



# MEETING of Yate Town Council's Environment and Community Committee

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE** of **Yate Town Council** to be held at Poole Court on **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024** between 7.00pm - 9.00pm for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the Agenda below.

Hayley Townsend  
Town Clerk

## Agenda

*In the exercise of Council functions, Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and the need to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Council also has a duty to tackle discrimination, provide equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivering services under the public sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010.*

*In the event of a fire alarm or other emergency (signalled by a continuously ringing bell), please exit the Council Chamber and leave the building through the nearest fire exit or safest evacuation route. Please meet by the flag pole in the car park. (NB: The nearest fire exit is located at the end of the corridor. (Exit the Council Chamber and turn right)).*

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act 2011

*Members who consider that they have an interest are asked to: (a) State the item number in which they have an interest, (b) The nature of the interest, (c) Whether the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, non-disclosable pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest.*

3. Public Participation Session with Respect to Items on the Agenda



5. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Environment and Community Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023. [Click here for minutes](#)

6. To consider the following Items on the Clerk's Report:

**Item 1 Items for Discussion/Requiring Resolution or Recommendation to Full Council**

- 1/1 Consultations
  - a) Urgent Consultations – To receive any urgent consultations
- 1/2 Care4Calais
- 1/3 Localism Contract 2024/2025 – 2026/2027
- 1/4 Kingsgate Park Car Park
- 1/5 Sunnyside Playing Field: Ball Catch Net
- 1/6 Yate & District Bowls Club Sponsorship
- 1/7 Security Updates
- 1/8 Youth Strategy Review

**Item 2 Items to be Received**

- 2/1 Estates Manager's Report
- 2/2 Status of all Groups that report to the Environment and Community Committee
  - (a) Venues Report
  - (b) Community Engagement Report
  - (c) Allotments Sub-Committee
  - (d) Climate & Planet Sub-Committee
  - (e) Events Sub-Committee
  - (f) Joint Parishes Consultative Committee
  - (g) Old Yate Sub-Committee
  - (h) Public Rights of Way, Commons and Greens Sub-Committee
  - (i) Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies
  - (j) Town Centre Strategy Group
  - (k) Yate Ageing Better, Health & Wellbeing Sub-Committee
- 2/3 Consultation Responses
- 2/4 Outstanding Items
- 2/5 Youth Commission
- 2/6 Out of Parish Provision

**Item 3 Confidential Items**

3/1 Confidentiality Confirmation

*To RESOLVE that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it is advisable in the public interest that any members of the press or public present be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw.*

- 3/2 Confidential Items;  
To receive any urgent confidential items.
- 3/3 To RESOLVE to return to public session.

**Item 4 Consideration of Impact of Decisions on Climate, Planet and Waste**

**Item 5 Consideration of Items to be Published via Social Media/Press**

# Clerk's Report

## Yate Town Council Meeting of the Environment and Community Committee 23 January 2024

### Clerk's Report

#### Item 1 Items for Discussion / Requiring Resolution or Recommendation to Full Council

##### 1.1 Consultations

###### a) Urgent consultations

To receive any urgent consultations.

##### 1.2 Care 4 Calais – Support Asylum Seekers in South Gloucestershire

Further to an informal meeting with representatives from Care4Calais on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the below information was subsequently received;

*Our main proposal would be a donation drive, either in the form of:*

- *A shoes & rucksacks collection day in Yate at a local town hall or community venue*
- *An evening event, likely a fundraiser and talk about refugee integration & community benefits*

*Keen to hear your thoughts and thank you again for your support of our work.*

To consider recommendation from nominated Councillors (Cheryl Kirby, Ben Nutland and John Ford):-

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Yate Town Council support the charity by means of use of a Town Council facility to enable a collection day and evening event to raise awareness, at nil cost.

##### 1.3 Localism Contract 2024/2025 - 2026/2027

The contract for the Localism Agreement has been provided by South Gloucestershire Council; this will run from 2024/25 until 2026/27. (Appendix 1)

Officers are reviewing the Dog Bin Maintenance service and investigating where savings can be made by taking part of this service in house, as similar to previous years.

An update will be provided at the meeting.

Members to consider information received and agree way forward in relation to entering into the Localism Agreement 2024 - 2027 with South Gloucestershire Council.

#### **1.4 Kingsgate Park Car Park**

Through Luke Hall MP, we received correspondence below from a resident regarding the car park at Kingsgate Park.

*'A couple of years back I questioned why Yate Council hadn't extended the car park for Kingsgate Park. I don't recall the lady's name who came back to me. I was told there was no plans to spend money extending the car park. Since then a Fitness centre has been installed, and recently various other equipment has been installed, since vandalised by youngsters.*

*This of course draws in more people to the Park, but no adequate parking has been provided. I am now questioning the validity of spending public money while not making provision to protect the residents living close to the park.*

*It seems to me there is an agenda here which needs addressing. I feel the block denial of the Council to protect the residents who pay for their services are nothing short of scandalous.*

*Can I ask that you take this up with the Council, and quite soon before I make further moves to upset the equilibrium of the Council Members of Staff and Controllers. It is in their interest to spend the money we supply in the manner with which we want and need.*

*The cost of extending the car park is negligible compared to what has been spent so far and would give lots of relief to those of us who pay for it. If they cant do anything about the car park, then they should stop spending our money on items we don't need.*

*Can I ask how you would recommend I should escalate this issue please? And even have the council investigated for the obvious negligence displayed so far by this Council.'*

The Kingsgate Park car park issue has been discussed at previous Environment & Community Committee meetings where it was decided not to pursue the matter, as in order to accommodate further car parking, it would result in drastically changing the landscape of the park and the costs would be astronomical. To receive any further comments on this matter.

## 1.5 Sunnyside Playing Field: Ball Catch Net

A local resident has asked if Yate Town Council would consider installing a ball catch net behind the goal of the main football pitch at Sunnyside to stop footballs landing in their (and neighbouring) gardens. Most weekends the footballs have landed in the gardens. The residents are concerned that balls may also cause damage to some of their garden plants and furniture. There is already a ball catch net at the far end of the football pitch to protect a resident's garden.

Estimates for supply and installation of a ball catch net are in the region of £1,000.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Yate Town Council support the resident's request to install a ball catch net, which would also improve playability for the clubs.

## 1.6 Yate & District Bowls Club Sponsorship

Yate & District Bowls Club has emailed the following correspondence:

*'One of the things I am looking at is sponsorship for the club. This will enable us to update equipment, update our playing kit and help improve the club for the members and allow us to reach out to the community, inviting them to join us in our friendly club.'*

*We are looking for sponsors for our Shirt and website. One other thing is signage.*

*In many of the clubs we visit, we see signage around the ground with advertising. We are not a garish club, pretty traditional, so we would be looking for some advertising that is not too brash but blends in as much as possible with the surroundings.*

*Would it be possible to put up advertising on the fence, opposite the pavilion. At the moment there is a dark netting covering the concrete posts and in between.*

*The advertising boards could fit from one concrete post to the next, maybe 2 or 3 deep (downwards) with 7 or 8 rows available. I do not expect to use all the area available, it depends on how many sponsors we get.*

*It would cover an area not particularly appealing as it stands now. My idea to attach fixing to the posts from which the advertising boards could be secured to and removed with ease, if necessary.*

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Yate Town Council support Yate & District Bowling Club's request to advertise sponsorship on the fence opposite the pavilion but with some rules (i.e. a maximum size, maximum quantity of sponsorship boards, agree one area of the green so it does not appear all around the green, no cost to Yate Town Council, sponsorship boards fitted by the club etc).

## 1.7 Security Updates

A paper regarding site security will be discussed under the Confidential Items section of the Clerk's Report.

## 1.8 Youth Strategy Review 2024

- a. To receive and approve Terms of Reference for the Youth Strategy Sub-Committee (Appendix 2);
- b. To receive the notes of the meeting held on 21 December 2023 with representatives of the Youth Strategy Sub-Committee and approve way forward (Appendix 3), with reference to the **RECOMMENDATIONS** therein.

## 1.9 Yate Heritage Centre

To receive the confidential notes of the meeting of representatives of Yate Heritage Centre Trust, Yate Heritage Centre Management Committee and Yate Town Council, held on 19th of December 2024, in confidential session. (Item 3/1)

# 2. ITEMS TO BE RECEIVED

## 2.1 Estates Manager's Report

To receive Estate Manager's Report with items for noting. [Click here for Estate Manager's Report](#)

## 2.2 Status of all Groups that Report to the Environment & Community Committee

To **NOTE** the following;

Sub-Committee/Group	Date of Meeting/Update	Appendix
Venues	Report for the period	<a href="#">Click here for Venues Report</a>
Community Engagement Report (Resettlement and Equalities)	Report for the period 1 <sup>st</sup> November – 12 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	<a href="#">Click here for Community Engagement report</a>
Allotments Sub-Committee	The next steps are to consult with the Allotments Sub-Committee on how they wish to proceed with the project. i.e. hold an independent consultation at Abbotswood, join up the Abbotswood Friends Group in spring etc. Social media consultation etc.	

Climate & Planet Sub-Committee (C&P)

1. Preparing and sowing a wildflower margin around the Covid & Dedicated Memorial Fruit Orchard.
2. Resident's offer to use funds obtained from a grant for Fruit Trees at the Covid & Dedicated Memorial Fruit Orchard.
3. Investigations for solar street lighting at Lye Field.
4. Investigations into electric vehicles for YTC fleet.
5. MAF funding towards a recycled seat to be located at the Covid Memorial Orchard.
6. Investigation for an electric hook-up point in Kingsgate Park for the ice cream van has been identified by a South Gloucestershire Council Tree Officer who has been to site and looked into this. Further meetings have been held with South Gloucestershire Council regarding the power supply works and hook-up point for the works; a quote is awaited.
7. SGC Active Travel Grant £500 for bicycle storage at the Armadillo;
8. Spring flowering bulbs have been planted into existing borders near to the Rodford Way and Westerleigh Road roundabout junctions. Phase 2 bulb planting will take place during autumn 2024.
9. A 'Greening Your High Street' application was successful with £3,500 awarded. These funds will be used to improve the biodiversity and green appearance to the front of the Station Road Halls.
10. As part of the WECA funding for round 2 (Goose Green, Tyndale Park, Heritage Centre & St. Marys Green, St. Marys Play Area, Lye Field & Howard Lewis), spring flowering bulbs were planted in the autumn. Trees will be planted during January & February and wildflower seed areas added in March.
11. Correspondence will be sent to Sodbury & Yate Clean Group for their input on a site to hold Spring Clean 2024
12. An all-weather surface has been installed around the Coronation Seat in Kingsgate Park. Materials used (Tiger Mulch) are recycled from shredded bus and lorry tyres. A Coronation planting scheme will be planted in March/April.
13. Replacement ceiling tiles have been fitted to improve insulation and cosmetic appearance at the YMCA. This was part funded by a Area Wide Grant and from the YTC Climate & Planet budget.
14. A bug hotel has been installed at the YMCA garden.

