



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet Report

Tuesday 6 January 2026

Telford & Wrekin Youth Strategy

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

Key Decision: No

Report Considered by: SMT – 2 December 2025
Business Briefing – 11 December 2025
Cabinet – 6 January 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approves the Telford and Wrekin Youth Strategy, (Appendix B) that sets out our strategic approach to delivering a youth offer across the borough.
- 1.2 Agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Childrens Services, in consultation with the Cabinet member: Children, Young People, Education, Employment & skills, to amend future versions of the Youth Strategy considering changes to national policy.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 This report sets out the proposal of the Youth Strategy 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 Strategy will be built around a three-part concept:

1. Youth Activities (universal): Broad, inclusive opportunities delivered by a range of providers, this includes activities such as urban games, sports and leisure activities including football, netball and rugby. Alongside these there are groups provided by uniformed organisation such as the cadets, scouting and girl guiding. These activities are available at no costs or at a small charge to parents. Providers of these activities access various funding streams. The council do fund a range of activities including urban games and leisure school holiday provision.
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 through 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 Offer 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 including a specialist hub and partner organisations. This is using existing services and provides services to targeted groups including, children in care, SEND and young carers.

3.0 Background

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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, and in so create a local boroughwide Youth Strategy.

- 3.4 The 'Youth Matters' national youth strategy was published on 10th December [DCMS Youth Strategy accessible final](#). The council strategy is clearly aligned to the national priorities, it goes above and beyond to deliver a needs-led, sustainable model of youth provision. It is built on ensuring that services are targeted to areas of greatest need, shaped by youth voice, and delivered in partnership with the community and voluntary sector.
- 3.5 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. It also recognises that it is not the sole provider for all youth provision in the borough and will continue to work in partnership with the many community and voluntary sector organisations who are key delivery partners.
- 3.6 The Strategy will provide a model that will ensure provision is:
 - Targeted: Focused on areas of most need and identified vulnerable groups, based on LNA findings.
 - Sustainable: Moves away from sole reliance of 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.
- 3.7 Telford and Wrekin's Youth Strategy is underpinned by a commitment to inclusivity, locality-based delivery, and strategic coordination. The Council recognises that youth provision extends beyond traditional youth clubs to encompass a broad and diverse range of opportunities that reflect the interests, needs, and aspirations of all young people.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 Engagement with young people and other stakeholders, including parents and carers, youth sector providers, town and parish councils, partner agencies and schools, throughout the creation of the Youth Strategy, has been key and central to all the work and this continues to take place.

3.10 Consulting on the priorities outlined in the Youth Strategy has been an essential part of its development and ensures that it accurately represents the needs and aspirations of young people.

Over the autumn term consultation has continued with the purpose to:

- Gather feedback from a broad range of stakeholders, including youth providers, partner agencies, schools, parents, and most importantly, young people themselves.
- Ensure the strategy is co-produced and shaped by those who will benefit from and deliver the Youth Offer.
- Identify gaps, priorities, and opportunities for improvement before finalising the commissioning framework and implementation plan.
- Build consensus and shared ownership of the Youth Strategy, supporting long-term sustainability and impact.
- Agree the final format of the strategy before publication.

3.12 The strategy is deliberately designed to be accessible to its target audience – young people. Much consideration has been taken as to the language used throughout the strategy and to the design itself. This is to ensure that young people can relate to the strategy, technical language and abbreviations have been kept to a minimum. Great effort has been taken to explain terminology that many young people may not be familiar with. (Appendix B)

3.13 Authentic co-production has been central to the production of the strategy, and the introduction has been written by local young people and reflects their needs and wishes (Appendix A).

3.14 The council has carried out its LNA, a statutory duty to capture the views of young people that allowed the council to understand the current landscape of youth provision on offer. The LNA assisted in identifying where provision is strong and where gaps remain, particularly in areas of most need and for identified vulnerable groups. This process led to a comprehensive review of existing services which involved mapping current provision, including youth clubs, sports programs, arts initiatives, and targeted support services to identify what is already in place and where gaps may exist. It also provided the opportunity to review how a variety of funding streams are allocated and the makeup of delivery partners across the borough.

3.15 As well as the LNA, the Council's **Youth Development Officer** has had a key role in actively engaging with a diverse range of young people across schools, community settings, and youth clubs to capture their voice and views on local youth provision. This has included meeting those accessing services and those not. Ensuring a broad representation of voices. Young people have shared feedback on feeling safe, mental health support, and the need for accessible, inclusive

opportunities. These insights have created a feedback loop that has informed the LNA and shaped the priorities for the Strategy.

- 3.16 As part of the developing youth strategy young people and their families will be able to access a range of information about the local youth offer through a centralised digital platform designed by young people, this work is being supported by a wider communications plan, developing the way information about the local youth offer is shared with young people. For example, using social media channels as a way of reaching a wider number of young people in the borough.
- 3.17 The National Youth Agency (NYA) are key to supporting local authorities in developing youth strategies. They facilitated a **peer pairing** with South Gloucestershire, which provided valuable insights into the benefits of Youth Strategy with a commissioned model of targeted delivery. Their approach, focused on centre-based and detached youth work in areas of most need to deliver inclusive, high-quality provision. With an emphasis on empowering local providers and targeting support to identified vulnerable groups.

