

## Update on Recommendations

	Recommendations	Comment
1	<p><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 joined-up plan that compliments services across the local authority.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>Working with the Shape programme and Public Health, investment was secured in 2020 for an apprentice role to lead the work on communications and marketing both for the Shape Programme and for Just Youth. This has led to a range of improvements to the website and an increased usage of social media platforms resulting in increased traffic on the website and engagement with social media channels.</p> <p>The Black Country &amp; West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group has provided funding to support ongoing development of the website with internal and external partners and promotion of this in community venues, as part of their ongoing commitment to the delivery of the Children &amp; Young People's Engagement Strategy and the Shape Programme.</p> <p>The Children &amp; Young People's Engagement Strategy has been developed with young people and stakeholders and was launched in April 2021. This brought together young people, stakeholders and enabled some key partners to showcase their youth offer. However, to do this justice and deliver a meaningful Youth Symposium a face to face event</p>

	<p>youth symposium should draw together a joined-up approval to youth work and young people in Sandwell.</p>	<p>is required to explore what a co-ordinated and renewed youth offer would look like.</p> <p>Alongside the Strategy, a communications plan has been developed to ensure key messages targeted at young people are shared through existing social media channels. To develop this further young people have been trained as Digital Leaders and will be looking to lead the development of content on both the website and social media, including looking at TikTok.</p>
2	<p>Young people should be afforded safe, flexible, space of their own, with 'Wi-fi &amp; Dry' as the basic offer in Sandwell. 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>In terms of mobile youth provision, the Service has 2 youth buses (double decker and single decker). This provision has not been operational during Covid due to social distancing restrictions but has been much sought after by young people. The Council is currently pursuing funding to purchase a new electric double decker youth bus which will require an investment in infrastructure.</p> <p>.</p> <p>The Town's Fund programme has prioritised a number of projects that will provide young people with places to go including a new skate park and community hub in Britannia Park. In Smethwick additional multi use classrooms are to be added at the Ron Davis Centre and improvements made to outdoor sports facilities in Lewisham Park. Additionally, plans for West Bromwich include improved facilities at West Bromwich Town Hall and Library including the development of a Cultural Quarter.</p>

After a successful pilot of sports based youth activity at Tipton Sports Academy, The Service is exploring the use of other Leisure Centre Facilities in Oldbury and West Bromwich, however these come with a cost that the Service is currently not budgeted for.

Not with-standing the restrictions imposed by Covid 19, the Service has been able to explore some alternative models of delivery where we have gaps in provision across the 6 towns. In addition to provision currently open in Tipton, West Bromwich and Smethwick (see Appendix 3 for current youth provision list), we are currently exploring options for open access youth provision within libraries particularly in West Bromwich, Oldbury and Rowley Regis. We have re-located our SEND youth club from the Meadows School to Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery, our detached youth work team in Lightswood Park is exploring the use of Lightswood House to facilitate a young Friends of the Park group, and we are exploring other museum facilities which may be suitable for young people's provision. In Wednesbury we are also exploring the option of developing open access provision with the voluntary sector at Wednesbury 2000.

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. Whilst the Service is

		<p>exploring many options for creating accessible youth spaces, the challenges still remain around multi use shared spaces and young people having some ownership and ability to make the space their own.</p>
3	<p>The council explores the option of providing free or concessionary public transport for young people to enable better access to local youth activities, opening up Sandwell and all it offers. Targeted provision should be considered in relation to vulnerable young people and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).</p>	<p>Although there are some concessionary travel discount schemes for young people up to age 18 to support them with subsidised travel to education or work, none of these extend to leisure time use. This is a wider issue that needs to be championed with the West Midlands Combined Authority.</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 and funding is identified from the Town's Fund to further develop infrastructure across West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis to support cycling.</p>

4	<p>The council should take a more strategic approach to funding and explore existing funding pots through a better use of regional partnerships and directories. Better alignment could be made to complimentary activity within the voluntary sector (such as SVCO's community grants) and to the corporate social responsibility objectives of local businesses</p>	<p>The Service has been successful in getting funding for additional targeted work in West Bromwich through the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and the Safer Streets Fund (SSF). VRU funding is targeted at addressing under 25's youth violence through detached youth work, mentoring and diversionary activity. The SSF is part of a more collaborative bid across the Council and with partners addressing issues of harassment and violence against women and girls.</p> <p>Additionally, the Government's Holiday Activity &amp; Food programme has enabled holiday activity programmes for young people to be delivered during key school holiday periods.</p> <p>As part of the Government's Spending Review, a commitment has been made to the Youth Investment Fund over the next 3 years. This will provide capital and some revenue funding for youth provision in left behind areas, these are yet to be announced.</p> <p>The Children and Young People's Strategic Commissioning Partnership has facilitated a collaborative approach to funding bids, ensuring that partners work together when drafting and submitting bids for funding, a good example of this is the recent bid for Family Hubs funding that brought together the Council, CCG and Sandwell Children's Trust.</p>
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5	<p>The Council should develop a renewed 'Youth Offer' which clearly identifies the very positive activities that are currently on offer and addresses those gaps which would enable a more bespoke approach. The National Youth Agency's Standard Quality Mark Framework 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. As Covid restrictions have eased some face to face open access youth provision has re-opened. In addition, we have continued to provide support to vulnerable young people through our Enhanced Youth Support team.</p> <p>Due to Covid19 it has not been possible to progress the NYASQMF. However, whilst plans are in place to progress this between April 2022-March 2023, we have progressed work on a theory of change model for the Service. This model sets out the areas of focus for the Youth Service and what support young people can expect.</p> <p>During Covid we have also invested in training and development for youth workers with 14 achieving a level 2 and 8 achieving a level 3 Award in Youth Work Practise.</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 required to deliver the provision would need to be reviewed.</p>	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan and the budget setting process will consider this recommendation alongside other priorities for the council's budget, aligned to the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>In the absence of any national statutory benchmark or guidance on what a sufficient youth service would offer, the National Youth Agency suggest each Local Authority (including any voluntary and Community sector provision)</p>

		<p>would provide at least two, full-time equivalent professionals who are JNC qualified youth workers be located in a secondary school catchment area, along with an equivalent team of at least four youth support workers, and trained volunteers, to ensure minimum access to quality youth services. Sandwell Youth Service currently employs 27 number of FTE and 7 of these are JNC qualified. It is difficult to assess what is currently available in the voluntary and community sector as this data is not captured.</p>
7	<p>Following the success of the Question Time session 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.</p>	<p>It had been hoped that this would be possible from autumn 2020, however, the ongoing Covid19 restrictions mean that a physical meeting is not possible at the current time. Contact with young people throughout this period has demonstrated that very few have access to the Teams environment and many are uncomfortable meeting in this way.</p> <p>With face to face meetings only resuming in September 2021, there is much work to be done in re-establishing the forum and getting everyone at a level of confidence to re-engage. It is proposed that the Question Time events are re-established to start in the 2022 summer term and then take place on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Also, Scrutiny alongside the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education and the Cabinet Advisor for Young</p>

		People & Skills need to consider the outcomes they want and the scope of the Question Time sessions.
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