



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## SMT Cabinet Reports

Tuesday 11 October 2022

### Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Shaun Davies - Leader and Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Families
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Darren Knibbs - Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support, Jo Britton - Executive Director: Children's & Family Services
<b>Service Area:</b>	Children's Safeguarding & Family Support
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jennifer Bullas – Senior Project Officer
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report considered by:</b>	SMT – 11 October 2022 Business Briefing – 21 October 2022

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- 1.1 the funding for the Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme for 2023;
- 1.2 the holding of an alumni event to understand the impact on successful applicants from the past 2 years and to inform the upcoming 2023 scheme; and
- 1.3 the communications plan be further developed to ensure more young people are reached, including our NEET cohort beyond the age of 16.

## 2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To provide a summary of the most recent Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme, costs, successes, and recommendations for 2023.

## 3.0 Background

3.1 The Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme has run since 2017, with a brief period where the funding was reallocated to the Laptops for Learning Scheme which was highly successful in providing devices to young people to continue their education during lockdown.

3.2 In 2021, an allocation of £20,000 was made and 132 young people applied. Of these applicants, 64 were provided with funding, bike vouchers, laptops, and travel passes.

3.3 This year, the same number of applications were made (132), but of these, a much higher 72 applicants were successful and were awarded funding, laptops and travel passes to support them with their path towards education, employment and training, or kick start a business.

3.4 Bus Passes were kindly provided by Arriva, who have supported this scheme since its relaunch in 2021.

3.5 A priority for the scheme was to encourage applications from some of our most vulnerable young people in the borough. A number of the total applicants were supported to apply through Education and Skills, the Virtual School or their allocated worker in Children's Social Care; with applications from 5 care experienced young people and 3 children currently looked after by the authority.

3.6 2022 also marked the first year all wards were represented in applicants.

## Communications

3.7 The communication plan for 2022 was very comprehensive. Three target segments were identified:

- **Residents aged 15-25**, who were targeted via adverts on their preferred social media platforms. Geo targeted adverts were also used as smartphones are cited as the most important device for accessing the internet at home or elsewhere among all adults aged over 15 years old. These young people are more likely to trust a message supported by other young people – whether that is by seeing or hearing someone like themselves or knowing that it has been engaged with by someone like them. Messages were delivered via Facebook and Instagram adverts using still assets, and short form adverts placed on TikTok and Snapchat. Case studies of young people who have benefited from the scheme in previous years were featured on the website.

- **Parents & Carers**, our largest audience on our corporate Facebook. Organic posts and adverts were the preferred channels to use for this campaign, followed by Instagram and Twitter posts. Shaun's Weekly Email and video was also used, alongside posts in local Facebook groups to help spread the word outside of our own corporate page. Parish and Town Councils were supplied with ready-made assets and content to share via email, on social media. In public, digital advertising space was used, featuring on the electronic advertising board in Telford Centre (if available) as well as totems in Southwater. Posters were placed around the locality.
- **Schools, colleges, universities, and partners** were contacted with information packs and a short slideshow to show in assemblies for 15-18 year olds / PSHE lesson to share the grant and how to apply. By bringing the grant scheme further forward, schools and colleges were more able to support young people in their applications and be available as referees.

3.8 For the first time this year, we held an information event at Southwater, midway through the application point, to provide information, application assistance, and wider support. This was advertised via school/college links, newsletters, team meetings and staff briefings.

3.9 Internally, the project leads attended Staff Briefings and team meetings to engage with Social Workers, Care Leavers Team, Strengthening Families, and other key teams who may know of young people who would benefit from support in applying for this opportunity. There was further internal messaging via intranet, staff news and direct emails to the relevant teams, along with inclusion in the Chief Executive's staff emails and mentions on the staff Facebook Group.

