



# Youth Council Terms of Reference

February 2025

## Terms of Reference

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## **1. Purpose of the Youth Council**

The City of Whittlesea Youth Council is a peak advisory and advocacy group whose role is to represent the voice of young people aged 12 – 22 who live, work, study or have strong connections to the City of Whittlesea. The Whittlesea Youth Council provides a formal means for representation and information exchange between Council and young people and provides opportunities for young people to raise local youth issues.

The Whittlesea Youth Council 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 City's Community vision Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All. The Youth Council is also an important avenue for the youth community to connect with and raise issues with Council, and for Council to refer matters to the Youth Council for their feedback.

## **2. Objectives**

Act as representatives to:

- a) Provide a platform for young people to raise issues and advocate on priorities that are important to young people in the City of Whittlesea.
- 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.

## **3. Youth Council Membership and Recruitment**

The Whittlesea Youth Council membership will consist of:

- a) a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 13 young people aged between 12 to 22 who either live, study, work, access services or have a significant connection to the City of Whittlesea.
- b) Where possible Youth Council members will be drawn from across the City of Whittlesea geographic area.

- c) Young people selected to be members of the Youth Council should represent the diverse and varied needs of the youth community in City of Whittlesea including but not limited to living in rural Whittlesea, LGBTIQ+, gender diverse, First Nations, people with a disability, chronic illness and/or mental illness, carers, people experiencing or have experienced financial insecurity and culturally and linguistically diverse young people.
- d) Candidates for Youth Council membership will be sought through a publicly advertised expression of interest outlined in Appendix 1.
- e) Youth Council 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 a majority membership of young people and preferably chaired by a young person.
- f) Members who are 18 years or over at any point during their term of office are required to apply for and hold a valid Working with Children Check – (Volunteer level minimum)
- g) If a young person turns 23 years before the end of their term, the member will be required to vacate their position.

#### **4. Term of Membership**

- a) Term of membership is a 24-month term.
- b) In general, applications for membership will be open to young people aged between 12 – 21 years, this will allow young people to complete a 2-year term before turning 23 years.
- c) Council will be advised of the Youth Council membership.
- d) In general, once a term of membership is completed, Youth Council members aged 16 years and over cannot re-apply for membership.
- e) If a young person is aged 12-16 years during their term of membership, they can re-apply for membership following a break of 24 months. This allows for a young person aged 12-16 years during their initial term of membership the opportunity to pursue a Youth Mayor or Deputy Youth Mayor position.

## 5. Responsibilities of Members

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

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

## 6. Induction, Planning and Training

- a) **Induction and Planning:** Youth Council members will meet for a compulsory induction and planning program prior to the first scheduled Youth Council meeting. The Induction and Planning program will provide members with training on meeting and Council processes. During the induction and planning program, the Youth Council will learn how to hold meetings using Council's Governance Rules.
- b) **Training:** Youth Council members will engage in ongoing training relevant to their role as Youth Council members. Some extraordinary training opportunities may be offered outside of meeting schedule times, these opportunities are voluntary for Youth Council members.

## 7. Management of the Youth Council

- a) **Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor:** The Youth Council will receive nominations for and vote on a Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor from the membership at the second meeting of the term. Elections will be held in accordance with Council's Governance Rules with nominations submitted via an Expression of Interest form prior to the first meeting. Youth Council meetings are chaired by the Youth Mayor with the support of the Office of Council & CEO providing meeting procedure advice in line with Council's Governance Rules. In the event that the Youth Mayor is unable to perform their role, the Deputy Youth Mayor will take over chairing responsibilities. The Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor are required to be 16 years old or above.

