



## Children and Young People Select Committee

### Response to the Final Report of the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group

**Date:** 12 September 2024

**Key decision:** No

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Children and Young People Joint Commissioning Service and Prevention and Early Help Service

### Outline and recommendations

This report serves as a preliminary response to the Committee following the publication of the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's Final Report and the recommendations contained within it. The report provides a brief update to the Committee on the Council's youth provision review and ongoing development of a new strategic youth offer and strategy, which, in due course, will form a significant part of the response to the Task and Finish Group's Final Report.

The Committee is recommended to:

- Note the Council's preliminary response to the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's Final Report; and
- Note the update provided on the Council's youth provision review and development of a strategic youth offer and strategy.

## Timeline of engagement and decision-making

As part of the development of Strategic Youth Offer and a new model for Youth Services, a diverse group of young people, parents, providers, and key stakeholders were consulted.

<b>October 2023</b>	Youth Provider market engagement survey
<b>October 2023</b>	Consultation events with Young People across the borough, Young Advisor, Lewisham Youth Theatre, Bellingham Youth Hub, Woodpecker, Honor Oak
<b>November 2023</b>	Young People Youth Offer Review Survey
<b>27 November 2023</b>	Council officers made a written submission to the Task and Finish Group (TFG) and attended an evidence session as witnesses
<b>November 2023</b>	Parents/carers Youth Offer Review Survey
<b>11 December 2023</b>	Roundtable Youth Provider and Key Stakeholder Conversation. TFG Members and support officer attended Youth Offer Review Stakeholder Roundtable
<b>January 2024 – April 2024</b>	Extended Young People Youth Offer Survey
<b>January 2024</b>	Additional Key Stakeholder Conversation Lewisham Downs Friendship and Creativity Group
<b>16 February 2024</b>	Council officers made written submission to the TFG and attended an evidence session as witnesses
<b>February 2024</b>	Additional Key Stakeholder Conversation – Ukraine Youth Support Service
<b>15 March 2024</b>	Second Roundtable Conversation. TFG Members and support officer attended Youth Offer Review Stakeholder Roundtable.
<b>October 2024</b>	Request approval of Mayor and Cabinet for the draft five-year Strategic Youth Offer 2024-2029.

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report serves as the Council's preliminary response to the Committee following the publication of the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's Final Report. A response will be formalised at a forthcoming meeting of the Mayor and Cabinet. The Council welcomes the final report of the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group and its recommendations. The Council was pleased for the opportunity to collaborate and work alongside the Task and Finish Group in reviewing youth provision, which aligned with the Council's own review of youth provision in Lewisham.
- 1.2 In addition, the report provides a brief update to the Committee on the Council's youth provision review and ongoing development of a new strategic youth offer and strategy.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to:
  - 2.1.1 Note the Council's preliminary response to the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's Final Report; and
  - 2.1.2 Note the update provided on the Council's youth provision review and development of a strategic youth offer and strategy.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1 This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Council's [Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#):
  - Cleaner and Greener
  - A Strong Local Economy
  - Quality Housing
  - Children and Young People
  - Safer Communities
  - Open Lewisham
  - Health and Wellbeing
- 3.2 This report is closely aligned to priority Children and Young People, Safer Communities, Open Lewisham, and Health and Wellbeing.
- 3.3 This report aligns with a number of Council strategies, including the [Lewisham](#)

[Education Strategy](#), [Prevention and Early Help Strategy](#), [Violence Reduction Approach](#), [Play Strategy](#) and Youth Justice Plan. A young people's participation strategy and an updated extra-familial harm strategy are being developed, which is intended to strengthen the Council's prevention and early help offer.

- 3.4 Furthermore, this report aligns with the [Lewisham Physical Activity Strategy 2023-28](#) and the intentions to tackle physical and mental health inequalities by ensuring residents have the opportunity to make physical activities a regular part of their everyday lives.

