

City of Whittlesea - Youth Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

1. PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The City of Whittlesea Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is an Advisory Committee whose role is to represent the voice of young people aged 12 – 25 who live, work, study or have strong connections to the City of Whittlesea. The Whittlesea YAC provides a formal means for interaction and mutual information sharing between Council and young people and provides opportunities for young people to participate and learn about civic and democratic processes.

The YAC is one of multiple mechanisms for Council to engage and consult with young people and involve them in decision-making processes. It is a crucial stakeholder in achieving, developing and reviewing the goals of *YouthPlan2030+* and the City's Community vision *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All*. The YAC is also an important avenue for the youth community to connect with and raise issues with Council.

2. OBJECTIVES

Represent and promote the voice of young people in the City of Whittlesea to:

- a) Provide a platform for young people to advocate on priorities that are important to their lives.
- b) Provide advice to Council on specific issues impacting young people in the City of Whittlesea as relevant.
- c) Offer advice and advocate to Council on current issues and emerging trends for young people and implications for the service sector in the municipality.
- d) Enhance the opportunities for participation in the areas of citizenship, leadership and civic participation for young people.
- e) Provide advice on Council programs and on the development of spaces used by young people.

Council Offices

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3. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT

The Whittlesea YAC's membership will consist of:

- a) a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 young people aged between 12 to 25 who either live, study, work, access services or have a significant connection to the City of Whittlesea. A majority of members must reside within the City of Whittlesea.
- b) Where possible YAC members will be drawn from across the City of Whittlesea geographic area.
- c) Young people selected to be members of the committee should, when possible, comprise of a diverse mix of young people with respect to age, gender and sexual identity, cultural background and location within the municipality.
- d) The Whittlesea YAC is an inclusive committee and welcomes the participation and membership of peoples with disabilities.
- e) Applications for membership to fill committee vacancies will open in the second quarter of the calendar year with annual membership terms running from July to June.
- f) Candidates for YAC membership will be sought through a publicly advertised expression of interest process recruitment process outlined in Appendix 1.
- g) YAC member applications will be assessed by a panel comprising young people and Council representatives and will follow the process outlined in Appendix 1. The Panel will be majority membership of young people and preferably chaired by a young person.

4. TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

- a) Term of membership is an initial 12 month period. Members will be provided with the option to remain on the committee for a second consecutive term if they wish.
- b) In general applications for membership will be open to young people aged between 12 – 24 years, this will allow for young people to complete a 2 year term before turning 26 years. If a young person turns 26 years before the end of their term, the member will not be required to vacate their position
- c) Council will be advised of the YAC membership.
- d) Members who are 18 years or over at any point during their term of office are required to apply for and hold and valid Working with Children Check – (Volunteer level minimum)

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- e) If a member resigns during their term, Council may choose to advertise the vacant position through an expression of interest process and a replacement appointed by following the procedure for appointing replacement members (See Appendix 2).

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

In order to fulfill the requirements of the committee, members are required to:

- a) Bring their own experiences of being a young person in Whittlesea.
- b) Keep informed of current issues and emerging themes in relation to young people
- c) Be aware of the activities, interests and concerns relating to the youth sector and the lives of young people in the municipality;
- d) Prepare for and participate in regular committee meetings and portfolio group meetings, and
- e) Whenever possible, liaise with and seek feedback from other young people in the municipality in relation to the topics discussed at committee meetings.

During the annual Induction and Planning program, YAC members will draft a Committee Charter which will set out agreed behaviours of members. The Committee Charter will be formally adopted at the first YAC meeting of the Term.

6. INDUCTION, PLANNING and TRAINING

- a) **Induction and Planning:** YAC members will meet for a compulsory induction and planning program prior to the first scheduled YAC meeting. The Induction and Planning program will provide members with training on meeting and Council processes. During the induction and planning program, the YAC will determine the focus and scope of three portfolio sub-groups for the term and will draft the YAC Committee Charter.
- b) **Training:** YAC members will engage in ongoing training relevant to their role as YAC members, training will be delivered during portfolio group meetings. Some extra-ordinary training opportunities may be offered outside of meeting schedule times, these opportunities are voluntary for YAC members.

