



## Mayor and Cabinet

### Proposal for a New Strategic Youth Offer and Strategy

**Date:** 23 October 2024

**Key decision:** Yes

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** CYP Joint Commissioning Service, Prevention and Early Help Service, Finance Business Partner, and Legal

### Outline and recommendations

This report provides an update to the Mayor and Cabinet on the progress of developing a new Strategic Youth Offer for the borough following the Council's review of youth provision and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's final report of the Youth Review Task and Finish Group. It also outlines the next steps for developing a five-year Youth Strategy (2025-2030).

Following the review of youth provision and the development of a new Strategic Youth Offer, this report recommends that the Council should take a strategic lead with greater control over service provision, closer alignment to the Strategic Youth Offer, and develop a more diverse range of youth provision to provide a modern, connected, and inclusive youth service for the borough. In order to deliver that approach efficiently and more cost effectively, the report further recommends insourcing youth service provision (currently provided by Youth First until 31 March 2025) as the preferred model.

Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to:

- Note the work undertaken to develop a new framework for a Strategic Youth Offer and the proposal to develop a five-year Youth Strategy (2025-2030) to embed the Strategic Youth Offer and position the Council as a Strategic Youth Lead with responsibility for the development of youth provision within the borough.
- Approve the proposal to insource the Youth Service provision (currently provided by Youth First) from 1 April 2025 and redesign it to align with the new Strategic Youth Offer from 1 July 2025.
- Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children and Education, to finalise the operational arrangements for the transition.

## **Timeline of engagement and decision-making**

As part of the development of the Strategic Youth Offer and a new model for Youth Services, a diverse group of young people, parents, providers, and key stakeholders were consulted.

<b>October 2023</b>	Youth Provider market engagement survey.
<b>October 2023</b>	Consultation events with Young People across the borough, Young Advisor, Lewisham Youth Theatre, Bellingham Youth Hub, Woodpecker, Honor Oak.
<b>November 2023</b>	Young People Youth Offer Review Survey.
<b>27 November 2023</b>	Council officers made a written submission to the Task and Finish Group (TFG) and attended an evidence session as witnesses.
<b>November 2023</b>	Parents/carers Youth Offer Review Survey.
<b>11 December 2023</b>	Roundtable Youth Provider and Key Stakeholder Conversation. TFG Members and support officer attended Youth Offer Review Stakeholder Roundtable.
<b>January 2024 – April 2024</b>	Extended Young People Youth Offer Survey.
<b>January 2024</b>	Additional Key Stakeholder Conversation Lewisham Downs Friendship and Creativity Group.
<b>16 February 2024</b>	Council officers made written submission to the TFG and attended an evidence session as witnesses.
<b>February 2024</b>	Additional Key Stakeholder Conversation – Ukraine Youth Support Service.
<b>15 March 2024</b>	Second Roundtable Conversation. TFG Members and support officer attended Youth Offer Review Stakeholder Roundtable.
<b>October 2024</b>	Request approval of Mayor and Cabinet for the new Strategic Youth Offer and outline of a draft five-year Youth Strategy.

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides Mayor and Cabinet with an update on the development of the Council's Strategic Youth Offer, which combines a diverse range of youth provision from across the Council. It also positions the Council as a strategic lead for youth provision in the borough, which harnesses the Council's unique position to lead and develop across sectors, forge strong partnerships, and collaborate to find innovative ways to meet the needs of Lewisham's young people and their families. A connected, modern, dynamic, and inclusive youth offer is essential for helping young people develop the confidence and resilience to transition to adulthood, engage meaningfully with their communities and wider society, and to start well and thrive.

