

Leighton-Linslade Partnership Committee

2 December 2021

Title: Community Forum Youth Survey

Report of: Vivien Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic Services

Purpose of this report: To provide Committee with the results from the youth survey

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership Committee is asked to:

- 1. Share the results of the Community Forum survey with Central Bedfordshire Council and request reciprocal sharing of the results from Central Bedfordshire Council's survey with Partnership Committee.**
- 2. Further explore in more detail young people's feedback of local recreation parks to better service young people's needs and wants with a view to responding by way of enhancements to provision as identified through feedback. To allocate up to £500 for the work from earmarked reserves (960/9053).**
- 3. Recommend to Leighton-Linslade Town Council's Policy and Finance Committee that up to £5000 from Future Projects (925/9507), be allocated to host a Gaming competition event in 2022, and that up to £3000 from the same budget (925/9053), be used to purchase gaming equipment for use in the TACTIC service and Vandyke Youth Centre to provide regular access to gaming activity in the centres.**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 05/09/2019, (Ref: 21/LLP) Committee requested a Community Forum representative lead the delivery of a youth survey to find out what young people need in Leighton-Linslade. This followed discussion about aligning the research work of the Forum more closely with the issues that Committee wished to gain an understanding of and with the potential to respond. Therefore, Committee wanted the focus of questions to be on services that were within the two councils' control.
- 1.2 Progress on the work was interrupted by Covid-19 restrictions. Whilst a large-scale survey exercise was originally desirable, it was later agreed that rather than wait for the right time, it would be more productive to undertake a smaller focused survey in recognition that young people would benefit from attention. At the time, the roadmap

out of Covid-19 restrictions was unknown. To this end, the survey is planned to focus on the age range of 12 to 16 years.

- 1.3 Unknown to all members of the steering group, Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) senior management had instructed officers to initiate a CBC led survey of young people to help review their services. This led to two surveys going out at the same time. The steering group quickly issued a press release in support of both surveys encouraging young people to complete both having explained the difference between the two.
- 1.4 In the first instance, the above was disappointing to learn. However, the expectation is that CBC and the Partnership Committee has an opportunity to share results. With both surveys being anonymous, sharing is considered to be of mutual benefit to all parties.
- 1.5 The CBC survey remains open until late December. The results shared today therefore are those relating to the Community Forum's survey.
- 1.6 The Community Forum survey results are attached at Appendix A.

2. SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

- 2.1 In total 149 responses were received and all bar 2 being residents of Leighton Buzzard and Linlade. The male / female mix of respondents was good with slightly more females.
- 2.2 Respondent identified recreation parks as being where they wanted activities to take place. Respondents also highlighted an enjoyment of sports and fitness. Officers suggest that further exploration of provision in local parks could be explored in more depth to ensure any enhancements are in keeping with young people's wants and needs.
- 2.3 The town centre and High Street feature a high second in preferred activity venues with activity taking place in a venue (building). The town centre is arguably less focused on provision for young people and Committee may bear this in mind when planning future provision. Both the Library Theatre and TACTIC centre are the obvious public venues currently able to respond.
- 2.4 When asked what services would make a difference, mental health support and health were mentioned on several occasions.
- 2.5 Gaming as an activity received several mentions. Officers propose that a high-profile gaming event in the town centre could be delivered in response to the level of interest shown here. Longer term investment in equipment for more regular access to gaming activity could be invested in for the TACTIC centre.

- 2.6 Ability to access activities for young people received a varied response. Distance from where they lived, confidence with meeting new people, and cost of activities all featured as reasons for preventing engagement.
- 2.7 The lack of take-up of online youth service provision could show a preference for face-to-face interaction. It could also be a lack of knowledge about what services are available to young people online, suggesting a need for more promotion.

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The survey provides a broad insight to young people's views of local provision. Insights provide information for longer term infrastructure investment as well as some ideas that can be responded to more quickly.
- 3.2 Committee would benefit from sharing the insights gleaned from the two surveys, Community Forum and CBC, for increased intelligence on what provision young people need and want.
- 3.3 In the first instance, it is proposed that a high-profile Gaming event is delivered in 2022, as per recommendation 1.3.

End