



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 9 October 2025

Youth Offer

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills.	
Lead Director:	Simon Wellman - Director: Education & Skills	
Service Area:	Education and Skills	
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Wards Affected:	All Wards	

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that CYP scrutiny note the ongoing work regarding the development of a robust youth offer across the borough.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report provides an update, of the development of a Youth Offer in Telford and Wrekin. The proposal is underpinned by the Council's statutory duty, as outlined in Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities are available for young people.
- 2.2 The proposed strategic Youth Offer will be built around a three part concept:
1. Youth Activities (universal): Broad, inclusive opportunities delivered by a range of providers, such as urban games and funded through various funding streams.
 2. Youth Clubs (targeted): Youth work-led provision targeted at priority groups based on a new commissioned model using additional investment. This proposal will enhance the current offer providing targeted support though a

commissioning model that supports long-term planning, quality assurance, and local innovation. The intention is to draw on insights from the Local Needs Youth Officer Assessment (LNA), national best practice, and extensive engagement with young people, providers, and community stakeholders.

3. Youth Support (specialist): specialist-based support delivered through Family Hubs and partner organisations. This is using existing services.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Over 85% of a young person's waking hours are spent outside of school and formal education. The quality and accessibility of recreational and educational leisure-time activities during these hours have a profound impact on young people's development, well-being, and life chances. Participation in youth provision contributes not only to individual outcomes, such as improved mental health, resilience, and educational attainment, but also to broader societal goals, including community cohesion, reduced anti-social behaviour, and economic inclusion.
- 3.2 Historically, Telford and Wrekin Council operated a centrally managed youth service that included a network of youth clubs, detached youth work teams, and targeted support for vulnerable young people. These services provided safe spaces, trusted relationships, and structured activities that supported personal development and community engagement. However, over the past decade, shifts in national policy and reductions in funding led to a transition toward more community-based and partnership-led models of delivery. While this allowed for local innovation and flexibility, it also introduced inconsistencies in access, quality, and sustainability across the borough.
- 3.3 In response to renewed national focus on youth services, through initiatives such as the National Youth Guarantee and updated statutory guidance under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, Telford and Wrekin Council has taken significant steps to re-establish a coordinated and inclusive Youth Offer. This work has included:
 - Re-establishing the Telford and Wrekin Youth Partnership, bringing together youth providers, schools, community organisations, and young people to co-design the local offer.
 - Appointing a Youth Development Officer in October 2024 to lead on capacity-building, quality assurance, and youth engagement.
 - Completing a comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (LNA), informed by youth surveys, focus groups, and local data, to identify gaps in provision and priority areas for investment.
 - Launching a Youth Provider Network and locality-based youth offer groups to strengthen collaboration and ensure provision reflects local needs.
 - Identifying the need to develop a digital Youth Offer platform to improve access to information for young people, families, and professionals.
 - Piloting quality assurance tools, including a RAG rating system and voluntary accreditation, to support continuous improvement.
 - Benchmarking against best practice, including a peer review with South Gloucestershire, whose commissioned model has informed the proposed approach.

- 3.4 This work has laid the foundation for a more strategic, needs-led, and sustainable model of youth provision. The proposed commissioned Youth Offer builds on this progress, ensuring that services are targeted to areas of greatest need, shaped by youth voice, and delivered in partnership with the community and voluntary sector.

National Context, Priorities, and the role of the Local Authority

- 3.5 Youth services across England have come under renewed national focus in recent years, with the UK Government reaffirming the critical role they play in supporting young people's development, well-being, and life chances. The 2022 national review of out-of-school youth programmes, alongside the introduction of the National Youth Guarantee and updated statutory guidance, has highlighted the importance of ensuring all young people, regardless of where they live, have access to:
- Regular clubs and structured activities
 - Opportunities for adventure and experiences away from home
 - Volunteering and social action opportunities.
- 3.6 These priorities are embedded in the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services to Improve Young People's Well-being, which outlines the duty of councils under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996. This duty requires local authorities to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people aged 13–19, and for those with learning difficulties or disabilities up to age 24.
- 3.7 Local authorities are uniquely positioned to lead this agenda. Their role includes:
- Setting a strategic vision for youth across the borough
 - Assessing local needs and mapping existing provision
 - Directing resources to areas and groups with the greatest need
 - Engaging stakeholders, including young people, families, schools, and providers, to co-produce a responsive and inclusive youth offer
 - Ensuring quality and safeguarding standards are upheld across all provision
 - Publicising and promoting available services to ensure accessibility.
- 3.8 Since 2024, Telford and Wrekin Council has embraced this leadership role by undertaking a comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, re-establishing the Youth Partnership, and embedding youth priorities into its Children and Young People's Strategy 2025–2028. The Council recognises that youth provision is not only a statutory obligation but a strategic investment in the borough's future, contributing to safer communities, improved health outcomes, and greater educational and economic opportunity.
- 3.9 Going forward, the proposal is for the Council to commit to delivering a commissioned, needs-led youth offer that reflects national priorities, meets statutory requirements, and is shaped by the voices of young people across Telford and Wrekin.