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7. MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMITTEE

- a) **Chairpersons:** The YAC will receive nominations for and vote on a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson from the membership at the first meeting of the term. Elections will be held via a silent ballot with nominations submitted via an Expression of Interest form prior to the first meeting.

YAC meetings are chaired by the Chairperson with the support of the Deputy Chairperson. In the event that the Chairperson is unable to perform their role, the Deputy Chairperson will take over chairing responsibilities.

- b) **Portfolios:** A maximum of three portfolio groups will be established through the Induction and Planning process. Portfolio groups will be aligned with the priorities of the YAC for the term, along with the priorities in the *YouthPlan 2030+* and *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All*. Each YAC member will nominate to participate in a specific portfolio sub-working group for the duration of the term.

At the first YAC meeting for the term, a portfolio leader will be elected to each portfolio group via a secret ballot. Nominations for portfolio leader will be submitted via an Expression of Interest form prior to the first meeting. The Chairperson will not be eligible to convene a portfolio group.

Portfolio working groups will meet a minimum of once per month according to the allocated meeting schedule.

Portfolio groups may focus on specific projects, events or activities that align with the objectives of the *YouthPlan2030+* and *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All*. Each group will have an allocated annual budget for projects.

Portfolio group leaders will prepare and deliver a verbal update on the group's progress at each full YAC meeting.

Non YAC Committee members may participate in portfolio groups in an ex-officio capacity but are not eligible for an Honorarium.

- c) **Meetings:** Meetings will be held monthly according to the YAC meeting schedule.

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- d) **Quorum:** At least 50%+1 members of the total number of committee members need to be present at meetings in order for the meeting to proceed. In the event that a quorum is not achieved within thirty (30) minutes after the scheduled commencement time of the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned until the following month.
- e) **Standing Agenda Items:** Each YAC meeting will have a standing agenda item of 'Council Matters for Consideration' where YAC members can identify and consider their response to Council matters. Topics may be nominated by either YAC members or proposed by the internal YAC Advisory and Support Group. Alternatively others may make a written request for an item to be included on the agenda as outlined in provision 8.b.
- f) **Minimum level of attendance:** Members who are absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without notice will be removed from the committee membership, notice of this will be provided in writing by the Team Leader Youth Services. Prior to removal, Council officers will conduct a check-in with the YAC member who has been absent to address any barriers to participation. This will identify next steps including greater support for attendance or leave of absence or removal or resignation.
- g) **Extended leave of absence:** YAC members can request to take an extended leave of absence from the committee. Requests for extended absence must be submitted in writing to the Team Leader Youth Services. The Team Leader Youth Services will notify the YAC of extended leave of absence of members in writing, to be Minuted at the next scheduled monthly meeting.
- h) **Resignation from YAC:** Committee members wishing to resign from their position on the Whittlesea YAC must advise the Chair and Deputy Chair in writing and the letter tabled at the next scheduled YAC meeting.
- i) **Voting:** It is preferable that decisions of the committee are made by consensus, however; there may be circumstances where a matter is decided by a vote. Where a vote is taken, each eligible member is entitled to one vote. A motion is deemed to have been carried if it receives 50%+1 votes of the committee members present at the meeting. In situations where there is a tied vote the Chair has the casting vote.

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- j) **Committee Support and Resourcing:** The YAC will be resourced by the Youth Services team who will be responsible for secretarial support including, in consultation with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, preparing and circulating meeting agendas, taking minutes of meetings, assisting in the preparation of reports and other administrative functions. Governance, Communications and Community Engagement support will be provided by the Whittlesea YAC Advisory and Support Group as outlined in the *Terms of Reference Whittlesea YAC Advisory and Support Group*.

