

To: **EXECUTIVE**  
**6<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

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## **APPROVAL TO UNDERTAKE A PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED YOUTH STRATEGY**

**Executive Director: People**

### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 A Youth Strategy has been developed for Bracknell Forest that sets out the strategic direction and priorities. The Youth Strategy supports the Council's Plan 2023 – 2027 ([Council Plan 2023 to 2027 | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/council-plan-2023-to-2027)), specifically the 'engaged and healthy communities'.
- 1.2 This report sets out the proposed youth strategy and the background to the development of this. The strategy provides a vision of youth services in Bracknell Forest. The intention is to undertake a public consultation and make any changes post this consultation with the aim of bringing a final version to the Executive for approval early in April / May 2024.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 **For the Executive to approve the draft strategy and agree that the final consultation plan will be agreed with Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning.**
- 2.2 **For the Executive to note the invitation to Members to join a dedicated session to provide feedback on the draft strategy.**
- 2.3 **For the Executive to note the intention to bring back a final strategy for Executive to approve following the consultation which will also include a detailed action plan.**

### **3 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The proposed Youth Services Strategy 2024 – 2027 policy has been created following a comprehensive data analysis, consultation and feedback on the proposed draft and priorities included.
- 3.2 The proposed strategy supports the Council's plan to ensure engaged and healthy communities. Youth services is a political priority of the labour executive as outlined within their manifesto for the local elections in 2023.
- 3.3 Stakeholder consultation is an important part of the development of the youth strategy, enabling young people, families, members, key stakeholders, and wider residents to understand and comment on the proposed strategy.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 An alternative option would be not to develop a youth strategy. However, given that there is not currently a strategic document identifying and driving the shape of youth services locally, this is not an option.

### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Bracknell Forest Council and other Local Authorities across England and Wales have a statutory duty under Section 507B, Education Act 1996 to 'secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people, and to make sure young people have a say in the local offer'. This is often referred to as the 'Youth Service Duty'. This includes youth work and other provisions that:
- Connects young people with their communities,
  - Offers young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of activities,
  - Supports the personal, social, and economic development of young people,
  - Improves young people's physical and mental health, and emotional wellbeing,
  - Raises young people's aspirations, builds their resilience, and informs their decision-making.
- 5.2 Wide discretion is given as to the way in which this duty is met, it may include direct provision as well as planning with others to provide the service and/or facilities. 'Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People's Wellbeing', published in June 2012 provides guidance for the local authorities.
- 5.3 In October 2020, the National Youth Agency (NYA) also published new guidance to support Local Authorities in their statutory duty to secure local services. This includes the meaningful engagement of young people to ensure access to quality youth services.

## Strategy Overview

- 5.4 The strategy proposes the following priority areas:
- We want to keep young people safe and intervene early to prevent and reduce harm.
  - We will support young people to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.
  - We will develop a multi-agency offer of support for Young Carers.
  - We will create more opportunities for young people to participate in democratic engagement across their communities.
  - We will invest in the workforce to support youth workers/professionals and develop pathway for young people to have a career in youth and early help work.

The table below summarises the priorities:

