

**Children's Services and Education
Scrutiny Board**

**Monday 27 January, 2020 at 5.00 pm
in Committee Room 1
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Agenda

(Open to Public and Press)

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Members to declare:-
 - (a) any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting;
 - (b) the existence and nature of any political Party Whip on any matter to be considered at the meeting.
3. Minutes of previous meeting 11 November, 2019
4. Annual Admissions
5. Exclusions and Alternative Provision
6. Youth Facilities Scrutiny Review

Date of next meeting – 16 March, 2020.

D Stevens
Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution:

Councillors Singh (Chair);
Councillors Preece (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Ashman, Carmichael, Chidley, Costigan, Z Hussain, McVittie,
Millar, Phillips and Shackleton.

Co-opted Members:-

Charlotte Ward-Lewis (Church of England Diocese representative)
Vacant (Roman Catholic Archdiocese representative)
Tahira Majid (Primary School Governor representative)
Vacant (Secondary School Governor representative)

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Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Apologies for Absence

The Board will receive any apologies for absence from the members of the Board.

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Declarations of Interest

Members to declare: -

- (a) Any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting;
- (b) The existence and nature of any political Party Whip on any matters to be considered at the meeting.

**Minutes of the Children's Services and Education
Scrutiny Board**

**11 November, 2019 at 5.00 pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Singh (Chair);
Councillors Allen, Ashman, Carmichael, Chidley,
Costigan, Z Hussain, McVittie, Phillips and
Shackleton.

Apologies: Councillor Preece, C Ward-Lewis and T Majid (Co-opted members).

In attendance: Lesley Hagger, Executive Director Children's Services;
Chris Ward, Director of Education, Skills and Employment;
Lisa McNally, Director of Public Health;
Ben Curtis, Barnardo's;
Rosie Pugh, Barnardo's.

19/19 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Allen declared an interest in relation to item 4 on the agenda relating to voluntary support for SHAPE as a Non-Executive Director of the Sandwell Children's Trust.

20/19 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

21/19 **Adverse Childhood Experiences ACEs**

The Board received a report and presentation from the Executive Director, Children's Services and representative from Barnardo's Midlands.

The Board noted that Adverse Childhood Experiences ACE were stressful or traumatic experiences that could have a huge impact on children and young people throughout their adulthood. An ACE could

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be a one-off event, an ongoing issue or a combination of issues, which could be abuse and neglect, or household and community dysfunction.

The Board noted the following messages from the presentation:

- the forms of ACEs included maltreatment, violence and coercion, adjustment, prejudice, household or family issues, inhumane treatment, adult responsibilities, bereavement and survivorship;
- ACEs have a complexity of impacts both for individuals and families, often on a continuing basis;
- the impact of ACEs could be mitigated by resilience and supportive relationships, to protect physical, emotional, spiritual and mental wellbeing;
- exposure to ACEs could increase the odds of a person drinking, smoking, having under age sex, unplanned pregnancy, be involved in violence or using illicit drugs or being incarcerated;
- the agenda for addressing ACEs in Sandwell was noted and Members noted that kindness and consideration provided a 'trusted person(s)' who could safeguard and reduce the impact of the environment young people were living in;
- resilience was being able to find the balance between the young person's trauma, or stressor, and the protective factors to raise physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health and wellbeing;
- there was a need to fix the environment young people were growing up in.

The Board noted that in addition to the ten identified ACEs had similar negative long-term effects including bullying, poverty and community adversities (living in a deprived area and neighbourhood violence).

The Board noted that childhood adversity created stress which impacted on healthy brain development, which in the long term could result in effects on behaviour, learning and health.

The Board noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board, at a recent meeting had approved an action plan to improve understanding, identification and support available to those at risk. A multi-agency steering group, chaired by the Executive Director Children's Services was established to develop and implement the action plan. The action plan was also

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incorporated into the work of 'Safer Sandwell' through the Prevention of Violence and Exploitation (PoVE) sub-group. Two posts had been funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner and hosted by Barnardo's to work across Sandwell and Dudley, their work is also supported by the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit and Public Health England.

The Board noted that the Action Plan identified three priorities:

- A Sandwell has a good understanding of the distribution of ACEs across the borough, professional curiosity was used in a systematic way to identify those at risk and support their needs;
- B People could access support and advice from a range of trauma informed interventions and services;
- C Professionals were ACE aware, and trauma informed, communities across Sandwell had a better understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences and its impacts.

The Board noted that the primary focus of the Action Plan was to develop the awareness and understanding of ACEs across all agencies, to improve the support provided to children and adults and this was reported to be progressing well. The training offer included:

- an e-learning tool – available to all agencies to raise awareness of ACEs;
- face-to-face training – to enable all agencies to be trauma-informed;
- a 'Trusted Adult' training programme was available in schools, three-day training, which was also made available to other agencies.

The Board noted that a Teamworx programme, was also offered to pupils in Years 5 and 6 who had been identified by their schools as experiencing ACEs, and a business case was being developed to extend the programme beyond the current academic year.

The Board noted that the next steps would be to evaluate the impact of the training and to develop ongoing resources that agencies could use when working with children and adults, and to review and make recommendations for policy review across agencies to address the negative impact of ACE's.

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The Board welcomed the work to encourage awareness training and participation with the Children's Trust, SHAPE and partners, the tools and training that had been developed, including the E-learning programme (developed by Barnardo's and Sandwell Council) and the 'Trauma Deck' of 52 cards used in training sessions at Team meetings. Also, the link up with Dudley Council as a partner, and the work that they were progressing with Bangor University about ACEs.