- b) **Meetings:** Meetings will be held monthly from 6:00-7:30pm. A meeting must not be continued for more than one (1) additional 30 minutes by way of a Procedural Motion for a continuance and is carried (with a mover and seconder, and no debate).
- c) **Quorum:** At least 50%+1 members of the total number of Youth Council 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.
- d) **Standing Agenda Items:** Each Youth Council meeting will have a standing agenda item of:
- Meeting Opening and Introductions
  - Acknowledgement of Country
  - Diversity and Good Governance Statement
  - Apologies
  - Declaration of Conflict of Interest
  - Confirmation of Previous meeting Minutes
  - Reports and matters for consideration
- e) **Minimum level of attendance:** Members who are absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without notice by 5pm on the day of the meeting will be removed from the Youth Council membership, notice of this will be provided in writing by the Office of the CEO. Prior to removal, Council officers will conduct a check-in with the Youth Council 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.
- f) **Extended leave of absence:** Youth Council members can request to take an extended leave of absence from the Youth Council. Requests for extended absence must be submitted in writing to the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO. The Office of the CEO will notify the Youth Council of extended leave of absence of members in writing, to be minuted at the next scheduled monthly meeting.
- g) **Resignation from Youth Council:** Youth Council members wishing to resign from their position on the Whittlesea Youth Council must advise the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor in writing and the letter tabled at the next scheduled Youth Council meeting. This letter is to be forwarded to the Executive Manager Office Council & CEO.
- h) **Voting:** Will be by show of hand and each eligible member is entitled to one vote. A motion is deemed to have been carried if it receives 50%+1 votes of the Youth Council members present at the meeting. In situations where there is a tied vote the Youth Mayor has the casting vote.

- i) **Youth Council Support and Resourcing:** The Office of Council & CEO will be responsible for secretarial support including, in consultation with the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor, preparing and circulating meeting agendas, taking minutes of meetings, assisting in the preparation of reports and other administrative functions i.e. payment of honorarium. Governance, Communications and Community Engagement support will be provided by the Executive Services directorate.

The Youth Development Team will be responsible for resourcing, including Council meeting agenda setting, attending events and functions with Youth Council members, assist Youth Council members write meeting reports, liaising with Youth Council members to establish their annual goals, coordinate the expression of interest recruitment process, including appointments, and facilitating the new Youth Councillor member induction program.

- j) **Honorarium Payment:** The commitment made to the Youth Council 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 Youth Council membership, members will be paid an annual Honorarium fee to compensate for costs associated with their participation. There will be one rate for non-executive Youth Council members and two higher rates for Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor in recognition of the greater commitment required by these two roles. The Honorarium fee will be paid monthly.

Youth Council Honorarium	
Position	Honorarium (Annually)
Youth Mayor	\$3,000
Deputy Youth Mayor	\$2,000
Non-execute Member	\$1,200

All Youth Councillors are eligible for additional payments to assist in their attendance of Youth Council meetings. These payments can include but are not limited to; travel costs including Taxis or Rideshare (Uber), parking costs when required to attend events, childcare costs if Youth Councillor requires to place their child/children in a care facility in order to attend Youth Council meeting and the associated costs of obtaining a police check.

Additional costs also may be incurred if a Youth Councillor requires access to an interpreter.

- k) Council will publish the Terms of Reference, list of Youth Council members, meeting agendas and the minutes of meetings on Council's website.

## 8. Attendance of Non-Members

- a) The Youth Council 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 Office of Council & CEO, in consultation with the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor, set meeting agendas and confirm non-member attendees. The Youth Council members reserve the right to limit non-Youth Council attendees at meetings. All meeting visitors are required to adhere to the Youth Council Charter. Youth Council meetings are not open for public viewing.
- b) Council Officers and external groups and parties wishing to consult with the Youth Council must submit a request form outlining the purpose of the request a minimum of one month prior to the Youth Council meeting they wish to attend. The Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor, with the support of Office of Council & CEO, will determine whether the request fits with the priorities and purpose of the Youth Council. The request form is to be publicly available on the Youth Council page of the City of Whittlesea website. The request form will be developed by the Youth Council during the planning and Induction process so that it outlines the Youth Council's priorities for the term.
- c) The Whittlesea Youth Council is accessible and welcomes the active participation of young people with disabilities. To ensure that active Youth Council 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. Youth Council members who require additional support are welcome to bring support people to meetings. Youth Council members are to raise this with the Office of Council & CEO staff during the induction and planning process or prior to the next Youth Council meeting so that the Youth Mayor can be notified of non-members in attendance in a support capacity. Support people are to attend Youth Council meetings in strictly an access and support capacity and are not permitted to engage in meeting business.



