

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Youth Services

Meeting Date: Monday, 15 September 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on Youth Services being funded by the Town Council.

Current Situation

Youth Services Grant

The Council has received signed agreements back from most grant awardees.

Unfortunately, the Friends of Springfield School have been unable to facilitate the therapeutic horse-riding sessions proposed in their application. The group is now exploring alternative, similar youth services that may be more feasible as a replacement. They have been advised any new proposal funding would be subject to the Council's discretion and cannot be guaranteed.

Following the agreement of grant allocations in July, a representative of the **Parish of Witney** asked for the parishes aims and activities to be updated with the following, which was an agreed statement on their website. They were awarded part funds for an enrichment programme.

'Our churches share a common purpose: to help each person in our communities grow deeper in their knowledge of and relationship with God. Our vision is to be a community of mercy and kindness.'

We cherish the Eucharist and the Daily Office, and we are an inclusive church committed to a hospitable Christianity where everyone is welcome.

As an outward-looking church, we seek to demonstrate God's love through our actions. We actively engage with 11 schools, 6 nursing and care homes, and provide outreach to new housing communities and those in need throughout the area.'

The Station Detached Youth

Officers met with the Project Director on 9 September 2025 and received an update on their summer programme, KICK, which was delivered at Witney ATP during the school holidays.

This year, only half of the pitch was available due to issues encountered with the booking process. However, this proved to be manageable, as attendance was lower than in 2024. The team believes this is likely because many of last year's attendees have since aged out of the target group, providing an opportunity for younger participants to take part.

In total, 94 young people attended across the summer, with approximately 25–30 participants at each session (held three days per week). Both the organisation and Thames Valley Police were pleased with this level of engagement.

As a result of these structured sessions, no additional detached youth work took place during this period. There is ongoing reflection on how the organisation's delivery model has evolved, and this will be shared in the form of a verbal update at the meeting. Officers were also updated on the leadership of the organisation and future projects.

A confidential report from The Station is attached as **Appendix A**, outlining their budget request and forward plan for future years and an updated Service Level Agreement (SLA).

BREAK – The Station has provisionally booked the café for 3 evenings in the October and February half-terms to run youth café sessions per a trial held earlier this year. It is proposed this runs along the same format, i.e. with free use of the bar, but The Station paying for wages of staff and discounted drinks from the cafe.

Mental Health Drop-in & We Game Sessions

Officers have requested an update from APCAM concerning in these sessions and hope to be able to report back at the next meeting, ahead of budget setting for 2026-27.

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 – the provision of free to access to services.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – the provision of youth services, particularly during the summer is aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

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.

The Council must ensure it is receiving value for money in the services it commissions or any group it enters into a partnership with to mitigate against both financial and reputational risk.

Social Value

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

The social value of services and support (via The Station's detached youth work) should be considered. Support contributes to young people being able to live fulfilling lives.

Financial Implications

- If the Friends of Springfield School are not awarded their youth services grant, £2,850 will still be available.
- Funding for The Station in 2025-26 is £18,000. The report from The Station suggests an increase to this amount for 2026-27.
- A discount for drinks purchased and paid for by The Station for the BREAK sessions.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Note the updates concerning the Youth Services Grant awards.
2. Consider permitting winter BREAK sessions in the Corn Exchange café, paid for by the Station.
3. Consider the report and requests from The Station for the 2026-27 fiscal year and recommend for budget-setting accordingly.