

**Cabinet resolved to:**

- (1) receive the report and recommendations of the Youth Facilities Scrutiny Working Group which was agreed by the Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board on 22 June 2020;
- (2) respond to the recommendations of the Children’s Services and Education Board within two months in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, setting out any approved recommendations, and how they will be implemented;
- (3) agree that young people are represented on Town Deal Boards and that young people are consulted on the development of Town Investment Plans in Summer 2020.

Section 9FE of the Localism Act requires the executive to respond to the overview and scrutiny committee indicating what (if any) action the authority, or the executive, proposes to take on the recommendations put before it. A period of two months is allowed for the executive response to scrutiny.

The table below set out a summary of the executive response to Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board:

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Lead</b>
1.	<b>A Partnership Framework (to include a Communications Plan and Multi-agency approach)</b> is developed with young people, for young people and is specifically targeted to promote current activities and future opportunities using the experts within the council to provide a	The channel selected for communication is a web-based platform hosted independent of the Sandwell Council site but is linked to and from this site. Just Youth can be found at: <a href="https://www.justyouth.org.uk">https://www.justyouth.org.uk</a>	

<p>joined-up plan that compliments services across the local authority. This should consider how we currently communicate, what we currently communicate and the most effective platforms to use across a range of media.</p> <p>A <b>Youth Symposium</b> should be held in early 2021 for all partners in the borough to help build a clear picture of what is available, build upon key themes arising from the Scrutiny Review, the multi-agency approach and develop closer partnership working for a joined-up offer for Sandwell. The youth symposium should draw together a joined-up approval to youth work and young people in Sandwell.</p>	<p>A new section of the site enables all activities taking place in the Borough to be included and there is a calendar setting out when and where activities take place. The website is also linked to Discover Sandwell <a href="https://www.discoversandwell.co.uk/explore/">https://www.discoversandwell.co.uk/explore/</a>, Sandwell Family Life (voluntary sector) <a href="https://www.sandwellfamilylife.info/">https://www.sandwellfamilylife.info/</a> and Sandwell Family Information Service <a href="https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/home.page">https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/home.page</a> websites. As the result of the Covid19 lockdown, events and activities for young people have been halted but these areas of the site will be populated in the future. In the meantime, a wide range of online activities and events are being publicised through social media including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.</p> <p>A young apprentice role has been created to keep the website up to date and to publicise it as the place for organisations to send their information.</p> <p>Work on establishing the Youth Symposium will be progressed in 2021 due to Covid 19. It has been difficult to find a digital platform that</p>	
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2.	<p>Young people should be afforded <b>safe, flexible, space of their own, with 'Wi-fi &amp; Dry' as the basic offer in Sandwell</b>. The council should take a strategic approach and consider modelling 'space options' across the Borough's 6 towns, these could test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Use of libraries within extended opening times – rethinking their use in the community</li> <li>ii. Mobile provision (through a bus or support vehicle).</li> <li>iii. Pop up shops and underused town centre units.</li> <li>iv. Leisure &amp; Activity Centres.</li> <li>v. Other council properties and schools.</li> <li>vi. New build, where no existing options are deemed suitable.</li> </ul>	<p>Through the Towns Fund process, a bid has been made to increase mobile provision via a new youth bus. Discussions are also in place regarding the potential to use the Community Infrastructure Levy to fund a new bus.</p> <p>In partnership with the Albion Foundation, a bid has been created to develop West Smethwick park as a youth hub. This is also dependent on a successful bid to the Towns Fund.</p> <p>Sports based youth provision has been piloted in partnership with Sandwell Leisure Trust at Tipton Sports Academy and Portway Lifestyle Centre but due to Covid 19 has stalled.</p>	

		<p>Whilst the council's services are not fully operating it has not been possible to move forward the conversation about libraries or other council buildings.</p> <p>Young People have been engaged in the Towns Fund consultation and one of the key asks has been for dedicated youth facilities.</p> <p>There are potential opportunities to re-develop the Coneygre Youth Centre – see below.</p> <p>During the Covid19 period, the value and importance of detached Youth Work has been even more pronounced and the relationship between this work, and access to 'Wifi and Dry' spaces even more important.</p>	
3.	<p>The council explores the option of providing <b>free or concessionary public transport for young people to enable better access to local youth activities, opening up Sandwell and all it offers</b>. Targeted provision should be considered in relation to vulnerable young people and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).</p>	<p>This action has not yet been specifically progressed and is dependent on engagement with the WMCA Strategic Transport Plan. There have been some statements from the WM Mayor that subsidised travel may be made available to encourage the use of public transport post Covid19, but it is unlikely that these subsidies will be available to under 18 year olds.</p>	

		<p>However, the development of the Metro site in Tipton, as part of the Strategic Transport Plan, is immediately adjacent to Coneygre Youth Centre. This will provide an opportunity for the council to develop the Coneygre Youth Centre as a 'hub' because young people will be able to get to it more easily, although there is still a cost attached. It may be possible to consider a scheme that would compensate the cost of travel to Coneygre and Malthouse.</p> <p>Additionally, the Strategic Transport Plan prioritizes cycle routes, which will come through Sandwell. The Youth Service has established a Youth Bike Project with a small grant from UK Cycling. The Project has been over-subscribed and plans are in place to extend it – it is hoped that Public Health funding may be able to support more activities and dedicated posts.</p>	
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4.	<p>The council should <b>take a more strategic approach to funding</b> and explore existing funding pots through a better use of regional partnerships and directories. Better alignment could be made <b>to complimentary activity within the voluntary sector</b> (such as SVCO's community grants) and <b>to the corporate social responsibility objectives</b> of local businesses</p>	<p>A new strategic process has been agreed through the Children and Young People's Strategic Commissioning Partnership to enable more high-quality funding bids to be made – this is attached. A review of voluntary sector grants has been established.</p>	
5.	<p>The Council should <b>develop a renewed 'Youth Offer'</b> which clearly identifies the very positive activities that are currently on offer and addresses those gaps which would enable a more bespoke approach. The <b>National Youth Agency's Standard Quality Mark Framework</b> should be used to measure the capacity, quality and sufficiency of youth facilities in Sandwell.</p>	<p>During the Covid19 lockdown, the youth offer has been via detached youth work and online support, including a weekly agony aunt session on facebook. In addition we have continued to provide support to vulnerable young people through our Enhanced Youth Support team and through delivering education packs.</p> <p>Due to Covid19 it has not been possible to progress the NYASQMF. However, plans are in place to progress this between October 2020-March 2021. Prior to Covid 19, we were delivering our own inhouse peer review process.</p>	
6.	<p>A renewed youth offer would aim to close the gaps in provision and ensure sufficiency of youth facilities, but in order to do this would require an increase in capacity and therefore the resources</p>	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan and the budget setting process will consider this recommendation alongside other priorities for</p>	

	required to deliver the provision would need to be reviewed.	the council's budget, aligned to the Corporate Plan.	
7.	Following the success of the <b>Question Time session</b> held during the review, it is recommended that quarterly Question Time sessions be scheduled into the Scrutiny Work Programme, with Shape forum the Cabinet Member / Champion for Children and Young People.	It had been hoped that this would be possible from autumn 2020, however, the Covid19 restrictions mean that a physical meeting is not possible at the current time. Contact with young people has demonstrated that very few have access to the Teams environment and many are comfortable meeting in this way. However, a solution is being considered to enable young people to join a Scrutiny meeting later in the year via a virtual platform, but this is impacted by current council policy.	