## **9. Relationship with Council**

- a) The Youth Council will report to and meet with Council twice yearly informing Council of identified issues or priorities of the Youth Council, projects and portfolio work undertaken by Youth Council members 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 Youth Council is established and may include presentations/discussion at Council Briefings.
- c) The mode of report will be chosen by Youth Council members. Reports to Council could incorporate but not limited to; video or infographic reports; verbal Council presentations; written updates (memos, letters or submissions).

## **10. Providing Advice to Council**

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

## **11. Code of Conduct**

Youth Council 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 Youth Council members on understanding and following the Code of Conduct.

## **12. Youth Council Charter**

We, the members of the City of Whittlesea Youth Council, commit to advocating for and being the voice of the youth within our municipality. We ensure a safe space for all, to engage in constructive collaboration on matters affecting young people. We aim to empower and foster community connectedness in our youth so they feel valued and supported to achieve their aspirations.

### 13. Grievance Resolution Process

In the event that a conflict occurs between Youth Council members, the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor will work with the Executive Manager, Office of Council & CEO to resolve it. If Youth Council members have a grievance or concern, it should be raised according to the following:

- a) If the grievance is about a fellow Youth Council member, the issue should be raised with the Youth Mayor, Deputy Youth Mayor and Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO.
- b) If the grievance is about the Youth Mayor or Deputy Youth Mayor, the issue should be raised with the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
- c) If the grievance is with the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO it should be raised with the CEO.
- d) All conflicts will be addressed and resolved in accordance with the code of conduct and the principles of natural justice.
- e) Youth Development staff support.

#### **14. Public Statements**

Members of the Youth Council cannot make public statements on behalf of Council as an independent group without prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Manager Public Affairs or their nominee.

#### **15. Budget**

Without consultation with the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO or Director Community Wellbeing, the Youth Council is unable to plan or hold events or functions that incurs expenditure to Council.

#### **16. Review of Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference (ToR) may be reviewed after 24 months in consultation with Youth Council membership. Council will work with Youth Council through a codesign process to explore opportunities to evolve the ToR.

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

### September - October

#### 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.

An Information Session will be held, this session will be recorded and uploaded online.

Youth Services staff will provide support to enable young people to apply in a manner that meets their needs.

### October - November

#### Expressions of Interest Received

Applications for membership are open to young people aged between 12 – 21 years, this will allow for young people to complete a 2 year term before turning 23 years.

An Expression of Interest process will be open during October/November. Where necessary, applications will be submitted in a manner that supports young people's needs.

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

### November - December

#### 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 November/early December.

### January

#### 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 Youth Council meeting. The Induction and planning program will provide members with training on meeting and Council processes and review and orientation to Youth Council Terms of Reference. During the induction and planning program, the Youth Council will determine the focus and scope of three portfolio sub-groups for the term.

### February

#### First Youth Council Meeting

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

## 18. Appendix 2: City of Whittlesea Recruitment for Youth Council Vacant Member Position

The following document outlines the process for filling vacant positions on the Whittlesea Youth Council 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 12 months of the term (ie. membership will be filled through shortlisted applicants who were interviewed but unsuccessful due to capacity limits during the previous Youth Council application period).
- b) If the vacancy occurs within the last six months of the Term, the vacant position will not be filled unless a Youth Council quorum is unable to be maintained.
- c) The Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor 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.