The Board welcomed that Sandwell was ahead of other Authorities with its work on ACEs. The following comments and responses were noted: -

- there was a strong relationship between poverty and ACEs in Sandwell and cultural and intergenerational relationships, and epigenetic journey had been considered when collating data;
- the Teamworx programme in schools for Year 5 and 6 pupils was to be reviewed to include younger and older Year groups;
- ACEs was a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- the link to looked after children had been considered, in addition to the trauma that unfolded before and when becoming a looked after child;
- the intergenerational aspects of ACEs were crucial, prevention was paramount and the link to pregnancy in young people had been taken into consideration;
- preventative steps had been taken to ensure that the steering group was represented by all services and organisations, and the strategy for prevention and protection was for all workforces to become ACEs aware, trauma informed and trusted adult trained;
- current services had been mapped, made available, trained and accessible;
- workforces were being trained to look beyond the symptoms of children who were not developing, to consider what the causes were behind behavioural, learning or emotional issues;
- training was being well received by all workforces and resources were being developed;
- data was being utilised from all available sources to build the data base;
- it was recognised that there was a need to adapt services to the needs of the local community and that Sandwell population and towns would need different support in place.

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The Chair thanked the Executive Director Children's Services and the representatives from Barnardo's for a very powerful and emotional video and thorough presentation. He welcomed that the responses to questioning about the work Barnardo's were delivering on ACEs and the way forward had been full and open.

The Chair requested that the Board be kept informed about the programme and informed of other measures that could be taken.

22/19 **SHAPE Programme**

The Board received a report and video presentation from the Director of Public Health, the SHAPE project manager and two members of the SHAPE Youth Forum.

At its meeting 10 October 2019, the Board invited members of the SHAPE to explain the work they did as part of the Youth Forum. The SHAPE Project Manager provided a report which outlined the governance arrangements, consultation methods and future steps to involvement in decision making and co-production with children and young people.

The Board received a [Video Presentation](#) about the SHAPE programme and how young people participated and wanted their voice to be heard.

A SHAPE Youth Forum Member and Member of the Youth Parliament informed the Board about young people's involvement in scrutinising policies and matters that involved young people and children, such as employment law. Another Youth Forum Member, told the Board how the SHAPE project worked to develop young people, to give them a voice for other young people, to consider services that affect them and influence their future.

The Youth Forum Members invited the Board to consider how to involve young people in consultations and decision making.

The Board welcomed the presentation and the opportunity to get children and young people involved in the scrutiny process.

The Board noted the following comments and responses to questions:

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- Josh had become involved with SHAPE through his UK Youth Parliament Campaign and it was recommended to Jess by her mother who worked in the team. Both had found SHAPE interesting, made new friends and got involved. They found it a way of making friends outside of school and enjoyed getting involved to make a difference;
- staffing levels had been identified as an issue, more funding would enable more staff and SHAPE would be able to deliver much more;
- the SHAPE talent show was getting bigger each year and the SHAPE programme had been recognised by television programme 'The Voice'. As a result, word had got around and the SHAPE Programme Manager had been asked to talk at various venues about the SHAPE programme and its success. This was welcomed but was time consuming when resources were stretched;
- engagement with schools had been difficult at first, it was difficult to get to all schools with current resource, but a conference had been developed for young people by young people, and now there were 90 young people involved and to attend the conference;
- in addition to the talent show and conference, other work was rolling out in relation to the 'Antibullying Road Show', 120 children had been seen on 11th September 2019 and it was anticipated that over 700 would be seen in that week. It was anticipated that this could be rolled out further with partnership working in place;
- the Antibullying Roadshow was free of charge to schools which increased take up;
- communication about SHAPE was rolled out through schools, SHAPE did not have capacity to reach out to parents, consequently there was a reliance on schools;
- in relation to how SHAPE could do better, the Manager indicated they would like to reach children with additional needs, work with autistic young people, do more with home educated children and alternative provision for learning, and much more, but advised that capacity, resources and links to get to people they want to reach were barriers to reaching those groups;

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- parental engagement and voting in ballots was another area identified for improvement, all other regions had thousands more votes in ballots. The Board noted that some schools were not engaging in the ballot process relating to issues such as knife crime, mental health and protecting the environment;
- there was a need to raise awareness about local issues and ballots through a designated officer, to co-ordinate with schools; the electoral participation officer post no-longer existed and there was no democratic process or dedicated person(s) nominated to assist;
- the team had talked with headteachers in partnership meetings and work had taken place with the Youth Services Manager;
- this was an opportunity for schools to get involved with the broader Ofsted criteria of youth participation in democracy, however there was a lot going on in schools and there was a need to consider how much of what was happening met the new curriculum objectives.

The Board welcomed the work SHAPE was carrying out to promote the wellbeing of young people and strengthen their voice in local democracy. The Chair indicated that there was a need to promote their work and to get all Members of the Council involved.

Resolved

- (1) that Council be recommended to amend the terms of reference for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board to include 2 non-voting co-opted representatives of the SHAPE Youth Forum, to represent the voice of young people on matters that impact on children and young people.

22/19 **Regional Adoption Agency**

The Board received a report from the Executive Director Children's Services relating to the performance of the new Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) arrangements, operational since 1st April 2019.

The Board noted that at a previous meeting it had been agreed that scrutiny of Adoption@Heart and the RAA performance would take

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place at the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board rather than at Corporate Parenting Board.

The Board noted that at the time of writing the report the first half year performance report had not been presented to the Adoption@Heart Commissioning Board, however there were early indications of performance set out in paragraph 4 of the report submitted that were promising from Sandwell's perspective. A performance dashboard was available but required some further development, monthly reports had been considered by the monthly Operational Management Board and the quarterly Strategic Commissioning Board.