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- k) **Committee Support – internal YAC Advisory and Support Group:** Convened by Team Leader Youth Services will comprise representatives from Governance, Communications, Participation and Engagement and Youth Services, the YAC Advisory and Support Group will provide Governance oversight, recommendations and operational support for the YAC. It will also provide an avenue for the YAC to engage across Council’s business units on key policy and strategic projects, media liaison as / where appropriate.
- l) **Committee Support – Honorarium payment:** The commitment made to the YAC is considerable with young people making a significant time commitment to ongoing work throughout the year which may impact their ability to undertake other paid employment. In acknowledgement of the significant time commitment involved in YAC membership, members will be paid an annual Honorarium fee to compensate for costs associated with their participation. There will be one rate for general committee members and a second higher rate for Chair and Deputy Chair in recognition of the greater commitment required by these two roles. The Honorarium fee will be paid in two instalments via Statement By Supplier Invoicing.
- m) Council will publish the Terms of Reference, list of committee members, meeting agendas and the minutes of meetings on Council’s website. Information about portfolio groups and projects will also be published.

8. ATTENDANCE OF NON-MEMBERS

- a) The committee may invite relevant Council Officers, other guests, experts and/or young people to attend meetings in an advisory capacity, for a specified purpose and for a specified period of time. The YAC members set meeting agendas and confirm non-member attendees. The YAC members reserve the right to limit non-committee attendees at meetings. All meeting visitors are required to adhere to the Committee Charter. YAC meetings are not open for public viewing.
- b) Council Officers and external groups and parties wishing to consult with the YAC must submit a request form outlining the purpose of the request a minimum of one month prior to the YAC meeting they wish to attend.

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The YAC Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, with the support of Youth Services staff, will determine whether the request fits with the priorities and purpose of the YAC. The request form is to be publicly available on the YAC page of the City of Whittlesea website. The request form will be developed by the YAC during the planning and Induction process so that it outlines the YAC's priorities for the term.

- c) The Whittlesea YAC is an accessible committee and welcomes the active participation of young people with disabilities. To ensure that active YAC membership is accessible, the City of Whittlesea Youth Services staff will support members to develop an individual access and support plan with young people who may require additional support to participate. YAC members who require additional support are welcome to bring support people to meetings. YAC members are to raise this with Youth Services staff during the induction and planning process or prior to the next YAC meeting so that the Chairperson can be notified of non-committee members in attendance in a support capacity. Support people are to attend YAC meetings in strictly an access and support capacity and are not permitted to engage in meeting business.

9. RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNCIL

- a) The YAC will report to and meet with Council twice yearly informing Council of identified issues or priorities of the YAC, projects and portfolio work undertaken by YAC participants and enter into dialogue with Council leaders around issues of importance or consequence for young people.
- b) A suitable forum for these twice yearly meetings will be determined once the YAC is established and may include: presentations/discussion at Council Briefings; participation in Community Council meetings, Council Public Question Times, Community Forums, etc;
- c) The mode of report will be chosen by YAC members. Reports to Council could incorporate but not limited to; video or infographic reports; verbal Council presentations; written updates (memos, letters or submissions).

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10. PROVIDING ADVICE TO COUNCIL

The YAC may invite Council Officers to committee meetings for the purpose of gaining information and consulting on relevant Council strategies and policies. The YAC may also engage with Council Officers at committee meetings for the purpose of providing expert advice to Council on topics and issues relevant to young people.

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

YAC members will be provided with training on understanding and identifying a conflict of interest during the Induction and Planning process. The YAC Committee Charter will outline the process for dealing with conflicts of interest.

12. CODE OF CONDUCT

YAC members will be required to sign an undertaking to adhere to the City of Whittlesea's Code of Conduct at the commencement of each term. The Code of Conduct sets out the behavioural expectations of all staff, contractors and volunteers representing the City of Whittlesea.