## 4. Background

- 4.1 In 2023, the Council launched its first ever [Play Strategy 2023-28](#) to oversee the development of high-quality play provision across the borough – thriving adventure playgrounds (APG) are a key compound of the strategy. The Council has recently recommissioned the APG Play Service and the APG Site Maintenance service under a new partnership approach that will support the development of the APG sites and, over time, increase the number of days they are open for community usage.
- 4.2 Following on from this, in October 2023, the Council began to review the current youth provision in borough. The Council took the opportunity to align with the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's review in recognition of the synergy and intended shared outcomes.
- 4.3 Part of the Council's youth provision review consisted of reviewing the existing Council-funded provision, which then fed into the development of a new Strategic Youth Offer and draft outline for a five year-strategic youth strategy. This has included appraising options for potential service redesigns to deliver key elements of the Strategic Youth Offer going forward. Redesigning elements of the existing Council-funded youth work offer is expected to create capacity to provide a more targeted and inclusive youth work offer, which better meets the needs of Lewisham's young people. In particular, a new Strategic Youth Offer will enable the Council to reach more underserved groups via target provision – such as specific girls and LGBTQIA+ provision.
- 4.4 In October 2024, the Council will seek approval from Mayor and Cabinet to adopt the new Strategic Youth Offer and the draft outline of a five-year Strategy Youth

Strategy. The Council will also seek permission to redesign the existing youth work provision to align with the proposal. The proposed Strategic Youth Offer takes a needs-led and area-based approach to service provision. This programme has been influenced and shaped by the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's review and a number of coproduction sessions with stakeholders over the last year.

- 4.5 The Council intends to redesign elements of the existing youth work offer to align with the proposed Strategic Youth Offer by July 2025, subject to Mayor and Cabinet approval in October 2024.
- 4.6 The Council will continue to coproduce the five-year Strategic Youth Strategy with key stakeholder, particularly young people, over the next month, with the intention of a final strategy to be launched later this year. The strategy will provide the framework to embed and continuously develop the Strategic Youth Offer over the next five years.

## **5. Initial Response to the Recommendations within the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's Final Report**

5.1 As noted in Section 4 of this report, the Council has developed a new Strategic Youth Offer and is developing a five-year Strategic Youth Strategy for young people in Lewisham. This work is currently ongoing and will provide the framework for the Council to deliver, in so far as possible, on the 15 recommendations within the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group's Final Report. Briefly summarised, the recommendations covered the following:

- Independent providers operating in the borough be nurtured and supported.
- Conduct a needs assessment of young peoples' needs and the sufficiency of the youth offer, committing to periodic reviews.
- Clarifying the role of the Council and taking a strategic lead in the development and coordination of services.
- A local infrastructure organisation with clear link to the Council be established.
- Provide an online directory for the borough and its partners to use.
- Safeguard open-access youth provision and complement with targeted and specialist youth work.

- Ensure there is at least one youth centre in each of the four Family Hub areas over time.
- Council-funded youth services should be prioritised for people who live in the borough, or have a strong connection, in the first instance.
- Develop open access youth work at service level with young people that is youth-led and reflects the dynamic needs, considering specific project to meet the fluid needs and wishes of young people.
- In collaboration with independent providers develop a common service user dataset to better understand young peoples' needs, impact, and gaps in provision.
- Develop and fund formal training and development and career progression opportunities for youth workers in the borough.
- Provide income maximation support to youth service providers and consider match-funding opportunities.

5.2 Implementing the strategy and the Task and Finish Group's recommendations will be phased over the lifetime of the strategy and will need to consider the Council's current and future financial pressures.

### **Draft response**

5.3 The Council thanks the Task and Finish Group for their comprehensive report and recommendations, which provide a robust foundation for the development of Lewisham's youth provision. The recommendations are integral in shaping the Council's forthcoming five-year strategy, which aims to ensure a high-quality, connected, inclusive, and responsive youth offer that meets the diverse needs of Lewisham's young people.

5.4 The Council acknowledges the importance of nurturing and supporting independent providers while preserving their unique identities. It also recognises the need for periodic reviews of the sufficiency of the youth offer, ensuring that it is geographically balanced and caters to young people of different ages and needs, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and from marginalised communities. The development of an online directory and improved outreach (targeted and street-based) will ensure better visibility and accessibility of services to young people across Lewisham and will form part of the new strategic youth offer.

