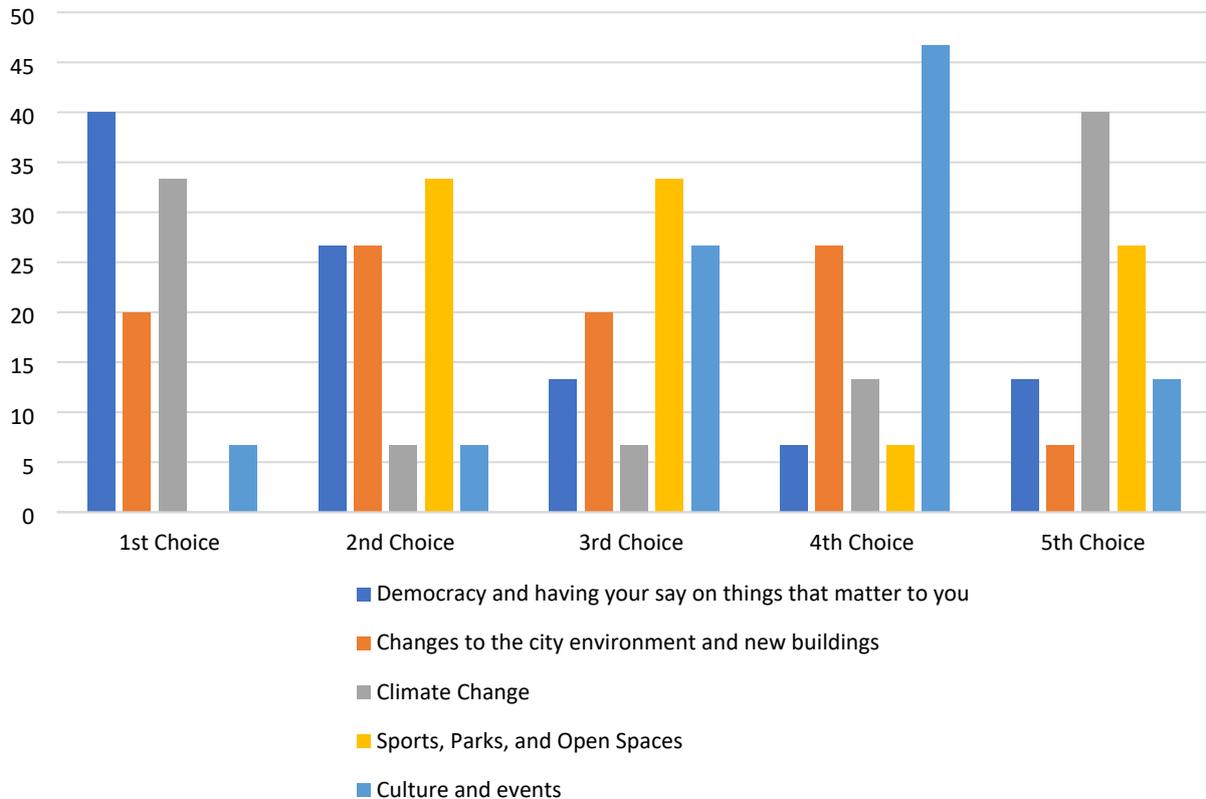
When seeking to gauge the political involvement of the respondents, it was clear that an overwhelming 60% of the young people who responded do not feel involved in the decision-making process by Gloucester City Council. However, when breaking these numbers down further by analysing age as shown in Appendix 1, it is interesting to note that out of those aged 13-17, 50% feel somewhat involved in the decision-making process despite not being eligible to vote. Moreover and of particular interest is that 60% of those aged 18-21 do not feel involved in the decision-making process and even higher than that at 83% do not feel involved at the age of 22-25.



When asking respondents who they would contact if they had a question about the Council, 40% of young people opted to ask their parent or guardian, however another 40% said they would contact either a council officer or a Councillor. The remaining 20% selected “other” with one individual taking to social media and another asking their friend. As shown in Appendix 2, it is increasingly clear that the younger respondents were more likely to go to their parents/guardian to ask their questions compared to 50% of those aged 22-25 who would contact a council officer directly.

Respondents overwhelmingly (87%), said they would contact the council via email when asked. However, 13% still opted to phone. When breaking this down by age, 100% of respondents aged 13-17 opted for email, while 80% of those aged 18-21 opted for email and 83% of those aged 22-25 also opted for email. It is important to note that 0% of respondents opted to communicate via letters with the council.

