

## Briefing Note – Rural Youth Engagement Project

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**Date Prepared:** 08/07/2021  
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### Background

The Area Boards in Amesbury, Pewsey, Southern Wiltshire, Tidworth and Warminster identified a need to increase engagement and opportunities for young people within their respective rural communities. Data and evidence that the boards reviewed highlighted that there were limited community led activity providers operating in the rural areas and that there was little variety of opportunities for young people. Transport and physical access to activities created another barrier for young people to participate in positive activities.

The respective Community Engagement Managers for the 5 areas worked with colleagues from Children's Services, Communities and Neighbourhoods as well as external partners to develop a project to target rural youth engagement and activity provision. All 5 of the Area Boards supported the project brief setting asides £5,000 per board for its delivery.

### Project aims

The project aims to identify a selected specialist youth provider to work across all 5 community areas to develop a stronger offer of positive activities, especially aimed at those young people at risk. The programme will compliment and strengthen what already exists, address need and develop local ownership. The initial 12-month programme will undertake research, implementation and review stages, with significant focus on ensuring that the project has a sustainable future past the initial period. The targeted project outcomes are as follows:

- Improved level of engagement with young people, targeting a reduction in isolation of young people in rural areas.
- Identification of young people with issues around mental health, educational attainment and physical health issues and signposting to appropriate activities and support.
- Increased and strengthened community led activity provision, with stronger communications channels between providers and partners across the communities.

### Current position

Community First have successfully been awarded the 12-month grant (£25,000) to undertake this programme, following a procurement process. Members of the Community Engagement team are due to meet with representatives from Community First week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> July. Community First have set out a delivery programme that utilises their Youth Consultants and the Youth Action Wiltshire arm of their delivery service to develop sustainable activity provision across the rural areas.

The Community Engagement Managers along with Community First will be developing a comprehensive communications plan and will continue to link this project with colleagues from across the council. A particular focus will remain with ensuring that Children's Services are involved and informed of the developments and findings of this project. Frequent assessment and a comprehensive evaluation of the project will take place which will include any recommendations for further action.