

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

26th November 2024

Executive Update to the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group

Purpose of report

1. To update the committee on the progress on the recommendations made by the Youth Provision and Area Board Youth Funding Task Group.

Background

1. On 21 September 2023 the Children's Select Committee endorsed the Final Report of the Task Group.
2. The Committee resolved to refer the following Task Group's recommendations to the relevant Cabinet member for response at the Committee's next meeting on 31 October 2023.
3. In January 2024 the Executive delivered an initial response to the recommendations and advised that a progress update would be provided in late 2024 to advise of progress. It has been agreed that the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Libraries and Communities will attend the January 2025 Children's Select to discuss these further with the committee.

Main considerations for the committee

Recommendation No.1	The Council develops an overarching youth strategy to bring together youth provision from within the Council with Area Boards, youth providers and external agencies. A 'product owner' could be used who is not responsible for delivery but could be responsible for co-ordinating the different strands of activity, connecting back to the strategy.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>The development of Wiltshire Youth Strategy is progressing well and will be presented back to the Children's Select Committee in January 2025. There has been a significant and collaborative effort to ensure this strategy provides an accurate reflection of the local youth offer within Wiltshire and the delivery to s507b of the Education Act. Importantly, it will also include recommendations in areas where further work is needed.</p> <p>Communities and Children's services have consulted internally and externally on the strategy. This has been</p>

	delivered through direct conversations with services and partners as well as via partnership FACT, Youth Council, Wiltshire Youth Partnership and the Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Work Network. A small task and finish group made up of council and VCS representatives is now in place to finalise the strategy draft.
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Recommendation No.2	The Council sets out a timeframe to meet the incoming statutory guidance to local authorities. It should ensure, with the support of stakeholders, that the needs of young people and current provision is mapped and an annual plan for young people in Wiltshire is developed. In doing so, it may want to seek guidance from the NYA on developing this approach. There would be benefits too in learning from the FACT project in developing a single source of information.
Updated position – November 2024	The updated statutory guidance has been incorporated within the draft Wiltshire Youth Strategy. Relevant updates have additionally been made to the draft Area Board grants criteria and will be reflected on the Area Board webpages. The All Together platform is being used as a platform for mapping current provision for young people and will continue to be supported.

Recommendation No.3	The proposal by the youth partnership to develop a tiered system for youth grants should be considered, as it complements the work already being piloted by the grant assessment panel to allow for differences in provider capacity and geographic cover.
Updated position – November 2024	The majority of applications for youth grants are from local groups to enable them to provide local activities and services. Where a provider is looking to work across more than three community areas, the Grant Assessment Panel (GAP) process is in place to evaluate this request as an exception, and has already agreed on multiple occasions and is working successfully. The Communities team is in a position to flag to the wider Council any issues which are appearing across the county, and which may require a new or revised service to be considered. Officers will be exploring other sources of funding such as social value and crowdfunding, which may be used to support youth organisations.

Recommendation No.4	The criteria for Area Board youth grants is amended to remove the requirement for organisations to apply for funding for a ‘new’ project and allow for repeat funding of ongoing projects that are meeting the needs of young people effectively.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>The current wording of the Area Board grant criteria is to ensure that any project does not solely rely on Area Board funding, as this is not guaranteed.</p> <p>An updated Area Board grant criteria has been proposed that will reflect that youth projects are not required to be ‘new’ as long as they can demonstrate that they are working towards sustainability.</p> <p>This will be implemented subject to single member decision.</p>

Recommendation No.5	The requirement to promote funded activities should sit with the grant holder who is more likely to have stronger local communication networks than the Council does.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>The All Together platform provides the opportunity for all locally delivered young person activities to be added and communicated. All successful Area Board youth grant applicants are requested to add their projects and activities onto the website through the terms and conditions of their grant. This platform is being promoted through the Area Boards and the Engagement and Partnerships service.</p> <p>Whilst we do encourage the applicants to promote their activities to young people, as it is in their best interest to be successful, the statutory duty for this remains with the council. We use our available platforms to promote and broadcast messages through social media, newsletters and sharing with partners such as youth groups and schools.</p>

Recommendation No.6	Consideration should be given to funding or part funding the development and infrastructure of Wiltshire’s youth sector, through the youth partnership. This would be an investment with longer term aims of supporting the development of this sector and increasing the likelihood of drawing down external funding for the county.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>Conversations have progressed positively between Wiltshire Council Children’s Commissioning and the Wiltshire Youth Partnership. A multi-funder model continues to be pursued between Wiltshire Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. We have been working to align the key objectives of the partnership with those of Wiltshire Council, to finalise the funding arrangement.</p> <p>Key aims being discussed are as follows:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the recruitment of a Youth Partnership Development Manager • Enable the set up and delivery of a Youth Capacity Building, Training and Support Fund which will deliver targeted grants to enable WYP project tasks and activities. This will help increase youth work capacity across Wiltshire over a two-year period, resulting in strengthened local youth provision with more trained youth workers.
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Recommendation No.7	Area Boards need to be actively encouraged to work with a LYN (Local Youth Network), Youth Forum, or partner-led multi-agency group, perhaps identifying an elected member for each Area Board to take the lead in setting up or maintaining community involvement in the provision of youth activities.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>Area Boards are encouraged to develop local youth working groups where they are required. This has been reiterated to Area Board Chairs. The Area Board Handbook 2022 states as follows:</p> <p>“Working groups are an excellent vehicle for driving Area Board priorities. It is recommended that each Area Board has a working group linked to each of their respective priorities (up to 5) however, the board does not need to be the lead organisation for each group. There are many excellent partner and community run working groups already in existence across Wiltshire and the aspiration where this is the case is to work in partnership and complement this work. Once the Area Board has established its priorities, it should assess the local landscape and agree whether an Area Board working group is required or whether to progress its local priority work through a partner or community led group.</p> <p>17 of the 18 Area Boards currently have a youth working group that they are engaged with or directly leading.</p>

Recommendation No.8	Explore with the Youth Council how to best support the Area Boards in ensuring the voice of young people is represented in decision-making.
Updated position – November 2024	<p>Significant work has been undertaken to develop the Wiltshire Youth Council and align this to local community work. All Cllrs have been invited to future Youth Council meetings and the Service Manager has attended the Area Board Chairs meeting to discuss.</p> <p>The Youth Council has developed a clear work plan and additional resource from Democratic Services has been</p>

	provided to support the Youth Council and ensure a closer tie to Area Boards and communities. Additional volunteers from within the Children’s Services Directorate are also supporting the operation. The relevant Heads of Service from both areas are meeting regularly to ensure closer communication.
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Recommendation No.9	Explore how to facilitate increased engagement between officers delivering services for young people and Area Boards when community issues have been identified.
Updated position – November 2024	As per the above, this is now happening. There is regular dialogue and fixed meetings between officers at all levels within Children’s services and Communities.

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