

10. YOUTH PROVISION - CONSULTATION, OUTCOMES, OPTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

On 22 April 2021, the Policy & Management Committee authorised the Town Clerk to instigate a 6 week public consultation on youth provision from 1 June 2021. The consultation closes on 12 July. As such, and in order to ensure timely decisions that may impact on future budget requirements, the outcomes of the consultation are being brought directly to Full Council.

The Consultation

The consultation has been conducted online via ‘*Survey Monkey*’ and via the printed media being delivered to all residential postal points in the GU7 area. In addition to roadside banners publicising the consultation, the Council’s social media platforms were utilised to promote the survey.

The three main questions relating to the consultation were:

- Q1. Do you believe that Godalming Town Council should provide a universal, free to access, youth drop-in facility aimed at secondary school aged children?
- Q2. Would you support an increase of £10 per year (@ 19 pence per week) to band D council tax to fund a dedicated youth worker and drop-in facility as explained on the Council website?
- Q3. The Town Council would also like to know your views on whether there should be a specific council scheme to help fund organisations to provide services and events for our youth (11 to 18 years old) in Farncombe and Godalming?

Analysis of the high-level outcomes of the consultation will be distributed to Members as soon as possible following the end of the consultation and will be tabled at the meeting.

Reach

The printed survey was delivered via Royal Mail to 25,192 postal points in the GU7 area. Additionally, the posts and reach utilising social media to date (7 July 2021) was as per the table below. The youth consultation was also promoted via prominent, strategically placed roadside banners located on the main thoroughfares of the town.

Social Media Stats

Godalming Town Council Facebook			
Date	Reach	Engagement (Shares, Likes, Comments etc.)	Shares
20/05/2021 Pinned Post on GTC FB Profile Page	4,487	324	23
01/06/2021 Youth Survey Button Employed on GTC FB Profile Page	159	5	0
09/06/2021 General post	371	16	2

29/06/2021 Scheduled re-post	300	12	2
05/07/2021 Scheduled re-post	279	10	2
12/07/2021 Scheduled re-post	141	0	0

Godalming Town Council Instagram		
Date	Accounts Reached (no of Unique Accounts that have seen the post)	Impressions (content seen by people on Instagram)
20/05/2021	170	182
01/06/2021 Youth Survey Button Employed on Instagram Profile Page	154	160
10/07	162	170
08/07	166	170
05/07	163	174

Outcomes & Recommendations

Members wished to consult with residents on the future provision of youth facilities and specifically the funding by GTC of a universal free to access drop-in facility aimed at those of secondary school age. Although the Town Clerk has sight of the survey results to date, as it does not close until 12 July the analysis of the survey data will not be distributed to Members and published on the GTC website until 13 July. Therefore, for the purposes of this paper, a number of potential options are considered. The option which the Chair will ask Members to consider at Full Council will be determined by the outcomes of the consultation.

- A. **Outcome** – The majority of respondents to Q1 **do not support** GTC providing a universal, free to access, youth drop in facility.

Recommendation – As GTC would not have the support of the community to provide this service, GTC would be challenged to justify the required precept increase both to residents and to the principle council tax setting authority (WBC), as such consideration should be given to alternative methods of supporting the town’s young citizens.

- B. **Outcome** – The majority of respondents to Q2 **do not support** the provision of a universal, free to access, youth drop in facility being funded by an increase to the council tax.

Note – As GTC would not have the support of the community to fund this service via an increase to the precept, GTC would be challenged to justify any significant increases in precept both to residents and to the principle council tax setting authority (WBC).

Recommendation – If the response to Q1 support the provision whilst responses to Q2 do not support GTC funding it from the precept, consideration should be given to seeking alternative methods of funding.

- C. **Outcome** – The majority of respondents to Q3 **do not support** GTC setting up a specific scheme to help fund organisations to provide services and events for our youth (11 to 18) in Farncombe and Godalming.

Note – As GTC would not have the support of the community to fund such a scheme, an increase to the precept or virement of existing budgets to create such a scheme would be difficult to justify.

Recommendation – **Organisations seeking funds for the provision of services and events in support of young citizens would be required to continue to apply for funding via the existing GTC grant schemes.**

- D. **Outcome** – The majority of respondents to Q3 **support** GTC setting up a specific scheme to help fund organisations to provide services and events for our youth (11 to 18) in Farncombe and Godalming.

Note – Whilst Members wished the question to be included in the survey, the question of the funding options have not been explored. The precept increase indicated at Q2 being targeted at a specific proposal. As such Members would either need to consider an additional increase in precept to fund the scheme, vire funds from other budgets or undertake a review of the distribution of the existing grant budget.