	<p>15. A free carbon survey was undertaken by WECA, at Yate Outdoor Sports Complex on 22.11.23. The outcome report will be circulated to the YOSC Liaison committee for consideration</p> <p>16. Yate Heritage Centre exhibition “Get orf my Land” will feature information on farming and climate change in the area.</p> <p>17. Armadillo Youth Café:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Club resources were donated/bought from charity shops.</li> <li>• Young people helped make recyclable poppies for Remembrance Sunday, and the wreath base was made from recycled newspaper and foraged foliage;</li> <li>• Materials used at the “Armadillo Advent” for arts and crafts event were sourced from recycled materials supplier, Children’s Scrap Store;</li> <li>• Morrisons supermarket donated milk due to be wasted, to youth and Warm Welcome sessions;</li> <li>• Adult colouring books for Warm Welcome visitors were sourced second hand.</li> </ul>
Events Sub-Committee	A doodle has been circulated to arrange the next meeting – some time in February.
Joint Parishes Consultative Committee	No update.
Old Yate Sub-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quotes are awaited for all the proposed refurbishment works in the Parish Hall &amp; YMCA. There are also some structural questions being investigated regarding walls in the Parish Hall toilets. All information will be provided at the next Environment &amp; Community Meeting in March.</li> <li>• A bug hotel has been installed in the YMCA Garden.</li> <li>• Marketing to offer the YMCA Garden to a community group, for green social prescribing, was released in wc 23.10.23. No volunteers or groups have come forward to date and periodic marketing of the opportunity will continue;</li> <li>• A draft artwork brief for building murals in Old Yate will be released in February 2024;</li> <li>• Seasonal lights have been installed outside the Station Road Halls, to be switched on/off as per following program of seasonal events: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Diwali (5day holiday 10.11.23-15.11.23): on by 5pm 10.11.23 - off 6am 16.11.23;</li> </ol> </li> </ul>



	<p>2. Hanukkah/Christmas (no switch off in between): on by 5pm 07.12.23 - off 6am 02.01.24;</p> <p>3. Chinese New Year (10.2.24-16.2.24 public holiday dates) on by 5pm 10.02.24 - off 6am 17.02.24;</p> <p>Following 17.02.24, the light units will be stored at the Parish Hall. Use/costs for installation of these lights for future events will be referred to the Events Sub-Committee.</p>	
Public Rights of Way, Commons and Greens Sub-Committee	No update	
Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies	Minutes received from outside bodies have been previously circulated to Members with a request to advise if they wish to discuss matters contained therein.	<a href="#">Click here to view Outside Bodies List</a>
Town Centre Strategy Group	<p>The minutes of the Town Strategy Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 <a href="#">Click her for minutes</a></p> <p>The next meeting of the Town Strategy Group will be held on 8 April 2024.</p>	
Yate Ageing Better Health & Wellbeing (YABHW) Sub-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dodington Parish Council awarded grant funding to Warm Welcome for £1,200 towards heating costs and free refreshments at Pop Inn Café, Armadillo Youth Café (inc. Senior Cinema, Saturday Community Cinema and Relaxed Cinema), Yate Heritage Centre and Poole Court</li> <li>• SGC Community Hub commission opportunity in Yate was awarded to Southern Brooks. A meeting request has been received;</li> <li>• Updates for the following projects (including funding applications) are included within the Venue Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pay What You Can (PWYC) lunches</li> <li>2. Memory Café</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Relaxed Cinema</li> <li>• Relaxed Museum</li> <li>• Warm Welcome</li> </ul>	

## 2.3 Consultations

### a) Consultation Responses

Consultation Name	Link / Appendix	Date received	Closing date	Notes
South Gloucestershire Council - Library Services	<a href="#">Click here for consultation</a>	18.10.23	10.1.24	To <b>NOTE</b> no comments were received or submitted.
South Gloucestershire Council - Late Night Street Lighting	<a href="#">Click here for consultation</a>	18.10.23	10.1.24	To <b>NOTE</b> no comments were received or submitted.
South Gloucestershire Council - Waste Less Recycle More	<a href="#">Click here for consultation</a>	6.10.23	7.1.24	To <b>NOTE</b> no comments were received or submitted.

### b) South Gloucestershire Council - Protecting & Enhancing the Common Consultation

With reference to the above consultation that closed on 3 November 2023.

To **NOTE** the following update from South Gloucestershire Council's Commons and Biodiversity Officer;

*'I would like to give you an update on the progress of work on The Common. We have now received and analysed the full survey feedback from the public survey and I would also like to give you an update on my next steps.*

*Here are the [full engagement survey results](#). An interesting read. We had a lot more responses than were expected which is excellent, it goes to show how passionate people are about the common. Responses are really positive and constructive, particularly towards wildflower enhancements, water interventions and animal homes (e.g. bird boxes), less supportive of tree planting, dog restrictions and grazing.*

*Access and maintenance issues such as signage and path condition have been highlighted as key issues for many people. This doesn't come across very clearly in the engagement results but has been mentioned many times in person.*

*What I am doing next:*

- *Write up a summary of the survey results, send people the survey results, give thanks for their feedback, publicise the upcoming volunteer orchard event and Friends group and give a summary of what happens next (e.g. drawing up a vision, investigate external funding opportunities, working with friends, water course maintenance.)*

- *Send this to stakeholders, friends and those who left email addresses on survey. Follow consultation protocol regarding press releases and social media.*
- *The full survey results will be put on the South Gloucestershire Council consultation web pages.*
- *Continue to work up the final vision including mapping BNG (biodiversity net gain) opportunities.*
- *Implement some water course maintenance this winter. Details to be confirmed but this involves small woody debris dams on the stream to slow the flow. Likely to be Jan-march.*
- *Plan for potential tree planting this winter. This is dependent on the details of the final plan and BNG details. For information we are likely to do tree planting but to do this in phases. Initial tree planting would be small scale and within/ very close to some of the existing hedges.*
- *Investigate the details of Section 106 funding and the opportunities to use this for improving access points and/or maintenance such as path conditions and signage.*
- *Work with community partnerships regarding opportunities for animal homes e.g. bat group installing and maintaining bat boxes.*
- *Work with the Friends and Volunteer Group Support Officer to see how we can reinvigorate and support the Friends.*
- *Continue to work with enforcement team regarding PSPOs and dog control options*
- *Assess the feasibility of grazing – fencing, shelter and water requirements, costs vs BNG income etc.*

*I would like to contact other stakeholders and the public regarding the survey results and next steps in the next few days so they don't have to wait for too long after responding to the survey and to be able to promote the upcoming volunteer task in the orchard. Please let me know if you have any queries or comments before I send this out.*

*Thank you for your help and support with this.'*

To **NOTE** that Councillor Willmore responded to SGC asking that drawings are displayed on field gates, along with an explanation of what is to be done and why, and how the current flooding issue will be reduced.

## **2/4 Outstanding Items**

To **NOTE** status of pending log. Insert new link [Click here for outstanding items log](#)

To further **NOTE** that correspondence has been sent to South Gloucestershire Council to request that the below lease negotiations are held off until Spring 2024 when community asset transfer options will be available which may enable freehold transfers;

- Witches Hat
- Land at Ridgewood

- Sunnyside pitches
- Yate Common

## **2/5 Youth Commission 2024**

### **To NOTE:**

- Draft service schedules and front-end contract for the 2024 YTC youth provider tendering exercise is currently under review with contract services at YTC solicitor provider;
- Following communication with the current provider, Learning Partnership West (LPW), LPW confirmed TUPE does not apply to the current YTC youth contract and employees working on the YTC contract would be assigned to other roles in LPW if the YTC contract was not renewed. The 2024 contract will indemnify YTC from TUPE;
- Officers aim to release the 2024 Youth Commission contract for tender (for x1 month from release date) by the end of January 2024 (subject to legal advice being returned within this timeframe).

## **2/6 Out of Parish Youth Provision**

### **To NOTE:**

- A funding application to Dodington Parish Council (DPC) for investment in 2023/2024 youth services at Armadillo Youth Café and costings for 2024/2025 for Dodington residents is due to be submitted in January 2024. This was delayed due to reduced officer capacity and an influx of new registrations at Armadillo youth sessions, which needed to be imputed to inform the data in the funding application;
- A meeting between YTC members and Sodbury Town Council (STC) was held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023, with costings for investment in 2024/2025 youth services at Armadillo Youth Café submitted to STC for Sodbury residents. STC has considered the information and requested that a grant application be submitted in April 2024 for consideration.

## **Item 3. Confidential Items**

### **3.1 Confidentiality Confirmation**

To **RESOLVE** to enter confidential session if required: *That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it is advisable in the public interest that any members of the press or public present be excluded and they be instructed to withdraw.*

### **3.2 Confidential Items**

#### **a) Yate Heritage Centre**

To receive the confidential notes of the meeting of representatives of Yate Heritage Centre Trust, Yate Heritage Centre Management Committee and Yate Town Council, held on 19th of December 2024 and to approve the recommendations therein. (Confidential Appendix 4)

b) To receive any urgent confidential items.

### **3.3 To RESOLVE to return to public session.**

#### **Item 4. Consideration of Impact of Decision on Climate, Planet and Waste**

To consider if there are any impacts on climate, planet and waste following items discussed and decisions taken during this meeting.

(YTC has adopted UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals, *The Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.* [click here](#) to find out more).

#### **Item 5. Consideration of Items to be Publicised via Social Media / Press Release**

To identify any items to be promoted and publicised via Social Media / Press Release etc.

## Department for Environment and Community Services

Hayley Townsend  
Yate Town Council  
Poole Court  
Poole Court Drive  
Yate  
South Gloucestershire  
BS37 5PP

Date: 07/12/2023  
Your Ref:  
Our Ref: ECS/SC/LOCAL24  
Enquiries to Gary Meddick  
Section: StreetCare Design & Operations  
Tel: 01454863696  
Fax:  
E-mail: gary.meddick@southglos.gov.uk

Dear Hayley  
**Ref: Localism 2024/25**

Please find below localism maintenance charges for the period 2024/25 based on the current service level. The annual uplift calculated from the BCIS GM87 indices between August 2022 up to August 2023 has risen by 4.19%.

Below is a breakdown of service costs for your council for the period 2024/25.

FEATURE TYPE	UNITS	MEASURE	Total
AMENITY GRASS	m <sup>2</sup>	93,153.96	£17,026.88
Carbon Reduction Project Refund (From July 2023)	m <sup>2</sup>	10,602.57	-£1,937.96
CONSERVATION CUT - SUMMER - Goose Green Way	m <sup>2</sup>	1,816.17	£479.83
SHRUB BED - MULCHED	m <sup>2</sup>	6,087.16	£6,439.19
DOG BINS	NUM	45.00	£8,836.53
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£30,844.47</b>

We will be implementing 3-year contracts for localism services, therefore the 2024/25 contract I have attached alongside this document will run until the end of 2026/27 financial year, more information regarding general terms and conditions can be found within the contract. Please do not hesitate to contact me or one of my team if you have any questions or wish to review your service level.

