
Agenda Item: Youth Services Grant – Evaluation of Applications

Meeting Date: Monday, 14th July 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the applications received through the grant scheme and to invite recommendations for the allocation of funds.

Background

The Council's Youth Services Grant scheme for 2025 opened for applications between 6 May 2025 – 27 June 2025. Grants will be allocated from a budget of £20,000 set for this scheme. For reference, the purpose of the fund is as follows:

'The Youth Fund is open to applications from community and voluntary sector organisations, including existing organisations and those in the process of setting up to establish easily signposted and accessible youth opportunities, supporting open access to preventative services, particularly for those who may be hard to reach and to extend activities to support the young people of Witney.'

Activities may include, for example, providing guidance and support about their lives and issues relating to school, family life and peers through way of drop-in sessions.

Applications may, for example, facilitate the provision of a safe space for young people who would otherwise have nowhere to go, including a safe space to talk, and the ability to enjoy some self-directed or group/organised discretionary activities. In this instance funds could be requested towards facility hire costs and towards a permanent youth structure in the town.'

The criteria for the scheme are attached as **Appendix A**.

Current Situation

Fourteen applications for the fund were received, totalling £54,342. These are outlined below with the requested amounts:

Apollos Clothing	£3,100	Purchase of new school uniforms
Buttercross Scouts	£3,500	Activity equipment/ropes for bridge
Community Loft at West Oxon Boxing & Fitness Club	£9,740	Mental health boxing sessions
Ducklington Sports Club	£1,700	New footballs/first aid kits for youth teams
Friends of Springfield School	£2,850	Therapeutic horse-riding sessions
4 th Girl Guides	£680	To assist buying camp tent & equipment for first camp unit

Home Start Oxford	£12,000	Ongoing costs
Parish of Witney (St Mary's)	£4,326	A summer enrichment camp
The Station	£7,296	Parenting courses
Tower Hill FC	£1,000	Consumable equipment
West Oxfordshire Levellers	£1,000	Girls Rugby League Activity day
Witney Food Revolution	£4,650	Teen focused food skills programme
Witney Town Band – Junior band	£1,500	New equipment
Yellow Submarine	£1,000+	Witney Youth Club summer activities

Full applications and supporting documents are included as additional **appendices** to this report, providing comprehensive details of each request.

While the final decision on awarding grants rests with the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee, Members may wish to review the applications and supporting materials at this meeting to determine whether any further information is needed from applicants.

The Committee may also wish to make recommendations to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee regarding the proposed grant awards.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – Dispersal can help ensure that young people from diverse backgrounds, including those from marginalized, low-income, or underserved communities, have equal access to safe spaces, recreational activities, educational support, and social opportunities.
- b) Biodiversity – Awardees should encourage nature-based activities and environmentally sustainable development.
- c) Crime & Disorder - Well-designed youth services offer safe, structured environments that engage young people in positive activities, reducing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour, vandalism, or crime. These services can also address underlying causes of offending—such as social exclusion, lack of opportunities, or poor mental health.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Applications such as for outdoor education, active travel can have a positive impact by promoting low-carbon behaviours and engaging young people in environmental matters.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Given the number of applications and the total amount requested through the scheme, Members should ensure they are confident in three key areas: the demonstrated need for the service, the applicant's capacity to deliver it effectively, and the clear community benefit

to young people in Witney. These considerations, along with others, are outlined in the grant criteria for reference.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Providing grants to enhance or introduce new services for young people generates significant social value by fostering stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities. These services help young people build confidence, skills, and resilience, improving their future prospects in education, and employment. They create safe spaces for social interaction, reduce isolation, and promote mental and physical well-being.

Investing in youth also supports early intervention and prevention, potentially reducing future demand on public services. Moreover, such grants can promote equality by reaching underserved or at-risk groups, ensuring all young people have opportunities to thrive in Witney.

Financial implications

- A budget of £20k has been agreed and budgeted for within this fiscal year for the purpose of this grant scheme.
- There is no additional budget over and above the amount already set.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Whether further information or clarification on any matter is required from applicants.
2. Recommendations on the allocation of funds to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 22nd July. *Given the high volume of applications, Members may wish to consider delegating the review process to a small group of Councillors, with the final decision on recommendations to be made by the Chair of the Committee and the Leader of the Council.*