During the Induction and Planning phase of program, training will be provided to YAC members on understanding and following the Code of Conduct.

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13. GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCESS

In the event that a conflict occurs between YAC members, the YAC Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will work with Youth Services Officers and Team Leader to resolve it. If YAC members have a grievance or concern, it should be raised according to the following:

- a) If the grievance is about a fellow YAC member, the issue should be raised with the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Youth Services Officer
- b) If the grievance is about the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson, the issue should be raised with the Youth Service Officer and Team Leader Youth Services.
- c) If the grievance is with the Youth Services Officer it should be raised with the Team Leader Youth Services and Manager Family Children and Young People.

All conflicts will be addressed and resolved in accordance with the code of conduct and the principals of natural justice.

14. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Ordinary members of the Committee cannot make public statements on behalf of Council as an independent group without prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer or nominee

15. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed after 12 months in consultation with YAC membership. Council will work with YAC participants through a codesign process to explore opportunities to evolve the committee towards a Youth Council Committee.

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Appendix 1: Whittlesea Youth Advisory Committee New Membership Recruitment Process Flow Chart

March - April

Public Expression of Interest Process Open

Flyers and information will be distributed to primary and secondary schools, TAFES, universities, community spaces including CAC's and community services that work with or support young people who live, work, study or connected to the City of Whittlesea. A social media campaign will take place, displaying flyers and information on all of Councils social media platforms.

Information and the application processes will be in a format that is accessible and inclusive of all young people. Youth Services staff will provide support to enable young people to apply in a manner that meets their needs.



April - May

Expressions of Interest Received

Applications for membership are open to young people aged between 12 – 24 years, this will allow for young people to complete a 2 year term before turning 26 years.

An Expression of Interest process will be open during April / May. Where necessary, applications will be submitted in a manner that supports young peoples needs.

Submissions will be sent to Youth Services Team and will be reviewed and shortlisted by a panel of Council representatives and young people.



May - June

Interviews

Shortlisted applications for membership will be interviewed by a panel comprising of Council representatives and young people. Young people selected to be the members of the committee should, when possible, comprise a diverse mix of young people with respect to age, gender and sexual identity, cultural background, lived experience and location within the municipality.

Successful applicants will undergo a referee check and will be notified of their membership at the end of May / early June.



June

Induction & Planning

Successful applicants will be required to attend the induction and planning program.

Members will meet for a compulsory induction and planning program at the commencement of their term prior to the first scheduled YAC meeting. The Induction and planning program will provide members with training on meeting and Council processes and review and orientation to Committee Terms of Reference. During the induction and planning program, the YAC will determine the focus and scope of three portfolio sub-groups for the term.



July

First Youth Advisory Committee Meeting

The first meeting for each term will take place in July. Election of leadership roles including Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Portfolio leaders will be undertaken at the first meeting along with the confirmation of a Committee Charter.

Appendix 2: City of Whittlesea Recruitment for Youth Advisory Committee Vacant Member Position

The following document outlines the process for filling vacant positions on the Whittlesea Youth Advisory Committee in the event a member vacates their position. Where this occurs, Council may:

- a) Refer to the original EOI Applicants shortlist if the vacancy is within the first 10 months of the term (i.e. membership will be filled through shortlisted applicants who were interviewed but unsuccessful due to capacity limits during the previous YAC application period). If the shortlisted applicants are not able to fill vacancies or do not enable the YAC membership to meet the required geographic or diversity representation under the Terms of Reference, Council may a public expression of interest will be advertised to ensure adequate representatives from wards are maintained.
- b) If the vacancy occurs within the last three months of the Term, the vacant position will not be filled unless a committee quorum is unable to be maintained.
- c) The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson along with Council representatives will make up the panel for recruiting new members.
- d) An induction process will occur for newly appointed members filling vacant positions outside of the annual recruitment process.

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