Yours sincerely



**Gary Meddick**  
**StreetCare Operations Manager**

**Terms of Reference**

**Youth Strategy Sub-Committee**  
**(responsible to Environment and Community Committee)**

**1. Membership**

1.1 Members as appointed by YTC.

**2. Delegated Business**

The Sub-Committee has delegated authority to deal with the following matters to conclusion, subject to YTC policy and budget:

2.1. To define aim, objectives, timeline, and brief for the youth strategy consultant work.

2.2 To appoint suitable youth strategy consultant.

2.3 To work with the chosen consultant in connection to the development of a youth survey, and resulting youth strategy.

2.4 To discuss and agree way forward on any other youth related matter connected to the findings of the youth survey.

**3. Referred Business**

3.1 To recommend any expenditure outside of the allocated budget.

3.2 Any other matter referred to the Youth Strategy Sub-Committee by Full Council or the Environment and Community Committee.

**NOTES OF THE MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE YOUTH STRATEGY SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023 FROM 2PM UNTIL 3PM AT POOLE COURT, YATE.**

**Present:** Councillors Nicola Clarke and Chris Willmore. YTC Community Projects Manager.

**1. Election of Chair for the meeting**

Councillor Chris Willmore was elected as Chair of the meeting.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gabriela Miron, Tony Davis, Ben Nutland; YTC Town Clerk and Finance Manager & RFO.

**3. External Consultant Quotes Sought re. Development of a Youth Survey, Resulting Youth Strategy**

Further to the resolution at Full Council on 05.09.23 (below), quotes were sought for external consultancy services:

***Minute 75. National Association of Local Council (NALC) Study Tour to Yate***

***RESOLVED*** Yate Town Council to seek quotes from an external consultant to update YTC's youth strategy, further to work undertaken by the consultant appointed by YTC in 2013. A sum of £5,000 be allocated from the Town Council earmarked reserves budget to fund the work and Councillors Nicola Clarke, Tony Davis, Gabi Miron and Chris Willmore to lead the appointment of the youth consultant and work with the chosen consultant in connection to the development of a youth survey and resulting youth strategy.

- a. The officer report circulated by email on 3 November 2023 (appendix 1) was **NOTED**;
- b. The service specification and quote provided by National Youth Agency (appendix 2) was **NOTED**;
- c. The service specification and quote provided by Jewel Consultancy for the Yate Heritage Centre Vision Workshop (appendix 3) was **NOTED**;
- d. The 2013 consultant youth survey undertaken by YTC (appendix 4) was **NOTED**;

It was further **NOTED**:



- i. Drivers for this review are different to the 2013 review, when the lack of commercial facilities for young people and changes to Local Authority Youth provision (withdrawal of Local Authority services) were known factors;
- ii. This work needs an empirical approach, and providers that are experienced in working with young people, including DBS checked;
- iii. There is a preference to work with a student for this review. Cllr Nicola Clarke could ask contacts at UWE Psychology department, and Cllr Chris Willmore could ask contacts at Bristol University and Bath Spa University, to recommend staff, colleagues or students to undertake youth strategy review work;
- iv. Costs from other consultants only be sought if University contacts cannot recommend consultants, and if NYA is not considered a possible provider.

It is **RECOMMENDED** to the Environment and Community Committee:

- i. Cllr Nicola Clarke and Cllr Chris Willmore pursue UWE Psychology department, Bristol University and Bath Spa University, for recommendations of staff, colleagues or students to undertake youth strategy review work;
- ii. Officers seek costings from National Youth Agency (NYA) for a localised research project service;
- iii. The Sub-Committee to be granted delegated powers to appoint suitable consultant (Delegated Powers already granted for the group to *work with the chosen consultant in connection to the development of a youth survey and resulting youth strategy, Full Council 05.09.23*).

#### 4. Member Feedback

Feedback from members of the Sub-Committee was **NOTED**.

#### 5. Specification of Youth Strategy (Works)

It was **RECOMMENDED**:

- a. Specification of services required:
  - i. Aim: To better understand what life is like for young people in Yate.
  - ii. Objectives: To identify what young people like and dislike about life in Yate; what improvements are needed to existing opportunities, and what new opportunities are needed, to improve the lives of young people in Yate.
- b. Timeline: to have a plan in place for the review, in time for the 2024 NALC study tour;
- c. Suppliers: see above item 3.d.

- d. Budget: £5,000 already set: further budget be negotiated if required;
- e. The following internal resources be utilised to support the work:
  - i. Armadillo Youth Café service;
  - ii. YTC's youth commission partner.
- f. YTC provide a dedicated young people's area at Yate Rocks 2024 event e.g. "teen chill zone", to showcase:
  - i. Local services and positive activities available to young people;
  - ii. what young people are doing locally – celebrating achievement.
- g. YTC consider a future event aimed at young people e.g. "Festival of Youth" (similar to Yate Ageing Better Health and Wellbeing format) as follows:
  - i. In a central location such as Yate Shopping Centre;
  - ii. On weekday during school holidays, if possible mid-August between exam results;
  - iii. To provide: free food, opportunity providers e.g. Duke of Edinburgh, local sports clubs, Off The Record, Diversity groups, Diversity Trust (LGBTQ+), local environmental groups, recruitment agencies,
  - iv. Councillors Chris Willmore to discuss the above idea at the next meeting of the Yate Strategy Group (Jan 2024).

## 6. Youth Council

An update was received from Councillors Chris Willmore and Nicola Clarke.

It was **RECOMMENDED**:

- a. Officers find examples of youth council models to bring back to the Working Group;
- b. YTC call a Joint Parishes Consultative Committee meeting (with Dodington Parish and Sodbury Town Council) to discuss opportunities to work together on a youth strategy review.

## 7. South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) / National Youth Agency (NYA) "Peer Review" Request (January 2024)

A request was received for YTC to participate in South Gloucestershire Council's Peer Review with the National Youth Agency in January 2024.

It was **RECOMMENDED**:

- a. SGC/NYA visit to young people's delivery (Tuesday or Wednesday evening, approx. 45mins, observing delivery, possibly speaking to young people and youth workers): YTC offer a visit to Armadillo provision, should SGC/NYA wish to visit LPW provision, they should do so during a SGC funded session. YTC Councillors to be present at visit; date/time offered is 18.01.24 between 5-6.30pm;
- b. Discussion on the SGC Youth Partnership (1hour): date/ time offered is 17.01.24 between 1-3pm, to take place at Armadillo Youth Café (if available).

It was **NOTED**, Officers to provide Councillors with the following information for the visit:

- a. Budget updates for all provision;
- b. Copy of new Youth Commission Contract.

## **8. Next Meeting**

To poll for a meeting in February 2024, if not required sooner.

# Appendix 1

## Report to Nominated Councillors Nicola Clarke, Tony Davis, Gabi Miron and Chris Willmore re Way Forward with Youth Strategy Review.

Acronyms:

YP – young people

NYA - National Youth Agency

CPM - Community Projects Manager

### 1. Context

Further to the resolution at Full Council on 05.09.23:

#### ***Minute 75. National Association of Local Council (NALC) Study Tour to Yate***

***RESOLVED*** Yate Town Council to:

*seek quotes from an external consultant to update YTC's youth strategy, further to work undertaken by the consultant appointed by YTC in 2013. A sum of £5,000 be allocated from the Town Council earmarked reserves budget to fund the work and Councillors Nicola Clarke, Tony Davis, Gabi Miron and Chris Willmore to lead the appointment of the youth consultant and work with the chosen consultant in connection to the development of a youth survey and resulting youth strategy.*

### 2. About National Youth Agency (NYA),

NYA is the national body for youth work, and the Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) for youth work in England. NYA offers guidance, support, advice, training, and staff development opportunities for youth workers and youth work organisations. (They describe themselves as the OFSTED of youth services, for more information click here [NYA](#)).

NYA have recently written the *Statutory guidance for local authorities' youth provision*, issued by the Secretary of State in relation to leisure-time activities and facilities for young people (NB: the Town and Parish Council sector is not bound by this statutory duty). This guidance *aims to support local authorities in understanding their duty as it stands today and in securing provision for young people in their area. It does not aim to standardise provision but rather to encourage local authorities to actively develop their own strategy, processes and partnerships, tailored to their local area.*

The new statutory guidance was developed *taking into account views from local authorities, regional youth work units, youth providers/practitioners and young people, as well as existing and past guidance along with best practice documents.*

Link to report: [Statutory guidance for local authorities' youth provision - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714212/Statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-youth-provision-2021.pdf)

### 3. Services Available from NYA

On 03.11.23, a meeting took place between YTC's Community Projects Manager (CPM)

and a representative from National Youth Agency (NYA), to discuss NYA services for youth strategy.

NYA provides general and bespoke services for youth service review and strategy; their services are provided by teams with expert knowledge and experience in children and young people's services and workforce including teachers, youth service leader's (for a wide range of young activities), former heads of education services and young people's departments, and researchers in the field of young people's development.

Some services can be commissioned as individual pieces of work. Packages of services are also available depending on the client need. Examples of services available are as follows:

- a. Steering group work – with leaders, young people, parents. Carers, other yp professionals (can be informed by client);
- b. Focus group work – with leaders, young people, parents. Carers, other yp professionals (can be informed by client);
- c. Local context review – a review of young peoples services in an area, analysis of existing provisions and needs/ gaps in provision;
- d. Survey of area – provider of youth services, template survey but can be adapted by client;
- e. Policy reviews e.g. Safeguarding;
- f. Workforce analysis e.g. assessment of staff experience, training, staffing resource, volunteer workforce;
- g. Strategy and recommendations (informed by services above).

#### **4. Costing for NYA Services**

- a. Baseline review package – some bespoke adjustments can be included, includes services such as remote surveys, survey of area/local context review, report of findings and recommendations, approx. £9,950 +VAT;
- b. Mid-range package – some bespoke features can be included, includes services such as remote surveys, survey of area, remote focus/steering group work, local context review, report of findings and recommendations; pricing starts at £15,000;
- c. Full service review package – bespoke to client, includes services such as remote surveys, survey of area, in person focus / steering group work, local context review, safeguarding review, workforce review, report of findings and recommendations, pricing starts at £30,000.
- d. In person service and presentations can be included at additional cost.