- 1.2 Aligning youth provision to the new Strategic Youth Offer is a crucial step in transforming how the Council provides youth services. It is therefore proposed the Council bring back in house the current out-sourced youth service from 1 April 2025 and redesigns the youth service provision to align with the new Strategic Youth Offer by July 2025. The Youth Service contract is currently provided by Youth First and the contract ends on 31 March 2025. This report outlines the options considered and recommends the option that best delivers a more connected, inclusive and collaborative offer, working across the Council and alongside partners within the voluntary, community, and faith sectors. Redesigning the current youth service provision will create opportunities to further diversify youth provision and increase access and engagement, particularly in areas of the borough where there is limited or no provision currently.
- 1.3 To enable the Council to deliver the Strategic Youth Offer and continuously develop and shape youth provision in Lewisham, the Council has begun coproducing a five-year Youth Strategy. Following a comprehensive review of youth provision, a needs assessment, and the benefit of insights from a scrutiny Task and Finish Group, the Council has identified several key priorities and principles that have been coproduced with key stakeholders. The final strategy is expected to be completed later this year (following further coproduction with stakeholders) and ready to be launched early 2025. The strategy will be the driving force to deliver and maintain a modern, connected, and inclusive Strategic Youth Offer over the next five years. A Strategic Youth Alliance Board made up of key stakeholders will be established to oversee the development of youth provision in Lewisham.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to:
  - 2.1.1 Note the work undertaken to develop a new framework for a Strategic Youth Offer and the proposal to develop a five-year Youth Strategy (2025-2030) to embed the Strategic Youth Offer and position the Council as a Strategic Youth Lead with responsibility for the development of youth provision within the borough.
  - 2.1.2 Approve the proposal to insource the Youth Service provision (currently provided by Youth First) from 1 April 2025 and redesign it to align with the new Strategic Youth Offer from 1 July 2025.
  - 2.1.3 Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children and Education, to finalise the operational arrangements for the transition.

## **3. Policy Context**

- 3.1 The Lewisham Labour manifesto for the 2022 local elections pledged that "Youth services will be targeted towards those who most need support." This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in [Lewisham Council's Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#):

- Cleaner and Greener
  - A Strong Local Economy
  - Quality Housing
  - Children and Young People
  - Safer Communities
  - Open Lewisham
  - Health and Wellbeing
- 3.2 This report is closely aligned to priority Children and Young People, Safer Communities, Open Lewisham, and Health and Wellbeing.
- 3.3. Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 which imposes a duty on a Local Authority to secure sufficient educational and leisure activities, and facilities for those activities, for all young people in their area aged 13 to 19, and for young people in their area with a learning disability aged 20 to 24. Wide discretion is given as to the way in which this duty is met; it may include direct provision as well as planning with others to provide the service and/or facilities. There is also statutory guidance 'Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to improve young people's well-being,' published in June 2012. The proposals set out in this report comply with this legislation and guidance.
- 3.4 This report aligns with a number of Council strategies, including the [Lewisham Education Strategy](#), [Prevention and Early Help Strategy](#), [Violence Reduction Approach](#), [Play Strategy](#) and Youth Justice Plan. A young people's participation strategy and an updated extra-familial harm strategy are being developed, which is intended to strengthen the Council's prevention and early help offer.
- 3.5 The Council's [Play Strategy](#) seeks to promote the importance of play in children and young people's development and wellbeing, with a focus on ensuring equitable access to play spaces for all young people across Lewisham. This strategy directly supports priorities around promoting mental health and wellbeing, particularly through the creation of community spaces that foster social connection and physical activity. Play is not just a leisure activity but an essential component of children's physical, emotional, and social development, supporting broader health outcomes.
- 3.6 A connect, modern, and enriching youth offer aligns with the [Lewisham Physical Activity Strategy 2023-28](#) and the intentions to tackle physical and mental health inequalities by ensuring residents have the opportunity to make physical activities a regular part of their everyday lives.
- 3.7 The NHS South East London (SEL) Integrated Care Board (ICB) has created a [Joint Forward Plan](#) for South East London and the Lewisham Health and Care Partnership has also created a [Joint Forward Plan specific to Lewisham](#). These plans include specific priorities for young people's mental health with the intention of increasing the join up of services for families, removing barriers to accessing services, and addressing inequalities.

**SEL ICB Priorities:**

- CYP Mental Health – Improving CYP's mental health, making sure they have quick access to effective support for mental health.

**Lewisham Health and Care Partnership (LHCP) Priorities:**

- Build stronger, healthier families and provide families with integrated, high quality, whole-family support services.
- Address inequalities throughout Lewisham's health and care system and tackle the impact of disadvantage and discrimination on health and care outcomes.
- Establish the integrated model for Family Hubs across Lewisham and to identify integrated pathways that can be delivered through Family Hubs.