Why a Commissioned Youth Offer?

- 3.10 Telford & Wrekin Council proposes a commissioned youth offer model to ensure provision is:
- Targeted: Focused on areas of most need and vulnerable groups, based on Local Needs Assessment data.
 - Sustainable: Moves away from short-term grants to multi-year contracts, enabling continuity and long-term planning.
 - Quality Assured: Embeds safeguarding, monitoring, and outcome-based delivery into provider contracts.
 - Flexible: Allows services to adapt to local needs and feedback, supported by digital tools and ward-level insights.
 - Empowering: Supports local innovation and enables providers to access external funding, reducing pressure on Council budgets.

Delivering a Coordinated and Inclusive Youth Offer: Summary of Strategic Enablers

- 3.11 Telford and Wrekin's Youth Offer is underpinned by a commitment to inclusivity, locality-based delivery, and strategic coordination. The Council recognises that youth provision must extend beyond traditional youth clubs to encompass a broad and diverse range of opportunities that reflect the interests, needs, and aspirations of all young people.
- 3.12 A diverse youth offer includes sports, arts, volunteering, mentoring, digital engagement, and targeted support. This breadth ensures that young people from all backgrounds, including those with SEND, aged 16–18, or from underrepresented communities, can access meaningful, developmentally appropriate experiences. The Local Needs Assessment (LNA) has been instrumental in identifying where provision is strong and where gaps remain, particularly in areas of most need and for vulnerable groups.
- 3.13 To address these gaps, the Council is proposing to adopt a targeted commissioning approach, focusing investment in areas of greatest need. This ensures resources are used efficiently and equitably, while encouraging town and parish councils to co-invest in youth provision aligned with local priorities.
- 3.14 Internally, the delivery of the Youth Offer is supported by a mixed economy system. Teams across the Council, including Safer Stronger Communities, Community Support, Family Hubs, and Children's Safeguarding, contribute to youth provision through funding, training, quality assurance, and direct delivery. This collaborative infrastructure is essential for sustaining a borough-wide offer that is both strategic and responsive.
- 3.15 A key enabler of this work is the Youth Development Officer, appointed in 2024, who plays a central role in building capacity, supporting providers, and ensuring youth voice is embedded in service design. This role also supports the Youth Partnership

and locality-based youth groups, helping to align grassroots delivery with strategic objectives.

- 3.16 The Youth Offer is also embedded in the Council's wider ambition to become a Child Friendly Borough, as outlined in the Children and Young People's Strategy 2025–2028. Initiatives such as 10 by 10 and 5 by 5 reflect a borough-wide commitment to early enrichment and inclusion, creating a strong foundation for lifelong engagement.
- 3.17 The Youth Offer also directly supports the priorities of the Telford and Wrekin Health and Well-being Board, particularly its commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people through a focus on prevention, early intervention, and tackling inequalities. By embedding youth provision locally and aligning with the 'Start Well' and 'Closing the Gap' themes of the Health and Well-being Strategy, the Youth Offer contributes to the borough's ambition for every child and young person to live well in their community. This includes promoting mental health, resilience, and social connection, key determinants of long-term well-being.
- 3.18 Finally, the Council is engaging a wide range of partners in shaping the Youth Offer, from schools and colleges to voluntary providers and statutory services. This strategic engagement ensures the offer is co-produced, community-led, and reflective of the lived experiences of young people. Which will include co-produced digital information platform to allow young people to access information about local youth activities and services.

4.0 Summary of Main Proposals

- 4.1 Telford and Wrekin is now well-positioned to adopt a commissioned youth offer, building on its existing mixed economy of provision. This model will combine statutory oversight with community-led delivery, enabling the Council to direct resources to areas of greatest need while supporting innovation and sustainability. Commissioning will also allow for greater responsiveness to emerging needs, encourage external funding, and ensure that provision is shaped by youth voice and local context.
- 4.2 The strategic actions underpinning the proposed Youth Offer are designed to complement existing provision, not replace it. The focus is on:
- Maintaining and enhancing the current Youth Activities and Youth Support offer, ensuring continued access to broad, inclusive opportunities and community-based support through Family Hubs, Safer Stronger Communities and partners.
 - Building and securing youth work-led Youth Clubs, that provides provision through a commissioning model.
 - Finalising the Local Needs Assessment (LNA) to ensure investment is directed where it is most needed.
 - Embedding youth voice through the Voices in Unity group to ensure services are shaped by lived experience and reflect the aspirations of young people.
 - Strengthening internal coordination across Council services to support a cohesive and responsive delivery model.

