

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA
ITEM NO

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

5

28 November 2019

Report Title	YOUTH WORK STRATEGY 2020 TO 2024
Purpose of Report	To present to members the draft youth work strategy for 2020 to 2024.
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to approve the Youth Work Strategy 2020-2024.
Consultation and Feedback	Feedback from consultation including that of Parish and Town Councils, service users and partner organisations can be found in Background Papers F and G.
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	<p>When the last strategy was agreed in 2016, the funding for a Youth Strategy (£60k p.a.) was to come to an end in March 2020. However, the Medium Term Financial Plan approved by Council in January 2019, and the Budget Strategy approved by Council in October 2019, have committed to maintaining this resource into the medium term. This therefore necessitates a new strategy to consider how to use the funds available from April 2020 onwards. The recommended strategy achieves this and can be accommodated by the funds available in the MTFP.</p> <p>Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources Tel: 01453 754115 Email: andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk</p> <p>Not approving the strategy will mean the Council not having a formal direction for its work with young people. Progress made in community based developmental work during the last eight years, will potentially be lost. It will inhibit young people from having their voice heard, particularly in their communities and on issues such as social exclusion, cultural diversity, democracy, mental wellbeing and sexual health.</p>
Legal Implications	<p>There are no legal implications arising from this report.</p> <p>Patrick Arran, Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer Tel: 01453 754369 Email: patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Report Author	<p>Steve Miles, Senior Youth Officer Tel: 01453 754504 Email: steve.miles@stroud.gov.uk</p>
Options	The options are to approve the strategy or not.
Performance Management Follow Up	The performance management system has evolved during the last eight years. It will continue to review and inform the work carried out by youth workers, enabling a reflective practical approach to be continued. It will track the active involvement and achievement of young people as volunteers.

Background Papers/ Appendices	<p>Background Papers are available via the Council’s website.</p> <p>A – SDC <i>Draft Youth Work Strategy 2020-2024</i></p> <p>B – Youth Voice Vehicle (System & Structure)</p> <p>C – Letter from SDYC Chair – Introduction of statutory youth voice</p> <p>D – CS&L Committee Members Information Sheet, March 2019</p> <p>E - Youth Work Context Briefing & Equalities and Diversity Statement</p> <p>F - Consultation with Parish and Town Councils</p> <p>G - Testimonies – young people and partner organisations</p>
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1. Introduction

1.1 The Council’s Community Services and Licensing Committee (through a Task and Finish Group) have overseen a review of the current youth work strategy and been directly involved in developing this draft strategy for 2020-2024 (**Background Paper A**). Having considered the strengths and outcomes of the previous strategies, this version principally continues with delivering established community based provision relating to youth participation – depicted on the diagram of our Youth Voice Vehicle (**Background Paper B**). It also sets out a plan to increasing the involvement of young people in the Councils decision-making. It also increase the Councils social media presence with and for young people. It acknowledges the call from SDYC to support the British Youth Council campaign policy, for the introduction of a statutory youth voice vehicle for all local authorities (**Background Paper C**).

2. Developing Communities Sustainably

2.1 This draft strategy requires a community development approach to be delivered through youth work practice. Previous outcomes have been achieved as a result of this work – evidence of these outcomes were presented to the CS&L Committee in March 2019 (**Background Paper D**). Informal updates have been given via quarterly or half yearly newsletters (available via the website).

2.2 This type of youth work is helping drive a more sustainable future for young people (**Background Paper E**). The last eight years has proven that young people in the district not only have a right to be heard (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), but have a huge role to play in social action. As positive active citizens helping to reshape better services for all, they are leading by example in their communities. Collectively they are regularly giving advice to commissioners and service providers. They are a huge asset to developing their communities more sustainably – consequently, those involved have become creators and not just consumers. Recently, services regarding mental health and emotional wellbeing, plus sexual health information advice and guidance, have all been improved through young people’s participation. Many other examples can be seen in (**Background Papers D and G**) and relate to localities and district/county wide services.

3. Staffing and Service Continuity

- 3.1 The nature of community development based youth work is that young people are involved through voluntary engagement. Subsequently they act as volunteers through engagement with groups, projects and programmes. It is critical to the success of the service, that staff develop meaningful and authentic relationships with the young people with whom they work. Ensuring we have professionally qualified and experienced youth work staff to deliver service provision is paramount.
- 3.2 During the term of the current strategy a corporate decision was taken to cease commissioning of part of the service to an external provider. Instead staffing resources were brought 'in-house'. As highlighted in **Background Paper D** and recognised by the Task and Finish Group, this has seen a significant improvement in service delivery and performance.
- 3.3 The workforce is now more flexible and can respond better to the needs of young people and their communities. It is hoped that moving from fixed term posts to one of permanency, will increase the sustainability and stability of our service delivery. This is vital for the personal and social development of young people and will help address inequality. It will also enable continuity in building an infrastructure, which brings public and voluntary sector organisations together to work in partnership.

4. Involving young people in Council decision-making

- 4.1 This strategy seeks to go further than ever before on the active involvement of young people in the Council's decision-making processes. The now well established youth voice vehicle (**Background Paper B**) will enable the interaction between young people and Council committees to take place. Methods of engagement suitable for young people will need to be blended with internal processes and systems of the Council. This will enable policies and practice for all services to potentially benefit from the recognised voice of young people. The strategy allows for a gradual change in culture. However, it will require respective officers from all services to work closely with our youth work team, to ensure effective engagement with young people where appropriate.

5. Promoting the Service

- 5.1 This strategy seeks to increase its promotion of the service. As a result of previous strategies, we know our service has a positive impact on individuals and communities. An enhanced social media presence will be developed for greater interaction with young people and their supporters. Additionally, District Councillors will further champion the service, particularly to encourage other providers to support young people (not known to us) to engage with our local youth forum groups.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The investment in youth work through the Council's previous strategies has been a hugely rewarding one for young people and their communities. The stories from young people and testimonials from our partners, highlight the positive impact (**Background Paper G**).
- 6.2 In the last eight years we have redefined the baseline of what future youth work provision can and should be built upon. We have upheld the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and enabled the active participation of young people in service design and delivery.
- 6.3 This strategy will bring further benefits to communities and services alike, including that of other partnerships and organisations. Similarly, it will enable young people to contribute towards the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and will help contribute to the current and future Corporate Delivery Plan.
- 6.4 Above all, it will result in young people becoming even more active in their local communities. This will create a greater representative voice at district level and beyond, whilst increasing prospects for their futures.