4.0 **Summary of Main Proposals**

The Youth Strategy is designed to align existing provisions, not replace them. It aims to be inclusive, locally responsive, and strategically aligned, while securing long-term sustainability and quality through commissioned partnerships. This strategy builds on the strong foundations of this existing youth offer which has been mapped out through our LNA. Currently there are a wide range of universal youth activities on offer across the borough. There are 28 targeted youth worker led youth clubs which are facilitated by several youth providers, some of which are funded by the council. There are bespoke provisions for children in care, young carers and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) (Appendix C). We have 8 family hubs which provide specialist youth and community support services, and this includes a specialist family hub (Appendix D).

The focus is on:

- 4.1 Ensuring services are shaped by lived experience and reflect the aspirations of young people.
 - To ensure youth voice is at the heart of the Strategy, the Council has established the **Voices in Unity** group, which are facilitated by the Youth Development Officer. This group brings together young people from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences and influence decisions on services and activities. This includes both young people who are engaged in local youth provision and those who are not. This group will act as a formal forum for co-production, ensuring that priorities set out in the strategy continue to reflect the needs and aspirations of young people. A plan for an annual Youth Summit will allow young people to showcase the impact of the strategy and influence future priorities.

4.2 Provide strategic oversight for the boroughs Youth Activities and Youth Support offer, to ensure that together with partners, young people continue to have access to broad, inclusive opportunities and community-based support.

- To monitor the implementation of the Youth Strategy, the council has re-established the **local youth partnership board** and it will be responsible for overseeing the development and delivery of the youth strategy over the coming years. The board will meet quarterly to review progress, monitor outcomes, and shape future priorities, ensuring the strategy remains responsive to local needs. It will bring together representatives from across the youth sector, the Council, local agencies and young people themselves to create a shared vision with a view to fostering collaboration between children, young people, and local partners. This approach will ensure that the strategy reflects the voices and experiences of young people and the organisations that support them.

4.3 Strengthening internal coordination across Council services to support a cohesive and responsive delivery model.

- In writing the strategy, the council has reviewed its wide **internal youth delivery partnership**. 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 and continue to be active in the design of the youth offer. This collaborative infrastructure is essential to a strategy for sustaining a borough-wide offer that is both strategic and responsive.

4.3 Building and securing youth work-led Youth Clubs, that provides provision through a commissioning model, securing partnership working with a range of youth providers.

- The strategy recognises the valuable work of existing youth providers and through its development, the Council has carried out consultation designed to build collaborative relationships and gather insights on current provision. This has provided an understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the local youth sector, allowed for sharing of best practices, and identifying areas for joint working. As a result of this engagement, a **provider partnership network** has been established to create a formal platform for ongoing collaboration.

4.4 Implementing borough-wide systems for data collection to monitor impact, track participation, and inform future planning and investment decisions.

- To be able to monitor and report back to stakeholders about the impact of the Youth Strategy and inform future priorities. This will include tracking participation, agreeing KPIs with providers about impact of delivery. Providing annual review of sufficiency and quality and ensure safeguarding and quality assurance.

4.5 The mission statement of the strategy is that ***We want Telford and Wrekin to be a child friendly borough where every child and young person is healthy, safe and can achieve their potential.***

4.6 The Youth Strategy is aligned with the council's overarching council corporate vision - Telford and Wrekin 2032 and the CYP Strategy 2025–28. It supports the boroughwide priorities for children and young people of Start Well, Stay Well, Enjoy and Achieve, and Keep Safe, contributing to the vision of a 'Child Friendly Telford and Council's wider ambition to become a Child Friendly Borough. 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.

4.7 The Youth Strategy 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.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 An alternative option would be for the borough to maintain the current model of youth provision, but this would not enable us to collectively understand our local needs and develop provision accordingly and risks non-compliance with the Council's statutory duties

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 Without a strategy the local area and our key partnerships will not be clear about how we intend to develop our ambitions around this agenda and to support areas of development. This could result in the continuation of a youth offer that is not aligned to needs of young people in the borough.

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 The Council's youth services are funded through several funding streams and this strategy is intended to align existing provisions. The ongoing budgetary provision for youth services forms part of the Council's overall budget strategy and processes

and is considered as part of this annual cycle. Where additional investment is required, this will be determined through the usual approval procedures for growth.

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 A borough wide strategy will have a positive impact for young people across all wards.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The Youth Strategy is designed to deliver wide-ranging benefits for young people's health, social development, and economic prospects across the borough..

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The Youth Strategy 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.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 The environmental impact of the Youth Strategy is expected to be minimal; however, the programme presents opportunities to promote environmental awareness and sustainable practices among young people.

14.0 Appendices

- A Forward for the Youth Strategy written by our young people
- B Telford and Wrekin Youth Strategy
- C Map of youth clubs and family hubs
- D Youth clubs and family hubs

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	18/12/2025	19/12/2025	SW
Legal	18/12/2025	19/12/2025	RP
Finance	18/12/2025	19/12/2025	TD