

BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to: Communities and Wellbeing Committee
2 March 2022

YOUTH CONSULTATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROVISION IN THE BOROUGH

Report by: Director of Community and Environment

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Enclosures: Enclosure No.1 – Risk Management Implications
Enclosure No. 2 – Top Level Summary of Findings
Enclosure No. 3 – In-depth analysis of findings

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Communities and Wellbeing committee on 1 July 2021 reported that, in order to contribute positively to services for young people in the Basildon Borough, £200,000 had been earmarked for investment in the provision of youth services during 2021/22. £100,000 of this would be ongoing to enhance the number of youth workers in the borough and the remaining £100,000 was a one-off allocation for the provision of services for young people in the borough. These had been approved as part of a number of proposals taken to the Council's Resources and Commercial Committee on 15 June 2021.

To ensure that this funding would be utilised appropriately, authority was sought for officers to explore possible options with Essex County Council's Youth Service to enhance the number of Youth Workers in the Basildon Borough. It was also proposed to undertake borough-wide consultation with young people to identify, assess and analyse the nature of their needs in order to inform the provision of future youth services in the borough and direct allocated funding accordingly. To achieve this, a consultation planning document for this consultation exercise was prepared and presented to the Committee for consideration at its meeting on 5 October 2021. The planning document detailed the approach, various options, survey questions and timescales along with indicative costs. This would help inform the Council on priorities of local young people and direct this funding resource accordingly.

The consultation has been undertaken and results have been analysed. This report sets out the key findings and officer recommendations.

CORPORATE PLAN AMBITIONS:

- People
- Prosperity

WARD(S):

All Wards

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. Committee to consider the consultation findings and comment accordingly.**
 - 2. Officers bring back an action plan for delivery in partnership with Essex County Council Youth Services to the next Committee.**
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BACKGROUND

The Communities and Wellbeing Committee agreed on 1 July 2021, that the Council undertake a youth consultation which would serve to provide insight into the aspirations and priorities of young people across the borough and how Council services could be best shaped to meet those aspirations and priorities.

The consultation was undertaken between 15 November 2021 and 14 December 2021. This comprised of an online survey aimed at 11-19 year olds, which secured a total of 248 responses. A top level summary of the findings from this consultation is attached at Enclosure No. 2, with a deeper analysis of the findings attached at Enclosure No 3.

Key Findings

- Where safe places to socialise was provided as an option, this was selected as either the top or second most important item across all questions.
- Employment emerged as a theme of importance, specifically job opportunities when asked about what would help with achieving their personal ambitions.
- In relation to Education, 31% of respondents voted 'support to catch up with missed education' as their first choice.
- Mental health support featured amongst top concerns when considering recovery from the pandemic.
- When asked to consider what would benefit young people more generally across the borough, leisure activities at a reduced cost was the most popular option (27%), closely followed by youth services and youth clubs (21%).

Insight gained from this engagement exercise has been considered alongside other existing insight relating to the views of young people on youth provision in the borough. Based on the findings of recent engagement exercises, officers have prepared a number of recommendations for Members consideration on potential actions that could be undertaken to better align youth provision in the borough with the expectations and expressed needs of young people in the borough.

In developing this report, the Culture and Health Service has collaborated closely with the Economic Development Service, to draw together a range of activities that the council is undertaking to address some of the issues raised in the consultation.

Enhanced Youth Services

At the Communities and Wellbeing Committee held on 1 July 2021 (Minute No: 390.) it was agreed that the Council would earmark £200,000 for investment in the provision of youth services during 2021/22 with £100,000 of this to be ongoing to enhance the number

of Youth Workers in the borough. Following this committee, officers presented possible options to the Communities and Wellbeing Committee on 5 October 2021 and it was agreed that the council enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with Essex County Council Youth Service for the enhancement of the number of Youth Workers in the borough. As part of this grant funding agreement, ECCYS will collaborate with Community Safety to carry out hot spotting/heat mapping of areas and deliver detached and mobile sessions in safe spaces, as per the consultation findings. ECCYS will refer and support young people to access other ECCYS targeted provisions inclusive of employability, and also signpost young people to other support services inclusive of mental health support. Basildon Borough Council have strong relationships with many mental health support providers and therefore, in collaboration with ECCYS, will identify what support is required by young people and how we can collaborate to identify where this support can be provided or accessed. Officers will work with ECCYS to understand the current provision of youth services and clubs to identify the opportunities to enhance this offer to meet the needs of young people locally.