## Respondents' Ranking of The Council's Most Important Services

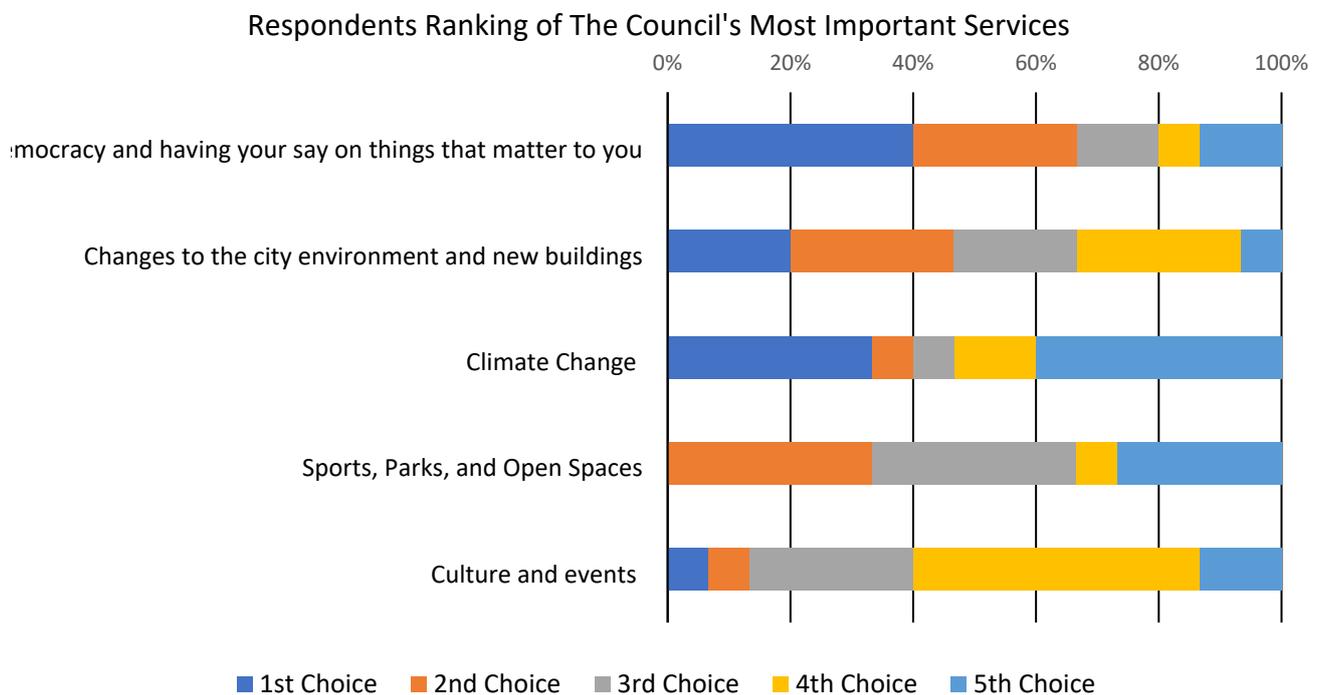


The graphs both above and below show how respondents ranked some of the council's most important services to their individual preferences. The graph above shows the number of respondents that listed each option as their 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> choice, while the graph below has aggregated responses to produce a hierarchy (most important to least important) based on the ranking respondents gave each option.

It is interesting to note that nearly half of respondents (40%) chose *Democracy and having your say on things that matter to you* as their first choice, demonstrating the importance of the process and the ability to have an input on decisions being made to young people – this ability to speak up and make their voice heard was more important to our respondents than any other option. This perhaps suggests how important it is for young people to know they are able to engage and voice their opinion on topics that are important to them, to build a feeling of being engaged within the decision-making progress. On the contrary, *Culture and events* was ranked least important by our respondents – not necessarily suggesting a lack of interest in culture and events, but rather this came through as the lowest priority when it comes to the importance of council services specifically. The importance of *Climate Change* is more nuanced than the Task and Finish Group initially thought, perhaps because respondents see it as a broader priority in their lives that doesn't directly link to the provision of council services.

Ultimately, the young people who engaged with our consultation expressed more interest in the principle and ability to engage with the work of the Council, than the specific issues with which they can engage. However, it is important to note those who responded to our

consultation are by nature more engaged than others in their age group, given they actively chose to submit a response.



What is one thing you would change about Gloucester?

The consultation asked respondents one thing they would like to change about Gloucester and the answers are diverse and mixed. One trend was that young people would like to feel more welcome in the city centre. One respondent said that they would like “more spaces for teens and young people to hang out for free without being accused of loitering or being a nuisance”, while another said the city centre just doesn’t have enough good shops.