3.8 The [Birmingham and Lewisham African Caribbean Health Inequalities Review](#) (BLACHIR) report emphasised the disproportionate impact of health inequalities on Lewisham's Black African and Black Caribbean communities. It highlights the importance of ensuring historically underserved communities are provided with opportunities to engage and co-design provision, as well as having access to physical and emotional health and wellbeing support that is culturally appropriate to respond to the diverse needs of Lewisham's population. In line with the opportunities highlighted within the BLACHIR report, an effective youth offer can support marginalised communities navigate the education system, help to build trust, and increase engagement with services where engagement from marginalised communities has been lower than expected. A youth offer that is culturally competent can also build trust through the provision of safe, violence-free spaces that are connected to the local community.

## 4. Background

- 4.1 Lewisham Council has a long-standing commitment to providing a diverse range of youth provision to young people living in the borough. Council-funded youth provision spans across the Council and are a vital part of the Council's Corporate Plan and commitment to children and young people, their families, and the wider Lewisham community.
- 4.2 The borough's current youth offer has faced challenges, including fragmented service delivery and a lack of youth engagement in shaping provision. In particular, the Council-funded youth service has struggled to modernise and keep up with the evolving needs of young people. Recognising these issues, the Council carried out a Youth Review between October 2023 and June 2024 including conducting a detailed analysis of the youth service landscape. Alongside the review, a Task and Finish Group was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2023 to achieve the following outcomes: understand the views and needs of young residents, evaluate local youth work and its benefits, identify challenges and good practices, and recommend options to increase youth provision participation.
- 4.3 The final report of the Task and Finish Group was presented to Mayor and Cabinet in September 2024. The findings highlighted the need for a cohesive, strategic approach to youth service delivery, emphasising the importance of connectivity, inclusion, and modernisation. The Task and Finish Group's report provided 15 actionable recommendations. Through the proposals within this report, and the ongoing work of the Council to enhance the youth offer, the Council intends, insofar as possible, to implement the recommendations in a phased approach over the duration of the five-year Youth Strategy.
- 4.4 In summary, both reviews broadly reported / concluded the following:

**Status of the current Youth Offer:**

- An underutilisation of council youth premises limited partnership working and diversification of the youth offer, and rising costs to maintain and modernise youth premises.
- Gaps in youth provision across the borough leading to inequity of access.
- Variable partnership working between the Council and VCFS.
- Youth worker workforce challenges – recruitment and retention.
- No strategic lead for youth provision to oversee development and coordination leading to some duplication of provision.
- Variability of inclusive youth provision.
- Youth Provision not aligned to needs analysis.
- No easily accessible directory of youth provision / local offer.
- Static youth offer from the Council that has not evolved with the times.

**Young people told us what they wanted:**

- More access to support as they grow up to manage life's challenges.
- More support to help make better choices.
- Access to a greater range of activities and range of provision locally.
- To be treated fairly and equally.
- A bigger say in services that are for them.
- Safe spaces.
- Trained youth workers that understand their needs and their backgrounds.

**Stakeholders told us:**

- There should be more collaboration to strengthen cross-sector initiatives (particularly between health, social care, education, employment support) enabling more holistic support.
- Provide strategic oversight and more coordination of resources shared more equally across the borough.
- Develop more partnerships with local businesses.
- Provide a more diverse and dynamic range of enrichment activities (mix of skills, training, recreational, and educational) to meet young peoples' needs and keep them engaged.
- Leverage technology and innovation.
- Centralised funding and resource allocation.
- Conduct regular needs assessment to help future planning of youth provision.
- Develop training and development programmes for youth workers.
- Lead on workforce development.

**Opportunities Identified:**

- Align youth provision to the four Family Hub areas and develop more area-based and specialist/targeted provision to meet local area needs.
- Closer working with passionate and effective grassroots organisations delivering services in the borough.
- Large amount of external funding already in place with some provision underutilised.
- Align youth provision with emotional wellbeing and mental health support increasing prevention and early help.

- Shared commitment across the borough to work differently and modernise, transform, and enhance the youth offer.
- Position the Council as a strategic lead for youth provision and coordinate workforce development.

### Summary of Needs Assessment

- 4.5 The review of needs assessment data highlights the necessity for a data-driven Strategic Youth Offer, focusing on areas with the highest needs.

#### Key findings:

- **Hotspot areas (Family Hub Areas 1 and 3)** have higher youth crime, deprivation, and mental health challenges.
- **Coldspot areas (Family Hub Areas 2 and 3)** less youth provision despite growing demand, particularly for mental health and youth activities.