The Board noted the following messages from the first six-month performance overview:

- adopter recruitment – 20 adopters had been approved and 53 in the process of being approved. The target of 120 adopters in the first year was unlikely to be met. The possible shortfall was largely due to problems with IT systems and transitional arrangements between local authorities in the first three months of operation;
- children placed – 47 children had been placed, of which, 24 had been placed for Sandwell. The target for 34 children placed in year 1 in Sandwell, was anticipated to be met;
- budget – there was a slight underspend for the period, this was part of the settling down process. The Local Authority would transfer actual spend at the end of the year. The Budget setting for 2020-21 would be finalised by the end of December 2019;
- Local Authority scrutiny – an interim report would be considered by Council Leaders and Chief Executives at the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA) on 13th November. There would be a report to lead Members for children's services in the new year to give assurance of progress to Corporate Parenting Boards;
- all four Local Authorities would receive a full performance report early in the new year;
- A full performance report would be considered by scrutiny in the new year and comments should be referred to Corporate Parenting Board for consideration.

The Board noted the following comments and responses to questions:

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- the timeline for an adoption differed and timescale depended on the circumstances of the individual child and family. There was an average timeline of 6 months but this had sometimes taken much longer;
- the 6 months average was a long time in a child's life, and in response to how the Council could help to reduce the transition period and reduce delays, the Board was advised that more people were needed to adopt and that the matching process of child to potential adopters needed to be a good match and must last;
- there had been several campaigns to encourage adopters, many of them in Wolverhampton, however the traditional campaigns, such as posters on buses, were not working as well. The way forward was considered to be targeted social media campaigns, adoptions recruitment in libraries (from next year) and a need to open discussions in communities of Sandwell;
- Members highlighted the need to reach out to communities for fostering and adoption campaigns;
- Members indicated that many people found the long and intrusive process to adopt off putting. They were advised that the national criteria had to be followed;
- Post adoption support was raised, in particular the cost of raising a child and indicated that this was a factor in people not coming forward to adopt. The Board was advised that there was a National Adoption Support Fund in operation until 2021 that could provide some assistance;
- when interagency placements (adopters from other areas) occurred, Sandwell would pay for the family from the other area and if they placed in Sandwell they would pay. Next year, the LA would pay per child placed and it cost more to place Sandwell children in other areas;
- the Board was advised that there were currently 61 children waiting for adoption in Sandwell and that it was not confirmed how many had complex needs.

The Board welcomed the progress made to date but indicated that there was more to do in relation to engagement campaigns with communities in Sandwell, and to reduce the transition period for adoption. The Board requested to see an action plan of how the RAA would address the issues raised.

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Recommendation:





- (1) that the first six monthly performance report be submitted to the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board at the first available meeting of the new year;
- (2) that Corporate Parenting Board consider the comments and recommendation of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board in relation to the first six monthly performance report;
- (3) that the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) be requested to provide an action plan to show how it intends to tackle issues identified by the Sandwell Children's and Education Scrutiny Board relating to reducing transition period and targeting engagement campaigns in Sandwell.

(Meeting ended at 6.35 pm)

Contact Officer: Deb Breedon Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3896

REPORT TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY BOARD

27 January 2020

Subject:	Annual Admissions
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Joyce Underhill - Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life
Director:	Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger Director – Education, Skills and Employment – Chris Ward
Contribution towards Vision 2030: 	  
Contact Officer(s):	Sue Moore, Group Head, Education Support Services, sue_moore@sandwell.gov.uk Donna Williams, Team Lead – Admissions and Appeals donna_williams@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Scrutiny Committee:

1. Considers the report which provides an update on how the council has continued to meet school preferences against the background of higher demand.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on how the council has continued to meet school preferences against the background of higher demand.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 The recommendation in this report supports the desire of the council to focus resources on the specific needs and aspirations of the community. This contributes to the Council's Vision 2030 Ambition 1 – Raising

aspirations and resilience, Ambition 3 – Young people to have skills for the future, Ambition 4 – Raising the quality of schools.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Sandwell's Admissions Team processes between 9,500 and 10,000 annual admission requests each year. By offer day in 2019, 4908 Year 7 requests had been administered, together with 4519 reception applications. A significant number of late requests are also received and processed up to the start of the school year in September.

- Of those applications offered places in reception, 89% were at schools requested as first preference (0.8% increase on the previous year and 3% increase on 2017). 95% of parents / carers secured places in one of their first three preference schools.
- Of those applications offered places in Year 7, 72.4% secured places in their first preference school (1.4% fewer than last year and 2.25% down on 2017). 89% of parents / carers secured places in one of their first three preference schools. The disparity between the level of preferences met for primary and secondary relates to the following:
 - (i) 2019 saw the highest secondary cohort for many years while a lower birth rate was responsible for a smaller reception cohort;
 - (ii) Given its popularity and an admission policy that prompts applications from all 6 towns, Sandwell Academy continues to be a school of first preference for a significant number of parents /carers, the majority of which will not receive an offer (the academy received 641 on time first preferences for 200 places;
 - (iii) The provision of 5,000 new primary places over the last eight years has raised the percentage surplus level to over 7% in reception and increased the LA's ability to meet more parental preferences.

3.2 How the meeting of preferences compared with the national, regional and statistical neighbour average on national offer day 2019.

Primary

Region	1 st Preferences met (%)	Parents who were offered one of their top 3 (%)
National	90.6	97.5
West Midlands	92.0	98.1
Stat Neighbour	90.4	97.6
Sandwell	91.2	96.6

Secondary

Region	1 st Preferences met (%)	Parents who were offered one of their top 3 (%)
National	80.9	93.0
West Midlands	78.4	91.7
Stat Neighbour	74.5	90.3
Sandwell	73.3	89.6

3.3 Appeals

The number of secondary annual appeals has increased in the last 4 years while there has been a significant decrease in reception and junior transfer appeals. This is in line with demand for places as lower primary cohorts move into reception while higher cohorts move into Year 7.

Year	Secondary Appeals	Primary Appeals
2016	264	343
2017	305	230
2018	275	171
2019	384	151

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The process relating to reception and Year 7 admissions falls within an annual cycle, the latest position for which has been outlined in section 3 above.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 This is not applicable to this report.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no alternative options.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This is not applicable to this report

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 There are no direct legal and governance implications. In accordance with the Education Act 1996 the council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient number of school places available for the children of Sandwell.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 All groups are potentially affected by the policy of expansion. This report demonstrates that this is uniformly applied in response to where pupil demand is expected although size and type of expansion is restrictive as it is dependent on the availability of government capital funding.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 There are no data protection implications in this report.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 There are no crime and disorder issues relevant to this report.