Furthermore, other responses reflected a wish to make Gloucester city centre more beautiful and inviting, which speaks to the importance of our ongoing regeneration programme. Another noticeable trend was the request for better transportation connections, specifically around buses and cycling. One respondent said they would like to see “better public transport and designated walking/cycle paths that are segregated from the main roads” while another criticised “the amount of road work” and bus delays as well as overcrowding, specifically on bus number 10. Another respondent spoke to the need to promote Gloucester to a greater extent externally, stating:

*“I would change the city’s brand in order to reach more people externally. Gloucester is transforming into a lovely city but when I mention it to other people they always have a negative reaction. I think media campaigns would be a good way to reach out to people, and maybe hosting events is a good way to bring people into Gloucester.”*

Furthermore, various respondents spoke to changes they would like made that are not within the remit of the City Council, such as investing more in schools, immigration, concern

about “wokeness” and requesting better shops in the city centre. This report has not covered these responses in detail as they are not considered within the remit of, or relevant to the work of, the city council.

### What is your biggest concern about Gloucester?

Respondents expressed a range of concerns affecting all age groups, as well as some issues specific to young people– with 36% of respondents including the word ‘crime’ in their answer. This included references to knife and drug crime, while another respondent simply said: “*Gloucester Park is scary*”, emphasising the concern about safety in the city and the risk of crime, along with references to fly tipping and road conditions.

Other concerns expressed revolved around a sense of economic decline – one respondent said, “*the quays are beautiful but I feel that the high street has a long way to go*”, while another referred to a “*lack of attractive businesses/shops in the city centre*”. Multiple respondents also referred to issues specifically affecting students and young people, such as a “*lack of activities for teens because not everyone wants to do sports*”, “*not enough free spaces to spend time in without feeling in the way*”, and a need for more student jobs in Gloucester. One response suggested this could be resolved “*by encouraging the development of small local businesses e.g., cafes and opening up more accessible youth clubs.*”

### What are you most proud of Gloucester for?

Our respondents expressed a range of things they are proud of Gloucester for – including the Gloucester Quays, Gloucester’s numerous parks, the charity shops, our cultural offering, high quality healthcare and even cheese rolling. While three respondents couldn’t think of anything they were proud of, the majority expressed their pride in the City, despite all respondents acknowledging that things can be improved. One respondent called Gloucester their ‘*Goldilocks City*’, expressing that Gloucester strikes a balance between big and small, and rural and urban:

*“Gloucester is my Goldilocks City, not too big nor too small. There’s enough going on/to do in the city but there is planet of tranquil countryside less than 10 minutes out of the city.”*

Ultimately, the responses show that young people in Gloucester have a diverse range of views and opinions on what makes them proud of Gloucester.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the consultation found that there is a discrepancy between what Task and Finish Group’s perceived areas of interest affecting young people and the interests highlighted by young people who engaged with the consultation. The overarching narrative from young people is threefold. Firstly, respondents made it clear that they felt the city centre is not enticing and for some respondents, a place where they feel unwelcome or

even unsafe. Secondly, out of the council services that are most important to young people, *“Democracy and having your say on things that matter to you”* was overwhelmingly their first choice. The fact that 60% of respondents don’t feel involved in the decision-making process supports this finding, as it suggests that the young people who responded to the consultation feel this is an important issue and would like to feel more involved with decisions about Gloucester. Lastly, 36% of respondents repeatedly stated crime as their biggest concern about Gloucester. It is also important to note that the findings from public consultation are limited and should not be used to describe overall trends, feelings, or views of the entire young people’s cohort in Gloucester.

In conclusion, are children and young people engaging with the council? The short answer is no. This does not come as a reflection of Gloucester City Council not trying to engage with young people, as by virtue of the nine-week public consultation, only 15 individuals responded. Furthermore, due to time and resource limitations, engagement with comprehensive schools in the city was limited which in turn constrained the outreach to individuals over the age of 13. Despite this, it is clear that greater efforts could be taken to include, monitor and analyse the activity and views of individuals between 13-25 years old across council services.

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## Section 4 - Anecdotal Evidence

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At the outset of the Task and Finish Group, Members were keen to engage with children and young people across the city, particularly in their wards. Members agreed to reach out to their local schools before they broke up for the end of the term. There were some challenges with arranging school visits to speak to pupils under the age of 13. Despite this challenge, Councillor O'Donnell, through his own ward work, spoke with several groups of young people between the ages of 8 and 19. Issues raised with him included the desire of young people to have better facilities in local parks, problems with litter, dog waste, a lack of affordable activities, the costs of attending events (such as Tall Ships) and a lack of community initiatives. Young people also mentioned the prevalence of drugs and alcohol and expressed their desire to have an input in new initiatives, particularly in relation to park designs.

