

Working together to tackle Climate Change

'You're never too young to make a difference'

Youth Voice Summit: 12th February 2020



Summary Event Report

Background to the event

Since 2016, the Voice, Influence and Change team have hosted a series of “Youth Voice Summit” events for young people in Leeds to come together to work with local decision makers on an issue that is important to them. For 2020, the theme was “Tackling Climate Change”. This was to reflect:

1. Young People across the country voting “Tackling Climate Change” as their top issue in the 2019 annual UK Youth Parliament “Make Your Mark” ballot
2. Leeds City Council formally declaring a ‘climate emergency’ in March 2019
3. The growing youth-led “Strike4Climate” movement in cities around the world, including here in Leeds

The Voice, Influence and Change Team worked in partnership with the Leeds City Council Health and Wellbeing Service to plan and deliver the event.

The day was split into three sequential workshops that were designed to enable students to consider climate change from a broad philosophical perspective before having the opportunity to take part in a Q&A panel and then finally working together to devise and develop practical solutions to lower the carbon footprint of their school communities. Their solutions are to be used in Leeds City Council guidance that will be issued to schools.

Consultation and marketplace stalls

Having such a large and diverse range of young people in one place provided a great opportunity for other services to deliver their own consultation and engagement work during the break times. The following services were in attendance

- **Child Friendly Leeds**
- **Leeds Youth Council**
- **Health and Wellbeing Service**
- **Leeds DEC**
- **Makertopia**
- **We are IVE**



Event attendance

The event was promoted to all secondary schools and colleges in the city through social media and direct emails. Schools were encouraged to bring a member of staff and up to 5 students, ideally representing a cross section of year groups. On the day the event was attended by 114 students plus members of staff from the following schools and settings:

Abbey Grange Academy	Allerton Grange High School	Brigshaw High School
Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School	Cockburn High School	Lawnswood School
Leeds West Academy	Mount St Mary's Catholic High School	Otley Prince Henry;s Grammar School
Pudsey Grangefield School	Roundhay High School	St Mary's Menston Academy
The Farnley Academy	The Grammar School at Leeds	The Ruth Gorse Academy
Bishop Young Academy	Notre Dame Catholic College	

They were joined by the following lead officers and elected members to take place in the Q&A panel (workshop 2) and the final roundtable discussions (workshop 3)

Councillor Judith Blake (Leader of Leeds City Council)	Councillor Lisa Mulherin (Executive Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development)
Councillor Fiona Venner (Executive member for Children and Families)	Councillor Neil Walshaw (Chair of Climate Emergency Advisory Committee)
Councillor Jonathan Bentley (Climate Emergency Advisory Committee)	Councillor Mohammed Shahzad (Climate Emergency Advisory Committee)
Councillor David Blackburn (Climate Emergency Advisory Committee)	Polly Cook (Lead officer, Sustainable Energy and Air Quality)



The programme:

0930: Arrival and refreshments

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0945: Welcome from **Councillor Lisa Mulherin** (Executive Board Member for Climate Change) and **Councillor Fiona Venner** (Executive Board Member for Children & Families)

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Icebreaker activity

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Workshop One: Learning about Climate Change – facilitated by [Thinking Space](#) – part of The Philosophy Foundation

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11.00am: Morning Break

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Workshop Two: Q&A panel on how a city responds to a [climate emergency](#) with
Councillor Judith Blake CBE – Leader of Leeds City Council
Councillor Fiona Venner – Lead member for young people and families
Councillor Lisa Mulherin – Lead member for environment
Councillor Neil Walshaw – Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee
Professor Julia Steinberger – Leeds University [Professor of Social Ecology & Ecological Economics](#)

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12.00pm: Lunch and marketplace area
(Sign up for free tree saplings for your school)

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12:45pm: Workshop Three: Working together to make a difference. An opportunity for students to work with Councillors and Council Officers to develop creative shared solutions to creating a carbon-neutral city by 2030

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13:30: Feedback and next steps

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13:50: Closing speech by Councillor Neil Walshaw, Chair of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee

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2.00pm: Evaluations and finish

Summary of student discussions

In the third and final workshop of the day, students worked alongside elected members from the Leeds City Council Climate Emergency Advisory Committee as well as officers from the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality team. Each school was provided with a pre-printed form to encourage them to consider the most effective ways that students can make a difference in their schools, in their communities and in their homes. For each of these categories they were also asked to think of an innovative and original approach they felt would make a difference. Responses from all the schools were collated and are presented below:

The image shows three identical pre-printed forms arranged vertically. Each form has a header with 'School name: _____' and logos for 'Healthy Schools' and 'Leeds City Council'. The forms are titled: 'The three most effective ways for students to make a difference in school are:', 'The three most effective ways for students to make a difference in the community are:', and 'The three most effective ways for students to make a difference at home are:'. Each form has a list of three items with arrows pointing to the right, and a space for 'Our original idea(s) is:'. To the right of each form is a small illustration: a house for the school form, a community scene for the community form, and a house with a tree for the home form.