#### **5. Process for Working with NYA**

- a. Following the release of the Local Authority Statutory Duty report, NYA has received a high number of requests from local authorities for youth strategy services;
- b. If YTC is interested in working with NYA, YTC should advise NYA of the budget available, service level required and timeframe for delivery, and NYA will assess resources available to undertake the work;
- c. If NYA can undertake the work required by YTC, NYA will return a bespoke quote / service agreement, valid for 40days from issue. Work can commence after the agreement has been signed/returned and initial payment made;
- d. NYA recommend all strategy reviews take a minimum of 6 months;

- e. For NYA to meet YTC date of May 2024, to coincide with the NALC Study Visit about youth, they would need a confirmed agreement with YTC by mid-late November 2023.

## 6. A way forward – member response required

This is the first quote for youth strategy services sought by YTC. The industry is exceptionally limited in youth sector specific professional comparisons/ service providers. This work could be undertaken by independent consultants, and it was also suggested that students may be able to undertake this work as part of a research project however, these routes will likely lack professional sector specific skills, knowledge and experience, which are vital to the validity of the outcomes identified.

The NYA baseline service costings exceed the £5,000 budget allocated by Full Council therefore, if nominated members accept the NYA proposal, at any level, further budget of a minimum of £5,000 is required. NYA also require confirmation of YTC intent to order the services, and initial payment for the services, before the end of November 2023.

The Financial regulations state:

*Where it is intended to enter into a contract for the supply of goods, supply of services or the execution of works with an estimated value between £7,501 and £29,999.99 inclusive of VAT the Clerk may commit expenditure. **Three quotes must be sought (see 10.3 above).***

**Nominated members to provide responses to the following questions:**

- 1. Do the NYA options for youth strategy services meet YTC requirements? Do members wish to work with NYA, to finalise a youth strategy service specification and quote?**
- 2. If answering yes to question 1, which service level do members recommend YTC progress for a final service specification and quote from NYA:**
  - a. Baseline approx. £9,950**
  - b. Mid-range starting at £15,000**
  - c. Full service review starting at £30,000.**
- 3. Financial regulations - do members recommend:**
  - a. YTC recommend waiving the financial regulations, due to the specific expertise needed to undertake this work, and the limited services/ suppliers available to undertake the work;**
  - b. YTC attempt to get x2 other quotes from similar professional sector organisations for example [LGRC | Local Government Resource Centre: Excellence in Council Management](#) and SLCC ([SLCC | Local Council Consultancy](#)) for comparison prices for consultancy work. Although these organisations may not be able to provide comparative quotes specifically for youth strategy work.**

NB\* if nominated members agree to proceed with the NYA service/ quote, officers will provide a tabled recommendation to Environment and Community Committee meeting on 07.11.23, recommending the allocation of further funding from the Yate Town Council Earmarked Reserves Budget, subject to the service level recommended (minimum additional funding required is £5,000 for baseline package); additional funding to be agreed at Full Council in January 2024.

The delay in approval from Full Council in January 2024, may require a request to NYA for an order in x2 parts until Full Council considers the additional funding. If this is not accepted by NYA, the agreement and commencement of the work will be on hold until after Full Council returns an outcome on the additional funding request.

## Appendix 2

# NYA Base Service Review



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## Proposed Delivery

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The NYA will conduct the review *and* produce a report for your organisation. The process of a review at this scale, takes approximately 3 months to conduct. Please note that scoping of Youth Provision within the local context will occur soon after project initiation to determine report structure owing to the large volume of evidence and data collection involved.

### Deliverables:

- Inception call (webinar)
  - Formulation of a steering group.
- Local Context
  - Geographical area confirmed (to be discussed during inception call)
- Analysis of Existing Youth Provision
  - Desk top research identifying all youth service providers in locality.
  - Check youth service providers identified in desk-top research with steering group to identify gaps.
  - Analyse statistics of young people's engagement in youth provision.
  - All provision mapped.
  - Youth provision analysis report drafted and published.
- Needs Analysis
  - Young people's survey promoted through local stakeholders.
  - Number of young people consulted to be confirmed in inception call.
  - Young people survey analysed, report created, and findings shared with steering group.
- Effective Youth Practice
  - Effective practice review.
- Gap analysis and Final Report
  - Review needs analysis against the current provision.
  - Identification of gaps as a result of the analysis.
  - Review against effective practice to compile a report summarising methodology, findings and recommendations.
  - Design and produce a final draft of report with recommendations.
  - Present findings and recommendations to steering group.

## Impact

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The review process will be informed by the NYA's expertise and wide range of knowledge in research and evaluation of the youth sector. This will ensure that the review will offer insight into the delivery of youth work within your organisation and/or local area.

The NYA is a recognised expert in the youth work sector. We deliver an annual Census of youth provision; publish the National Curriculum for Youth Work; and host Youth Work One, providing the sector with insight and data. The NYA offers credibility and thoroughness to the review process supporting Yate Town Council ambition to scope and review youth provision, identify impact and to build a high-quality youth work.

## Costs

Item	Total
Total Project Cost – Excluding VAT	£8,291.67
Total Project Cost – Including VAT	<b>£9,950</b>

*(Please note all costs are subject to change.)*

## Additional Optional Elements

### Local context

Create an analysis report of the local area in the context of young people, demographic and issues affecting young people

### Analysis of existing youth provision

Youth provision survey and data analysis

Youth service provider focus session completed x 3 focus groups

### Quality review

Quality practice self-assessment

### Safeguarding & risk management audit

Review of quality practice, policies and procedures with summary report

### Workforce review

Review and analysis of workforce with report and recommendations

### Needs analysis

Young Advisors - training, survey development input and steering group attendance.

Comms messaging and social assets developed by NYA for survey promotion

Young people focus groups x 3

Parents / carers survey

Report analysing local context and needs analysis

### Effective youth work practice

Literature Review and collection of case studies of effective practice

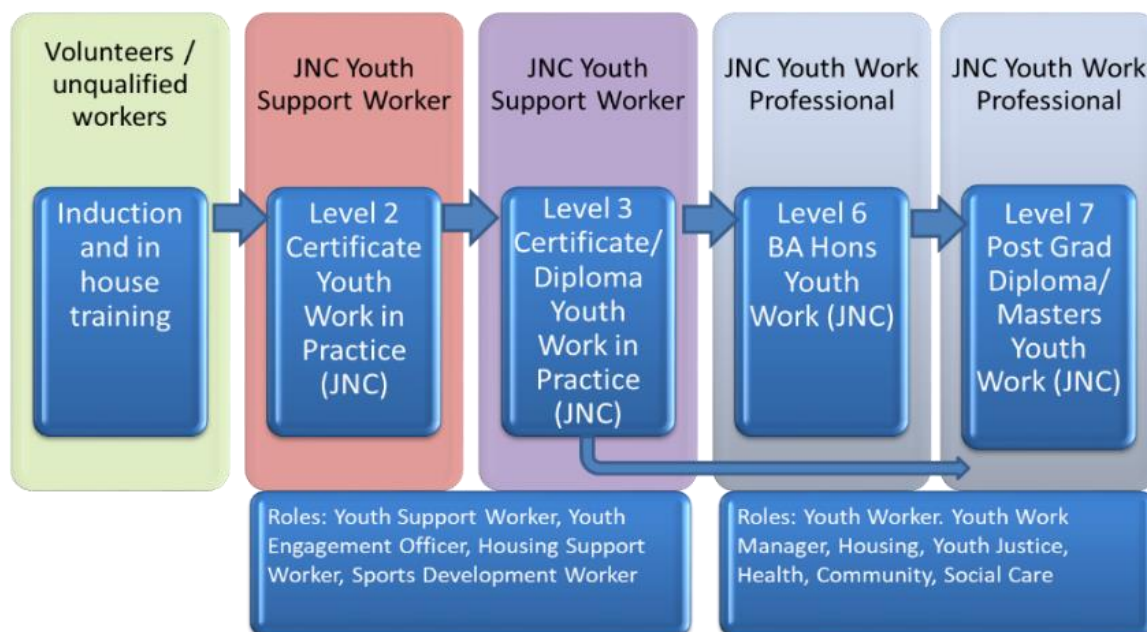
## Additional Services Provided by NYA

**Hear by Right** is a nationally recognised framework for best practice in young people’s participation. It is an organisational development tool that upholds best practice. It supports organisations to plan, develop and evaluate their participation practices and provision. It fosters a culture of development; a continual journey for keeping young people at the heart of decision-making. The *Hear by Right* framework is a resource for self-assessment, there is also the option to go for a formal assessment process to gain a national NYA award to recognise and celebrate great practice in participation. NYA offer a range of training options around this topic for staff and young people and would welcome the opportunity to discuss any requirements for this with you.

The National Youth Agency **Quality Mark** framework focuses on improving youth work practice and recognising the impact youth work has on young people and communities. It is relevant to voluntary organisations, local authorities and other settings where youth work takes place. Unlike some other frameworks the NYA Quality Mark doesn’t focus on internal policies and procedures, it focuses on the outcomes of the work the organisation does and the impact that work has on the young people it works with. The NYA works in partnership with the organisation we are assessing to develop functional action/improvement plans – importantly, we are experienced in providing coaching, training and support to achieve the standards set. NYA Quality Mark is a resource for organisations to use primarily as a self-assessment tool and has the opportunity to gain recognition through an award process.

### Youth Work Development and Learning Pathway

We believe young people deserve to be supported by highly trained, skilled workers. NYA validate all professionally qualifying youth work programmes across 60 higher education institutions. We are also a training and awarding body for youth work skills.



## The NYA

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The National Youth Agency is the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) for youth work in England and the national body for youth work. We have been raising awareness, improving quality and practice, and championing the importance of the youth sector in England for over 50 years and our role has never been more important.

Since 2019 we have been supported by funding from Department for Culture, Media and Sport to maintain our core PSRB functions, working with the UK Government to develop and inform national youth work policy and to establish sector quality standards. We have secured other diverse funding to deliver programmes which support our wider charitable mission: to transform the lives of young people through quality youth work. Additionally, The NYA uniquely upholds national qualifications and national occupational standards for professional youth work in support of youth workers and runs the Education Training Standards national committee to accredit youth work qualifications and coordinates a network of Higher Education Institutions for workforce development and academic research.

The NYA has extensive and recent experience in supporting local authority, and voluntary sector providers to review, evaluate and improve youth work provision. This includes an extensive review of Blackpool Council's youth work offer, published in 2022. In 2023, the NYA is working in partnership with the DCMS and Local Government Association to deliver the peer review of local authority youth work provision in three areas. Results will be published in 2023, and we hope to extend the Peer Review programme, later in the year.

## WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

**Date of proposal:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Client:** Yate Heritage Centre (Yate Town Council)

### Overview

Yate Heritage Centre is 22 years old, it's a unique facility in Yate, that hosts free community events, heritage and education services, and exhibitions, relating to arts, heritage and culture. In 2019, Yate Heritage Centre received Art Council Museum Accreditation, a significant achievement for a local heritage facility.

