

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 15th March 2021

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Carter, Cabinet Member for Children and Schools

PART I NON-KEY DECISION

YOUTH OFFER AND YOUTH CENTRE PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress of the Youth Offer and Youth Centre project, which aims to refresh the youth offer in Slough and design and open a new youth centre as an enabler of the delivery of the offer.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

Cabinet is requested to note the progress towards the project aims.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

(a) Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The report supports the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy by detailing how the Council will enhance a youth offer in the Borough, which in particular impacts the Starting Well outcome area:

SJWS Priorities:

1. *Starting Well*
2. *Integration (relating to Health & Social Care)*
3. *Strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods*
4. *Workplace health*

This project will consider the needs of young people as identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

(b) Five Year Plan Outcomes

The report primarily supports outcome areas 1, 2 and 5 in the Five Year Plan. The outcomes are:

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful
- Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs

- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents

4. Other Implications

(a) Financial

A capital allocation of £5 million was made in 20/21 and is carried forward to the 21/22 financial year.

No new revenue expenditure is currently anticipated for this project during 21/22. The revenue costs for developmental work is ring fenced within existing revenue budgets. The directorates that will allocate staff time will build this requirement into their existing budgets and plans for 21/22.

Revenue costs directly associated with the running of the new youth facility will be incurred from 22/23 onwards and will be defined through the production of a full business case. These will be included in the next report to Cabinet, which is estimated to be submitted in Q2 21/22.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	N/A	N/A
Property	N/A	N/A
Human Rights	N/A	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A	N/A
Employment Issues	N/A	N/A
Equalities Issues	N/A	N/A
Community Support	N/A	N/A
Communications	N/A	N/A
Community Safety	N/A	N/A
Financial	N/A	N/A
Timetable for delivery	N/A	N/A
Project Capacity	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act implications of this report.

Local authorities have a duty under s.507A of the Education Act 1996 to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, access to (a) sufficient educational leisure-time activities for the improvement of young people's well-being and sufficient facilities for such activities and (b) sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of young people's well-being and sufficient facilities for such activities. Young people are defined as those age 13 to 19 years (up to 24 for those with a learning difficulty or disability).

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

A full equalities impact assessment will be carried out as part of the delivery phase of the project and will inform the decision paper that will be brought to Cabinet during 2021/22.

The new Youth Offer will offer considerable opportunity to the young people of the town and particularly to those more alienated from accessing main stream activity. The Offer, and the proposed youth centre that will be developed and opened, will provide a mix of open access and targeted opportunities, ensuring that young people's needs are met. The centre itself will be in a town centre location to ensure it is accessible to young people from all areas of the Borough.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1. This is a report outlining the progress made within the Youth Offer and Youth Centre project.

Context

- 5.2. Slough has the youngest population in the country. 29% of our population are aged between 0 and 17. Our young people are the future of the town and it has been a long standing ambition to ensure that our young people get the best start in life and take ample opportunity from what society has to offer. Young people of the town and professionals alike have told us that although there are many opportunities, these are sometimes not accessible to all and young people don't have an identifiable bespoke space that can cater for their needs and open up these opportunities. This project has been established to address that need and put young people front and centre in the recovery of the town.
- 5.3. Before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic it had already been identified that young people in Slough needed access to greater facilities and opportunities tailored to them. Alongside the planning for integration of youth opportunities in some of the localities Hubs, it was identified that an additional purpose-built or purpose-designed facility would be required to meet the needs of young people in Slough. £5m was allocated in the 2020/21 capital budget in recognition of this need
- 5.4. In parallel it was identified in 2019 that the Slough Youth Offer was due a refresh, which would coincide with the re-commissioning of some aspects of youth provision, which at the time was scheduled for early 2021. [Note that a short-term extension to current providers was subsequently offered, taking the existing contract to summer 2021].
- 5.5. Combined, this created the case for establishing a dedicated project that refreshed our Youth Offer and developed a business case for a new Youth Centre. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this project started formally in summer 2020.

Refreshing our Youth Offer

- 5.6. Slough has an existing Youth Offer delivered through a wide network of public, voluntary, and private sector organisations. The current Youth Offer can be described under the following categories:

- Youth Participation and Voice
- Health and Wellbeing
- Culture and Leisure
- Skills and Advice
- Targeted Support

5.7. Our future Youth Offer will need to build on the strengths of the current approach whilst being adaptable to the changing needs of young people in the Borough. In terms of changing needs to consider these include that:

- Deprivation remains a significant challenge for families. One in five young people under 16 live in low-income families
- Slough has a relatively high proportion of overweight young people
- Many young people have faced new challenges caused by lockdown and the closure of schools and colleges, including negative impacts on their mental health, physical health, friendships, and learning
- The youth unemployment rate in Slough has risen sharply since spring 2020
- Incidences of serious violence, and the impacts of negative gang experience, remain high in the Borough.

5.8. Between September and November 2020 this project ran, or drew on insight from, a series of meetings and workshops. The aim of these sessions was to ensure the project work was grounded in an understanding of the needs of young people over the next five to ten years, and what this might mean for the Youth Offer in Slough. These discussions included Members, officers in youth services, early help, and place teams, as well as colleagues from the voluntary and community sector and other partner representatives who sit on the Children and Young People’s Partnership Board.

