



YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGY 2025-2030

Version	2.1
Created by	Matthew Filmore – Deputy Town Clerk
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Approved by	Full Council

1. Purpose

1. This strategy aims to create a framework against which, during the period 2025 to 2030, the Council will seek to procure services and activities which support the holistic development of children and young people within Woodley.
2. This strategy replaces the Council's previous 'Strategy for Youth Services – 2022-27'.

2. Background

History

3. Whilst local councils have no statutory duty to provide youth services, Woodley Town Council has historically chosen to provide funds to support the provision of youth services in the area.
4. In 1992, the Town Council invested funds in the Airfield Youth and Community Centre under an agreement to support the youth services being provided by Berkshire County Council and, subsequently, Wokingham Borough Council. Over time, services reduced and eventually ceased. In 2019, following the dissolution of the agreement, the Council received £89,400. These funds were placed in an earmarked reserve "for capital expenditure for the benefit of young people in Woodley", where they remain.
5. From the early 2000's, the Town Council also chose to fund detached youth work in and around Woodley. Most recently, this was provided via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with an external youth service provider, with the last SLA ceasing in November 2020.

Strategy for Youth Services 2022-2027

6. Before seeking to establish a new SLA for tender, the Council determined to develop a Strategy for Youth Services ('the Strategy'), the aim being to set out a framework for the basis of any future youth service provision and identify approaches that would be achievable and provide most benefit based on the existing funding commitment (circa £27k per annum).
7. The 'Strategy for Youth Services 2022-2027' was developed during 2021 and adopted at Full Council in December that year.
8. During 2022 a new SLA was developed and a formal invitation to tender was published in the Autumn, to which no responses were received.
9. In June 2023 it was determined that the Council should re-visit how to achieve its aims to provide youth services, in line with the Strategy, and a working group was setup in September 2023 to undertake this work.
10. Following a period of extensive research and consultation with stakeholders, including young people, external youth service providers, Wokingham Borough Council and Thames Valley Police, the working group submitted recommendations to the Leisure Services Committee. These were approved in November 2024.
11. The following strategy document reflects the recommendations of the working group.

3. Strategy for Youth Services - 2025-2030

Commitment

12. The Council commits to supporting the provision of targeted support services to children and young people in Woodley.

Strategic Aims

13. Through the provision of these services, the Council seeks to:

- A. Address young people's mental health and wellbeing, feelings of isolation / loneliness and physical health and wellbeing
- B. Give young people stronger voices at local community and local government levels
- C. Provide safe and appropriate opportunities to meet and have fun with friends
- D. Widen the diversity of activities and opportunities for young people
- E. Work within the available WTC budget
- F. Provides opportunities for additional funding (eg per event, matched funding, sponsorship)
- G. Enables arrangements for the first five years of Youth Service delivery
- H. Can respond flexibly to changes in the interests and preferences of young people
- I. Can be cost-effectively managed by WTC, Community Youth Partnership (CYP) and other partners as appropriate

14. To achieve these aims, the Council will seek to facilitate and coordinate the provision of a variety of youth services and activities, delivered in partnership with external agencies.

Focus

15. The Council will prioritise funding services which:

- Target children and young people aged 9 to 21, with a specific focus on supporting those who are deemed to be, or preventing those who may become, vulnerable - especially those not currently engaging with an existing youth provision.
- Focus on delivering provision during school holidays and / or on Friday evenings between 3pm and late, although additional provision on Mondays to Thursdays - between 3pm and 7pm – and during national holidays / events; i.e. Halloween, may also be supported.
- Provide a setting for young people to meet, chat and spend time with friends.

Delivery

16. The Council will be flexible and open to proposals which achieve the Council's strategic aims, with the expectation that services will be delivered via:

- regular activity led sessions; for example, sports, music, arts or other appropriate workshops, training and courses; and / or
- irregular activity led sessions; for example, competitions, one off workshops / activity sessions, structured trips.

Location

17. The Council will only fund services which take place within the Woodley Town council boundary, or outside the boundary where funding provides for access for Woodley residents.

18. Additionally, to support ongoing provision, the Council will seek to provide a mobile venue (e.g. a van, converted bus or trailer) from which services / activities may be delivered.
19. The Council will also support provision through the use of other venues and facilities, whether owned by the Council or not, where agreement can be reached, as appropriate to the service / activity being delivered.

4. Review

20. This strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose.
21. In the absence of any significant changes, this strategy should be reviewed and updated during the 2029/30 municipal year for the next period, as appropriate.