11.2 In so far as risk is concerned, the council's strategic risk register currently includes a red risk around school place planning: SOPB 2 - If the LA is unable to exert sufficient strategic control over school place planning and the direction of capital investment, then it will be unable to deliver on its statutory duties. An appropriate project management structure is in place, and the School Organisation Programme Board meets on a regular basis.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 Plans for future school provision are only sustainable with continuing government funding directly to the LA through basic need or through the provision of new places via the government's free school programme.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 A sufficient level of school places in local areas where there is demand is of benefit to the local community. Enhanced community provision is often included when schools expand their facilities.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 There is no direct impact in the recommendation on any council managed property or land.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The report outlines the council's past actions and future plans with regard to school place provision. Consequentially the recommendation is to note the report.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None

17 APPENDICES:





None

Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger

Director – Education, Skills and Employment – Chris Ward

REPORT TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY BOARD

27 January 2020

Subject:	School Exclusions and Alternative Provision
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Joyce Underhill - Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life
Director:	Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger Director – Education, Skills and Employment – Chris Ward
Contribution towards Vision 2030: 	  
Contact Officer(s):	Moira Tallents, Group Head, Inclusive Learning Services, moira_tallents@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Scrutiny Committee:

1. Considers the report which provides an update on how the council, working with schools, manages exclusions of pupils and provides suitable alternative educational provisions where necessary.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on how the council works with schools in managing the exclusions of pupils and provides suitable alternative educational provisions where necessary.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 The report supports the desire of the council to focus resources on the specific needs and aspirations of the community. This contributes to the Council's Vision 2030 Ambition 1 – Raising aspirations and resilience, Ambition 3 – Young people to have skills for the future and Ambition 4 – Raising the quality of schools.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 All children are entitled to a full, well-rounded education. The aim of the council, and our schools and academies, is to ensure children are able to stay in school so that they do not miss out on their educational entitlement. Where possible this will be in our mainstream schools and, where appropriate, our special schools.
- 3.2 The council's overall aim is to continue to reduce the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions in our schools. However, there are times when an exclusion cannot be avoided and it is in these situations that we help schools find alternative provision for pupils. This may be through a fresh start in a new school, in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or in another suitable provider of education or training.
- 3.3 The council holds a directory of suitable alternative education providers for pupils. These providers are properly registered with OfSTED and the DfE and have been quality assured by our council teams.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Overall, the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions has decreased for the last four years. The percentage of pupils in Sandwell receiving a fixed term exclusion from school is less than the national and regional averages.
- 4.2 Secondary exclusion data over the last three years shows the following:-

Year	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
Category	Fixed	Perm	Fixed	Perm	Fixed	Perm
No. Exclusions	1,988	72	1,602	67	813	36
No. Pupils	1,130	72	995	67	582	36
Total Days	5,525	-	4,040.5	-	2,031.5	-
No. pupils with 3 or more	217	-	151	-	59	-

- 4.3 2018/2019 data shows the number of fixed term exclusions in Secondary schools has halved since 2017 / 2018. This has resulted in a reduction of over 1000 days lost learning days compared to last year.

- 4.4 Permanent exclusions also significantly reduced (by 31) in 2018/2019. The cohort experiencing the highest proportion of exclusions are Yr.10 pupils.
- 4.5 The Fair Access and Exclusions team have been working with schools through development days to improve recording of reasons for permanent exclusion. This has helped us to refine our support work with schools and also enabled us to work with police on specific prevention initiatives.
- 4.6 Primary school exclusions are lower than in the secondary sector and have remained low for a number of years. Data shows the following:-

Summary						
Year	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19	
Category	Fixed	Perm	Fixed	Perm	Fixed	Perm
No. Exclusions	429	11	323	16	304	10
No. Pupils	222	11	172	16	148	10
Total Days	896.5	-	643.5	-	645.5	-
No. pupils with 3 or more	50	-	45	-	36	-

- 4.7 Permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions reduced in primary schools in 2018/2019. The cohort experiencing the largest number of overall exclusions is Year 6. As with secondary schools, persistent disruptive behaviour is the main reason for exclusion in primary schools, followed by physical assault on an adult.
- 4.8 Schools receive support via the BLISS strategy (Behaviour Learning Improvement and Support Strategy) through the Fair Access and Exclusions team and Inclusion Support services.
- 4.9 **Local Authority Processes and Support**
- 4.10 The Fair Access and Exclusions Team supports pupils, parents and schools when pupils reach the point of permanent exclusion. The team will advise the school on different options to avoid permanent exclusion where possible as well as the statutory processes for permanent exclusion if it cannot be avoided. They facilitate Independent Reviews when parents challenge schools over the legality of a permanent exclusion.
- 4.11 In Primary schools, support is provided through the BLISS programme. If a school is considering a permanent exclusion they hold a multi-agency meeting with the Fair Access and Exclusions team and members of Inclusion Support to look at additional support to keep the child in school. This support could include alternative strategies to manage the child's challenging behaviour in school, involvement from the Preventing Primary

Exclusions team for a 6-week block, a preventative placement at the Primrose Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or a managed transition to another primary school (agreed by learning communities).

- 4.12 In Secondary schools, support is provided by the Fair Access and Exclusions Team, the independent chair of the Fair Access Panels and Inclusion Support. Alternatives to permanent exclusions are explored through a professional's meeting; these could include managed transition to another school through the Fair Access Panel or preventative placement at Sandwell Community School / Alternative Provision. Weekly family surgeries have been established by the Lead for Fair Access and Exclusions and the Independent Chair to support parents and pupils at risk of exclusion.
- 4.13 Fair Access meetings for both secondary and primary schools are held on a 6-weekly basis. All schools attend as well as the PRUs, representatives from the police and inclusion support and CME (Children Missing Education) team.

