



CABINET
Tuesday, 02 November 2021

Subject	Funding for Rural Youth Provision
Report by	Councillor Letitia Smith Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism
Supporting Officer	Nicole Rickard Head of Communities Nicole.rickard@eastssuffolk.gov.uk 07766998074

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	Bungay & Wainford Deben Halesworth and Blything Kelsale and Yoxford Melton Orwell and Villages Rendlesham and Orford Southwold Wickham Market Wrentham, Wangford and Westleton

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

To seek growth funding to pilot a project to enable the development of sustainable youth provision in rural communities in East Suffolk.

Options:

The need for this project has been identified over a number of years and the Covid-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the challenges faced by young people in all areas of the county, but specifically in rural communities in East Suffolk where there are specific challenges around access to services and the level of youth provision. Covid impacts have been identified in relation to education, employment, emotional wellbeing, loneliness and levels of physical activity in young people.

East Suffolk Council has funded some pre-pilot activity to be delivered by Community Action Suffolk through the Covid-19 Community Recovery Fund to test this approach.

Recommendation/s:

That Cabinet approve an additional £101,650 for a two-year Rural Youth Support project, to be delivered by Community Action Suffolk, to work alongside communities in the four most rural Community Partnership areas to develop additional youth work provision.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

Regular updates will be provided by Community Action Suffolk and quarterly update meetings will be held to evaluate progress and outcomes. Community Action Suffolk will be working alongside the four Community Partnerships and the four Communities Officers that support communities in these areas.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

The Council's Enabling Communities Strategy emphasises the importance of enabling communities of interest as well as communities of geography, with young people being a key group within the Age protected characteristic identified within the Equality Act 2010.

Environmental:

None

Equalities and Diversity:

Age is one of ten Protected Characteristics identified by East Suffolk Council (the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act plus deprivation/socio-economic disadvantage). 20.9% of the East Suffolk population is aged between 0-19 (compared to 23.7% in England).

Key issues for young people include deprivation, low aspiration, low educational attainment, high number of NEET's, mental health & wellbeing, lack of activities, access to affordable & accessible transport.

It is clear that this project will have a positive impact on young people in East Suffolk, specifically those living in rural communities. This will complement the Youth Focus Suffolk project which is targeting nine more urban wards in East Suffolk as part of a countywide programme.

Financial:

This proposal, if agreed, would cost the Council an additional £101,560 for a two-year project.

In the Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) report to Full Council on 24 February 2021 it was reported that for 2021/22 only, Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (SPSL) have agreed that their share of pooling benefit from the Suffolk Business Rates Pool will be distributed to the pool members, to potentially provide a further buffer against reductions in business rates income if required.

The SPSL share is generally utilised for community and economic projects. The MTFS indicated a firm intention for East Suffolk to retain its SPSL element in a earmarked reserve and use it to continue to promote valuable projects of this nature, a number of which represent a continuation of community response/recovery and economic recovery work in respect of the pandemic. The proposal in this report firmly fits this criterion. Technically, due to accounting timing differences regarding realisation of this SPSL share, this will initially be funded from the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve that currently contains accumulated Pooling Benefit.

Human Resources:

None directly, although the four relevant Communities Officers will work closely with the Community Action Suffolk project lead and enable delivery of the project in their Community Partnership area.

ICT:

None

Legal:

A simple Grant Agreement would be co-produced with Community Action Suffolk, including the key outcomes included in paragraph 3.4 below.

Risk:

The main risk is lack of take up from rural communities as this model depends on activating and engaging local volunteers to work alongside paid staff to identify the needs of young people and develop solutions to those needs.

External Consultees:

This proposal has been developed in conjunction with Community Action Suffolk.

Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the [Strategic Plan](#) which are supported by this proposal:

(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)

**Primary
priority**

**Secondary
priorities**

T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How does this proposal support the priorities selected?

Seven of the eight East Suffolk Community Partnerships (P06) have identified some aspect of support for young people as one of their priorities. The specific needs identified include education, opportunities, aspiration, services, facilities, activities, physical activity and mental well-being.

It is clear from studies on the impact of Covid-19 that young people have experienced a range of negative impacts and that there are concerns about the longer-term manifestations of these impacts. The Councils priority around 'taking positive action on what matters most' (P07) means that we use data to identify specific issues, in this case the needs of young people in the District post-Covid, and we want to try to tackle gaps in provision and support for young people by enabling action to be led by local communities. This priority also specifically highlights the needs of rural communities.