## 4.0 Outcomes of the Communications Strategy

4.1 The following statistics demonstrate the effectiveness of the communications strategy:

- 844,953 people visited the web pages via social media, 69% of the overall page views.
- While these people came for information, there were 1,335 total clicks on the form. 846 of these views were referrals from social media and GovDelivery.
- Upon completing the form, 53 of 132 submitted applicants confirmed they found out about the grant via social media; 22 via non-socials adverts - on the telford.gov website and our print posters - 10 through contacting schools and colleges using the assets designed and sent via the Education Noticeboard; and the rest through word of mouth.
- 85 of all applicants found out about the grant and directly completed the form after seeing one or more of the marketing methods used.

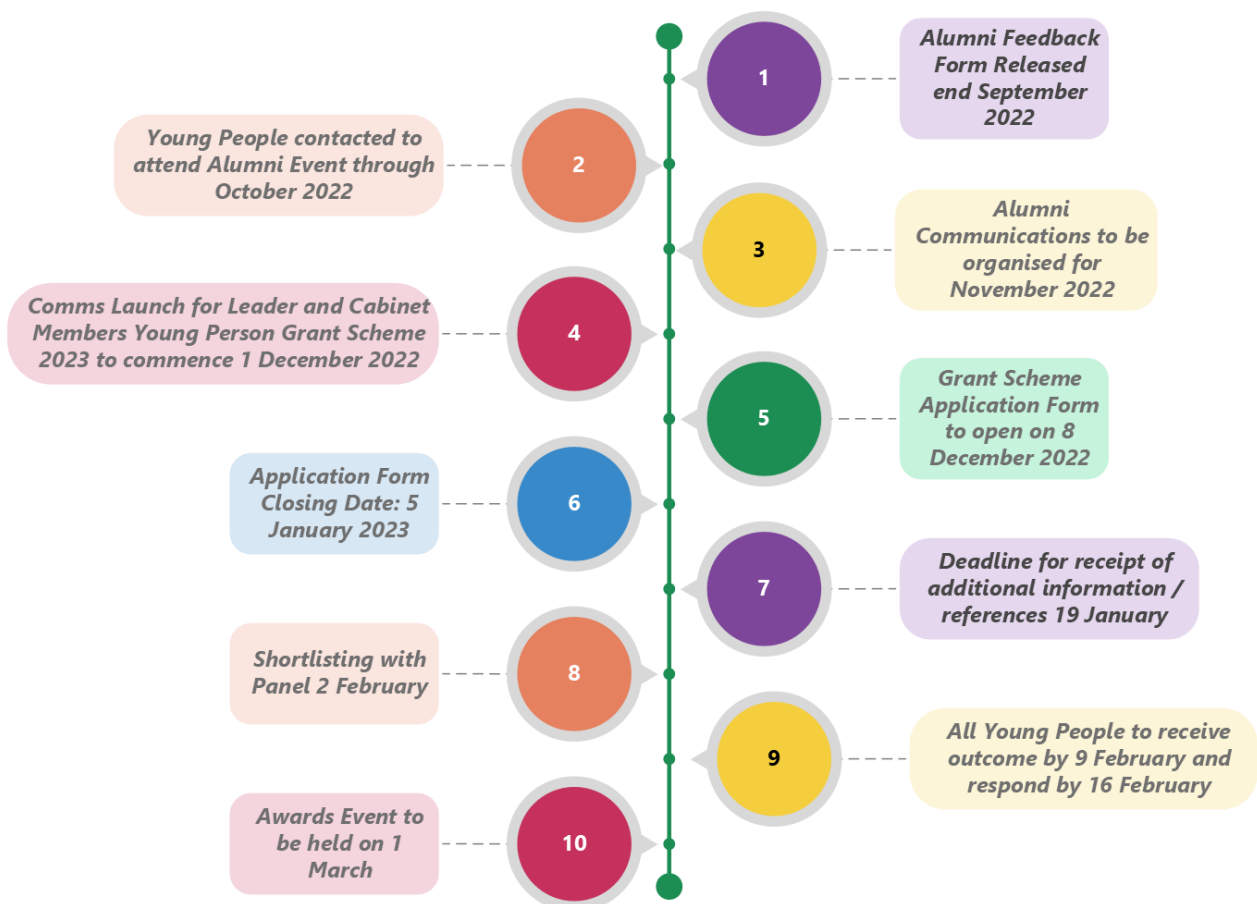
## 5.0 Summary of main proposals

5.1 The key proposals below are focused around how a continually high number of applicants can be reached and supported, through a robust communications

## Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme

strategy which is sensitive to local needs and requirements, the ongoing engagement of partners which can support progress, and maintaining connections with successful applicants to better understand how value can be added to their award, what support helped them on their journey after receiving funding, and what obstacles and challenges that remain. Addressing these, as below, will ensure that the Grant Scheme continues to be impactful and innovative.

- 5.2 Further examine how best to target communications to localities which would benefit most from investment, including IoD local area data analysis.
- 5.3 Work closely with the internal NEET clinic and partner agencies such as SYST and Job Centre Plus to target young people keen to enter education, employment and training.
- 5.4 Improve tracking of impact through alumni questionnaire.
- 5.5 Improve communications from an earlier point through film content gathered at alumni event.
- 5.6 Looking towards 2023, a flowchart has been created (below) to show time planning for the upcoming cycle. It has been requested that this cycle be brought forward slightly.



## **6.0 Alternative Options**

- 6.1 The alternative options are to not undertake the scheme, to directly fund other existing NEET scheme or to add funding to existing care schemes. These are unlikely to have the same successes as they would not provide a broad enough scope to ensure the widest range of children and young people can apply for funding and celebrate their ambitions.

## **7.0 Key Risks**

- 7.1 There are a number of Key Risks identified in this report. They are, chiefly, the potential for a failure to further target young people most in need of assistance, a potential lack of uptake and the 'overcoming adversity' field lacking some specificity and requiring an updated definition to ensure appropriate applications.

## **8.0 Council Priorities**

- 8.1 Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community- this scheme is closely linked with the On Your Side investment initiative.
- 8.2 Everyone feels the benefit from a thriving economy.
- 8.3 All neighbourhoods are a great place to live.
- 8.4 A community focused innovative council providing effective, efficient and quality services.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The 2022/23 budget provision for the Young Persons Grant Scheme was £24,980, consisting of a base budget of £14,980 and contribution from reserves of £10,000.

## **10.0 Legal and HR Implications**

- 10.1 The Council has, pursuant to the general power of competence, contained within the Localism Act 2011, the power to do anything which individuals may generally do. The making of grants, targeting the groups identified within this report is therefore lawful and also helps the Council to meet other statutory duties. Whilst every decision of the Council is open to challenge, the grants are made in a fair, reasonable and transparent manner and in line with the Council's equality duties. Legal advice is provided on an ongoing basis as and when required.

## **11.0 Ward Implications**

- 11.1 All wards must be targeted with communications and how to access application support.

## **12.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

- 12.1 Improved access to education, employment, and training.
- 12.2 Improved later in life health outcomes relating to obtaining continuous employment or education access
- 12.3 A decrease in the NEET population and therefore associated ASB.
- 12.4 Increased social and emotional wellbeing for young people

## **13.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 13.1 The scheme is committed to EDI, and work has been undertaken on this years' scheme to ensure the form is accessible, with a broader range of application types and medium supported. The project lead also works to contact all applicants by a range of communication methods (phone, email, and via referees and other supporting bodies) to ensure applications are given the best opportunity to represent needs, requirements, and situation.

## **14.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 14.1 Not directly applicable

## **15.0 Background Papers**

- 15.1 N/A

## **16.0 Appendices**

Appendix A, which demonstrates through data charts the breakdown of grant request types, the ages of applicants, and the ward breakdown.

## **17.0 Report Sign Off**

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	22/09/2022	10/10/2022	RP
Finance	17/10/2022	18/10/2022	TD
Director	17/10/2022	18/10/2022	DK