In addition to addressing the consultation findings, ECCYS will support young people to access other provisions such as the Basildon Borough Youth Council, Young Commissioners, Young Inspectors and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Supporting young people to access other services, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award aligns closely with the findings from the governments policy paper 'Youth Review: Summary findings and government response' in which young people identified 'adventures away from home' as a priority. As part of the grant funding agreement, ECCYS has committed to collaborating with community partners such as Achieve Thrive Flourish (ATF) who offer young people experiences and opportunities to develop through sport, art, culture and heritage. Going forward, this partnership aims to explore further investment into youth clubs and provision in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector to provide fun and enriching opportunities for Basildon's young people.

Key findings met by this recommendation:

- Safe places to socialise
- Employability
- Education
- Mental health support
- Leisure activities, youth services and youth clubs

Education and engaging schools

Officers propose to work with local schools to understand the current provisions for support to catch up with missed education, as recognised in the key findings of the consultation. Officers will then be able to utilise this understanding to work with partners including ECCYS and voluntary and community sector partners to identify opportunities to support young people to catch up with missed education.

Key findings met by this recommendation:

- Education

The development of a Digital Youth App

The Leader of Basildon Borough Council announced at a council meeting on 22 July 2021 (Minute No. 411) proposed that a digital youth application (app) be developed for young

people that would provide information on existing provision of youth services and activities throughout the borough. Officers are currently exploring an existing digital app solution with Speakers for Schools and South Essex College which will address the Leaders proposal by providing information on existing provision of youth services and activities in one central place. The app will be developed as a pilot project, by students from South Essex College through bespoke and meaningful work experience placements. The app will also address young people's priority of employment, identified during this consultation, by providing employment opportunities such as apprenticeships and work experience on the app, as well as employability tools such as inspirational talks and workshops. To enable young people to access the advertised leisure activities, youth services and clubs, the app will also offer young people hyper localised discounts for these services and activities. In terms of next steps, South Essex College are working with Speakers for Schools to finalise a timeline of work experience placements to progress the development of the app.

Key findings met by this recommendation:

- Employability
- Leisure activities, youth services and youth clubs

Youth Futures Foundation Application

The Economic Development Service has collaborated with a range of partners recently to submit an application to the Youth Futures Foundation, Connected Futures Fund, to try and enhance the provision of employment support for disadvantaged young people in Basildon. Through this project, we are looking to improve the preparedness of young people for the world of work, improve their focus and 'outlook' (a term that the Social Market Foundation uses to describe self-esteem, aspirations, attitude, motivations and sense of control over their own life). Whilst this is likely to be an extremely competitive fund, if successful, we would be awarded £125,000 in Phase One of the project (which would last over 18 months) to build the partnership and establish a shared vision for how we would choose to strengthen employment support services for disadvantaged young people in the borough. At the end of this process, successful applicants in Phase Two will be awarded up to £1.5m of funding to deliver the proposed enhancements.

Key findings met by this recommendation:

- Employability

2022/23 Economic Development Service Plan

In their 2022/23 Draft Service Plan, the Economic Development team has set out its plans to deliver the following activities that will be targeted on addressing some of the issues raised by young people in the consultation.

1) Establish a Basildon Secondary School / Further Education Careers Forum

This Forum will bring together secondary education & FE establishments in Basildon with key providers to share updates, opportunities and best practice to improve the delivery of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG). The Forum aims to provide centralised support for schools and colleges; bring together key CIAG providers; ensure secondary schools and colleges across the borough can access up to date information about career resources and opportunities; and

help careers leaders across different establishments to build relationships, share best practice and tackle challenges together.

2) Establish a Primary School Careers Forum.

This forum will bring together primary school Head Teachers in the area, or their nominated representatives, to explore the potential development of a 'start early' Careers programme, to provide young people with information about future careers opportunities. Through this partnership between the council and local primary schools, we aim to establish links with primary school provision; raise the profile of careers education with school leaders; and develop a future borough wide careers programme.

3) Establish a Basildon Industry Champion Programme.

This initiative aims to establish a 'brokerage service' to bring together local education providers with local businesspeople, to provide in school visits and an inspirational programme of work related activities. Schools, colleges and providers will be able to submit details of activities requiring employer support (such as mock interviews, inspirational talks and mentoring) which will be collated and emailed monthly to Industry Champions. Volunteer Industry Champions will be recruited from the local business community who are keen to support local school and college activities. The programme aims to provide a simplified route into schools and colleges for employers and increase access to local workplace role models for the young people of Basildon.

4) Deliver a Borough wide 'Your Futures' Careers Fair October 2022.

