

To: EXECUTIVE
21st May 2024

APPROVAL OF THE YOUTH STRATEGY FOR BRACKNELL FOREST
Executive Director: People

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 A Youth Strategy (*Appendix D*) 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)), specifically the 'engaged and healthy communities'.
- 1.2 This report sets out the background to the development of the Youth Strategy and the identified priorities through data analysis and consultation activity.
- 1.3 The strategy provides a vision for the youth offer in Bracknell Forest, working collaboratively with our external partners to strengthen the offer to young people through a range of activities and groups.
- 1.4 The Youth Strategy is accompanied by an action plan (*Appendix E*) that sets out specific tasks that will be undertaken by partners to ensure that the identified priorities are implemented within timescales. The action plan will be finalised with timescales and lead agencies, after the approval of the strategy to ensure partner agencies are able to confirm resource.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 For the Executive to note the feedback received from young people, families, communities, and professionals as part for the development of the Youth Strategy.
- 2.2 For the Executive to approve the Youth Strategy 2024-2027 for Bracknell Forest and the supporting action plan to ensure identified actions are taken forward.
- 2.3 For the Executive to note the plan to revise the operating model of the Targeted Youth Support Service to facilitate the delivery of the action plan. In addition, we ask the Executive to note the plan to coordinate youth work activity delivered by partners across the borough utilising external funding, including £117,000 of time limited grant funding to create a cohesive youth offer for Bracknell Forest young people.

3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Youth Strategy 2024 – 2027 has been created following a comprehensive data analysis, consultation and feedback on the proposed draft and priorities included. The data review has informed the consultation discussions and modelling of service provision and potential reach of young people.
- 3.2 The 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 Consultation activity (*Appendix A-C*) has taken place throughout the development of the strategy with young people, parents/carers, professionals, communities, and elected members. Consultation activity has informed the development of the strategy

and the priorities within it. Ongoing feedback has resulted in amendments to the strategy.

- 3.4 Young people in Bracknell Forest deserve a youth offer that meets their needs and supports to them to thrive. Throughout the development of the strategy young people have consistently outlined their wishes and hopes for this strategy.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Alternatively the Early Help Service had considered submitting an in-year growth bid, that would support the implementation of the action plan, which would have kept the existing delivery model within the Targeted Youth Support Service, but this has not been recommended to the current financial position of the council.

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.

6 Strategy Overview

- 6.1 The strategy will deliver a range of provision and interventions to support young people to thrive and develop their interests and talents to live successful lives.

- 6.2 An underpinning principle of the Youth Strategy is co-production, both with our partners, but importantly with young people and their families, ensuring that their lived experience and local intelligence influence the decisions we collectively make as a partnership.

- 6.3 The strategy provides a framework on performance indicators and expected outcomes. We will monitor the implementation of the strategy through a multi-agency working

group that will reporting the Early Help Partnership Group. We will ensure that young people receive support that is of high quality and will continue to implement the quality assurance framework to assure ourselves that the young people's needs are being met and that the strategy is supporting this.

- 6.4 It is recognised that youth work activity takes place in a range of venues and environments, and ensuring the right is location is critical to engaging young people in our work. Young people have told us that universal youth work matters to them; they value the opportunity to engage in youth services. This strategy, we will ensure universal provision is promoted and delivered in a variety of ways to ensure young people's needs are met.
- 6.5 The Youth Strategy reflects the council's commitment for engaged and healthy communities, supporting an early intervention and prevention approach and ensuring young people have access to youth service activities. This will include embracing technology to deliver activities and services.
- 6.6 Partnership working is central to the delivery of the priorities within this strategy, working with our partners we will collectively contribute to the delivery of provision for young people. This will ensure that young people have access to a range of provision across the borough.
- 6.7 The strategy contains the following priority areas:

Priority 1: We want to keep young people safe and intervene early to prevent and reduce harm.	
What did young people tell us?	What have we included in the strategy?
Young people told us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That they are worried about being exploited and want to talk to people they trust about how to keep safe and manage risk. • Moving around Bracknell Forest can feel unsafe, particularly when they must use underpasses. • They worry about being bullied and would like to know who they can talk to for support. 	Increase the awareness of universal youth work activities, which may include youth clubs, groups and activities, amongst young people, families and professionals. Work with colleagues across the council to install safety features in underpasses in addition to artwork that makes these spaces more welcoming. Providing one to one support for young people where there is an emerging risk of exploitation to support with safety planning, managing risks and exploring positive activities.
Priority 2: We will support young people to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.	
What did young people tell us?	What have we included in the strategy?
Young people told us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • They want a space to be young people and not feel judged. 	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. Work with health colleagues to ensure sexual health support is accessible,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having groups to attend based on key issues that are concerned about e.g., mental health. 	<p>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>
Priority 3: We will develop a multi-agency offer of support for Young Carers.	
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"> • That they are not always clear on what support is available to Young Carers and how they can access the support. • That the council should have high expectation and champion Young Carers in everything the council does. 	<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>
Priority 4: We will create more opportunities for young people to participate in democratic engagement activities across their communities.	
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"> • There are limited opportunities to get involved in the democratic process in Bracknell Forest. • They have ideas and views and want to contribute to decisions that affect them. • Young people value the youth work approach to intervention and would like more adults to use this approach. 	<p>Continue to deliver the Youth Member of Parliament for Bracknell Forest and strengthen the election process through engaging all schools.</p> <p>Commitment to explore further opportunities for young people to engage in the democratic process, working with elected members.</p>
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.	
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"> • That they are supported by youth workers/professionals who understand them and know how to talk to them. They feel respected and listened to. • Having access to youth workers/professionals who can help them with their worries and concerns is important to them. 	<p>We want to ensure that professionals are supported to deliver the priorities of this 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> <p>A pathway to support young people to have a career in youth work.</p>

