
Agenda Item: Youth Services

Meeting Date: Monday, 23 March 2026

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on youth services funded by the Town Council in 2026/27, together with services delivered by other authorities and/or stakeholders.

Background

At the previous meeting of the Committee, it was resolved that the timeframe and criteria for the Council's **Youth Servies Grant Scheme** should remain unchanged for the 2026-27 year (minute no. SC49(2) refers).

Current Situation

Youth Services Grant 2026–27

In accordance with the resolution, and aligned with a subsequent resolution regarding the Committee Calendar for the 2026–27 year, the following key dates are proposed for the scheme:

- 8th May 2026 Scheme opens for applications
- 7th June 2026 Scheme closes for applications
- 15th June 2026 Evaluation Meeting (Stronger Communities Committee)
- 22nd June 2026 Agreement on Awards (Policy, Governance & Finance Committee)
- 13th July 2026 Full Meeting of Witney Town Council (final decisions)

Please note that the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee retains final authority over grant awards.

APCAM

APCAM have welcomed the Council's decision to continue offering school holiday mental health drop-in sessions for young people at the Corn Exchange and dates are currently being booked.

There will be one remaining We Game Session which had to be cancelled during half term due to unforeseen circumstances.

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 – Access to well-funded, quality services can help mitigate the effects of social inequality. Ensuring that resources are directed toward the communities and individuals who need them most is a crucial step toward improving outcomes for young people, fostering social mobility, and promoting a more just and equal society.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from the contents of this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder –By offering young people the tools, opportunities, and support they need to thrive, youth services reduce the likelihood that they will engage in criminal behaviour, contribute to social disorder, or face long-term negative outcomes. These services not only benefit individuals but also promote the well-being and safety of entire communities.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from the contents of this report.

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.

- Town and Parish Councils have no statutory duty to provide youth services. There is a reputational risk residents will see further funding as additional taxation. This needs to be balanced against the social value to the community.

Social Value

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

Investment in youth services can reduce the risk of negative outcomes, such as involvement in crime, substance abuse, or mental health crises. By offering structured activities and support systems, these programs help prevent young people from falling into harmful behaviours and provide alternatives to risky or destructive paths.

Funding youth services is a critical investment in the future of individuals and communities. It creates long-term social value by addressing the needs of young people, promoting positive development, reducing social inequalities, and fostering a more resilient and cohesive society.

Financial implications

- The budget for the Youth Services Grant in 2026-27 is £20,000 (4169/408).

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report.