Recommendation – **If outcome D is supported by the analysis of the consultation results, Officers recommend that Members consider a full review of the existing grants budget and procedures.**

- E. **Outcome** – The majority of respondents to Q1 & Q2 **support** GTC providing a universal, free to access, youth drop in facility funded by an increase in the precept.

Recommendation – **Members to consider options to instigate the provision of a universal free to access drop-in facility aimed at those of secondary school age funded by an increase to the parish precept. Potential options are set out below for the consideration of Members.**

Outcome E Options

Objective: Godalming Town Council to aim to open a universal free to access youth drop-in facility, operated and funded by Godalming Town Council, managed by professionally qualified youth workers providing support and activities for young people in the Godalming area of secondary school age. Target date for opening 18 April 2022.

Location/Venue

In the initial youth consultation report considered by Members in October 2020, it was proposed that GTC should identify potential permanent locations for a universal youth drop-in service and a provision of £20,000pa was initially estimated as a rental cost.

The Youth Provision Task & Finish Group has not been able to identify a potentially suitable premises on the commercial market, either in location, size or cost. As such consideration has been given by Members of the Task & Finish Group and Officers regarding the use of existing GTC facilities.

Broadwater Park Community Centre (BWPCC) is a relatively modern (30 years old) purpose built community centre located adjacent to Godalming Leisure Centre and the only secondary school located within the Parish of Godalming. Its location has already been identified as an opportunity to provide diversionary youth activity through the WBC Friday/Saturday Night Project. The pre-existence of a staff office would provide a base for future employees and

the flexibility and adaptability of the space, along with secure gardens, and onsite car parking offers the opportunity for a wide range of easily accessible activities.

BWPCC is the least used of the Council's community centres. Assuming that all pre-covid users were to return, the average collective weekly hire would be in the region of 28 hours from 7 different users, with 10.5 hours per week being from 1 user. The data supporting these figures was taken from the RBS booking system to cover a month with no bank holidays or school holidays and chosen to include hirers who only meet for part of the year, i.e the period of maximum use.

In 2019/20 (which included 7 days of lockdown) the revenue generated by BWPCC, including income from casual and occasional hirers was £27,754. However the current budgeted income for 2021/22 is £24,000. The average operational cost of BWPCC, excluding staff related expenditure and one off capital project costs (LED lighting, refitting of kitchen and redecoration of halls and installation of accessibility ramps for emergency egress) over the previous 5 years has been £21,275 per annum, which has included £2,500 per annum to GTC's Land and Property Maintenance Reserve to cover the cost of the periodic capital costs. Therefore, as income has exceeded revenue expenditure, the cost to the precept from loss of hire of the centre would, at the present time be £24,000.

It is unknown how many of the pre-covid users would return if the centre was available. However, it is suggested that, as it would be over 15 months since many previous hirers had last used the centre, if a decision were to be made to repurpose BWPCC, now would be the best time to do so without causing significant disruption to previous user groups. Whilst there is a range of alternative venues in the Farncombe area for previous users of BWPCC (dance, yoga, pilates, chess and photographic groups) there is no other realistic location for a permanent youth drop-in venue. As such, Members may wish to consider the hierarchy of need and it is suggested that, at present, GTC has placed support for youth activity at the apex of such need.

Whilst the inability to serve all the needs of a community is regrettable, GTC staff would, if requested, support previous users in seeking alternative venues. Additionally, Members would wish to note that in the medium term the potential to replace the loss of general access community space does exist via the option to operate the new community building at Ockford Park when it becomes available, anticipated in 2023/24.

Recommendation:

- 1. Broadwater Park Community Centre is designated as the home of the Godalming Town Council Youth Drop-in Facility as of 1 September 2021 with a target date to be fully operational by 18 April 2022**
- 2. Previous existing users of Broadwater Park Community Centre to be informed that the centre will not be available for use post 1 September 2021.**
- 3. Casual hire to continue until such time as enabling works to the buildings in preparation for the opening of the youth facility begin.**

Lead Youth Worker – Full Time

Youth work is a specialist area requiring the engagement of appropriately qualified youth workers. Likewise, whilst Members may have views on what a youth facility should provide, the success of the facility is predicated on it meeting the needs of those for whom it is provided for. As such, the Youth Provision Task & Finish Group considers it of paramount importance that a Lead Youth Worker is recruited as early as possible in order to both engage with potential users of the facility, but also support the work necessary to prepare the facility for opening.

