



Strategy for Youth Services

2022 – 2027

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Purpose

Following the end of the previous service level agreement with Just Around the Corner (JAC) in 2020, the Town Council has determined to continue providing targeted support to young people in Woodley. The Council is seeking to do this by inviting tenders from specialist youth service providers to provide this support through a new service level agreement from 2022.

Research

It is recognised that the Town Council has limited resources to provide youth support services and that activities under a new service level agreement must be targeted and achievable.

The Town Council engaged ACL Consultancy Solutions Ltd (ACL) to draft a document summarising and assessing the approaches available to the Town Council when shaping future youth provision. ACL facilitated several meetings with members of the Council's Community Youth Partnership and other interested parties during 2021, at which views, opinions and suggestions were gauged. Section 7 of the ACL document (Appendix A) informs the priorities and approaches on which the basis of this Strategy has been formed.

Priorities

This Strategy identifies nine key priorities which the Town Council aims for the new service to aspire to. These are that the service:

- A** Addresses young people's mental health and wellbeing, feelings of isolation / loneliness and physical health and wellbeing
- B** Gives young people stronger voices at local community and local government levels
- C** Provides safe and appropriate opportunities to meet and have fun with friends
- D** Widens the diversity of activities and opportunities for young people
- E** Can work within the available WTC budget
- F** Provides opportunities for additional funding (eg per event, matched funding, sponsorship)
- G** Enables arrangements for the first five years of Youth Support delivery
- H** Can respond flexibly to changes in the interests and preferences of young people
- I** Can be cost-effectively managed by WTC, CYP and other partners as appropriate

These nine priorities have been used as the assessment criteria against which the potential approaches open to the Town Council have been assessed.

Outcomes

Measured outcomes against many of the priorities are very difficult as they are both subjective and wide-ranging. National frameworks exist and others are being developed to help providers of youth support services to evaluate their services, and these are themselves very wide-ranging and complex.

It is recognised that the Town Council is not a specialist provider of youth support services and does not have the knowledge and expertise to prescribe a fixed, detailed plan of activities through the SLA, particularly at the outset. Therefore the operation of the SLA will need a partnership approach with the provider, to enable the Council to understand the existing and changing needs of young people, and for the provider to understand the Council's expectations. This will be managed through regular (suggested monthly) update and progress meetings between the service provider and the Council's working party.

Approaches

The ACL document identifies four specific styles of approach open to the Town Council, along with the possible associated activities. These approaches are:

1 Activity Led

This approach centres around the provision of specific activities, such as:

- Pop-ups and events
- Workshops (practical, cultural)
- Sports
- Health and wellbeing (including mind and body)

2 Street Based

3 Placed Based

This approach centres around the location/s at which activities are provided, such as:

- Youth Hub(s)
- Youth Centre(s)
- Youth Café
- Sports, leisure or other health and wellbeing centre(s)
- Partner premises (eg schools)
- Specialist facilities (peripatetic or fixed)

4 Issues Led

This approach centres around providing activities which focus on a particular issue, such as:

- (Focus on) mental Health
- (Focus on) physical wellbeing
- (Focus on) personal wellbeing
- (Focus on) equality of access
- (Focus on) family breakdown
- (Focus on) criminal behaviour, including drugs distribution and use/

Assessment

By assessing the associated activities against this Strategy's priorities, we have identified that each of the four identified approaches meet, on average, the following number of priorities:

Approach	No. Priorities Met (avg.)
Activity Led	6.25
Street Based	8.00
Place Based	2.83
Issues Led	3.17

(See Appendix B for full matrix assessment)

Youth Strategy

The Town Council is working with a current budget of £27,000 p.a. for supporting young people through the delivery of a service level agreement.

Based on the assessment above, between 2022 and 2027 the Town Council will expect the service provider under the SLA to deliver youth support via a mix of 'activity based' and 'street based' approaches. These approaches are realistic and achievable within budget, and currently meet a greater number of the strategic priorities than either the 'place based' or 'focus led' approaches.

It is recognised that activities must be flexible throughout the period of the SLA in order to respond to changing situations; e.g. Covid, social media and other evolving pressures on young people. It is also recognised that not all of the activities mentioned in these approaches may be operating at the same time throughout the period of the SLA e.g. some periods may require more/less focus on harder to reach young people – through street based activities.

The service provider under the SLA shall provide regular information and advice on activities as appropriate in order to tailor the service provided to meet changing needs. Partnership working outside of the SLA e.g. via the Community Youth Partnership, will remain important in identifying and understanding local needs.

In addition to the activities under the SLA the Council shall:

- Continue to seek opportunities to engage and consult with young people in Woodley
- Continue to work with partners for the benefit of young people in Woodley
- Review and update policies and strategies as required to respond to the changing needs of young people in Woodley
- Engage an organisation with appropriate expertise to carry out an annual survey of young people in Woodley, to gauge needs and inform Council service provision - both within and outside of the SLA. (survey to be funded separately from activities under the SLA)

- Consider where existing services or facilities may contribute to, or have a positive impact on the priorities both within and outside of the SLA

Whilst this Strategy does not currently support the provision of youth support services via either the 'place based' or 'focus led' approaches due to the available budget and likely return on investment when assessing against the key priorities, they remain potential approaches which could be utilised by the Town Council in future in the context of any significant additional funding, appropriate feasibility assessments, and a review of this Strategy. For example, start up costs for a youth café are estimated at £20,000-£100,000 (ACL document 8.3.5.2.)

Monitoring

As mentioned in the 'Outcomes' section, measured outcomes against some of the priorities are difficult. Delivered activities will be monitored against the requirements set out in the SLA, which will be defined from the outset. These may be quantitative; for example:

- Number of detached youth work sessions
- Number of contacts with young people
- Number of pop up events / workshops and attendance numbers
- Attendance and reporting to Council meetings
- Progress on longer term projects
- Evidence of working with partners
- Evidence of audited accounts

The service provider will also be required to report annually on how they believe their service has met the Town Council's 9 key priorities, as defined in this Strategy.

Governance

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) shall be for a period of 5 years. The SLA may include an option to extend up to a maximum of 3 years, subject to review and approval by the Leisure Services Committee. The service will be procured in accordance with the appropriate public procurement regulations. This will require an open tendering process with tender assessment based on the criteria and profile specified in the tender document. The SLA shall have appropriate termination clauses to reflect changes in service requirements or address failings or other changes in the delivery of the activities.

Expressions of interest will be invited from potential service providers. A working party shall be set up to meet with interested organisations prior to formal tendering and development of the SLA.

The working party will assess the tender responses and make a recommendation to the Strategy and Resources Committee on the appointment of the service provider.

The service provider shall attend and report to each scheduled meeting of the Leisure Services Committee, in accordance with the terms and monitoring set out in the SLA.

The service provider shall attend and report to meetings of the Community Youth Partnership as required, in accordance with the terms and monitoring set out in the SLA.

The service provider shall also meet with the monitoring working party as required.

The Strategy shall be reviewed annually by the Leisure Services Committee to examine successes and identify any required changes or adjustments to the SLA.

Equality

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) shall form a key part of the selection for service delivery through the SLA. Tendering organisations will be required to provide an equality policy and demonstrate how their organisation meets the requirements under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Delivery

It is envisaged that the new SLA will go out to tender in early 2022 with an anticipated commencement of service from April 2022.