

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL
Community Development Committee
Tuesday 30 June 2026
Creation of a Youth Council

Recommendation

The Committee RESOLVE to:

- **Explore the creation of a youth council.**
- **Delegate Officers to engage with young people, through a meeting with local youth groups and secondary schools, to identify the desire to establish a youth council.**
- **Bring a report back to a future meeting.**

Ward

All

Risk Management

A budget of up to £1000 should be adequate to conduct initial engagement exercises. Future resource/budget requirements for the establishment of a Youth Council would be informed by the outcomes of the initial engagement exercises and the model of youth participation recommended by young people.

Crime Prevention

Increased engagement can help strengthen young people's sense of belonging and civic responsibility, which may reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour and disengagement. There are no crime and disorder risks association with this initiative.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The proposal supports advancing equality of opportunity and community inclusion, subject to appropriate measures being taken to ensure accessibility and representative participation.

Objective

To promote the environmental, social, and economic wellbeing of the town and its community. To provide leadership and a voice for the community.

Report

Members have expressed an interest in strengthening youth engagement and promoting democratic participation among young people; this is demonstrated by the creation of the Mayoral Cadet role. A potential

approach highlighted by members is the establishment of a Young Mayor/Youth Council initiative.

As part of research into youth participation models, discussions were held with the Participation Lead for Children's Quality Assurance at Northumberland County Council. He recommended engaging local youth organisations and secondary schools by inviting them to nominate a small number of young representatives to attend an initial meeting to explore the development of a Blyth Town Youth Council. Additional thought will be required to ensure the opportunity for inclusion of home educated and those less engaged young people.

The purpose of the initial meeting would be to gather young people's views on:

- Whether a Town Youth Council should be established;
- The issues and activities a Youth Council should be involved in;
- How the Youth Council should communicate its views and influence the work of the Town Council; and
- The most appropriate method of appointing members, for example through elections or an open application process.

The Participation Lead has indicated that he would be willing to facilitate this initial discussion.

Should the Council wish to establish a Youth Council, one option would be for it to operate as a sub-committee¹ of the Community Development Committee. In this arrangement, the Youth Council would require its own Terms of Reference, which must remain within the scope of the parent committee; a sub-committee to Community Development cannot be granted broader powers or responsibilities than those delegated to the Community Development Committee itself.

The Terms of Reference would need to specify matters such as membership, responsibilities, reporting arrangements, and any delegated authority. As a minimum, the Youth Council would require appropriate meeting accommodation and administrative support.

In considering the structure of any Youth Council, Members will need to consider safeguarding arrangements and determine the extent to which it would operate in an advisory capacity or be granted delegated powers. Reference may be made to Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation when considering the appropriate level of youth involvement and decision-making. Members may also wish to consider whether a dedicated budget should be allocated and identify who would provide ongoing support and facilitation.

¹ Local Government Act 1972. Section 101, 1a

As an alternative to a formal Youth Council, Members may wish to consider a model like that operated by Ashington Town Council, which has established a Youth Advisory Committee. This is a standing committee comprising councillors and non-councillor representatives from local youth organisations, providing a structured mechanism for young people's views to inform council decision-making.

Elaine Brown
Deputy Town Clerk

23 June 2026

[Youth Council | Barnstaple Town Council](#)

[Sample Constitution A](#)

Appendix 1

Roger Harts Ladder of Youth Participation (1992)

