

Sheffield
Futures



Report for Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Written by Sheffield Young Advisors and
Sheffield Youth Cabinet

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Introduction

Young people are at the heart of many services throughout Sheffield. Their involvement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services affecting them is critical for ensuring a service is efficient and based on actual need.

Article 12 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

“Children and young people have a right to express an opinion on any matter affecting them and to have that opinion taken into account”.

The Sheffield Youth Cabinet and Sheffield UK Youth Parliament aim to represent the voice of all young people aged 11-18 who live in Sheffield. As a part of their role they work on campaigns to make adults and other young people look at and listen to the issues that you want seen and heard. This work is voluntary and they are all passionate about making Sheffield and the UK a better and fairer place for young people. Sheffield Youth Cabinet are coordinated and supported by Sheffield Futures to undertake their roles, commissioned by the Local Authority.

Sheffield Young Advisors are an award winning and diverse team of trained young consultants aged 16 to 25 who are commissioned to help organisations and local services improve their products and delivery and to make them more young people friendly. They are employed and co-ordinated by Sheffield Futures and use a variety of methods to ensure that young people are given the chance to be meaningfully involved in service design, delivery and evaluation. Sheffield Young Advisors are also part of the national charity Young Advisors and the wider movement.

For further information on the work of Sheffield Youth Cabinet or Sheffield Young Advisors, please contact involvement@sheffieldfutures.org.uk

This report was designed and developed by the young people using their own words supported by Sheffield Futures Involvement Lead, Emma Hinchliffe.

The views contained within this report are those directly of the young people involved.



Background

Sheffield Futures Young People's Involvement and Enrichment team were contacted by the support officer for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to discuss the possibility of young people feeding in their views to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's piece of work to develop a set of principles for any future decision making structures, and consider the strengths and areas for development of different decision making structures.

Methodology

It was agreed that we would put several key questions to both the Sheffield Young Advisors and to Sheffield Youth Cabinet at their next full meeting for their responses which they would collate into a report. Representatives of these groups will also be attending a hearing to answer and additional questions from the report.

The key questions were as follows:

1. What does good decision making look like to you?
2. What is important to you or your organisation about the way Sheffield City Council makes decisions?
3. What do you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment? What don't you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment?
4. What features would you like to see in any new decision making structure in Sheffield?
5. Is there anything to avoid in any new decision-making structure in Sheffield?

This report is split into two sections, the first being the feedback from Sheffield Young Advisors and the second being the feedback from Sheffield Youth Cabinet.



Sheffield Young Advisors

Five young people aged 17 to 23 were present at the meeting where this was discussed. The responses we gave were as follows:

1. What does good decision making look like to you?

We thought about the following:

Informative – Based on up to date information

Transparent – live broadcasting, can see the structure of how these decisions are made, show evidence as to why these decisions are made.

Representative – The decision making body reflects that of the population

Publicised – how the public can find out about these decisions and how they can get involved

Real meaningful community engagement

Accessibility – Languages, adaptations to the audience, age appropriate language

Consistency

Earlier involvement – not tokenistic

Look at engaging community groups to represent others within their area

2. What is important to you or your organisation about the way Sheffield City Council makes decisions?

We thought about the following:

Transparency

Involvement of Hard to reach – earlier consultation

Publicity

Representation



3. What do you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment? What don't you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment?

In terms of what we liked and didn't like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions, we generally felt that up until starting this discussion we were unaware of how decisions were made in Sheffield.

4. What features would you like to see in any new decision making structure in Sheffield?

We thought about the following:

- ✓ A clear set of stages that decision making goes through that is consistent throughout
- ✓ Data that is being used to aid decision making needs to be up to date and relevant and needs to be specific to the decision being taken
- ✓ Emphasis on awareness
- ✓ True accountability and representation, showing they are engaging with the public
- ✓ Engaging with the community via more outreach and not expect people to come to you. (ie parents evenings, community groups, house to house calls)
- ✓ In consultation, present several options, not just the final one that would be the ideal choice
- ✓ More community conversations

5. Is there anything to avoid in any new decision-making structure in Sheffield?

We felt that the key things to avoid were the opposites of what we would like to see.

Other comments:

We also had a few other comments as to how we felt decision making should be made, which was that there should be an equal weighting for all parties involved in the decision making and that decisions should not solely be based on the deprivation model. We also felt that in order for decisions to be made in an efficient manner a mixture of a cabinet structure and a committee based structure may be needed.



Sheffield Youth Cabinet

Ten young people aged 11 to 17 were present at the meeting where this was discussed. The responses we gave were as follows:

1. What does good decision making look like to you?

We thought about the following:

Heuristics – Have similar actions in the past yielded positive results?

Consider consequences of decision short term and long term

Everyone involved bears equal weighting

Decisions made benefit the majority

Everyone is considered fairly and on their own merit where necessary

Transparency of knowledge – is information accessible?

Based on the ladder of participation with meaningful involvement

Representation of minorities

Consultation of young people

The ideas have to be based on good intentions ie facts and investigations

A structured and streamlined debate

There has to be regulations so no one person can take control

2. What is important to you or your organisation about the way Sheffield City Council makes decisions?

We thought about the following:

Based on good intentions facts and investigations

Everyone is considered fairly and on their own merit where necessary

A diversity within the decision makers



3. What do you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment? What don't you like about the way in which Sheffield City Council makes decisions at the moment?

80% of the group felt that we didn't know much about how decisions were currently made and would like it to be publicised better so that we could know more. For the 20% who knew about current decision making, we felt that it was good that there was a scrutiny committee but felt that other parties and their constituents were under represented.

4. What features would you like to see in any new decision making structure in Sheffield?

We thought about the following:

- ✓ Ability for the public to vote on what motions they wish to see debated
- ✓ Documentation of decision making process
- ✓ Updates on recent decisions which have been made
- ✓ Cross-party cabinet system
- ✓ A more streamlined decision making process
- ✓ The decisions need to be negotiated
- ✓ The parties need to be more represented
- ✓ More cooperation between the parties
- ✓ Community representation

5. Is there anything to avoid in any new decision-making structure in Sheffield?

In terms of things to avoid in any new decision making structures in Sheffield, we thought about the following:

- ❖ Rushed or dragged out decisions
- ❖ Unfair, biased debates
- ❖ Privileged minorities making decisions