The priority around health, wellbeing and safety (P08) includes specific reference to helping individuals and communities to be more resilient and achieve their full potential.

This project aims to increase the resilience of young people, their families and their communities through a model where communities are enabled to develop solutions to the needs identified by their young people.

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	Young People have been identified as a priority for the Community Partnership Board through its Covid Response and Recovery work, and by seven of the eight East Suffolk Community Partnerships. The specific needs of young people in rural communities have been identified through rural proofing work undertaken by the Community Partnerships.
1.2	A report by the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH) (Feb 2021) highlights the number of challenges caused by the pandemic which disproportionately affect young people aged 10 -24. These include loneliness, mental health concerns, lack of access to health services, unemployment, a widening education gap, and exacerbation of financial and health inequalities. The report concludes: <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“Lots of young people are going to need help in the months and years ahead. Some of the workforce/ organisations best placed to deliver this, such as the youth sector, have been hardest hit. This needs acknowledging and correcting. There is not one programme or intervention that is going to be the “quick fix”. We can start to put mitigating actions in place now.’</p> (Association for Young People's Health, 2021)
1.3	Suffolk County Council and Community Action Suffolk, working to the Collaborative Communities Board, have recently launched a new Youth Focus Suffolk project which focusses on 37 wards of interest across the County, including the following nine wards in East Suffolk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldeburgh and Leiston • Beccles and Worlingham • Carlton and Whitton • Carlton Colville • Gunton and St Margaret's • Harbour and Normanston • Kirkley and Pakefield • Oulton Broad • Western Felixstowe
1.4	These are all wards with higher populations of young people, including six in or adjacent to Lowestoft. Youth Focus provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth work training - 121 support and information for organisations and groups - Peer support network - Online resources, information on funding and training via https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/advice.page?id=e3Mluv4crYg

1.5	The proposed project addresses the needs of rural communities, outside the main settlements, and is therefore supplementary and complementary to the wider Youth Focus programme.
1.6	The Holiday Activity Fund (HAF), which is funded at Suffolk level, but which ESC staff co-ordinate at a local level, is delivered across the District but as might be expected is focussed on more urban communities and market towns. There is therefore less likelihood that young people from more rural communities will be able to participate.
1.7	The Council supports the Youth Voice website which provides an opportunity for young people to raise issues which are then fed into the relevant Community Partnership meeting – this can be found at Youth Voice » East Suffolk Council
1.8	We also facilitate the East Suffolk Youth Priority Action Group which brings together a range of practitioners working with young people across the District, the Waveney Youth Council and an annual Youth Take Over Day across the District.

2 Current position

2.1	Based on the work undertaken by the Community Partnerships to define their priorities, the rural proofing programme undertaken by all eight Community Partnerships and supported by Community Action Suffolk, and a range of data around the impact of Covid-19 on young people, a project proposal has been developed by the Communities Team in conjunction with Community Action Suffolk to address the specific needs of young people in the four most rural Community Partnership areas.														
2.2	A range of needs in relation to young people have been identified through the Community Partnerships, as follows: <table border="1" data-bbox="304 1196 1369 1749"> <tr> <td>1. Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and villages CP</td> <td>Education, Opportunities and Aspirations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and villages CP</td> <td>Tackle social isolation and loneliness for all age groups including young people</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and villages CP</td> <td>Facilities, activities, and employment for young people</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Felixstowe Peninsular CP</td> <td>Education – aspirations, ambitions, and standards</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Framlingham, Wickham Market and villages CP</td> <td>Developing opportunities for young people</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Lowestoft and Northern parishes CP</td> <td>Tackle childhood obesity</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Woodbridge, Melton and Deben Peninsular CP</td> <td>Youth Engagement, opportunities, and services</td> </tr> </table>	1. Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and villages CP	Education, Opportunities and Aspirations	2. Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and villages CP	Tackle social isolation and loneliness for all age groups including young people	3. Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and villages CP	Facilities, activities, and employment for young people	4. Felixstowe Peninsular CP	Education – aspirations, ambitions, and standards	5. Framlingham, Wickham Market and villages CP	Developing opportunities for young people	6. Lowestoft and Northern parishes CP	Tackle childhood obesity	7. Woodbridge, Melton and Deben Peninsular CP	Youth Engagement, opportunities, and services
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3 How to address current situation