4.14 Preventative Work and further developments

- 4.15 There is a strong focus on preventative work within Sandwell schools using whole school approaches as well as targeted support. All schools have been offered free support to develop a whole school approach to supporting pupil's mental health and well-being which impacts on behaviour. The mental health and well-being charter mark and curriculum is now well-established within Sandwell schools. This year, all schools have also been offered free "Trusted Adult Training" to identify and support pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. This training has been developed and delivered by Inclusion Support and funded through the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Sandwell is also part of NHS England trailblazer project for mental health in 2020, qualified mental health support workers will be supporting within 20 schools as part of the pilot.
- 4.16 A Managed Transitions Toolkit has been developed for secondary schools following a research study by an Educational Psychologist into best practice. All secondary schools made contributions to the toolkit through Fair Access development days for pastoral leads. A pilot is now being conducted using the toolkit to track success. It has been requested that all managed transitions are discussed at secondary Fair Access Panel so that they can be tracked.
- 4.17 The secondary Fair Access panels are currently considering job descriptions for 2 posts to support managed transitions across the borough, to replicate the Primary model by having a Reintegration Officer

as well as Family Support Worker. These roles will be funded by schools through the exclusion levy.

- 4.18 Funding through the High Needs Block has been agreed by schools to create a secondary equivalent of the Preventing Primary Exclusions team. This new team will focus on intervention work at KS3, especially pupils transitioning from primary to secondary school. This team should be established by September 2020.
- 4.19 Primary and Secondary Fair Access Management Boards have been established. Both boards review data and actions against strategic development plans and provide governance. Boards consist of head teachers and senior LA officers.
- 4.20 Both Primary and Secondary Fair Access panels now routinely review exclusions data to discuss and problem solve schools that have a high number of exclusions and share good practice.
- 4.21 Primary panels, as well as Secondary are now also being supported by the Special Advisory Teacher: SEMH team from Inclusion Support who are now fully trained in the use of the reporting modules for exclusions and are using the data to target and influence change in schools with high numbers of fixed term and permanent exclusions. This data is also reported to the Quality Standards Board, this board consists of head teachers from each learning community and senior officers from the LA including school improvement and SEN.
- 4.22 Primary panels, as well as Secondary are now also being supported by the Police Service. There is a new process for identifying pupils at risk of exclusion with the Police. We are awaiting confirmation regarding new posts within the Police service to support the Fair Access and Exclusion Team with preventing primary exclusion meetings.

4.23 Alternative Provision Data

- 4.24 At the time of January Census 2019, 344 pupils were receiving education via alternative provision (AP) and 116 were educated in Pupil Referral Units (PRU).
- 4.25 Most pupils being educated in AP are in KS4. In Jan 2019, 262 pupils were either Yr.10 or Yr. 11. 184 pupil cases were closed by July 2019 due to students no longer requiring statutory education.
- 4.26 Students are placed within AP for a number of reasons including behaviour difficulties, newly arrived in the country at KS4 or for specific medical reasons.

4.27 Alternative Provision Developmental Work

- 4.28 Until recently pupils were placed at AP through a number of different routes: school referrals, fair access and exclusions team, Children Missing Education (CME) team and SEND team. In September 2019, a new process and panel was initiated to bring local authority referrals under a single referral route in order to establish transparency across the LA. This panel consists of LA officers but will be widened to include other agencies such as the police and social care to provide a holistic approach to support.
- 4.29 Schools can still place students independently within AP but maintain responsibility for the student's attendance, education and welfare. The responsibilities of placing pupils in AP under the new Ofsted inspection framework has been shared with schools at Fair Access Development days.
- 4.30 Attendance and progress of pupils placed by the Local Authority in independent alternative provisions is monitored by the CME team. The CME team also maintain and review the Sandwell AP Directory, which details locally approved independent Alternative Providers.
- 4.31 The Fair Access Team / CME team have introduced a quality assurance cycle for independent AP providers. They have developed a quality assurance framework for Alternative Provision with schools and local APs. This includes a quality assurance onsite visit by a team consisting of LA officers, senior leaders from Sandwell schools and the Independent Chair of the Fair Access panel.

4.32 Pupil Referral Units

- 4.33 Albright Education Centre (formally Whiteheath Education Centre) provides education for pupils who cannot attend mainstream school due to health difficulties and they also provide the home/hospital education service. Albright has made a successful transition to its new site in Tipton. They have seen an increase in pupils unable to attend school due to mental health problems. Due to this Schools' Forum has recently agreed to fund an additional 10 places.
- 4.34 Primrose Centre (Primary) have made many improvements in the last 18 months under their new Headteacher. They have improved the number of successful pupil re-integrations into mainstream and special school and the up-take of short term preventative places has increased. They work closely with schools as well as local authority teams such as the Fair Access Team to establish the correct support for pupils.

4.35 Sandwell Community School (Secondary). The school has recently reduced the number of sites it uses (to accommodate the new Albright site). Each campus has a specified role i.e. Assessment, KS3 provision. They offer preventative places to schools through joint work with the Secondary Fair Access Panel. The number of re-integrations back into mainstream school is starting to increase, plans to improve this are being developed with Fair Access Team.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

5.1 This is not applicable to this report.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 Not applicable to this report.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Schools Forum manages funding for excluded pupils, alternative provision and pupil referral units through annual allocations. Funding for these areas comes through the High Needs Block and is also supported through individual school budgets for pupils which they place in some alternative provisions.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 There are no direct legal and governance implications. The council has a statutory duty to ensure every child can access their full educational entitlement.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 The council monitors the number of exclusions taking in to account pupil characteristics and ethnicity.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 There are no data protection implications in this report.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 The council and schools work directly with the local community police to support programmes to reduce crime and disorder. Reducing exclusions is seen as a good long-term strategy to support this work.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 High Needs Block funding and school budgets can sustain the work of the support teams, costs of alternative provision and PRUs. There are no concerns that this funding will cease.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 The Albright Centre (PRU) provides high quality educational provision for pupils who cannot attend mainstream school due to health difficulties and they also provide the home/hospital educational service.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 There is no direct impact in the report on any council managed property or land.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The report outlines the council's current performance with regard to exclusions and the subsequent provision for excluded pupils.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None