It is owned, funded, and operated by Yate Town Council. Daily, operations and activities are overseen by x1 full time Community Heritage Officer, x1 part time Education Assistant, a team of committed volunteers, and varying levels of support from stakeholder groups including:

- A Trust
- A Management Committee
- A friends group
- An events committee

Although the Heritage Centre has revised its short-term plans (usually every 3 years) it has not reviewed or updated its overarching strategy/ mission statement since it opened.

YHC needs a new "Vision", that keeps up with the culture industry while motivating and inspiring staff and stakeholders (new and existing), to ensure YHC achieves its true potential, and returns greater value for public investment.

- A stakeholder workshop was held in July 2023
- Between September and October 2023 there will be a public consultation to gain broader feedback.
- A 2nd and final half day workshop is needed (October/ November 2023)

### The Objectives

Facilitation of a 2nd and final half day workshop, hopefully in October/ November (dates tbc):

- To bring together new and existing feedback, to inform our Vision and action plan
- To contribute an impartial view of the feedback obtained, and actions needed.

### Summary of how these results will be met

Helene will work alongside you to design and develop plans for this workshop, creating an initial draft workshop plan for you to review, followed by a series of updates and changes to the plan as needed.

The workshop plan will be created after an initial meeting with you, to gather more information about the requirements and to share initial thoughts on design. It is usually necessary to have 1-2 follow up meetings with you to discuss the plans as they develop, as well as correspondence via e-mail.

Helene will agree with you what the outputs need to look like and what kind of write up (if any) is required, and how to link this workshop up with the outputs from Workshop 1 and the public

consultation. It is understood that you can offer minute taker (Community Projects Manager).

After the workshop, you will be offered (at no additional cost):

- 1) A debrief session (30 minutes) to reflect on the workshop and draw out key lessons learnt
- 2) An Impact Questionnaire and follow up session of 30-60 minutes (6 months post workshop) to help you to check back over progress and impact since the workshop.

Helene will visit the venue as part of the initial meeting.

**Technical/Project approach**

In line with the suggestions so far, facilitation using the World Café methodology is likely to be the best fit as this will allow cross pollination of ideas to a diverse group of people, allowing for structured but relatively informal discussions.

The outputs of the first workshop will feed into this workshop. Details of how this will work in practise will be outlined in the initial workshop plan but for example the tables could be divided up by question/heading with printed copies of the pre-vision notes on each table. The participants could be asked to build on/comment on or prioritise the different suggestions in each round of the World Café followed by a Focused Conversation in plenary to discuss the main findings.

**Project Deliverables**

Deliverable	Date
Finalised Workshop plan	tbc
Facilitation of Workshop 2	tbc
Debrief and follow up	tbc

**Supplied materials.**

Workshop general materials (pens, post it notes etc) will be supplied by Jewell Facilitation Ltd unless something specific or specialist is required. This will then be discussed with the client.

All venue costs and booking will be the responsibility of the client.

**Costing**

The following details the pricing for delivery of the services outlined in this proposal. This pricing is valid for 20 days from the date of this proposal.

SERVICES COST CATEGORY #1	PRICE
Workshop design, preparation and planning. Client liaison Venue visit Post workshop debrief Impact review <b>1 day total @ £650/day</b>	£650
Total Services - Category #1 costs	£650
SERVICES COST CATEGORY #2	PRICE
Workshop facilitation for half day workshop @£650/day	£325
Total Services - Category #2 costs	£325
SERVICES COST CATEGORY #3	PRICE
Travel	N/A
Total Services - Category #3 costs	N/A
SERVICES COST CATEGORY #4	PRICE
Documented deliverable of workshop outputs	TBC
Total Services - Category #4 costs	TBC
TOTAL COSTS	£975

**TOTAL COSTS: £975**

## Young people in Yate and their perspectives on leisure services and facilities *Research Report*

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28 August 2013

Rachel Lander

Prepared for Yate Town Council



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## Introduction

Yate is home to over 4,000 young people between 10 and 17 years of age (UK Office for National Statistics 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Yate's young people are recognised by South Gloucestershire Council as a priority area of social need. This is due to a variety of factors, including underperformance at school and low aspiration and attainment. Yate Town Council is committed to providing young people with opportunities for social engagement and development, and has a track record of substantial investments in youth services and facilities.

Recently, there have been changes in youth funding and provision across South Gloucestershire. During a year of transition, South Gloucestershire will transfer a significant proportion of management and administration responsibilities for youth leisure provision to Yate Town Council. Yate Town Council seeks greater knowledge about young people's knowledge and perspectives regarding leisure facilities and activities in order to assess how well it is meeting needs with available resources. This research will also help ensure that future provision employs resources effectively and efficiently.

To meet these objectives, Yate Town Council employed a researcher, a PhD student in the School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol, to conduct independent research with young people in Yate. The research project aimed to address the following questions:

- How do young people in Yate spend their leisure time?
- How satisfied are young people with existing leisure services and facilities?
- What else can youth leisure providers do to address the concerns of young people?
- How would young people like to engage with the Council to influence decision-making related to services and facilities for young people?

Research participants were recruited through one local school and through youth programmes, with the support of teachers and youth workers. In order to gather meaningful qualitative data, the project focused on young people aged 13 and 14 years old. Efforts to include another age bracket were not successful. Data was collected using qualitative methods: photo diaries and follow-up focus group discussions. A young people's advisory group was assembled to advise on the research methodology, and it is hoped they will support research dissemination and follow-up.

## Key findings

One notable outcome is that, overall, young people reported being satisfied with existing youth provision. Young people in Yate participate in a wide range of leisure services and facilities, including informal use of public spaces, such as parks, as well as participation in local clubs, lessons and sports.

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<sup>1</sup> According to 2001 census data. Data for 2011 isn't available for all parts of Yate but data for central and north Yate suggest the numbers of young people have increased since 2001.

Areas where Yate Town Council may wish to focus their efforts include: improving access to leisure activities for young people who have financial constraints and for young people who are marginalised (including lesbian, gay and bi-sexual young people), and tackling bullying to ensure that leisure services and spaces are safe and welcoming environments for all young people.

Yate Town Council may also wish to work with parents to increase awareness of safety and improve young people's independence and mobility, particularly in travelling to cinema and other venues outside of Yate using public transport.

An interesting finding of the research is that young people see a distinction between the spaces and services that adults use, and their own legitimacy in using public services and spaces. For example, young people are supposed to use the public leisure centre at specific times, and they are not supported to use the local shopping centre as a leisure space, although adults do. The Council may wish to encourage more intergenerational interaction and to encourage young people to feel ownership and responsibility for leisure spaces and services.

Another important outcome of the research relates to young people's relationship with Yate Town Council and their view of themselves, as citizens with a voice and influence. Young people feel they should have input into decisions about youth provision, but currently lack knowledge about how to influence these decisions. They also doubt whether their voices are really taken into account, even when the Council has conducted youth consultations. Yate Town Council should implement mechanisms for young people to interact with the Council, and ensure that young people are informed about what is happening and how to make their concerns known. Young people have the capacity and the desire to contribute to strategic decision-making about spaces and activities for young people.

Further areas for research include other age groups in Yate; gender-specific barriers and interests in relation to leisure activities and services, particularly sports; where and how bullying takes place, and ways to prevent it; and effective mechanisms for involving young people in decision-making at Yate Town Council.

## Theoretical background

This study is aligned with the 'sociological child' concept, which sees childhood as socially constructed, variable from one place to another, and understands children "as social actors, as competent research participants with particular communication skills that researchers can draw upon... and as forming a particular social group who are constrained by adult structures and practices in which they are located" (Morrow 2008:51).

Youth can be seen as a life stage during which individuals are relinquishing childhood roles, when they experiment and form identities which they may seek to demonstrate to themselves and others (Lobo 1999:28). Leisure time and space can be seen as an area where young people can test and express their independence, including through their interaction with the built environment in urban contexts and in public open spaces (Woolley 2006:55). In addition, leisure fulfils desires for pleasure, escape, release, excitement, relaxation and social status (Wearing et al. 2012:6). Leisure is often aligned with consumption, which often translates into young people being unwelcome in public spaces where they aren't actively consuming or spending (Lobo 1999:30, Valentine 2003:45).

Some researchers have noted that today's generation of children often do not have the same freedom to explore and move independently in communities, and spend more time in organised activities, compared to previous generations (Francis and Kental 2008:67, Skår and Krogh 2009:340, Woolley 2006:46). Reasons include parental fear of strangers, drugs, traffic and dogs. However, in reality these fears are often out of proportion with the actual risk (Skår and Krogh 2009:341, Woolley 2006:46).

Some proponents of this perspective argue that the provision of spaces specifically for young people are efforts to regulate and control young people's identities and use of public space (Jones 2008:196).

In contrast to the surveillance that controlled leisure spaces may enable, "deviant leisure creates a means for... adolescents to test the boundaries of independence through risk-taking behaviours, breaking rules and pushing the limits of societal norms." (Wearing et al. 2012:6). By violating rules and regulations, and deciding not to participate, adolescents can express resistance to adult-created structures and spaces and social norms. Wearing et al. (2012:10) note "deviance is one of a number of key elements that help to constructively shape adolescent self-identity".

However, there is also criticism that teenagers are not adequately considered in planning public open spaces (Lobo 1999). Woolley found that the provision of spaces specifically for young people, such as skate parks, may be an expression of control on the part of adults, but it may also be accepted by skaters and young people if they are included in the design and development.

## **Methodology**

### **Recruitment**

To collect meaningful qualitative data, the research focused on young people aged 13 and 14 years old. In refining the research proposal, it was agreed with the Yate Council sub-committee on youth provision to include some young people aged 16-17 years, but unfortunately no young people in this age group agreed to participate.

The research participants were recruited through Brimsham Green School and through youth programmes. Young people, in particular, are unlikely to participate in qualitative research unless they are recruited through people they know. Thus, the support of teachers and youth workers was critical to gain introductions to young people and to support recruitment.

Dawn Young, one of the youth workers, was a fantastic resource throughout the recruitment process and helped me navigate the environment to speak to the young people I hoped to include. Christina Stokes, Darren Whelan and other youth workers also provided valuable assistance in recruiting young people and helping with logistics for the focus groups.

Brimsham Green School agreed to participate in the research and several teachers contributed by disseminating information about the research to recruit participants. I visited several year nine classes to explain the research and the teachers, particularly Caroline Smith, the head of year nine, facilitated follow-up by collecting consent forms, sending reminders to students to bring in their cameras, and organising logistics (meeting room and students' schedules), to ensure that I could carry out the focus group discussions.

Unfortunately the other two schools that were approached, Yate International Academy and Culverhill School, declined to participate in the research. Efforts to recruit participants through outreach programmes and through the learning disabilities youth group were also unsuccessful.

Further detail about the recruitment process, including challenges, can be found in the 'Reflections and limitations' section of the report.

