

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 6th July 2020

Title: Youth Services

Contact Officer: Office Manager – Adam Clapton

Background

The Council previously agreed to budget £30,000 towards the provision of Youth Services in the town following a Youth Forum and meetings with key stakeholders from this sector. In addition, the Council resolved to develop a signposting strategy in order that parents and young adults are aware of what services are available to them.

Current Situation

Youth Service Signposting

Following a previous resolution, Officers contacted Oxfordshire Youth regarding mapping/signposting youth services already on offer in Witney. Their physical signposting document (attached as Appendix A) while comprehensive, is only completely accurate on the day of publication, requires a large amount of manpower in updating and needs the relevant qualified people to produce it. To understand what was currently available in terms of mapping was suggested and to consider the number of organisations which would be listed, which would currently only be a handful based on their data.

The most accurate information currently relating to all community initiatives can be found on www.oxfordshireallin.org Although created quickly due to Covid-19, this has grown into a popular resource and lists several organisations not specifically related to the pandemic. There are hopes that this will be develop further following the current crisis and there are also several other websites offering mapping in relation to youth provision who may be willing to enter an information sharing agreement; namely The Family Information Service and Activities Oxfordshire, both administered by Oxfordshire County Council.

Oxfordshire Youth are enthusiastic about supporting Witney Town Council in this project, are happy to share information and advised that Thame and Faringdon Town Council's had undertaken youth projects. A dedicated webpage, with an interactive map on the Council's website might be a starting point which could list the services commissioned by the Town Council and then evolve, embedding links to the above resources.

Grant Funding

Draft funding criteria and an application form are attached for consideration as Appendix B. As requested by the former Working Party these are borne from the current Town Council grant award documents and other similar local authority grants.

Although the draft documents allude to the necessary insurances and policies being required to be able to qualify, Oxfordshire Youth have indicated that other Council's offering similar youth funding have stipulated that the applying organisation should be affiliated to them. This has two benefits; Firstly, that the organisation is promoted in a further county-wide setting, and secondly any affiliated member must have a minimum standard of the necessary documents in place such as safeguarding etc.

Environmental impact

There is no known environmental impact in relation to this report. Applicants will be encouraged to submit their documentation electronically.

Risk

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

Financial implications

There is no set budget for a signposting document to be produced, unless it is taken from the £30,000 earmarked reserve (this will obviously reduce the amount to be grant-funded).

Recommendations

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

1. the form Witney Town Council Youth Services signposting should take,
2. the draft grant funding criteria and application form (including key dates),
3. whether it should be stipulated that those applying for funding are affiliated to Oxfordshire Youth.