- 5.5 At the heart of the strategy will be a clear commitment to defining the Council's role as the strategic lead for youth provision in the borough. The Council will promote good practice, facilitate collaboration, and advocate for youth provision resourcing, ensuring it remains at the forefront. The Council's strategic leadership role will include capacity-building support for providers, quality assurance, and the facilitation of workforce development across the youth sector in Lewisham, alongside the promotion and maximisation of funding opportunities to grow the youth offer organically in line with young people's changing needs.
- 5.6 The Council is pleased to confirm that recruitment is currently underway for a Strategic Youth Offer Manager, who will be instrumental in guiding this work and ensuring that the Council's strategic lead role is fully realised. This role will enhance the Council's commitment to delivering a connected, modern, and collaborative youth offer in Lewisham.
- 5.7 The focus will also extend to ensuring that youth centres can modernise and be places where a range of appropriate youth provision can be delivered, which is guided by what young people want. The Council has significant financial challenges and will need to balance investment in line with greatest need and available financial resources over the lifetime of the strategy.
- 5.8 Through this strategic approach, the Council will work collaboratively with stakeholders to continuously develop the strategic youth offer that is connected, responsive, and, most importantly, youth led. The recommendations from the Task and Finish Group will help guide our approach, ensuring that the Council delivers lasting, positive outcomes for the young people in Lewisham.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 The budget for the provision of Youth Services in 2024-25 is £1.743m. This includes a budget for the Youth offer, as covered in this report, of £1.403m. The remainder of the budget is allocated to Adventure Playgrounds.
- 6.2 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, the report to Mayor and Cabinet in October will present fully costed options arising from the strategic review, ensuring that the final recommendation remains within the £1.403m currently set aside for the provision of the youth offer.

## **7. Legal implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **8. Equalities implications**

8.1 The Council is undertaking a full Equalities Assessment Analysis as part of the programme of work to develop and implement the draft strategic youth offer strategy, including carrying out any necessary service redesign (subject to Mayor and Cabinet approval).

8.2 The Council's ongoing approach to developing the draft strategic youth offer strategy continuous to ensure those that access and benefit from youth provision are leading the conversations and supported to develop provision, including ensure seldom heard voices (e.g., those not accessing provision, particularly those from marginalised communities) are supported to engage in the process. The Council will continue this approach throughout the lifetime of the strategy to ensure it is dynamic and services continue to meet the needs of Lewisham's young people.

## **9. Climate change and environmental implications**

9.1 There are no specific climate change and environment implications arising from this report.

## **10. Crime and disorder implications**

10.1 An effective youth offer, delivered by a skilled and passionate workforce will engage young people away from activities that may cause a nuisance within their local community (such as anti-social behaviour) and prevent young people being exploited into crime.

10.2 The new Strategic Youth Offer that is under development will be delivered with a range of partners, including the Council's Community Safety Service and support the Council in meetings its Serious Violence Duty, which requires organisations across the public sector to work together to tackle, prevent, and reduce incidents of serious violence, and make local communities safer.

10.3 The work the Council is undertaking to develop the youth offer and meet the recommendation of the Task and Finish Group will have a positive impact, by



way of a reduction, regarding crime and disorder.

## 11. Health and wellbeing implications

- 11.1 A diverse, connected, and responsive youth offer with a range of positive activities serves as an effective prevention and early help offer to children and young people and their families. It also aides in their overall development with strong links to their general health and wellbeing, particularly providing support at key transition stages of a young person's life. The youth offer will also serve as part of the Council and the Lewisham Integrated Care Board's (ICB) emotional wellbeing and mental health support offer to young people in Lewisham.
- 11.2 The work the Council is undertaking to develop the youth offer and meet the recommendation of the Task and Finish Group will have an overall positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Lewisham residents.

## 12. Background papers

- 12.1 Not applicable.

## 13. Glossary

Term	Definition
APG	Adventure Playground
ICB	Integrated Care Board
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and more
TFG	Task and Finish Group
SEL	South East London
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

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## 15. Appendices

- 15.1. Appendix A - Final Report of the Youth Provision Task and Finish Group.

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