### **Composition of the research participants**

In total, 31 young people participated in the research. This included:

- 13 participants in the Brimsham Green School groups
- 5 participants from the Brimsham Green Youth Club
- 5 participants from St. Nicholas Youth Centre ('St Nicks' hereafter)
- 8 participants from the Armadillo Youth Venue and Café (the 'Armadillo' hereafter)

The young people who participated in the research were between 12 and 14 years of age, in years 8 and 9. Only two young people were 12 years old (their real ages came out after they

had been spoken to and invited to participate. It was thought that they were 13 or 14 years old to begin with).

Location:

- Most participants live in north Yate.
- Most of the young people from the Armadillo group attended Brimsham Green or Chipping Sodbury School.

Level of participation:

- 18 identified themselves as regular participants in organised activities and users of leisure services
- 11 said they did not participate in organised activities or utilise leisure services
- All young people said they use public facilities such as parks, shopping centres, and other public places

Minority groups and social care:

- One young person identified him/herself as living in care.
- Two young people said they had social workers.
- None identified themselves as having any disabilities.
- The group included a small number (4-5) young people who come from non-caucasian ethnic backgrounds (based on observation, not self-identified).

### **Young people's advisory group**

The youth workers involved in advising on the research project (Dawn Young, Christina Stokes, Graeme Riley and Darren Whelan) supported the idea of creating and supervising a young people's advisory group. The purpose of this group was to oversee the research and advise on research methods, implementation and research findings. It was intended to give young people greater ownership of the research and also to make the research more responsive to young people's needs.

The youth workers recruited 2-4 young people, aged 13-14 years old, from each of the main youth projects (Brimsham Youth Club, St Nicks and the Armadillo). Seven young people participated in the first meeting, together with three youth workers and the researcher.

The young people's advisory group first met in June and had the opportunity to learn about the research and suggest ways that they would like to be involved in the research. They helped refine the research methodology, and it was agreed that they would participate in the focus group discussions as co-facilitators. We agreed to discuss research analysis and dissemination at a later date, at which point they would decide whether they wanted to participate in those stages of the project.

As a result of input from the young people's advisory group, the methodology of the research was revised. While originally a small group of participants were to do photo diaries and photo-elicitation interviews, and a separate, much larger group would participate in focus groups, these activities were combined. The final research design included a much larger group of young people who would do photo diaries and who would all then be invited to participate in focus group discussions. This eliminated the need to have individual photo-elicitation interviews, which resulted in a savings in the budget, even after accounting for the cost of buying more digital cameras.

These changes were approved by the Yate Council sub-committee on youth provision. Following discussions with this sub-committee, it was also agreed to include two focus groups of 16- and 17-year-olds.

Because of the challenges and delays in recruitment, unfortunately there was not time to train the young people to help co-facilitate the focus groups or to participate in research analysis. There are plans to meet with the young people in September to share the findings of the report and to discuss research dissemination.

### **Data collection**

While the research plan was to recruit about 60 young people, the number that participated (31) was enough to hold five productive focus group sessions and produce good quality data about young people's leisure time and their views on youth activities and services in Yate.

The research planned to engage young people and collect data through two main methods. First of all, young people were asked to record their free time (evenings and weekends), through a visual diary, for one week (seven consecutive days). They were offered a digital camera (Vivitar Vivicam 46), but were also invited to use other visual methods of their choosing if they preferred. For example, drawing or collage. All young people who participated used the digital camera.

The young people were then invited to attend a follow-up focus group discussion, which took place within a week of finishing the photo diary. The focus group discussions each included 3-8 young people and were recorded using a digital recorder. An additional note-taker was present for two of the focus groups, to record non-verbal actions, but it was decided that this didn't add sufficient data to make it necessary for all of the groups.

The young people recorded their visual diaries for one week (seven consecutive days) over the period of Friday 12 July to Thursday 1 August 2013. Of the 26 cameras that were handed out, 17 young people returned them. Five of the young people experienced problems using the cameras and unfortunately their photo diaries were lost through technical difficulties, so the total number of visual diaries was 12. Three of the young people who produced visual diaries were unavailable to participate in the follow-up focus groups.

However, an additional 13 young people who did not participate in the photo diaries participated in the focus groups. This is because the young people from St Nicks who were given the cameras did not show up for the focus group, so the focus group from St Nicks was

composed of the young people who showed up for the youth club on the night that the focus group was scheduled. Because of problems recruiting young people from the Armadillo, there was not time in the schedule to include a week for photo diaries. Thus, these young people participated in a focus group discussion without doing the photo diaries first.

The focus group discussions took place between Monday 22 July and Wednesday 21 August. Focus groups with children who were recruited through Brimsham Green School participated in their discussions in a room provided at the school, during school hours. The young people recruited through youth clubs and the Armadillo participated in focus groups prior to the youth club activities, and at the Armadillo, respectively. The focus groups took between 45 minutes and one and a half hours.

Thus, the data includes a mixture of photos and verbal input from the focus groups, involving some young people who participated in both methods and some young people who could only participate in one method. The young people who had trouble using the cameras and lost their pictures were still able to provide a verbal account of their free time (rather than talking through their photo diary). Their recollection of their free time in the previous week was better than the accounts provided by those young people who hadn't been loaned a camera at all, but who participated in a focus group.

The focus group discussions were semi-structured and divided in three parts: 1) presenting visual diaries and discussing how the young people had spent their free time in the preceding week; 2) discussing leisure services and facilities that are available for young people, including what they enjoy, what is missing, problems and concerns; 3) how young people interact with Yate Town Council and how they would like to influence decisions about youth provision. For the St Nicks and Armadillo focus groups, the first part was adapted to a shorter conversation about how young people had spent their free time in the preceding week, since they had not done visual diaries. These focus groups were also slightly less structured than the other groups to adapt to the size of the groups, the expectation of the group (e.g. the St Nicks group had not planned to participate) and the materials that were available.

A third, supplementary method – a Facebook fan page – was employed in an attempt to engage greater numbers of young people. The Facebook page was promoted through the youth clubs and the Armadillo, and through the young people who participated in the research. It was launched at about the time the focus group discussions took place because it was thought that young people would be less inclined to participate in the more in-depth focus group methods if they could offer their opinions through Facebook. The youth workers were given administrative control over the Facebook page so they could monitor input and promote it through different channels.

Unfortunately, there was very little activity on the Facebook page. If there had been more time during school term, it would have been useful to engage the young people's advisory group in promoting the Facebook page.



## Results and discussion

### How young people spend their free time

Free time was defined as any time outside of scheduled school hours. Thus, it includes time (waking hours) spent doing homework or contributing to household cleaning, activities which young people may not necessarily include under ‘leisure time’.

Data collected through the photo diaries and the focus groups showed that during the time period under study, the majority of young people’s free time was spent at home or in public parks. This is no doubt a seasonal trend, given the good weather. A lot of time was also spent with technology – laptops, mobile phones, video game consoles (e.g. X-Box, PlayStation). Using Facebook and YouTube were popular individual hobbies, and a few of the young people also spent a substantial amount of time doing activities like swimming, drawing or training. Most young people reported doing an organized activity, or using a youth or leisure facility, at least twice during the week.

In addition to presenting their photo diaries, during the focus group discussions young people were asked to brainstorm all of the different activities and ways that they would spend their free time over the course of the year. They were then asked to group these activities in categories. This table represents how they visualize the different aspects of their free time. The young people defined four main categories: social time, sports and leisure activities, hobbies and ‘other’ (also called ‘boring stuff’).

Social time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hanging out with friends in public parks (Kingsgate, St Mary’s, the Cage)</li> <li>• Walking around Yate</li> <li>• Shopping centre (Bristol Cabot Circus, Cribbs Causeway)</li> <li>• Youth club</li> <li>• Family time (visiting grandparents, etc)</li> <li>• Holidays</li> </ul>
Sports and leisure activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yate Leisure Centre (swimming, the gym)</li> <li>• Club and team activities (football, swimming, boxing)</li> <li>• Music and dance lessons, drama classes</li> <li>• Riding, cycling, scooting, fishing</li> <li>• Games at home (skateboarding, kickboxing, foosball, trampoline, garden games, etc)</li> </ul>
Hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video games (X-box / PlayStation)</li> <li>• TV/Laptop (watching movies, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter)</li> <li>• Mobile phone and iPod (texting, music, apps, snapchat, instagram)</li> <li>• Reading, drawing, baking, eating</li> </ul>
Other (also called ‘boring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Cleaning my room or doing chores</li> </ul>

stuff')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel</li> <li>• Being 'in town' (with parents, as opposed to socializing with friends)</li> </ul>
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The categories highlight, to some extent, young people's perspectives about the main priority for different activities. While 'leisure activities' and 'hobbies' may seem quite similar in some ways, the way the young people grouped them show that leisure activities are seen as more active, group activities, while hobbies are on the whole more passive, individual activities. Interacting with friends is clearly the focus in activities that fall under 'Social time'. Interestingly, youth clubs fall into this category, suggesting that the activities organised as part of youth clubs aren't as important as having space and time to be with friends.

Importantly, all the focus groups that engaged in this brainstorming and sorting activity came up with the same categories. The names differed slightly, for example using 'hanging out' instead of 'socialising', but in common usage these terms essentially mean the same thing.

Most of the young people said they have control over how they spend their free time. Their parents sometimes want them to visit grandparents or insist they spend more time on homework or sports, but usually they can choose how they spend their time.

Most young people said they would like more time to hang out with friends. This was a particular concern of young people who participated in a lot of organised activities and team sports.

Young people did not highlight financial issues as a major barrier for participating in leisure activities and services. However, this could have been because the data collection and discussion took place in groups, and young people who face financial barriers may not have been comfortable raising this issue in front of their peers. On the Facebook page, one young person said that he/she would like to have access to job opportunities that are remunerated. Many young people perform volunteer roles, but these are not paid positions.

### **Opinions on youth services and facilities**

When asked how satisfied they were with how they spend their free time, most young people reported that they were generally satisfied. When asked what they thought about what Yate had to offer, many young people reported less satisfaction or did not have any formed opinion to share.

Discussions about satisfaction with youth provision in Yate suggested that in many cases, young people have not developed clear opinions about how satisfied (or not satisfied) they are. In some respects, this suggests that they feel they do not have much choice in the matter. However, most of the young people who participated were not dissatisfied and their discussions about youth provision reflected positively on the different options and facilities available.

The exception to this was the focus group at St Nicks. The young men that participated in this group felt there was 'nothing to do' in Yate and they felt that young people in north Yate were prioritised by local authorities. For example, they noted that the skate park was not convenient for them and although they had asked for a skate park to be built in south Yate (in another recent consultation), this had not been acted upon and they felt they had not been listened to. The young people at St Nicks are aware that south Yate is seen as more dangerous and disadvantaged than north Yate, but they are nevertheless proud of their neighbourhood.