#### Groups needing targeted support include:

- Young people with **SEND**
- **Young women**
- Those at risk of **criminal exploitation**
- **Black and mixed heritage** young people
- The **LGBTQIA+** community

- 4.6 The Council will continuously use data and partnerships to create a flexible youth offer, addressing gaps in mental health services and early intervention while closing funding gaps and 'coldspots' within the borough – i.e. through the introduction of street-based (detached) youth work.

#### Spotlight on Successful Approaches to Delivery and Partnerships

- 4.7 Both reviews highlighted many examples of high-quality youth work being provided across Lewisham by both the Council and the VCFS, which has shown a strong capacity to attract substantial external funding. A mapping exercise during the Youth Review (October-December 2023) found that **69 VCFS organisations collectively secured about £5.2 million** from external grants, philanthropic organisations, and other charitable sources. If the Council provides more strategic leadership and acts as a coordinating force, it could unlock further external funding opportunities and foster sector-wide connectivity.
- 4.8 Recent successful funding initiatives include The Challenger Trust's pilot project with Lewisham schools and the Lewisham Young Leaders Academy (LYLA), which secured external funding for an additional two years. The Council's collaboration with St. Dunstan's College and an experienced supplementary school provider helped establish LYLA, with continued Council advice and support to develop a sustainable funding model.
- 4.9 By building on these successes and strengthening partnerships within the VCFS, the Council can establish itself as a central coordinating body for youth provision in Lewisham. This would attract more funding from philanthropic, governmental, and private sources and maximise the use of youth-centred buildings, streamlining provision and creating growth opportunities across the borough's youth sector.

#### Revitalising Youth Centres

- 4.10 In 2013/14, the Council reduced its centre-based youth services due to budget cuts, closing sites like Grove Park Youth Club. However, residents formed The Grove Park Youth Club Trust in 2015, successfully reopening the club by July 2021 after nearly a decade. Partnering with organisations like the Rio Ferdinand Foundation, the club expanded to offer youth sessions five evenings a week and launched GPYC Studios in 2023, blending community engagement with strategic partnerships and National Lottery funding. This sustainable model revitalised the club as a thriving hub for youth activities.
- 4.11 Youth First, in partnership with the Council, also raised funds to redevelop Riverside Youth Club in Deptford, with contributions from Section 106 funding. The redevelopment includes 3G football pitches, which will generate revenue. Youth First will lease and manage the building on the Council's behalf. This approach enhances the youth offer and reduces youth building running costs.

### **Previous Approach to Redesigning the Youth Service**

- 4.12 When the Council approved the establishment of a Youth-Led Employee Mutual (YELM) in 2015/16, which later became Youth First, it anticipated several key benefits for Lewisham's youth services. The organisation was awarded a three-year contract from 1 September 2016 for the youth services and staff transferred from the Council to the organisation. The contract was subsequently extended, and a new four-year contract commenced on 1 April 2021.
- 4.13 The YELM model aimed to foster innovation, enhance service delivery, and open new fundraising opportunities. It was expected to diversify revenue streams, particularly through increased rental income and external partnerships, reducing reliance on Council funding. Additionally, the YELM model was to provide strategic direction and coordination within the VCFS. However, many of these benefits have not been fully realised.
- 4.14 Initial successes included fundraising for the Riverside Youth Centre redevelopment and expanding mental health support. Nonetheless, the YELM model has struggled to meet key objectives. It has not significantly increased engagement with young people aged 8-25 or annual revenue from external funding sources. Growth in service utilisation, particularly among underrepresented and vulnerable youth, did not meet expectations.
- 4.15 The YELM model has not fulfilled its intended leadership role within the VCFS or coordinating and leading on youth work across the borough effectively. Financial challenges have persisted, as increased external revenue streams have not offset core operating costs. Consequently, Youth First remains heavily reliant on Council funding, with the core contract subsidising significant parts of its operations at the expense of direct youth work provision.

### **Overall Response to the Reviews**

- 4.16 To address the challenges and opportunities identified in both reviews, the Council has coproduced a framework for a new Strategic Youth Offer, which will form the foundations for a new five-year Youth Strategy (2025-2030), ensuring that all young people in the borough have access to high-quality youth provision tailored to their needs. The Council is also committed to redesigning the externally commissioned youth service to align with the Strategic Youth Offer.



