


**REPORT TO
CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION
SCRUTINY BOARD**

27 January 2020

Subject:	Youth Facilities
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Joyce Underhill - Cabinet Member Best Start in Life
Director:	Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
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DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board:

1. Consider and agree the scope for the Youth Facilities Scrutiny Review;
2. agree membership of the Youth Services Working Group;
3. make comments and recommendations on the review project plan as necessary.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board has agreed to carry out a review of Youth Facilities in Sandwell. The scope document (appendix 1) sets out the rationale and suggested way forward for the review working group to review and refine.
- 1.2 Youth facilities are not only provided by the local authority, many activities are provided by voluntary and community sector organisations and companies such as Sandwell Leisure Trust. However, there is no information available through which to assess whether the provision meets need.
- 1.3 The Outline Approach (at Appendix 2) highlights the various review stages, the support for Members carrying out elements of the review, the purpose of the core officers group and the proposed time framework.
- 1.4 The draft project plan to support the Scrutiny Review is attached (appendix 3). The proposed project plan includes a range of methods to gather evidence including desk top research, visits, café workshops and use of social media to find out more from stakeholders and young people about what they want and what they think about current provision. Also planned in the review project plan are opportunities to meet with young people, partner organisations, parents and carers, and to consider best practice and alternative methods for the delivery of youth services.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 High quality Play and Youth Services improve the life chances of children and young people and acknowledge that children and young people have a right to enjoy their childhood as well as enabling them to develop the confidence and aspirations for a successful adulthood. The Services benefit whole communities, local neighbourhoods, families and individual children and young people.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Childrens Services and Education Scrutiny Board, 18 March 2019 considered a [report](#) relating to Play and Youth Services in Sandwell. The [2018-19 Annual Youth Services report](#) provided a detailed summary of youth services. The Board recommended that consideration be given to the joining up of Play, Youth and SHAPE services and requested a further update to scrutiny about Play and Youth Services.
- 3.2 Youth Facilities have been significantly depleted in past years, however, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has managed to maintain some

important services for children and young people that many other local authorities have not managed to protect. The services offered are high quality, work with large numbers of children and young people, and work closely in partnership with other agencies.

- 3.3 The review aims to gather evidence to inform service shaping and future provision. Recognising and protecting the future of these valuable services is important for the children and families of Sandwell but it is also important to note that in an environment of increasing demand but, over past years, reducing resources, the services cannot be 'everything to everyone' and some prioritisation is needed.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Skilled youth workers build relationships that support young people to explore their personal, social and educational development. Youth work enables young people to develop their voice, influence and place within society. At a 'place' level rather than an individual level, Sandwell's Youth Service staff enable the SHAPE programme to be delivered.
- 4.2 Youth work is not about simply being in spaces where young people are, or may be, and providing something for them to do. This distinction is very important to recognise when making decisions about the purpose and functions of Sandwell's Youth Service.
- 4.3 The Youth Service is funded through an SMBC base budget and income generated from a variety of sources.
- 4.4 The review will gather evidence from stakeholders, the Council and partners, evaluate findings and options and make recommendations to shape future Youth Facilities provision.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 There is no content within this report that requires any further consultation at this stage.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The purpose of the review is to consider whether current youth facilities meet the needs of young people and if the Council should consider alternative options.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 There are no current considerations.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 The Youth Services provides targeted group work relevant to protected characteristics.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 There are no current requirements for a data protection impact assessment to be carried out relevant to this paper.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 There are no crime and disorder risks specifically relating to this report, however, it must be noted that the impact of engagement in positive activities has implications for crime reduction.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 The sustainability of services is reliant on the continued provision of funding for services, some of which are directly funded through government grants or traded income.

12.2 There continues to be increasing demands on Play and Youth Services to support community and borough wide events. In particular, the Youth Service is called upon to provide support to local activities by providing the Climbing wall, youth buses and provision of live music from Coneygre Arts Centre. In addition, there is pressure to deliver the Youth Offer in some towns where there is a shortfall in voluntary sector provision.

12.3 Enhanced Youth Support has proven to be an integral part of the Youth Service offer. This service provides support to both individuals and groups through targeted interventions and referrals are received through a number of partners including schools, COG's, Police and Childrens Centres. The success has been such that demand is beginning to exceed capacity.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 Play and Youth services that benefit the wellbeing of children and young people are a vital component of successful lives and contribute to social value within Sandwell's communities.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 There are high demands on the youth buses. The double decker bus is 20 years old and given its age is prone to regular breakdown during the winter months. To replace the bus and fully kit it out would require an investment of up to £200,000.

14.2 The Youth Service has operational management responsibility of Coneygre Arts Centre and Malthouse Stables Outdoor Education Centre. These centres both have income targets which contribute to the core budget of the Service.

15. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The Review of Youth Facilities will gather evidence about current Youth Facilities, there will be consultation

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board 18.03.2019 - Youth Service 2017/18 [Report](#)

17. APPENDICES:

17.1 Appendix 1 – Scope Document

17.2 Appendix 2 – Outline Approach

17.3 Appendix 3 – Draft Project Plan