17 APPENDICES:


None

Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger

Director – Education, Skills and Employment – Chris Ward

**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:	
Contact Officer(s):	James Sandy Senior Democratic Services Officer James_sandy@sandwell.gov.uk Deb Breedon Democratic Services Officer Deborah_breedon@sandwell.gov.uk

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

Scrutiny Review – Scoping Document

Appendix 1

Review Title:	Youth Facilities
Scrutiny Board:	Children’s Services and Education
Date of Review:	January-March 2020

Reasons for undertaking the review:

In April 2019 the All Party Parliamentary Group published its report from the inquiry into the role and sufficiency of youth work and in July 2019, the government launched a review into how the statutory guidance for Local Authorities on providing youth services can be more useful for local youth service provision and young people themselves. Sandwell should have its own view about local provision.

As a result of austerity and budget reductions, Sandwell’s youth service and the facilities that it offered to young people was reduced. The impact of this change has not been assessed.

Sandwell has been approached by the organization Onside Youth Zone with a view to establishing a facility in Sandwell that is similar to The Way, in Wolverhampton, but we don’t know if young people want a facility such as this.

Facilities for young people are not only provided by the local authority – there are many activities provided by voluntary and community sector organizations, and companies such as Sandwell Leisure Trust, but there is no information available through which to assess whether the provision meets need.

The last Scrutiny review into youth matters was in 2011 and looked at young people’s relationships with the police, and diversionary activity. A review of youth provision is overdue.

The SHAPE forum, and other young people’s groups have said that they want to have a say in local decision-making and a Scrutiny Review would be an ideal way to respond to their request.

The Council’s review of Scrutiny arrangements has welcomed a range of new approaches to the way in which ‘scrutiny’ activities are carried out and so a task and finish review is well-timed.

Intended Outcomes:

- a) To understand the needs and wants of Sandwell’s youth population (taking account of a broad age range);
- b) To understand the current levels of activity and provision on offer to young people across Sandwell;
- c) To assess whether the level of provision, either directly provided or grant-aided/procured, by Sandwell Council is sufficient to meet the needs and wants of young people across the Borough;
- d) To identify any gaps in current provision and how those gaps might be filled, or any over-sufficiency in provision;
- e) To produce a robust and coherent report, informed by young people, setting out a ‘sufficiency strategy’ for youth provision in Sandwell.

Questions

- a) What do young people want?
- b) What is the current provision?
- c) Does the current provision meet the needs of young people?
- d) What do we not do and what more could we do?

**Officer Group
(including partners):**

Core Group
Tariq Karim, Youth Service
Dawn Maleki
Denise Hooper, Neighbourhoods/Communities
Manny Sembhi – Community Services
Neesha Patel, SHAPE
Steve Walker, Youth Service

Wider Group
VCS partners
John Grant or reps from Children & Young People’s Forum
Jon Hewitt, WM Police
Rob Lake, Albion Foundation
Sandwell Leisure Trust
Sandwell Children’s Trust
Youth Offending Service

Links to Vision 2030:

Yes

**Scoping undertaken
by:**

Lesley Hagger
Executive Director of Children’s Services

Council Chief Officer (or partner equivalent):	Lesley Hagger Executive Director of Children’s Services
Existing data available for consideration:	
DfE and Home office research and data; Scholarly research; List of past and current youth service provision; List of voluntary sector provision. Feedback from SHAPE Conference & SHAPE Survey 2019	
Potential witnesses	<p><u>Young People’s Group</u> SHAPE representative Youth Service Representative Looked After Young People Board representative Young Carers representative</p> <p><u>Parents/carers Group</u> Sandwell Parents of Disabled Children Kitchen Table Talks Parents of Youth Service Young People</p> <p><u>Professionals</u> Sandwell Youth Workers VCS youth workers Police National Youth Agency</p> <p>Cllr Danny Millard, Cabinet Member for Skills and Employment Cllr Joyce Underhill, Cabinet Member Best Start in Life</p> <p><u>Programme of visits and meeting young people</u> Youth Service building based activities Youth Service mobile activities VCS activities The Way, Wolverhampton The Factory, Birmingham Youth Service Portway Lifestyle Centre</p>
Review Work Programme: see Project Plan	

**Scrutiny Review: Youth Facilities
Children's Services & Education
Scrutiny Board**

Outline Approach

January 2020

Background

This paper outlines the Children's Services & Education Scrutiny Board's approach to a focused review of Youth Facilities across Sandwell.

Building on an initial scoping document it details the proposed engagement, fact-finding and research activities to be undertaken within the next three months (with a final report for consideration in April 2020).

It is envisaged that this project will allow both members and officers to experiment with new ways of working, in parallel with the outcomes of the recent scrutiny review working group and a refreshed structure.

Key Questions

What youth facilities does Sandwell: Have? Need? Want?

Key Themes

1. Information & Access

- Literature review

2. Partnerships across the public, private and third sectors

- Council services and voluntary agencies
- Key relationships

3. Assessing the impact of service change

- Levels of activity and visibility of facilities

4. A view on local provision

- The offer
- What do young people say?