## 5. Proposal - A New Coproduced Framework for a Strategic Youth Offer

5.1 Through several working groups and workshops with stakeholders, six strands were identified which form the framework for the Strategic Youth Offer:

1. Youth Voice and Participation
2. Strategic Youth Alliance and Strategic Lead Role
3. Open Access / Universal Youth Provision
4. Team Around the School / Team Around the Street (targeted/specialist)
5. Area-Based and Needs Driven (aligned to the four Family Hub geographically areas across the borough)
6. Workforce Development

5.2 The new framework for a Strategic Youth Offer is underpinned by the following coproduced principles:

- **Youth-led and Coproduced:** Young people and stakeholders shape and drive the offer at every level and are supported to where needed.
- **Diverse, Dynamic, and Responsive:** Evolves with the changing needs of young people and target those who need it most.
- **Skilled and Committed Workforce:** Recognises the importance of a skilled and committed workforce to engage, bond with, and support young people where they want to be supported.
- **Culturally Appropriate:** Provides a safe space, understands the needs of marginalised and racialised communities and supports young people.
- **Strategic Leadership and Youth Alliance:** Takes a strategic lead role to coordinate and improve the youth offer and collaborates with stakeholders and supports young people to design and advocate for youth provision and influence decision-makers.
- **Inclusivity:** Removes barriers and ensures all young people can benefit from the youth offer.
- **Consistent and Shared Language:** Aligns the offer with i-Thrive Framework for a consistent and shared approach to language, service mapping, and pathways into other support provision.
- **Area-Based and Needs-Driven:** Youth provision will be delivered according to identified needs and specific area-based ward profiles.

5.3 The coproduced framework for a new Strategic Youth Offer aims to empower young people by providing the skills, opportunities, and support needed to start well and thrive in education, employment, and life. As the Strategic Youth Offer develops and connects to provision across the Council and the borough it will include clear pathways to employment through career guidance, vocational training, and mentoring, along with diverse skill-building programmes delivered in a range of settings. Access to open-access and enriching positive activities will remain a key element to the youth offer.

5.4 Partnerships with schools, community organisations, and local businesses will strengthen the coordinated delivery of the offer, while innovative approaches in time, like digital platforms and gamification, will make the youth offer more engaging and accessible. To ensure continuous improvement, robust monitoring, and evaluation frameworks, including the NYA Quality Mark and peer

assessment models, will be phased in. Regular feedback from young people will shape services and ensure they remain relevant and impactful. This ambitious approach strives to equip Lewisham's young people with the tools they need for a successful future, creating a supportive environment where every young person can realise their full potential.

### **The Council's Role as a Strategic Lead for Youth Provision**

- 5.5 As the strategic lead for youth provision, the Council will provide a pivotal role in ensuring that the youth offer is coordinated, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of young people across the borough. This responsibility stems from the recognition that a centralised approach is essential to align resources, foster collaboration, and drive improvements across services.
- 5.6 To support this function, a Strategic Youth Offer Manager is being appointed to oversee the development and implementation of the framework, working alongside a dedicated CYP Community Development Officer. These roles will be instrumental in building and strengthening the capacity of the VCFS, which are key partners in delivering the youth offer. Both reviews highlighted the importance of such roles in enhancing the borough's youth provision, ensuring that services are effective, inclusive, and aligned.
- 5.7 By taking on the role of a strategic lead, the Council will coordinate efforts across multiple stakeholders, provide the necessary support and leadership to the VCFS, and ensure that all youth-related services are delivered in a cohesive and impactful manner. This will ensure that Lewisham's young people receive the best possible opportunities and support to thrive.

### **Governance – Strategic Youth Alliance and Local Area Networks**

- 5.8 The Strategic Youth Alliance Board will serve as a strategic partnership body, co-chaired by young people and key stakeholders from the Voluntary, Community, and Faith Sectors. The core purpose is to provide leadership and coordination to Lewisham's youth offer, ensuring it remains responsive to the needs of young people. The Board will guide and oversee the development and implementation of the new youth offer, bringing together key partners, including youth providers from the VCFS, council services, health, education, and community representatives.
- 5.9 A critical aspect of the Board's work will be its use of data insights to continuously monitor and respond to the ever-changing needs of young people across the borough. By utilising data and feedback from the community, the Board will identify gaps in provision, highlight successful outcomes, and refine strategies to ensure that the youth offer remain relevant, inclusive, and effective. This data-driven approach will support the Board's decision-making and ensure the strategic allocation of resources to areas of greatest need.
- 5.10 The **Local Area Networks (LANs)** will play a vital role in supporting the work of the Strategic Youth Alliance Board. Each LAN will operate across one of Lewisham's four Family Hub areas, bringing together local youth providers, community organisations, schools, and other stakeholders to collaborate on delivering youth services. The LANs will focus on localised needs, working

closely with the broader strategic objectives set by the Board, and ensuring that youth provision is tailored to the specific characteristics of each area.