This event will enable every young person in the borough from Year 9 – 13 to meet and gain information on a full range of education and employment pathways. Key employment sectors will be featured as well as technical education pathways. The event will be inclusive to residents from a range of backgrounds including those in care, eligible for FSM, from BAME backgrounds and those with mental or physical health conditions. This event will also champion STEAM (Science, Technical, Engineering, Arts and Maths) careers and opportunities. 'Your Future's Careers Fair aims to increase awareness of all post 16 and 18 education pathways available (including apprenticeships, A – Levels, Traineeships, T Levels, Supported Internships and Supported Apprenticeships, Sixth Form provision, FE colleges and HE).

5) Develop and maintain a central platform for careers resources and work experience opportunities for careers professionals.

This platform will showcase upcoming events and key resources relating to careers and will aim to simplify the careers landscape for careers leaders, teachers and those working with young people and increase the quality and quantity of careers provision being delivered in local schools and colleges

Key findings met by this recommendation:

- Employability

Essex Local Delivery Pilot

Commissioned by Sport England, the Essex Local Delivery Pilot (ELDP) is a once in a generation opportunity to use physical activity to make a difference to people's lives. Funded by the ELDP, the ATF Basildon Hub empowers young people and their families to 'Achieve, Thrive and Flourish' through community-centred participation in sports, heritage, arts and culture. The place-based approach means hubs in different parts of the borough provide different services based on community need e.g. the Northlands Hub works with young people in the youth justice system. ATF are piloting the Northlands Hub, due to

launch officially in Spring 2022, as part of Basildon Council's Connected Communities policy and strategy which aims to focus on place-based working and establish one community hub in each of our five towns which will provide safe spaces to socialise. ATF's work will not only create safe spaces for young people and families but also use sport and physical activity to tackle violence and vulnerability, especially by activating green spaces to bring more footfall into supposed no-go areas. Another closely linked LDP funded provision is Park Play, which offers young people the opportunity to be physically active and 'play' every week in their local park for free.

Key findings met by this recommendation:

- Safe places to socialise
- Leisure activities, youth services and youth clubs

Summary

To summarise, officers are exploring a number of opportunities within our existing resources and capacities to address the view of young people sought through this consultation. Where gaps in local provision addressing young people's priorities may be identified, officers will work with young people and local community partners to explore and co-create additional opportunities. Officers will also note the recent Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) policy paper 'Youth Review: Summary findings and government response', published 1 February 2022, to ensure the opportunities explored also align with these key findings.

LEGISLATION/POLICY

There are a number of statutory duties that the council is expected to comply with in relation to involving the local community in decisions that affect them. Where a statutory duty or relevant common law obligations to consult exists, this will be undertaken in accordance with legislation and associated guidance. Activity outside of these statutory requirements will be undertaken in accordance with the council's Consultation and Engagement policy, including activity which is planned or in response to a particular need.

Even where there is no statutory duty to undertake a consultation exercise, a duty to consult can arise from the common law duty to act fairly, for example because of the potential impact on residents; the public equality duty and/or because of past practice in consulting.

Lawful consultation needs to be undertaken at a formative stage when proposals are being developed. With regard to the timeframe for consultation, the requirement, if not provided for in statute, is for this to be reasonable and this is ultimately a matter for the Council to determine, taking into account such factors as the complexity of proposals and how long it will take residents to consider and respond to proposals.

Effective consultation will need to include information on what is being proposed, as well as any criteria that will be used to develop a recommendation(s) and the design of any future services.

The outcome of the consultation must be conscientiously considered as part of any decision-making process to inform the recommendation(s).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Corporate Plan Ambitions

People:

- We will safeguard those who are vulnerable or less able to help themselves
- We will work with partners to reduce health inequality in the borough
- We will provide and support a range of leisure and community facilities and projects to improve residents' health and wellbeing
- We will listen to and work with our communities when making decisions, developing policy and designing services

Prosperity:

- We will use our influence to ensure all our residents get the best education and skills to benefit from growth opportunities and to create their own success

Financial Implications

At present, officers do not foresee any financial implications as the proposed recommendations are being explored within current capacity and resources. However, if any costs are to arise from pursuing any of these recommendations then the agreed one-off allocation of £100,000 for the provision of services for young people in the borough.

Risk Management Implications

The risk management implications are set out at **Enclosure No. 1**.

Diversity, Inclusion and Community Cohesion Implications

Enhanced opportunities for young people in the Basildon Borough will aid young citizens. This aligns with Basildon Borough Council's Connected Communities Strategy 2021 with its aims to encourage communities to continue supporting each other and connect people to local assets. Essex County Council Youth Service, a key partner in this work, ensures inclusivity by working with all young people to ensure that they have access to opportunities for employment, volunteering, education, support and training and extends their service in the borough for those aged 19 to 25 years and for those with a learning, physical or other disability.

Other Relevant Considerations

None.

Background Papers

None.