### **Services/facilities that young people reported they would like to have in Yate:**

- Cinema (overwhelming, top priority among the participants)
- Indoor skate park (another popular suggestion)
- Bowling
- Ice skating
- More outdoor skate parks (specifically, in south Yate)
- Play activities
- Yoga (including hot yoga)
- Better shopping

Some young people also noted that they would like more and better access to some existing facilities. For example, the leisure centre has designated hours for young people. This does not always fit with young people's schedules. Some young people go in the hours for adults anyway, and have not found it to be a problem as long as they do not "mess around". A few young people suggested they would like the leisure centre to be open later in the evening.

The participants suggested they would like to use sports fields to play sports with their friends in unstructured and unplanned ways. However, sports clubs and leagues usually book the sports fields.

### Age-sensitive leisure facilities and services

Several young people, and particularly boys, reported that they would like to have more facilities that are tailored to their age group. Play facilities, including the soft play centre, are for young kids, and older kids dominate other facilities.

The Brimsham Green focus groups mentioned that there is no longer a youth club for their age group. Previously, there was a youth club specifically for year nine students, but it has been amalgamated into the group for years 10 and 11. They are not comfortable in the group with the older kids, so they do not go.

### Gender-sensitive activities

Some of the young women expressed the desire to have more organised activities that cater to their interests. For example, workshops in makeup or in jewellery making. They felt that many organised activities, particularly through the youth clubs and at the Armadillo, are more suited to what boys want to do.

Some girls noted that the boys would like better access to sports facilities, including the gym, but were reluctant to discuss their own interests in sports. It seemed that although some of them were interested, it was not very popular (socially) for girls to be interested in sport.

## **Barriers to leisure facilities and services**

### Travel

Many young people commented on barriers to accessing some leisure activities and services. For example, the nearest cinemas are at Longwell Green and at Cribbs Causeway, Bristol. To get to these cinemas, young people need to take the train and/or the bus. However, their parents are not always comfortable with them travelling on public transport on their own at night, and are also not always available to drive them. The cost of public transport was not highlighted as a barrier to access.

### Bullying and intimidation

Some participants noted that there are problems with bullying and intimidation, and this puts them off using public facilities and open spaces. One young woman said she had been called pregnant, and this had had a big impact on her reputation and on her self-esteem. She had found it difficult to leave behind this label, because different people kept bringing it up even though they knew it was not true.

While none of the participants self-identified as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, a few of them reported that they had friends who were gay and who experienced a lot of bullying and discrimination by their peers. The young people felt more should be done to tackle homophobia and make sure leisure spaces are welcoming for gay young people.

## **The Armadillo**

In all of the focus groups, one or more of the young people mentioned the Armadillo. The young people who were regular users of the Armadillo had positive feedback about it. In four of the five groups, the feedback was generally poor, and/or the young people had never visited the Armadillo so could not offer an informed opinion.

Positive feedback:

- The staff are very welcoming and friendly, the young people have very positive relationships with them
- The Armadillo is a safe place to hang out
- More interesting to hang out than youth clubs, where they have the same activities all the time
- You can hang out with your friends and have fun
- A good place to get away from family and annoying situations at home

The young people noted that the staff provide personal support, they are “someone to talk to about difficult problems I’m dealing with”. While the young people recognised this wasn’t an official function or service offered at the Armadillo, they valued the relationships they had with staff and said the staff played an important role in making it a fun and safe place to be.

Criticisms:

- The Armadillo used to have some interesting activities going on, and they used to go, but not anymore.
- “There is a lot of stuff – things that we like, like X-Box, but there isn’t much going on.”
- The cinema nights aren’t a bad idea, but the films are old ones – films “we have already seen” – and even though it is cheap, “it’s not that good”.
- Safety and comfort issues: not knowing the other kids who are there, adults and people smoking outside, “my parents say it isn’t safe”

Many young people do not understand what the Armadillo has to offer, they expect it to perform the same function as a youth club.

The young people in the Armadillo focus group felt that the facility has a bad reputation because of rumours that there were drugs being sold at the Armadillo. This issue had previously been mentioned by youth workers in informal conversations. However, none of the young people in the other focus groups mentioned anything about drugs. They said they did not go to the Armadillo because they did not know what was going on, because their parents thought the area was not safe, and because when they had previously gone to the Armadillo, they did not know the other young people and felt uncomfortable.

### **Interaction with Yate Town Council**

This component of the research aimed to assess young people’s knowledge about, and interest in, engaging with the local council and influencing decision-making related to youth provision.

#### **Influencing decisions about youth provision**

All the young people agreed that young people should have a say in how Yate Town Council spend their budget for youth services. They feel that young people have unique knowledge about being a young person that local councillors, and others involved in decision-making processes, do not.

A few young people said that young people should influence different kinds of service provision. They should be consulted on decisions that would affect young people, including decisions about public spaces and leisure services that young people use, but which aren’t specific to young people.

#### **Young people’s knowledge about Yate Town Council**

Many young people do not know the difference between South Gloucestershire Council and Yate Town Council. Some participants did not realise there were two different councils. None of the participants could name any Yate councillors or staff at Yate Town Council, and no participants knew what responsibilities were held by which administration. Some of them knew the location of the South Gloucestershire Council offices, but few could explain where the Yate Town Council administration was located.

Several young people knew of Steve Webb, MP for Thornbury and Yate. The Brimsham Green School focus groups discussed a time he had visited their school and made a presentation.

### **Relationship between young people and Yate Town Council**

The focus group discussions suggested that there is little interaction between young people and Yate Town Council. Young people noted that Yate Town Council does collect their opinions from time to time, usually through surveys, but this is a one-way communication. Young people rarely hear about the outcomes of these surveys, how they are used or other follow-up.

Young people in several of the focus groups said it was unfair that they are asked their opinions but they do not have a mechanism to ask Yate Town Council what they have done with their opinions or to ask Yate Town Council about things they want to know about.

The young people who participated in the research do not feel their opinions carry any weight or influence on the decisions made by Yate Town Council.

### **Communicating with Yate Town Council**

When asked how they would like to communicate with Yate Town Council, young people suggested a number of different channels.

To receive information from Yate Town Council, young people suggested that the Council could circulate a newsletter through their schools or communicate to them through their teachers. They suggested that Yate Town Council should have a Facebook page for young people, as this is how most young people get their information. Young people said they would not look at the Yate Town Council website unless they received an alert or an email which suggested there was something specific they might want to read. And even then, it would have to be a very interesting alert to inspire them to go to the Yate Town Council web site.

The students at Brimsham Green School said that the Council could communicate with them by making presentations at their Friday morning assembly. (This is how MP Steve Webb became known to them.)

A number of young people said they liked the idea of meeting in a small group with Council staff, like the focus group format (one person from the council with 6-8 young people). This format allowed them to ask questions without feeling self-conscious and they could help the council person understand their perspective. However, they recognised that it would be

impossible for the Council to interact with all young people in this way. The young people at the Armadillo said that this could be done with a selection of young people for major funding decisions and projects.

When asked how, or if, they would contact Yate Town Council, if a decision had been made that they disagreed with, young people reported that they would email or try to speak to someone in person. However, several young people felt that their emails would not be seriously addressed and they didn't know who they would contact, or how to find out who to contact, if they did want to meet with someone.

One young person was concerned about whether the boxing club in Yate would have to close when the club's lease expires on the venue they use. He said that an adult involved with the club was helping them to communicate their concerns to the council. He was hopeful that the conversations would result in a solution for the boxing club. This example shows that young people feel it is through adults, as mediators, that they can interact with Yate Town Council. No young people had examples or seemed aware of how to communicate with the Council directly.

Young people said they would have to meet with someone face-to-face in order to trust that their views would be listened to and acted on.

Some of the young people liked the idea of having a young person participate in committee meetings at Yate Town Council. However, the young people at St Nicks noted that one or two young people could not accurately represent all the young people and their differing views. Implicitly, they seemed to be concerned that they would not be represented, that any young person likely to volunteer to attend committee meetings would be someone with very different interests and perspectives compared to them.

On the whole, young people tended to agree that Yate Town Council should make more effort to engage with them where they live and go to school. They said that the way young people communicate is very different from the business procedures used by local councils, but most young people felt it was up to Yate Town Council to adapt to their needs rather than the other way around.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations for Yate Town Council are based on the findings of the research. They are:

### Reduce socio-economic inequalities and barriers between social groups

- Increase transparency about where and how the youth budget is spent (e.g. by publishing in local papers, circulating newsletters in schools) so that young people are aware of the investments in their vicinity and can see it is equitable.
- Prioritise spending that will benefit young people who have the fewest resources at home.
- Encourage more intergenerational activities and interactions, including by encouraging the leisure centre to not discriminate against young people by defining what hours they can use the facilities.
- Reduce territoriality and address misconceptions about different areas and different groups by creating opportunities for young people from north and south Yate to interact.

### Leisure services and facilities

- Explore ways of increasing access to leisure services and facilities for young people who face financial barriers and who are marginalised (e.g. LGBT). Particularly lessons and club activities that seem to be restricted to young people whose parents can afford them.
- Consider ways of making sports fields (e.g. football fields) open to young people to use in unstructured and unplanned ways, outside of club sports.

### The Armadillo

- Find ways to welcome newcomers and introduce them to the Armadillo, including managing their expectations about what it has to offer and what it is about.
- Involve young people in strategic planning and implementation, so they feel they have some ownership of the facility and so it responds to their needs.
- Address the safety concerns that parents have (e.g. unknown adults outside and around the venue).



### **Address barriers to young people's independence in their free time**

- Explore possibilities for creating safer transportation routes to popular venues (e.g. cinema, shopping mall), and/or
- Work with parents to demonstrate that existing routes are safe enough for young people to travel on their own in the evening.

### **Communicating to young people**

- Encourage young people to see themselves as valid and legitimate citizens with a direct relationship with Yate Town Council.
- Establish and publicise different ways that young people can communicate with the council and influence youth policies and spending. One method (e.g. youth council/committee) will not be suitable for all young people.
- Communicate the results of youth consultations to young people: if young people do not see a result from engaging with the council, they are less motivated to do so again and do not feel their voice has an impact.

### **Future consultations and research**

- Research other age groups to identify how well youth provision responds to their needs and where there is room for improvement.
- Further research into the barriers that different groups of marginalised young people face, particularly financial barriers and social discrimination such as homophobia and bullying.
- Work with girls and young women to learn more about what kinds of leisure activities they would like to do, including barriers or perceived barriers to girls' participation in sports.

## **Reflections and limitations**

### **Challenges with recruitment**

The timing of the research posed significant challenges for recruitment. Funding for the research was not confirmed until late, which delayed the confirmation of the contract, and therefore recruitment only began at the beginning of July. At this time, schools were already winding down and were busy with trips and other commitments. For this reason, two of the three schools (Yate International and Culverhill), declined to participate. As a result, north Yate is disproportionately represented among the research participants.