- 5.11 In addition to supporting youth provision, the LANs will work closely with other cross-cutting agendas, including the **Play Strategy Advocacy Group** and the **Family Hub Model**. By aligning their efforts with these initiatives, the LANs will ensure that services for young people are integrated into broader community and family support systems, creating a cohesive, multi-agency framework for youth development.
- 5.12 Overall, this approach ensures a coordinated and holistic approach to developing the youth offer in Lewisham, with the Strategic Youth Alliance Board providing oversight, and the LANs ensuring localised, responsive service delivery. Through the collective efforts of these structures, Lewisham's Strategic Youth Offer will evolve to meet the complex and diverse needs of young people across the borough.

## 6. Reconfiguring the Existing Youth Services

### Reconfiguring Youth Services to Deliver the Council's Ambitions

- 6.1 The Council intends to redesign the Council-funded youth service (youth work) to align with the new Strategic Youth Offer, ensuring a seamless transition as the current contract ends on 31 March 2025. This redesign will reflect the principles of the new Strategic Youth Offer to ensure that provision remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of young people in Lewisham. The Council is proposing to develop a new area-based youth work offer to be in place by July 2025. The areas will align with the Council's existing four Family Hub areas across the borough.
- 6.2 Reconfiguring the external youth service provision will enable the Council to repurpose existing funding towards new elements to enhance the Council-funded youth provision in the borough and provide a wider range. The new youth service provision will maintain the current open-access and targeted mentoring offer provided by Youth First currently. In addition, through the reconfiguration, the Council intends to develop the following functions:
  - **Responsive Commissioning:** Set aside an allocation of the Youth Service Budget to provide opportunities for expression of interests, matching funding, and grants to deliver specific opportunities – such as: Girls only groups, LGBTQIA+ groups - to enhance access for underserved groups and pilot new initiatives.
  - **Street-Based Youth Provision (Team around the street):** Street/issue-based youth work to provide youth work (detached) in areas of the borough where this limited or no coverage.
  - **School-Based Youth Provision (Team around the school):** Build links with schools and establish opportunities for clusters of schools to be supported enabling youth work to be delivered in education settings.
  - **Directory of Services:** Develop a directory of services for youth provision and align with other service area needs for directories – SEND Local

Offer, emotional wellbeing and mental health, Early Years, Family Hubs, Communities and Culture.

## Options Appraisal

6.3 As part of the development of the new Strategic Youth Offer and the Council's Youth Review, an options appraisal was conducted to evaluate different models for delivering youth services in the borough that would enable the Council to achieve its intentions for a more modern, connected, and inclusive youth offer. This included delivering an area-based youth offer with targeted and specialist youth work elements. The appraisal considered the following options:

- **Commissioning external providers:** Continuing with external providers for youth service delivery.
- **Hybrid model:** A combination of external commissioning and in-house provision.
- **Insourcing:** Bringing youth service provision entirely in-house.

6.4 Insourcing was identified as the preferred option with a redesign of services taking place post transfer (1 April 2025), allowing for new functions to be established by July 2025 for the following reasons:

- **Improved Service Quality and Accountability:** Insourcing allows for greater control over service delivery standards, ensuring that youth services are consistently high quality and aligned with the borough's priorities. With direct oversight, the borough can swiftly respond to emerging issues and adapt services to changing needs.
- **Better Integration and Coordination:** Insourcing will facilitate better coordination with other in-house services, such as Family Hubs and social care, creating a holistic support system for young people.
- **Responsiveness:** An in-house model allows for service delivery to flex and respond to emerging needs without challenges of adjustments to service provider's contracts.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** By directly managing youth services, the borough can reduce overheads associated with managing contracts.

6.5 A detailed financial analysis was undertaken to assess the full cost implications of insourcing youth services and a summary is provided in the table below. Whilst there are some initial setup costs associated with transitioning the service in-house, the overall position, when compared to the existing approach, is an increase in direct provision across the borough.