- Implementing a borough-wide data system to monitor impact, track participation, and inform future planning and investment decisions. This approach ensures that the Youth Offer remains inclusive, locally responsive, and strategically aligned, while securing long-term sustainability and quality through commissioned partnerships.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Governance

- 4.3 To ensure accountability, quality, and continuous improvement, the commissioned youth offer will be monitored through a borough-wide performance framework. This will include:
- Use of a digital monitoring system (e.g. Upshot) to track participation, demographics, and outcomes at ward level
 - Quarterly reporting from commissioned providers against agreed KPIs
 - Annual review of provision sufficiency and quality, informed by youth feedback
 - Safeguarding and quality assurance audits led by the Council's Youth Development Officer
 - Youth-led evaluation through the Voices in Unity groups and annual Youth Summit.
- 4.4 Youth work-led Youth Clubs are currently delivered across multiple areas in Telford and Wrekin, with a range of providers including 4 All Foundation, SYA, and local town and parish councils. To enable accurate tracking of participation we are proposing to use a digital tracking system. This has been successfully implemented by other local authorities. A summary of current delivery areas and providers is included in Appendix A.
- 4.5 To ensure the Youth Offer remains strategically aligned, inclusive, and accountable, a clear governance structure will be established. Oversight will be provided through the Telford and Wrekin Youth Partnership Board, which will include representation from young people, commissioned providers, and partners. This board will meet quarterly to review delivery, monitor outcomes, and shape future priorities based on lived experience and local intelligence. In addition, the Youth Offer will maintain a formal reporting and assurance link with the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board (TWSCB). This will ensure that safeguarding standards are consistently upheld across all commissioned youth provisions and that emerging risks or trends are escalated and addressed through multi-agency collaboration. The Youth Development Officer will act as the operational lead for safeguarding within the Youth Offer, working closely with TWSCB to support training, audits, and continuous improvement. This governance model ensures that the Youth Offer is not only co-produced and community-led but also embedded within the borough's wider safeguarding and strategic planning frameworks.

Youth Voice

- 4.6 Youth voice is embedded throughout the development and delivery of the Youth Offer. The strategy is being co-produced with young people through:

- The Voices in Unity engagement groups, inclusive of SEND, LGBTQIA+, and underrepresented communities
- A five-month co-design process involving surveys, focus groups, and lived experience insights
- Proposed ongoing governance through the Youth Partnership Board
- A plan for an annual Youth Summit to showcase impact and influence future priorities.

Implementation Timeline

The proposed implementation timeline is as follows:

- Autumn 2025 – Youth Strategy publication and consultation
- Winter 2025 – Finalisation of the commissioning framework
- Spring 2026 – Provider engagement and contract awards
- Summer 2026 – Launch of the commissioned Youth Offer

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 Several alternative delivery models were explored for the proposals for the development of the Youth Offer, each assessed against statutory duties, financial sustainability, and the ability to meet the diverse needs of young people across the borough:
- 5.2 Direct Council Delivery was deemed financially and operationally unsustainable in the current climate. The cost of re-establishing a fully staffed, centrally managed youth service would significantly exceed available resources and limit flexibility. Moreover, this model would not leverage the strengths and reach of community-based providers, which are essential for a responsive and locally tailored offer.
- 5.3 Relying Solely on Family Hubs was considered insufficient to meet the full spectrum of youth needs. While Family Hubs play a vital role in early help and family support, they are not designed to deliver the breadth of recreational, developmental, and social activities required under the statutory duty. This approach would risk narrowing the offer and excluding older or more independent young people who may not engage with family-centred services.
- 5.4 Maintaining the current fragmented model risks non-compliance with the Council's statutory duty under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, which requires local authorities to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient leisure-time activities and facilities for young people aged 13–19, and up to 24 for those with SEND. The current model lacks consistency, coordination, and quality assurance, leading to unequal access and missed opportunities for early intervention and support.