Making a difference in School:

1. Start an eco-committee that regularly meets with senior leaders: 3
2. Promote a sustainable travel initiative: 4
3. Ask your school to review its menu and introduce more lower-carbon options and meat-free days: 3
4. Start a student led school gardening project: 3
5. Get your school to introduce outdoor lessons: 2
6. Plant trees: 2
7. Organise a car free street event: 1
8. Tackle single use plastic: 4
9. Get your school to incorporate sustainability into lessons: 3
10. Organise a uniform swap shop: 5
11. Ensure your school switches off over the holidays to reduce wasted energy: 2
12. Carry out a school sustainability survey amongst staff, pupils and parents: 1
13. Encourage parents to stop idling outside the school gates: 1
14. Get your school to introduce cycling proficiency courses: 1
15. Encourage your school staff and governors to take a carbon literacy course: 1

Making a difference in the Community:

1. Get in touch with your local parish, town or ward councillors: 1
2. Organise an event to celebrate Earth Day, Clean Air Day, or Car Free Day etc.: 4
3. Organise an "Ask a climate scientist" event: 1
4. Join or start a local community garden: 1
5. Organise a community litter pick: 6
6. Host a swap shop event: 3
7. Organise a community switch-off: 2
8. Visit a community repair café: 1
9. Make sure there are recycling facilities in community buildings: 3
10. Educate others on what you can and can't recycle: 4

Making a difference at home:

1. Plan meals ahead with your family to save time and food waste: 5
2. Get your family to leave the car at home once a week
3. Let the grass grow in your garden to create a habitat for wildlife
4. Save hot water – heating water is one of the most energy intensive processes in the home!: 2
5. Track your energy usage with a smart meter: 4
6. When you can't reuse, recycle!: 2
7. Go vintage with your wardrobe and buy second hand: 2
8. Get your family to commit to a meat free Monday: 5
9. Switch the light bulbs to energy efficient ones: 2
10. Plant pollinator friendly plants- you can even do this on a window sill or balcony: 2

Original ideas:

At School:

- Create living walls/ivy fencing x2
- Take book donations
- Introduce L.E.D lights
- Recycle using TerraCycle
- Introduce a car free zone around schools x2
- Have a climate empowerment day with workshops, discussions and activities
- Have a recycling student committee
- Write to parents and bus companies to ask them to stop idling
- Plant trees each time year 11 graduates the school
- Send out daily switch-off reminders
- Start bee-keeping
- Wildlife photo competition
- Educate about conscious consumerism
- Have a monthly car-free day

In the Community:

- Contact your local MP
- Create a rubbish sculpture to raise awareness of waste
- Community tree planting x3
- Involve local faith groups in climate action and sustainability
- Display environmental posters
- Use social media to promote sustainability in your community
- Volunteer with a conservation local group/charity

At Home:

- Donate to a charity shop instead of throwing things away
- Compost food waste x2
- Reduce single use cleaning materials
- Grow your own food x2
- Don't use single use plastic packaging
- Run an energy saving campaign by telling people how much money they could be saving

- Educate parents about the climate emergency
- Recycle old materials
- Where is your energy coming from? Can you switch to renewables or a green tariff?
- Contact local councillors
- Use sustainable transport

Event evaluation

In order to reduce waste, for the first time at a Summit event evaluations were done online using a link provided to attendees at the end of the event. 69 responses were received.

Question One:

As a result of attending the event, do you feel any more confident about how you and your school can play a role in helping to tackle the climate emergency?

Yes I feel more confident:	97%
No, I don't feel more confident:	1%
I'm not sure:	2%

Question Two:

How would you rate the event on a scale of 1 to 5? (5 being excellent.....1 being poor)

Rating 5 (excellent)	36%
4	60%
3	3%
2	1%
Rating 1 (poor)	0%

Attendees also were able to leave comments:

Well organised, informative summit

Thank you I've had a really solid time today. Good job guys!

I have got more solutions that I can take forward that I wouldn't have thought of before.

It was a very helpful event as it helped me understand the effects of climate change on a more local scale and we can help our community.

I think it's very important to educate people on climate change and how it affects them, this is because not many people don't know how it will effect them and it's very important.

Lots more ideas, thank you.

I think my school as a whole is just unco-operative, however the all group who came today does feel passionately about it. This doesn't give me much confidence for my school.

This was a really inspiring event and was really influential. I learnt a lot about other people's views on climate change.

Although really interesting, there was a lot of being talked at. We would have loved the chance to do more discussions/actions/projects.

The final workshop made me feel more confident about what schools can do