Function	Current <u>External Youth Services Model</u>	Proposed <u>Insourced Model (Transition Year)</u>	Proposed <u>Insourced Model (Full Year)</u>
Open-Access	£1.100m	£0.887m	£0.887m
Targeted (1:1)			
Street-Based			
School-Based	-		
Responsive Commissioning	-	£0.050m	£0.213m

Buildings and Maintenance	£0.3000m	£0.300m	£0.300m
Set Up Costs (One-off)	-	£0.163m	-
<b><u>Total Annual Cost</u></b>	<b><u>£1.400m</u></b>	<b><u>£1.400m</u></b>	<b><u>£1.400m</u></b>

## Implementation Timeline

6.6 The main steps for implementing the proposal, if approved, are:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Engage and consult with affected staff	November 2024 – March 2025
Existing Youth Service staff transfer to the Council	1 April 2025
Youth Service reconfiguration – staff engagement and consultation	1 April 2025 – 30 June 2025
New Youth Service model 'live'	1 July 2025

### Transfer of Staff to the Council (via a TUPE Transfer)

6.7 Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) 'TUPE' will apply to the affected staffing group within Youth First currently providing the contracted service provision. Staff from Youth First would TUPE transfer (service provision change) to the Council on their existing terms and conditions, including pension entitlement. The process will require the incumbent provider, Youth First, to formally consult with staff that the TUPE transfer will apply to. The Council will require full employee liability information of the staff who will TUPE transfer. Costs associated with the TUPE transfer have been factored into the proposal to insource. The Council will work jointly with Youth First to manage the TUPE transfer and ensure there is no service disruption.

## 7. Developing a Five-Year Youth Strategy (2025-2030)

7.1 Building on the progress outlined above, the Council will coproduce a five-year Youth Strategy, to be finalised early 2025. The strategy will:

- **Establish a Vision:** Provide a clear vision for youth provision across the borough, driven by the voices of young people and community stakeholders.
- **Enable a Connected Offer and Define the Strategic Lead Role of the Council:** Develop a coordinated approach to service delivery across statutory, voluntary, and private sectors, ensuring that all young people have access to the right services at the right time.
- **Set Performance Targets to Measure Impact:** Define measurable outcomes related to youth participation, mental health and wellbeing, employment and skills development, access to enriching activities, and social inclusion.

## 8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The current contracts for youth services budget is £1.743m. This funds both Youth Service provision and the Adventure Playground Service. The cost of the Youth Service element of this is in the region of £1.4m.
- 8.2 As can be seen from the table below, the cost of the in-house service will remain within the £1.4m budget, with resources being set aside for transitional costs for the first year. In the year after the completion of the reshaping, those resources will be reallocated to responsive youth services.
- 8.3 Members will note that the strategy is being presented within the £1.4m funding available for 2024/25. The council is currently reviewing all spending as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2025/26 and beyond. In the event the MTFS results in a revision of this budget the Youth Offer would need to be revisited to ensure the offer remains within council approved funding.

Function	<b>Proposed <u>Insourced</u> Model</b>	<b>Proposed <u>Insourced</u> Model</b>
	<b>(Transition Year)</b>	<b>(Full Year)</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Core Service	0.89	0.89
Responsive Commissioning	0.05	0.21
Buildings and Maintenance	0.30	0.30
Set Up Costs (One-off)	0.16	-
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>1.40</b>

Further details can be seen in section 6.5 above.

## 9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Council has various statutory obligations in respect of the provision of youth services, including a duty under section 507B Education Act 1996 to, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide young people in the Lewisham are with sufficient educational and recreational leisure time activities and facilities for the improvement of their wellbeing. Furthermore, the Education and Skills Act 2008 requires the Council to make available to young persons and relevant young adults for whom it is responsible such services as it considers appropriate to encourage, enable or assist the effective participation of those persons in education or training. The proposals in this report align with these duties.
- 9.2 The Local Government Act 1999 places the Council under a duty to secure continuous improvement in respect of the delivery of its functions in terms of a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This is known as the Best Value duty. This duty implies that any decision to bring services back in-house

must be justified as providing better value compared to other options (e.g. maintaining current arrangements or a hybrid approach). Under the Council's constitution, decisions relating to the options for future service delivery where the value is at least £500,000 per annum, including whether a service should be taken in-house, is reserved to members.