Planning & Timeline

Proposed Activity	Target Date
<p>Initial Outline Report <i>This report</i> detailing the ideas and approaches supporting the initial scoping document following consultation with the Board's Chair and the Executive Director of Children's Services.</p>	Wednesday 8 th January 2020
<p>Online campaign set up (Instagram) Create platform for public to share experiences, aspirations and questions via social media. The intention is to use an accessible platform which will help generate some creative feedback on the topic.</p>	w/c 13 th January 2020
<p>Officer Support Meeting A steering group of nominated officers within the Council to help guide the targeting of wider networks in the borough.</p>	w/c 20 th January 2020
<p>Scoping Workshop To ensure the focus and parameters of the review. To ensure support for the effective capture of activity & findings.</p>	
<p>Children's & Young People O&S Committee To formally approve the review and refine the programme of work in relation to the scope & approach.</p>	Monday 27 th January 2020
<p>Invitations and planning for forums To identify existing opportunities within relevant forums and to explore ad-hoc meetings as available.</p>	w/c 3 rd February 2020
<p>Site Visits and Field Research Facilitated by a member leading on a particular theme or issue area.</p>	10 th - 21 st February 2020
<p>Drop-in/Sense Check Event To take stock of progress to date, emerging issue and identified gaps in the project work.</p>	w/c 24 th February 2020

<p>Question Time Session An open panel discussion, addressing key issues and allowing for dialogue around a future approach. This session would be a four-person panel comprising of cross sector representatives, held in public for an hour, with questions from those attending and the engagement activities to date.</p>	w/c 2 nd March 2020
<p>Writing Up & Capture To collate, refine and condense the findings of the review.</p>	w/c 9 th March 2020
<p>Findings & Feedback Meeting Members to meet and finalise draft committee report.</p>	16 th March 2020
Final Recommendations	April 2020
Evaluation & Learning	April 2020