Such work to include, identifying any changes required to the internal or external layout of the centre, identifying equipment and facilities, establishing safeguarding policy and

procedures, recruiting youth work support staff and potential volunteer helpers as appropriate. Working with the RFO to establish budget monitoring and expenditure requirements and seeking external funding/community/local business support. Establishing links with the Safer Waverley Partnership and other organisations and determining pattern of operation/opening.

Governance

Officers to seek examples of job descriptions for similar roles undertaken in other local council areas. Job descriptions and particulars of employment to be considered by Staffing Committee 9 September 2021, if agreed, recruitment to be undertaken for engagement from 1 November 2021.

Recommendation: GTC to undertake the recruitment of a Lead Youth Worker to be in post for 1 November 2021.

Support Youth Workers

Based on Lead Youth Worker's assessment of requirement, i.e numbers and hours, that would be dependent on operating times and activities and the available budget. Support youth workers to be recruited for opening of the youth facility in April 2022.

Recommendation: Lead Youth Worker, via the Youth Management Group to submit support youth worker recruitment requirement to Staffing Committee for 10 February to enable support youth workers to be in place by 18 April 2022.

Operating Times

Whilst the aim is to provide a five day a week after school service with the potential of diversionary activities during school holiday periods, the operating details will be provided by the Lead Youth Worker based on an assessment of available resource and linked activities. For example, if the WBC Friday Night Project in conjunction with the Leisure Centre goes ahead this would use BWPC for youth activities during that evening, therefore it may be that the Youth drop-in on a Friday operates for an early after school session with the Friday Night Project taking over for the later session.

Governance

Lead Youth Worker to provide initial operating plan for the opening for the centre on 18 April 2022 to the Policy & Management Committee with quarterly activity reports thereafter to the appointed GTC Youth Management Group.

Management Group

GTC to appoint a Youth Management Group consisting of the RFO and 3 Councillors to support the Lead Youth Worker, with the potential addition of a representative from WBC/Safer Neighbourhood Team. Chair of Youth Management Group to submit quarterly reports to Policy & Management Committee/Full Council and an annual report to be included in GTC Annual Report.

The Youth Management Group to be established as an Advisory Committee of the Policy & Management Committee under Standing Order 128 – 131

128. Every Standing Committee may appoint one or more ad hoc advisory committees for purposes, which shall be specified in terms of reference by the Standing Committee.
129. Unless the Council determines otherwise, all the members of an advisory committee and a sub-committee of the advisory committee may be non-councillors.
130. The provisions of Standing Orders 1 to 20 shall apply mutatis mutandis to all advisory committee proceedings (but only in so far as those provisions can apply to non-councillors). Non-councillor members of an advisory committee are not bound by the Code of Conduct but are expected to declare pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests at meetings of the advisory committee as though they were bound by the Code.

131. Agendas and any supporting papers, reports and minutes of an advisory committees shall be circulated to all members of that advisory committee. Reports and minutes of an advisory committee will be circulated in accordance with Standing Order 121 above and will be received on the next agenda of the parent Committee.

Recommendation:

- 1. Members to appoint 3 Councillors, plus the RFO as Youth Management Group.**
- 2. Members to determine whether they wish to invite a representative of the Safer Waverley Partnership as a permanent representative on the Youth Management Group.**
- 3. Youth Management Group to be governed as an Advisory Committee to the Policy & Management Committee.**

Funding

The youth provision consultation stated the mainstay funding of a universal free to access youth drop-in facility would need to be funded by an increase to the Town Council's precept of £100,000. Whilst the revenue expenditure set against BWPCC does cover all operational costs of operating the building, this is offset by income. In order to avoid additional demand on the precept a need exists to balance the loss of BWPCC income against the Youth Facility Budget.

As such, in setting any youth provision budget structure, in the first instance £24,000 per annum should be considered as the operational cost of the building. The budget put forward to Members in May 2020 and considered in October 2020 anticipated operational costs (utilities, equipment, etc.) of £12,000 with rent/rates of £20,000, making a venue provision of £32,000. The Youth Provision Task & Finish Group considers that utilizing BWPCC provides the best value for money and contains the premises costs within the scope of the initial costings.

Governance

Funding for Lead Youth Worker to be taken to Policy & Management Committee 9 September 2021 following approval of Job Description and Particulars of Employment by Staffing Committee.

GTC budget considered by Policy & Management Committee 25 November, approved by Full Council 16 December.

Recommendations:

- 1. The RFO undertakes the 2022/23 budget setting process based on a precept cash increase of £100,000 for youth provision.**
- 2. The current budgeted income of £24,000 for BWPCC is offset against the cash increase required for youth provision.**
- 3. The salary requirement for a Lead Youth Worker, is set against reserves for the period 1 November 2021 to 31 March 2022 (including the youth provision reserve balance).**