3.1	The proposed project will focus on the four most rural Community Partnership areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and villages Community Partnership (south of the CP area)
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Carlton Colville, Kessingland and Southwold Community Partnership (west of the CP area adjoining the above) 3. Framlingham, Wickham Market and villages Community Partnership (north of the CP area adjoining both of the above) 4. Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Community Partnership area
3.2	The aim of the project is to work alongside communities in these areas, offering practical, targeted support to develop sustainable youth work provision, identifying needs and enabling new activity – all in conjunction with young people.
3.3	<p>The two main elements of the project are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruiting and training trusted volunteers in individual communities – potentially capturing some of the volunteer energy generated during the pandemic. The CAS offer would be a flexible super-localised approach, which would involve working closely with community groups and individuals to build their confidence and capacity. This includes focussed one to one support to help the groups constitute themselves, address any barriers they may come across and generally following the process alongside them 2. At the same time outreach and engagement activities would be undertaken with young people to ensure that their needs and assets are fully understood, with the aim of bringing community groups, volunteers and young people together to shape the long-term provision
3.4	<p>The project will recruit rural youth development officers and sessional youth workers to facilitate this work. It is anticipated that the project will focus on two to three areas of East Suffolk at a time – offering 4 months of targeted development work, before moving on to the next areas. The work in each area could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Youth Participation’ training for Parish Councils and community groups to build understanding of effective youth engagement - Youth development workshops in the local communities - Localised mapping of youth provision in the area and creation of local partnerships / networks - Recruiting and training a team of local volunteers to develop provision in each neighbourhood - Establishing strong partnerships with schools - Undertaking outreach youth work sessions in each area to build relationships and participation from young people. - Working alongside the volunteer team and young people to co-produce the programme of activities for the area.
3.5	Through the Youth Focus network, the project will work closely with other youth organisations working in more urban communities to create interesting and engaging opportunities for young people and volunteers, for example digital youth work. The Leaders in each community would be included in the Youth Focus peer support network - a support group for similar projects at a Suffolk level – as well as the East Suffolk Youth Priority Action Group for more local, ongoing support.
3.6	Each community model will be unique depending on the needs of that community, the needs of young people and local assets including young people themselves. The emphasis will be very much on one-to-one support with whatever the community needs help with based on the needs identified by the young people in that area – for example setting up a new group (with a constitution and appropriate policies), reconfiguring an existing group, developing a project plan and/or seeking funding. The needs and structure might be quite different in each

	area - in one cluster of villages it might be setting up a carpool to get young people to provision in the local town, in another it might be taster activity sessions, another it might be a youth night at the local pub and another it might be more traditional youth work sessions. In some communities the needs might be more physical e.g. a youth shelter, skate facility and/or youth café.
3.7	The overall aim is to build capacity within local communities to develop youth provision that meets the needs of local young people. At the end of the project the intention is that communities will feel empowered and equipped with the knowledge and tools that they need to continue to offer youth provision in partnership with young people.
3.8	The total cost of the two-year project is £101,560. This includes project staff, training, travel, equipment and networking events, workshops and training for community group. It also includes a £10,000 development fund for community groups to apply to for funding to start up new activities (match funding may be available through their Community Partnership and other sources at a Suffolk level, for example through the Suffolk Community Foundation).
3.9	Key Outcomes for East Suffolk young people and their communities would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communities feel more confident and equipped to engage with, support and work with their young people - Residents feel more connected with others in their community, reducing isolation and loneliness - Intergenerational relationships are strengthened within the community, supporting emotional wellbeing across age groups. - Enhanced youth work skills through quality training provision - New opportunities for volunteering created and supported, positively impacting mental health. - Improved emotional wellbeing, health and happiness for individuals - Improved family and community cohesion - Increased engagement in extra-curricular activities for young people, encouraging positive choices. - Reduction in anti-social behaviour, substance misuse or offending - Increased participation in active leisure and healthy lifestyle activities - Increased aspirations, successful transitions into education, employment and training post 16

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	There is strong evidence of unmet need in rural communities in terms of a range of issues impacting the lives of young people and emerging data that demonstrates that the impacts of the pandemic are being felt more in deprived, rural and coastal communities.
4.2	This project complements the Youth Focus work funded by Suffolk County Council focussed on nine more urban/populated wards in East Suffolk and provides an opportunity to develop, evolve and test a model for enabling sustainable youth provision in rural communities.

Appendices

Appendices:

None.

Background reference papers:

None.