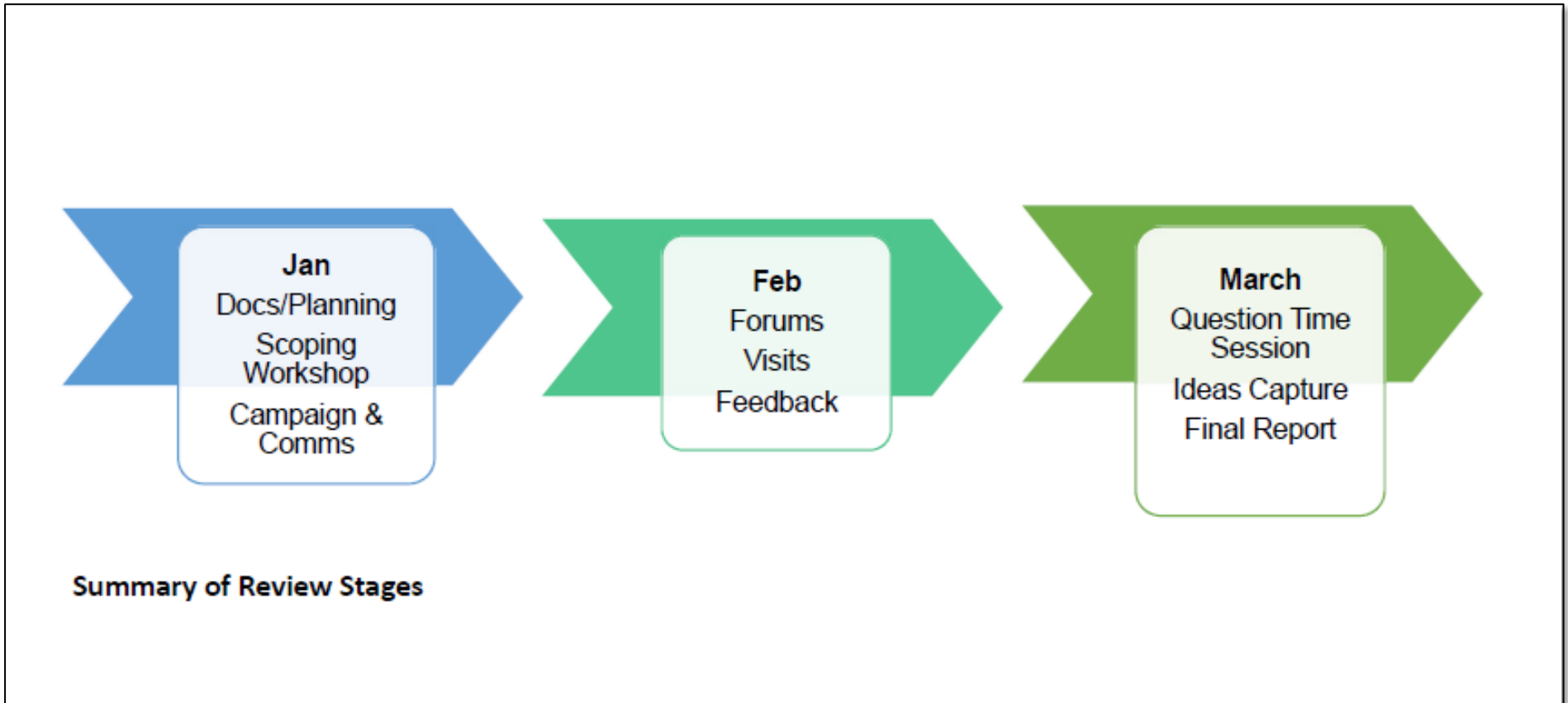
Support

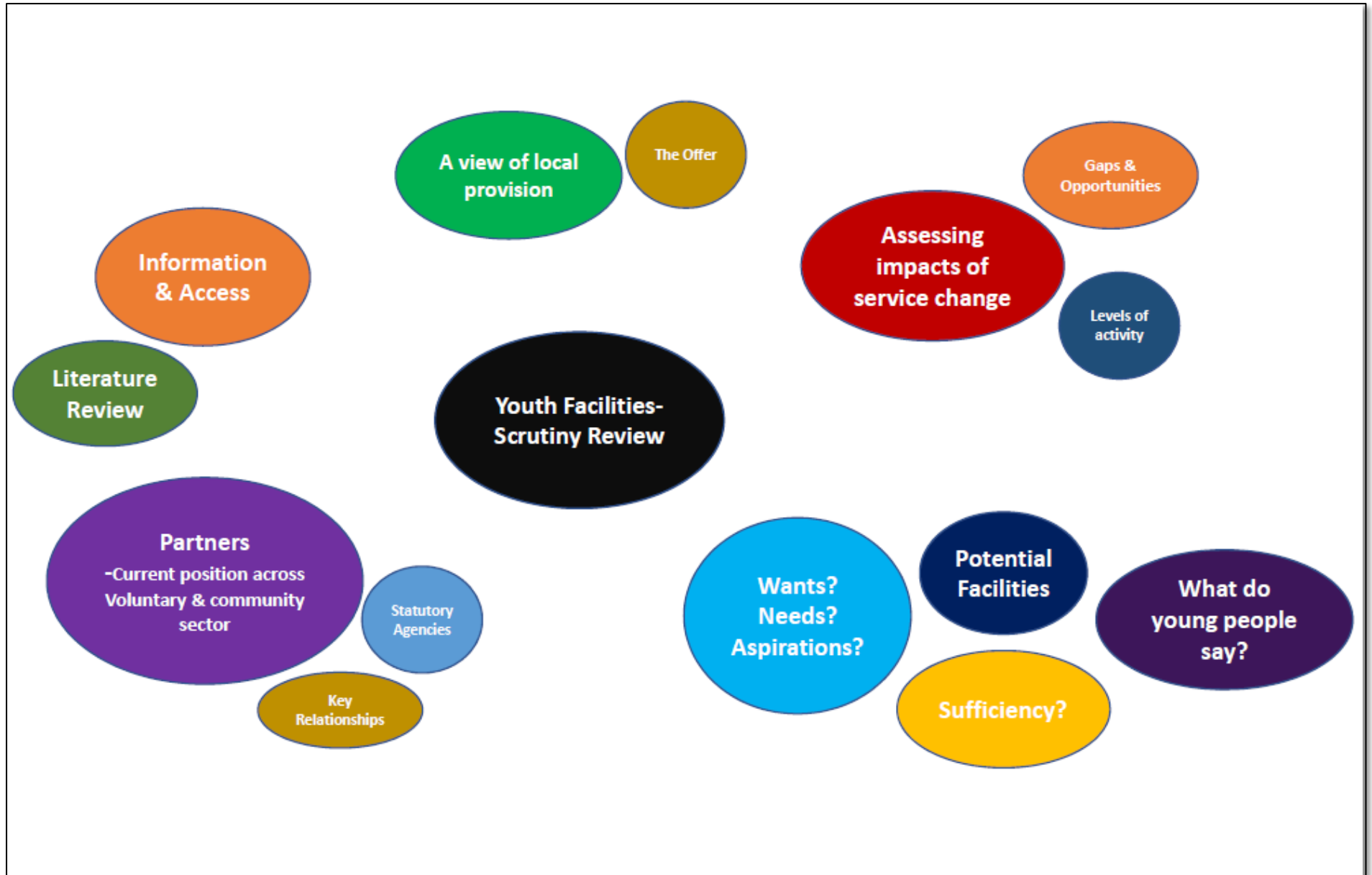
This review will be supported by scrutiny officers within Democratic Services, helping members to lead on particular elements of the review, such as;

- **Building the evidence base**
- **Capturing the local picture**
- **Finding external examples of good practice**

A steering group comprising colleagues from Youth Service, Neighbourhoods and SHAPE and wider partner organisations, such as the Police, will help to ensure fit with Vision 2020 and the national & international context.

A more detailed project plan & breakdown will be finalised following approval of this outline.





Task	Lead Officer	Start Date	End Date	Dec-19				Jan-20				Feb-20				Mar-20				Apr-20					
				19.12	6.01	13.01	20.01	27.01	3.02	10.02	17.02	24.02	2.03	9.03	16.03	23.3	1.04	6.04	13.04	20.04					
1. Project Scope																									
Scope	JS		08.01.2020																						
Agree timelines, witnesses and activities	JS		19.12.2019																						
Email to Chair write to Board Members to agree membership and lead roles (Draft see 1a)	JS																								
Officer Group meeting - Scope																									
																							Confirm what the core group can bring to the table in terms of evidence gathering and social media	Arrange to inform Joyce Underhill	
2. Develop online Activities																									
Meeting with communication team (see 2)	AG/JS																								
Instagram																									
Survey Monkey																									
Twitter																									
I want to Postcard																									
3. Work Group meeting - Scope																									
Evidence Gathering	JS																								
Desk top and prepare report to CSE Board - Scene setting report / presentation to agree the scope (see 3)	DB																								
4. CSE Scrutiny Board Meeting - Background report and scope																									
5. Existing Forums (see 4)																									
6 - Site Visits Create a template for Members to complete online when visiting a Youth Services site in Sandwell. Arrange a visit to the Way and VCS youth facilities. (see 5)																									
7. Drop in 'Café work shops : 4 tables (see 6)																									
Officer meeting - catch up, consider social media feedback and agree questions for question time?																									
8 - 'Question Time - at SHAPE? ask about the Challenges / Constraints and Budget (see 7)																									
Evaluation of Evidence																									
9 - Team work through the evidence and produce findings table (see 8)																									
Work Group meeting - Review evidence, analysis and draw conclusions																									
Prepare review report and presentation - findings options and implications of the recommendations (see 9) Is current provision enough - if not how much more and options																									
Final report to Board																									
10 Childrens Services and Education Scrutiny Board - Presentation and Recommendations to Senior Officers, Executive Members and Scrutiny Board																									
11 - Final Report to April Cabinet meeting																									
12. Evaluation of process and learning feed back to Scrutiny Review Working Group / scrutiny processes.(see 10)																									
13 - Executive response to CDE Scrutiny Board June 2020																									
14 - Monitor outcomes to feed into Annual Report																									