During one of the deep-dive sessions, Councillor Andrew Gravells reminded the Task and Finish Group that good ideas don't just come from older people, and shared an example of his ward work. He explained that some young people in his ward had come up with a great idea on how to make the best use of a disused piece of Public Open Space, but were unsure how to go about obtaining the relevant permission. Councillor Gravells had become aware of their ideas after being approached by constituents who objected to them. However, he saw merit in what the young people were trying to achieve, and easily found their parents and met with them to help the young people take the proposal forward. Councillor Gravells' involvement was welcomed by the parents and following his meetings with the young people, parents and City Council staff, a great initiative was created which still currently exists in Abbeydale. What initially appeared to be a negative situation created by young people, very quickly became a positive facility initiated by young people which could be enjoyed by the whole community. From both the anecdotal and data-based evidence, it is clear that listening and engaging with the City's young residents is beneficial both to the individual and the Council as a whole.

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## Section 5 - Conclusions and Next Steps

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Ultimately, the Task and Finish Group enquiry confirmed that young people have strong views and ideas about Gloucester and want to be heard. It was clear from both the findings of the public consultation and Members' own discussions with young people that many issues which are important to them are matters which the City Council has responsibility for, or at least some influence over. There were also issues raised in the public consultation which were not covered by the Task and Finish Group enquiry, such as safety issues in the city, which Members felt might be something to look at in future work considerations.

Following the conclusion of the deep dive sessions, Members found that some City Council service areas do engage with young people well, however they felt that there were certainly ways which the council could improve and that more of a joined-up approach might be beneficial. Members felt that the City Council does not necessarily tailor services towards young people at present. This said, towards the close of the Task and Finish Group enquiry, Members were advised that the Community Wellbeing Team had been successful in obtaining funding for two new posts. One of such posts will be a Youth Engagement Lead who will be looking at a strategic level at how the council can listen to young people and involve them in the council's work and decisions. The other role will work alongside the Youth Engagement Lead but will be focusing more specifically on serious youth violence. The Task and Finish Group were pleased to note that these roles are being created, and the creation of the new Youth Engagement Lead role in particular was at the forefront of their considerations when compiling and finalising their recommendations.

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## Section 6 – Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group

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<b>COUNCIL-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended that all council consultations include a question relating to age, in order to establish the age range of residents taking part.</li> <li>• It is recommended that a review of the City Council’s communications strategy takes place, specifically looking at how the Council could better engage with young people through the use of new social media channels.</li> <li>• It is recommended that the Task and Finish Group reconvene in 12 months’ time for a meeting with the new Youth Engagement Lead officer to discuss progress on implementing their recommendations.</li> </ul>	
<b>SERVICE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<p>Planning (Development)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended that the Planning Service consult directly with young people on major planning applications and regeneration schemes within the city through local schools and further education institutions.</li> <li>• It is recommended that the Planning Service implement innovative engagement tools, such as Digital QR codes on statutory planning notices and ‘Dot-Voting’, during formal consultation periods hosted in local communities.</li> </ul>
<p>Planning (Policy and Open Spaces)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended that when the council’s Playing Pitch Strategy is updated, consideration is given to extending membership of the delivery group to include groups promoting physical play and activities as well as sports bodies.</li> <li>• It is recommended that when the council’s Open Space Strategy is updated, consideration is given to</li> </ul>

	<p>extending any public consultations to grassroots community organisations.</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended that the Council uses the development of the Council’s Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan as an opportunity to increase engagement with young people on local climate change challenges and solutions.</li> </ul>
<p>Democracy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended that a document or information leaflet be created on a yearly basis and circulated to local schools. This should be in a child-friendly format, featuring a range of updates on Council activity, presented in an interactive way such as through the inclusion of wordsearches, competitions and/or other child-friendly activities. This could also support PSHE lessons, with the document being used to encourage children to engage and discuss their thoughts and opinions on what is going on within the Council. However, we are conscious of the resource available within the council and would want to ensure this was as effective as possible to justify the commitment of resource.</li> <li>• It is recommended that City Councillors engage with schools to a greater extent and invite them on a yearly basis for a visit to, and tour of, the Council Chamber and Mayor’s parlour. This could include interactive activities such as mock debates, along with a focus on the history of the city, such as by encompassing a visit to Gloucester Museum.</li> <li>• It is recommended that a child-friendly guide on how Gloucester City Council works is developed and published online as an educational resource – explaining in easy-to-understand terms how the Council operates, its remit within the city, and how young people can get involved. This could be used by schools to support with lessons, as well as on an individual basis by young people and their families.</li> </ul>

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## Section 7 - Acknowledgements

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The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the supporting officers and all of the lead Officers who attended and gave evidence ahead of the deep dive sessions:

- Development Control Manager
- Planning Policy Manager
- Policy and Governance Manager
- Climate Change and Decarbonisation Lead
- Cultural Development Manager

The Task and Finish Group would also particularly like to thank the young people who took part in the online public consultation, and all those young people who gave up their time to talk to Members about their views and concerns.