<b>Priority 1: We want to keep young people safe and intervene early to prevent and reduce harm.</b>	
<b>What did young people tell us?</b>	<b>What have we included in the strategy?</b>
Young people told us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That they are worried about being exploited and what to talk to people they trust about how to keep safe and manage risk.</li> <li>• Moving around Bracknell Forest can feel unsafe, particularly when they must use underpasses.</li> </ul>	Increase the awareness of universal youth work activities, which may include youth clubs, groups and activities, amongst young people, families and professionals.  Providing one to one support for young people where there is an emerging risk of exploitation to support with safety planning,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They worry about being bullied and would like to know who they can talk to for support.</li> </ul>	managing risks and exploring positive activities.
<b>Priority 2: We will support young people to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.</b>	
What did young people tell us?	What have we included in the strategy?
<p>Young people told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would access to services to gain information, advice, and guidance on a range of issues include their mental health, sexual health, and general health.</li> <li>• They want a space to be young people and not feel judged.</li> <li>• Having groups to attend based on key issues that are concerned about e.g., mental health.</li> </ul>	<p>Work with young people and key stakeholders to provide access to information, advice, and guidance in a range of methods to ensure it is accessible for young people.</p> <p>Work with health colleagues to ensure sexual health support is accessible, appropriate and meets the needs of all young people in Bracknell Forest.</p> <p>Working with partners, develop a programme/schedule of group sessions across the borough to promote to young people and professionals working with young people.</p>
<b>Priority 3: We will develop a multi-agency offer of support for Young Carers.</b>	
What did young people tell us?	What have we included in the strategy?
<p>Young people told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That they are always clear on what support is available to Young Carers and how they can access the support.</li> <li>• That the council should have high expectation and champion Young Carers in everything the council does.</li> </ul>	<p>Review the current pathway to access support for young carers and ensure that this is promoted to encourage more young carers to access available support.</p> <p>Work with young carers to develop the wider offer of support, to ensure it meets their needs.</p>
<b>Priority 4: We will create more opportunities for young people to participate in democratic engagement activities across their communities.</b>	
What did young people tell us?	What have we included in the strategy?
<p>Young people told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are limited opportunities to get involved in the democratic process in Bracknell Forest.</li> <li>• They have ideas and views and want to contribute to decisions that affect them.</li> <li>• They want youth workers to share their expertise with other adults and for them outside (not schoolteachers) be in those environments to explore/discuss and inform young people.</li> </ul>	<p>Deliver the Youth Member of Parliament for Bracknell Forest through an election process across schools.</p> <p>Commitment to explore further opportunities for young people to engagement in the democratic process, working with elected members.</p>
<b>Priority 5: We will invest in the workforce to support youth workers/professional and develop pathways for young people to have a career in youth and early help work.</b>	
What did young people tell us?	What have we included in the strategy?
<p>Young people told us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That youth workers/professionals who support them, understand them</li> </ul>	We want to ensure that professionals are supported to deliver the priorities of this

<p>and know how to talk to them. They feel respected and listened to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having access to youth workers/professionals who can help them with their worries and concerns is important to them.</li> </ul>	<p>strategy through high quality multi-agency training and development opportunities.</p> <p>Providing quality services for young people, is delivered through a knowledgeable and suitably qualified workforce.</p>
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## Consultation

5.5 A structured consultation plan has been developed including a combination of consultation methods providing opportunities for young people, families and key stakeholders including members, voluntary organisations, other statutory organisations to give their views on the proposed strategy. This includes the following elements:

- The consultation plan includes an online survey that individuals and organisations will be invited to complete; it is proposed to run the survey for a period of 4 weeks from 7<sup>th</sup> February until the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Members will be invited to a dedicated session to provide comments on the draft strategy.
- Consultation workshops – targeting young people, families, internal colleagues, and other groups of professionals.
- Invitation to key stakeholders to submit written comments by email.

See consultation plan in appendices.

5.8 In addition, a communications plan will be developed to ensure that the consultation is promoted widely to relevant Council services, Members, statutory and voluntary organisations, Registered Providers, health professionals, and advice agencies. This will include:

- Promoting the strategy and the online survey on the Council's website,
- Use of internal and external newsletters such as Forest Views,
- Targeted emails to key contacts and organisations that have an important role in representing the views of various cohorts.

5.9 Once the consultation is complete and the responses analysed, the proposed strategy will be finalised and presented to the earliest possible Executive with start date for the strategy being May 2024.

## 6 Other Considerations and Advice

### Financial Advice

6.1 The Executive Director: Resources is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from undertaking the proposed consultation.

### Other Consultation Responses

6.2 As detailed in the report, a consultation plan will be developed to engage stakeholders, partners, Members, key service areas within the Council, applicants, and residents. Consultation events have taken place to support the creation and inform the strategy priorities and content.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 A priority of the Youth Strategy is to coordinate and increase universal youth provision across the borough. There should be no barriers for young people when accessing youth provision and the impact on equalities is positive.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 There are no foreseen strategic risk management issues associated with this strategy.

### Climate Change Implications

- 6.5 The strategy is not expected to have any impact on emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 6.6 The health and wellbeing of young people across Bracknell Forest will be supported through a rich and diverse offer of support.

### Background Papers

Youth Strategy 2024 - 2027

Consultation Plan

Quick Guide to Strategy

### Contact for further information

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