- 6.8 A comprehensive data review was completed at the start of the process for developing a strategy and informed the consultation activity. Headlines of the data review are included within the strategy and outline the increasing demand for early help services.
- 6.9 The pathways to accessing universal provision and targeted support have been included within the strategy. This section has been strengthened based on the feedback received from young people and others.
- 6.10 Young people developed a pledge that has been included within the strategy and this has been included in the strategy as practice guidance. The impact of the pledge will be measured through feedback after one-to-one support, annual survey activity and focus groups.
- 6.11 A 'young person version' of the strategy will be developed by young people once the strategy has been approved. It is anticipated to have this completed by September 2024.
- 6.12 In addition to this strategy, Short Breaks are developing a 12 week skill education youth programme for young people with mild to moderate SEND from year 9, in line with preparing for adulthood, to age 25. They will be offering a series of life skills workshops, alongside fun enrichment activities, opportunities for socialisation and friendship building while providing a regular weekend break for parents/carers.
- 6.13 The service is working with Short Breaks to develop a step-down programme at Braccan Walk youth centre after the initial 12-week programme. The proposed offer is to run weekly groups that will be embedded into the longer-term youth offer. The groups will continue to be themed around independence skills with a focus on reducing isolation and maintaining positive wellbeing. Supporting Families reserve (costed at £32k) will be used, with the longer-term plan to incorporate this offer into the wider review that is being led by Short Breaks service.
- 6.14 The Targeted Youth Support Service secured external funding of £85k, from the National Lottery Million Hours Fund, to increase the number of youth work hours until March 2026. This work will have a focus on reducing anti-social behaviour in the south of the borough and will be incorporated into the ongoing youth offer after 2026.
- 6.15 A revision to the operating model will ensure that roles with the Targeted Youth Support Service are aligned to support the delivery of key tasks within the action plan.
- 6.16 The overall delivery of the strategy is expected to be managed within the overall resources of the council and partners, with an additional investment £117,000 of time limited grant funding.

7 Consultation, Feedback & Action Plan

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place throughout the development of the strategy using a variety of consultation methods including surveys, focus groups, and engagement with young people in the community during detached youth work sessions (*Appendix A-C*).
- 7.2 A series of consultation events have taken place with young people (*Appendix A*), partners, parents, and carers (*Appendix B-C*), including the creation of a podcast style presentation for members. Young people, professionals and families have engaged in focused conversations and provided information to inform the strategy.
- 7.3 Consultation events took place between June to August 2023, October to November 2023 and 7th February to 11th March 2024.

- 7.4 148 young people and 48 adults completed the online survey in February and March 2024. Feedback received has been incorporated into the final youth strategy and the implementation action plan.
- 7.5 A full breakdown of the consultation findings are attached to this report.
- 7.6 A comprehensive implementation action plan has been developed (*Appendix E*) that breaks down each priority further, to ensure that progress is achieved in implementing the strategy.
- 7.2 The proposal is that a new subgroup is formed to lead on the strategy implementation, which would report into the Early Help Partnership Meeting.

8 Other Considerations and Advice

Financial Advice

- 8.1 The Executive Director: Resources is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from agreeing the strategy.

Legal Advice

The relevant legal implications are addressed within the report.

Other Consultation Responses

Several consultation events, surveys and focused sessions have taken place with young people, residents and professionals throughout the development of the strategy. (*Appendix's A-C*)

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.4 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

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

Climate Change Implications

- 8.6 The strategy is not expected to have any impact on emissions of CO₂.

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

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

Background Papers

- Appendix A: Young People's Survey Feedback

- Appendix B: Online Feedback
- Appendix C: Focused Group Headlines
- Appendix D: Youth Strategy 2024 – 2027
- Appendix E: Youth Strategy Action Plan 2024 – 2027 Final

Contact for further information.

Grainne Siggins, Executive Director: People

Grainne.siggins@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Audrey Johnson, Assistant Director Early Help & Communities

audrey.johnson@bracknell-forest.gov.uk