5.9. Insight to inform this project was also gathered through the engagement phase for developing the 2040 Vision. Through that engagement it became apparent that there was support for additional youth facilities, and that young people’s skills and employment opportunities would need to be an integral part of the delivery of the new offer.



Mural Board capturing young people’s feedback through the 2040 Vision development

5.10. Overall, the following three key need areas were identified through these discussions:

- **Develop skills and access opportunities**, including improving the rates of employment, education, and training
- **Improve safety**, including reducing serious youth violence
- **Inspire new ideas**, including enhancing entrepreneurship as well as participation in culture and the arts

5.11. It was further defined that the overall youth offer needed to primarily:

- Be accessible to young people between the ages of 10 and 21
- Include a new youth facility in the town centre
- Connect to existing provision and the new localities hubs
- Ensure inclusive access for our diverse communities
- Enhance our Early Help provision
- Integrate with our culture, arts and leisure offer
- Support the skills and employment agenda

Developing a new Youth Centre

5.12. A key aspect of delivering against a refreshed youth offer is designing and opening a new facility in the town centre. The town centre was identified as the ideal location due to its accessibility from all parts of the Borough, its neutrality in terms of location, and its complementarity to the locality hubs and other regeneration activity already underway or planned.

5.13. During 2020 a set of discussions were held with external organisations with expertise in design, delivery and sponsorship of youth facilities. Research was also undertaken into youth centre models in local areas across England, including approaches taken in Luton, Greenwich, and Islington. This enhanced our knowledge of youth provision accessible in other local areas in the country and expanded our network of partners in the youth sector.

5.14. Through this discovery phase of work a set of core themes were identified that will underpin a successful new youth centre:

- A centre should be run as a collaboration between public, voluntary and community, and private sectors
- Youth engagement needs to be integral in design, development, and delivery of the centre. Youth involvement in the governance of the centre is good practice
- A sustainable revenue model needs to underpin a long-term plan for the centre and how it enables the achievement of a local youth offer, however, revenue costs for developmental work have been ring fenced.
- To add value, a centre needs to be flexible to enable young people to pursue their ideas alongside receiving support if they require it
- To be accessible and inclusive, the centre needs to be affordable for all groups in the local community and the income model driving the operations of the centre needs to align to this

- To create a multi-use facility to generate income; this could be by providing access to a variety of groups for example day time activities for non-youth provision.

5.15. The current context of a pandemic and the impacts of that must be considered during the 2021/22 phase of this project. The impact of Covid-19 on mental health, economic opportunities, and social interaction would need to be considered in the programme of activity developed by the centre. This activity would become one component of the Covid-19 response and recovery programme underway in Slough.

5.16. Since November, a search has been undertaken to identify possible sites and a short list of five possible sites is currently being explored. A business case, with detail on a shortlist of options, is scheduled to be developed by Quarter 2 2021/22 and will be presented to Cabinet.

Next steps

5.17. The proposed next steps focus on moving the project from scoping to implementation. This will involve the introduction of a portfolio project from quarter 1 2021/22, which will be reported on to Cabinet every quarter alongside the other projects on the portfolio. The project aim is to have identified a preferred site and to have agreed the design and operational delivery model during the 2021/22 financial year.

5.18. Given the lead-in times for design and re-fit of a facility it is anticipated that a new centre would open during the 2022/23 financial year. This timescale allows for the voluntary and community sector recommission to take place and for sustainable funding and delivery models to be developed. It also enables youth engagement to be at the heart of the project from the outset in quarter 1 2021/22.

5.19. The new Associate Director for Community will be responsible for delivering this initiative, working closely with Associate Directors in the People Children and Place directorates. The initiative will be integral to the Children and Young People's Plan and guided by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board. The project will fit within the scrutiny remit of the Education and Children's Services Panel.

5.20. The key factors for consideration in quarter 1 2021/22 will be:

- Site location and build/re-design
- Operational delivery model
- Capital and revenue expenditure levels
- Alignment to the voluntary and community sector youth services commission
- Alignment to the Slough 2040 Vision and wider regeneration programme
- Alignment to the localities model and the localities hubs

5.21. The voluntary and community sector recommission is due in June 2021 and the commissioning process will ensure that expectations around the new youth offer and in relation to the design and delivery of a new youth centre are factored in. The YES Consortium has been included in the steering group for this project since September, which recognises the integral role that the voluntary and community sector will play in the successful delivery of this offer and the new centre.

Through the One Slough initiative there will be an active consideration of sustainable sources of revenue funding for the delivery of the centre. These options include private organisations with a local presence

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

Education and Children's Services Panel received an update report at their meeting on the 3rd December 2020. Feedback from that panel is incorporated into this report.

7. **Conclusion**

This paper sets out the progress made in the Youth Offer and Youth Centre project and describes the next steps for the project during the 2021/22 financial year. The project is at a transition point from scoping phase to implementation phase and it will be driven by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board as a key enabler of improved outcomes for young people in Slough.

8. **Appendices Attached**

None

9. **Background Papers**

None