- 9.3 Exit from the current contract which is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 must be in accordance with the contract terms, including in relation to the transfer of staff pursuant to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) as it is anticipated that there will be a transfer of staff to the Council following the service provision change. The necessary formal engagement and consultation with affected staff and their union representatives will need to be built into the transfer programme. The Council must also ensure that it complies with all relevant pension and employment legislation in respect of the transition.

## **10. Equalities Implications**

- 10.1 An Equalities Analysis Assessment (EAA) has been conducted for the Strategic Youth Offer and proposal to insource the youth service provision, and it identified no adverse impacts on any protected characteristic groups. The overall impact is positive, with the offer promoting inclusivity and ensuring that all young people, regardless of their background, have equitable access to services and opportunities. Regular needs assessments will be carried out to better understand and respond to the evolving needs of young people, ensuring that underserved and marginalised communities are continuously supported and encouraged to engage. The focus on being youth-led, culturally appropriate, and needs-driven ensures that the specific requirements of marginalised and racialised communities are addressed, helping to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for those most in need. This approach aligns with the Council's commitment to equality, ensuring that every young person can thrive.

## **11. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 11.1 This report proposes that the running of the Council's youth centre and associated activities transfers to the Council. The Council will have the responsibility for operating the sites and will seek opportunities to enhance and develop the youth centres to reduce their carbon footprint and be more environmentally friendly. The inhouse offer will work closely with the Corporate Estates Team to identify any opportunities to improve building efficiencies and encourage young people to lead and shape this work.

## **12. Crime and Disorder Implications**

- 12.1 The Strategic Youth Offer aims to provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to youth services across Lewisham, which will have a positive impact on reducing crime and disorder. By engaging young people in positive activities, providing access to tailored support, and addressing the underlying issues that contribute to youth disengagement, the offer will help to divert young people away from anti-social behaviour and crime. The focus on youth-led and coproduced services, coupled with targeted interventions for those most at risk, will create safer communities by fostering resilience, social cohesion, and improved life

opportunities for young people. Additionally, collaboration with schools, local organisations, and community stakeholders will ensure that services are responsive to local needs, further contributing to the prevention of crime and disorder.

### **13. Health and wellbeing implications**

13.1 The Strategic Youth Offer is designed to significantly enhance the health and wellbeing of young people in Lewisham. By providing access to a wide range of youth services, including open-access activities and targeted support, the offer promotes both physical and mental health. It will help young people develop resilience, build positive relationships, and access essential support services, contributing to improved emotional wellbeing. The focus on inclusivity and culturally appropriate services ensures that marginalised and racialised communities receive the support they need, addressing health inequalities. Moreover, by aligning with local health initiatives and the Family Hub model, the youth offer will ensure a holistic approach to young people's wellbeing, creating pathways to sustained healthy lifestyles and positive life outcomes.

### **14. Social Value Implications**

14.1 The Strategic Youth Offer will generate significant social value by enabling stronger, more resilient communities and empowering young people to actively contribute to society. Through youth-led and coproduced initiatives, it promotes social inclusion, ensuring that all young people, particularly those from disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds, have access to opportunities for personal development, education, and employment. By investing in the development of a skilled and committed youth workforce, the offer will support the local economy through job creation and capacity building within the VCFS. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses, schools, and community organisations will enhance community cohesion and provide long-term benefits to both young people and the wider community, creating a positive cycle of social value and sustainable development across the borough.

### **15. Contracts Management**

15.1 There are no contract management implications arising from this report.

### **16. Background Papers**

16.1 Not applicable.

### **17. Glossary**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
CYP	Children and Young People
YF	Youth First
LBL	London Borough of Lewisham
NYA	National Youth Agency



EAA	Equalities Analysis Assessment
LANs	Local Area Networks
TGF	Task and Finish Group
GPYC	Grove Park Youth Club
BLACHIR	Birmingham and Lewisham African Caribbean Health Inequalities Review
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
YELM	Youth-Led Employee Mutual
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual
LYLA	Lewisham Young Leaders Academy
VCFS	Voluntary, Community, Faith Sector
SEL ICB	South East London Integrated Care Board
LHCP	Lewisham Health and Care Partnership

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## 19. Appendices

**Appendix 1** Lewisham Family Hubs Areas map