- 5.5 The proposed commissioned model aligns with the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which emphasises the importance of a coordinated local youth offer that prioritises areas of greatest need, engages young people in shaping provision, and supports a mixed economy of delivery. This approach enables the Council to fulfil its legal obligations while promoting innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity across all wards.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 The implementation of the Youth Offer faces several manageable risks:
- **Funding and Budget Identification:** A key challenge is securing a dedicated commissioning budget. Without this, long-term planning and consistent delivery may be compromised, particularly in areas of greatest need.
 - **Workforce Capacity:** A shortage of qualified youth workers could affect the ability of providers to deliver high-quality, inclusive services across the borough.
 - **Quality and Consistency:** Without a borough-wide framework, there is a risk of variation in service standards. Strengthening quality assurance processes will help maintain consistency and support continuous improvement.
 - **Digital Access:** Ensuring a robust digital platform is essential for meeting statutory requirements and improving access to information and services for young people.
- 6.2 Mitigating these risks will require early budget planning, creative workforce development opportunities, and clear governance and monitoring arrangements.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 The proposals outlined in this report support the following Council priorities:
- Every child, young person, and adult lives well in their communities
 - Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
 - A community-focused, innovative Council providing efficient, effective, and high-quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There is existing resource available within current budgets, supporting a Youth Development Officer post. However current funds are limited, the model also encourages co-investment from town and parish councils and enables providers to leverage external funding, to deliver youth provision beyond the areas identified to be in most need.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 The Council has a statutory duty to, so far as is reasonably practicable, secure sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities for qualifying young people, for the improvement of their well-being, along with sufficient facilities for the same. The proposals in this report set out how the Council intends to meet its

duties. Legal advice will be provided on an ongoing basis as the proposals emerge.

9.2 There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 The proposed Youth Offer ensures that all wards across Telford and Wrekin benefit from inclusive, high-quality youth provision, while strategically directing resources to areas of greatest need. Informed by the Local Needs Assessment, the offer prioritises support for vulnerable groups, including young people aged 16–18, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and LGBTQIA+ youth, through targeted commissioning. This approach aligns with the statutory guidance issued under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, which requires local authorities to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient leisure-time activities for all young people, with particular emphasis on those who are disadvantaged or in need of additional support. Simultaneously, the offer promotes universal access by enabling all children and families to participate in a diverse range of healthy, enjoyable, and educational activities within their local communities. This balanced model supports equity and inclusion, ensuring that every ward has access to meaningful opportunities while addressing disparities in engagement and outcomes.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The Youth Offer is designed to deliver wide-ranging benefits for young people's health, social development, and economic prospects across the borough. By providing accessible, inclusive, and engaging activities, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, the offer promotes positive mental health, social connection, and resilience. It supports early intervention and prevention, reducing the risk of isolation, anti-social behaviour, and poorer life outcomes. Economically, the offer contributes to long-term community well-being by raising aspirations, improving employability, and encouraging co-investment from local partners, thereby strengthening the borough's social infrastructure and future workforce.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The Youth Offer is underpinned by a strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that all young people, regardless of background, identity, or ability, can access meaningful opportunities. It actively addresses barriers faced by underrepresented groups, including those with SEND, LGBTQIA+ youth, and young people from disadvantaged communities, by embedding inclusive practices into service design and delivery. Through co-production with diverse youth voices and targeted commissioning in areas of greatest need, the offer promotes fairness, representation, and equity across all wards, helping to create a more inclusive and cohesive borough.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 The environmental impact of the Youth Offer is expected to be minimal; however, the programme presents opportunities to promote environmental awareness and sustainable practices among young people. Through activities delivered in local settings, the offer encourages place-based engagement. Additionally, providers will be encouraged to incorporate eco-friendly practices and environmental education into their youth work curriculum, supporting the Council's broader climate action goals and fostering environmental responsibility in future generations.

14.0 Appendices

A: Current Targeted Youth Work-Led Provision by Area

Area	Provider
Admaston	4 All Foundation
Arleston	4 All Foundation
Brookside	SYA
Dawley	Great Dawley Town Council
Donnington	Volunteer Ran
Hollinswood and Randlay	The Lottery Funding/FunZone
Hollinswood and Randlay	Barnardos
Ketley Bank	4 All Foundation
Ketley	4 All Foundation
Lawley	4 All Foundation
Leegomery	SYA
Lightmoor Village	SYA
Madeley	SYA
Newport	Newport Town Council
Oakengates	Army Welfare Service Community Support
Oakengates	4 All Foundation

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Stirchley and Brookside	Stirchley and Brookside Parish
Sutton Hill	4 All Foundation
Woodside	4 All Foundation
Wrockwardine Wood and Trench	4 All Foundation

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director			
Legal			
Finance			