The time of year was also the main reason that no sixth form students could be recruited from Brimsham Green, as many of them were away on trips or for other reasons. The head of sixth form distributed information sheets to those who were not away, but none volunteered to participate. If there had been more time before the schools finished, it would have been possible to try other ways of recruiting them, including meeting with them to explain the research in more detail, but there was not time in the schedule.

Because of the challenges recruiting through schools, I decided to recruit more young people through the youth programmes. Originally, I planned to include just one focus group to include young people who participate in the main youth programmes (clubs and the Armadillo), but this expanded to include one group from each of the three main youth programmes.

The Armadillo was unsuccessful in recruiting young people in July because of low attendance and because of challenges related to staffing. Due to time constraints, it was not possible for the young people who were recruited in August to do the photo diaries, but they did participate in the focus groups. Unfortunately, these young people did not appear to have seen the information sheets that were provided and thus their expectation of the discussion was rather different from the other young people that were involved.

I tried to recruit young people with learning disabilities from the Wednesday evening group that meets at Brimsham Green School youth wing, but they were not interested. Next time, it might be better to work closely with their parents from the beginning. The young people seemed very cautious of the research project and uncomfortable with me approaching them directly. Dawn Young kindly followed up with them, to answer questions and provide any clarification on the research, but none agreed to participate.

I spent three evenings on outreach programmes to recruit non-participants. I accompanied youth workers when they approached young people in parks and other public places. Unfortunately most young people were not interested in participating, and/or did not reply to subsequent communications even if they agreed at the time I spoke to them.

### **Research methods**

In refining the research design, the decision to bring together the visual diaries and focus group discussions was a positive one. The diaries premised rich and fruitful discussions, and

the focus groups provided a safe space for young people to come up with ideas and discuss issues they hadn't considered elsewhere.

The photo diaries were an instrumental component of the research. The diaries themselves did not provide a lot of information directly, but they facilitated some rich discussions. They also stimulated young people to start thinking about how they spend their free time, ahead of the focus group discussions.

One issue with the photo diaries is that they did reveal some young people that came from wealthier families. For instance, some young people talked about the various lessons they went to or clubs they were part of, including riding lessons, music lessons, swim clubs, etc. Some of the other participants commented how busy these young people were, and while no covert observations were made about their socio-economic situation, other young people then followed to degrade how they spent their free time, saying they 'did nothing', or 'not much'.

Focus groups as a method successfully stimulated young people to brainstorm ideas and discuss amongst themselves the activities they do in their leisure time and the different services and facilities available. In groups, they discussed barriers to doing what they would like to do in their free time, and they also considered ways of overcoming these barriers. Thus, the participants benefited from the research beyond the direct findings that the research produced.

Focus groups were a particularly good method for young people to discuss how they interact with Yate Town Council, and how they might like to influence Council decision-making. It seemed that young people had rarely thought about their direct relationship with Yate Town Council or considered the possibility that their voices matter. They seemed to think that their parents or teachers were responsible for making sure their opinions were represented, rather than thinking of themselves as active citizens.

The focus groups limited the emergence of sensitive topics and issues that different individuals struggled with. Bullying and intimidation are sensitive issues and while they were mentioned, I felt that individuals were not comfortable going into detail about specific experiences they had had. The individuals who receive some level of social care – for example living with a foster family or receiving social care services – were also reluctant to talk about how their relationships with carers or parents influenced how they can spend their free time.

Informal discussions with youth workers suggested that many young people do have financial barriers to participation, but young people did not openly discuss financial barriers. One young person expressed a desire for job opportunities that are remunerated, and the number of young people performing voluntary roles suggests that they have time and willingness to do work. Yate Town Council may wish to further explore job creation for young people, including subsidised job opportunities.

## **Limitations**

The research reflects the views of a selection of young people aged 13 to 14 years. Their views can't be said to represent all young people their age, but do provide an indication of some of the issues they experience.

As mentioned above, the findings of the research reflect young people's views at a specific time of year. In December or January, for example, the findings could be very different. In addition, young people's concerns do change over time and articles in the news or current events could have influenced the opinions that came up in this project.

While the research intended to include marginalised young people, to ensure that their views were reflected, more time and attention is needed to work with them during recruitment and to design research methods that are suitable for them. Specifically, young people with disabilities, young people living in care, young people who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, questioning or intersex (LGBTQI), and others.

Further research could provide greater insight on sensitive issues that young people are dealing with, including bullying, intimidation and exclusion, and barriers to leisure services related to financial constraints or parents' concerns about safety. Such research should employ more confidential research methods so that young people can raise issues that they are not comfortable discussing in front of their peers.

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## APPENDICES

### A. Information sheet for participants

#### Participant information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project. This information sheet explains why the research is being done and what your participation will involve.

If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please contact me, Rachel Lander (research lead), at [rachel.l.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.l.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk).

What is the purpose of the research?

Yate Town Council has commissioned this research because starting next year, they will take on more responsibility for managing youth services and facilities. (This is a result of administrative changes at South Gloucestershire Council.) Yate Town Council would like to know the perspectives and ideas of young people about existing youth leisure services and facilities, as well as the kinds of services or facilities they would like to have. This research will contribute to Yate Town Council's planning and budgeting processes in the autumn.

I am also a graduate research student at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. As part of my studies, I need to complete a research project, called a dissertation. So I will use some of the data from this research for my dissertation.

Why have you been chosen?

You are being invited to take part in this study because you are within the target age group for Yate's leisure services and facilities for young people. The project aims to include a diverse group of young people.

What will happen if you take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to keep a visual (photo) diary for one week and participate in a follow-up focus group to discuss the diary. The visual diary should record what you do in your free time, outside of school. It is anticipated that you would record what you do and where you are in evenings and on the weekend. For example, you might record images of a sports club or field, the cinema, a friend's house, the youth club, your bedroom, or a local hangout. You can borrow a digital camera for your diary, or use your own camera or craft materials to do the diary.

After one week, participants will meet to discuss their diaries (any parts they are comfortable sharing) and to discuss with other participants their opinions about existing youth services and how they would like to see the Yate Town Council youth services budget spent.

I will ask you to sign a form saying that you understand what the study is about and that you have voluntarily agreed to take part.

Do you have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in my project. If you do decide to take part you are still free to stop at any time. If you want to stop you do not have to give any reason.

What will happen to the information you provide?

All information collected during the project will be kept strictly confidential. That means nobody but me will know that the information you provide is from you. You will have the opportunity to choose a nickname – a pseudonym – for yourself, this will be used as the file name for your diary and any other information relating to you. In any public report or findings, this will be the only name used to refer to you. Only I will have access to the code linking the pseudonym to each person who takes part.

The findings will be presented to Yate Town Council and as part of my dissertation. I may write an article about the research. Participants will also be provided with a summary of the findings.

Contact for further information

If you need any further information, please contact me ([Rachel.I.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.I.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk)) or Dr Debbie Watson, who is supervising my project. She can be contacted by email ([debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk)) or post: School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ.

## **B. Information sheet for parents/carers**

### **Information sheet for parents and carers**

Your child was invited, and has voluntarily agreed to take part in a research project. He/she was provided with the details of the research (see below), and had time to consider the advantage and disadvantages before deciding to take part.

It is important that you also understand what the research will involve, so please take time to read this information sheet carefully. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please contact me, Rachel Lander (research lead), at [rachel.i.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.i.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk). Please let me know if you would like to withdraw your child from the research project by 8 July 2013. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the research?

Yate Town Council has commissioned this research because starting next year, they will take on more responsibility for managing youth services and facilities. (This is a result of administrative changes at South Gloucestershire Council.) Yate Town Council would like to know the perspectives and ideas of young people about existing youth leisure services and facilities, as well as the kinds of services or facilities they would like to have. This research will contribute to Yate Town Council's planning and budgeting processes in the autumn.

I am also a graduate research student at the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol. As part of my studies, I need to complete a research project, called a dissertation. I am interested in how young people, as service users, influence local decision-makers and advocate for the kinds of services and facilities they want. So, I will use some of the data from this research for my dissertation.

Why was your child chosen?

Your child was invited to take part in this study because she/he is within the target age group for Yate's leisure services and facilities for young people. While not all young people can be included due to resource constraints, the project aims to include a diverse group of young people.

How your child will participate in the research

Your child will be asked to keep a visual diary for one week (Mon-Sun) and to participate in a follow-up focus group discussion with other young people.

Using visual methods such as photography, video or drawing, participants will record what they do in their free time (outside of school hours). He/she will be lent a digital camera for the purposes of this diary, but can also use their own materials. Participants will be asked to bring their visual diaries to the focus group discussion.

The interview will take place one week to 10 days later. In groups of 6-8 people, young people will present and discuss their visual diaries. It should take no longer than an hour and a half and will take place after school hours either at school or at a youth facility, such as the Armadillo.

The interview will be recorded using an audio recorder, and a note-taker will be present to make observations, to make sure that nothing is forgotten.

Does your child have to take part?

We have given your child the opportunity to make the decision about whether or not to take part because making decisions of this nature are part of child rights, and we also believe your child is capable of making a reasoned decision in this case. If you do not wish your child to take part for any reason, I would appreciate it if you could let me know within the next week so I can find an alternative participant.



What will happen to the information you provide?

All information collected during the project will be kept strictly confidential. That means nobody but me will know that the information that your child provides is from her or him. Participants will have the opportunity to choose a nickname – a pseudonym – and this will be used to refer to their diary and any other information relating to them. In any public report or presentation, this will be the only name used to refer to them. Only I will have access to the code linking the pseudonym to each person who takes part.

The findings will be presented to Yate Town Council and as part of my dissertation. I may write an article about the research. Participants will also be provided with a summary of the findings.

### **Contact for further information**

If you need any further information, please contact me ([Rachel.I.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.I.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk)) or Dr Debbie Watson, who is supervising my project. She can be contacted by email ([debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk)) or post: School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ.

## **C. Consent form for participants**

### **Participant consent form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to get in touch (telephone/email):

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you read the information sheet?

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about the research?

Have you received enough information about the research?

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the research project at any time, without giving reason?

Do you agree to participate in the research?

Do you agree to have the discussion recorded?

Do you agree that the findings of the research can be included in the researcher's dissertation and report to Yate Town Council?

Do you agree that the findings of the research may be disseminated in publications, such as in an article in a journal or newspaper?

Is it ok to call or email you to inform or remind you about the diary or the follow-up focus group discussion?

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Signature

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Date

#### Contact for further information

If you need any further information, please contact me at [Rachel.I.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.I.2012@my.bristol.ac.uk) or Dr Debbie Watson (my supervisor) at [debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:debbie.watson@bristol.ac.uk), or by post at: School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ.