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South East Somerset Youth Work Feasibility Study

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Objectives of the Feasibility Study	4
Definitions for the Study	4
Method	5
Stage 1-Opting in for Councils	5
Stage 2- Data Gathering	6
Numbers of Young People in Defined Area.....	8
Community profiles	10
Profile: Ansford	10
Profile: Bruton	12
Profile: Castle Cary	15
Profile: Ditcheat.....	19
Profile: Henstridge.....	20
Profile: Milborne Port	23
Profile: Shepton Montague	26
Profile: South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Profile: Sparkford	27
Profile: Wincanton.....	30
Youth Work Sector in Somerset.....	33
Somerset County Council Childrens Services	33
Potted History of Somerset Youth Provision.....	34
Somerset Youth Work Alliance	34
North Dorset.....	35
Feedback of Youth Work Providers and Connected Stakeholders	35
Funding	36
Potential Models.....	37
How to Operate the Youth Work	37
Grouping of councils	39
How to Engage Youth Work Provider:.....	40

Indicative Costs for Youth Work Delivery	41
Recommendations	43
Conclusion	45
About the Authors.....	46
Appendix 1	47

Introduction

This study was Commissioned on behalf of the South East Somerset (SES) Local Community Network (LCN), by Castle Cary Town Council through consultation with the project steering group (see Method). This study follows on from local work in many parish and town councils who aspire to do more for their young people.

The history of Universal Youth Work in Somerset leading up to the present day, has left the SES area with little in the way of a Universal Youth Work offer for young people. There is, however, a strong Youth Work sector in Somerset in some areas. Somerset's geography and its dispersed settlements means that the SES does not have a large local provider.

Focusing on Universal Youth Work, this study attempts to understand the need for this type of work in some of the parish and town council areas in SES. The study was undertaken to understand these key communities and their need for Youth Work for their young people. Through engagement with stakeholders such as Youth Work providers and funders, this study attempts to assess the viability and sustainability of developing a Youth Work service in SES.

Structured using community profiles, with direct input from young people (where possible) and other community stakeholders, each identified area is considered in terms of their aspirations and need for Youth Work. The later part of this report looks at the Youth Work sector in Somerset, including its history and then potential funding opportunities.

Lastly, the report looks at potential models to move forward with increasing the delivery of Youth Work in SES. Centrally to the report, local councils are the natural leaders to this initiative and undoubtedly best placed to do so. Critically, to move on from this report to a state of Youth Work delivery, local councils will need to match aspiration with funding and development work from elected members and officers.

Objectives of the Feasibility Study

The feasibility study objectives were co-produced with the research team and the steering group (See methods section) and cover four key aspects:

- 1) Understand the current availability and gaps in Universal Youth Work Provision in the defined area
- 2) Understand key communities in the defined area in terms of their aspirations and their needs of Youth Work support for their young people
- 3) Assess the viability and options for increasing Universal Youth Provision in the defined area, including options for funding and sustainability
- 4) Create recommendations on how to develop sustainable Universal Youth Work offers in the SES LCN area.

Definitions for the Study

Defined area: is made up of parish and town council areas that opted into the study. These areas are:

Ansford
Bruton
Castle Cary
Ditcheat
Henstridge
Milborne Port
Shepton Montague
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis
Sparkford
Wincanton

Youth Work: A distinct educational process adapted across a variety of settings to support a young person's personal, social and educational development (NYA 2022). In practice it is curriculum informed work with young people, that uses activities as a basis for building relationships, and uses those relationships to support and enable personal development for young people.

Universal Youth Work: Youth Work that is openly available to all young people (as opposed to targeted intervention) and where the stated purpose is not pre-determined or aimed at addressing specific issues or problems.

Young People: For the purposes of this study, we are using the age range 13-17 years old. However, it was accepted that if during data gathering, the research team came across 12-year-olds or 18-19-year-olds their views could be gathered and included.

Method

This study was commissioned by the steering group on behalf of the South East Somerset (SES) Local Community Network (LCN). This steering group consisted of:

Judi Morison	Chair of Castle Cary Town Council
Ewan Jones	Chair of Bruton Town Council
Tim Carty	Chair of Milborne Port Parish Council
Tim Cook	Lead Locality Specialist- South Somerset District Council
Lisa Davis	Castle Cary Town Clerk
Howard Ellard	Chair of Wincanton Town Council

Table 1: Steering group members

Before the commencement of this study, two initial meetings were held within the SES LCN. The first meeting was the LCN launch event on 19th May 2022, the second was focused on Youth Work provision in the LCN area 29 June 2022. Both meetings included workshops discussing needs and wants in relation to Youth Work and other children/young people positive activities. These meetings comprised of council members and professionals from third sector organisations, and this work informed the formation of the study objectives.

Following these meetings, the steering group co-produced the study objectives, the scope, and the project timeline with Sam Plummer, who is the project lead. At this stage, the steering group decided that parish and town councils should opt into involvement in the study.

Stage 1-Opting in for Councils

An information email and a link were sent to all local councils involved from SES LCN, which enabled them to opt into the study with a 3-week window. The councils were given a project overview, and by signing up all committed to:

- Their area being included in the report, including the information they share with the research team.
- Agreeing to being interviewed or setting up the interview with the relevant councillors or officers.
- Filling in the parish/town council survey.
- Supporting visits or outreach from the team where possible.

At the end of the 3 week-window, 10 councils had opted in, which became the defined area for the study.

Stage 2- Data Gathering

The approach to data gathering was to use different methods to engage different stakeholders, with a view of getting input to satisfy the first 3 objectives of the study.

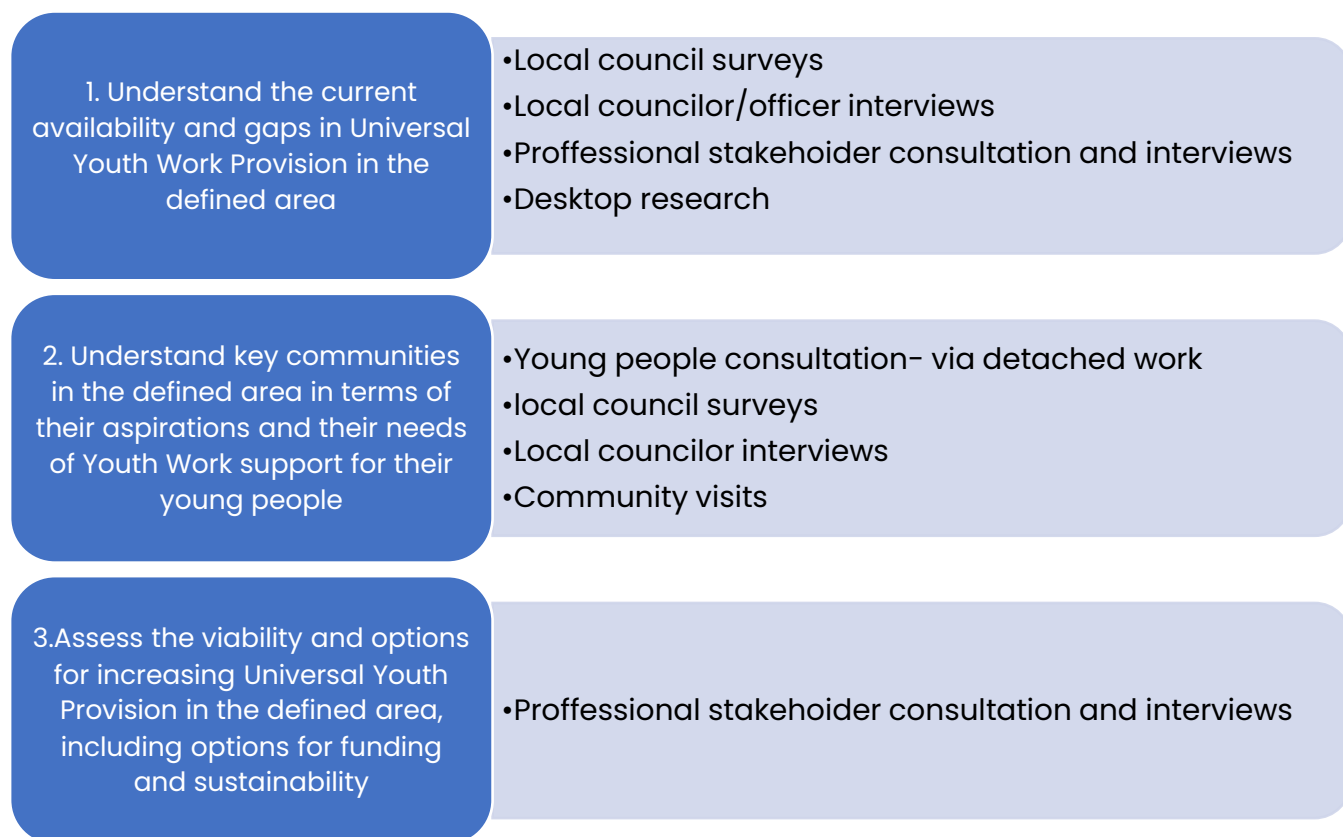


Figure 1: Methods applied to the first three study objectives

Local council surveys: These online surveys were completely qualitative and focused on known community resources, existing activity relevant to the study, community strengths and community concerns. These surveys also aimed to gather each council's aspiration for Youth Work provision, budget availability/priority and appetite for collaborative working with other councils. A list of survey respondents can be found in appendix 1.

Local councillor/officer interviews: Conducted after the surveys, these semi-formal interviews were conducted digitally and explored the answer to the surveys deeper and encouraged participants to lead the discussion to information they thought important for their area. A list of interviewees can be found in appendix 1.

Professional stakeholder consultation and interviews: Consultation here is to be considered in the broadest sense. Through the duration of the project the Project Lead had contact with a range of professional stakeholders (employed or

volunteer) via informal face to face conversation, emails, and telephone calls. These stakeholders include police officers, third sector organisations, uniformed groups, and church representatives. These interactions will be used to inform the study.

In terms of the Somerset Youth Work Sector, information was sent out about the project via the Somerset Youth Alliance, and it was requested for organisations to either arrange an interview or to supply information via email. In addition to this, the Project Leader attended a Youth Work alliance meeting to discuss the project and gain feedback.

Professional stake holder interviews were semi-formal and consisted of both online and face to face interviews. The interviews were aimed at Somerset youth sector organisations (primarily Youth Work Alliance members), funders, commissioners, and Somerset County Council authority officers. A list of interviewees can be found in appendix 1.

Desktop research: Consisted of internet search and considering available quantitative data relevant to the area.

Young people consultation- via detached work: A detached team consisting of the Project Lead, another professionally qualified worker and on some occasions our young person researcher, Daisy Church, conducted 40+ hours of detached work across the defined area.

Care was taken to not raise expectation of young people, by being clear that we are just idea gathering and explaining the process of the study. We also pointed these young people to the YCSW website as when the report is published it will be made available there for young people.

Young people were asked if they would be happy to take part, if they were they were given markers and a bit of card, they put their age and if they wanted their gender (we asked them not to write their names or anybody else's). Then we asked 3 questions:

- 1) What they like about their area?
- 2) What could be better about their area?
- 3) What they would like to see for young people in their area

As they did this we also talked about their answers and tried to have deeper conversations. Where young people didn't want to write (or it was too wet), the youth workers recorded the comments from young people in relation to the questions and following conversations.

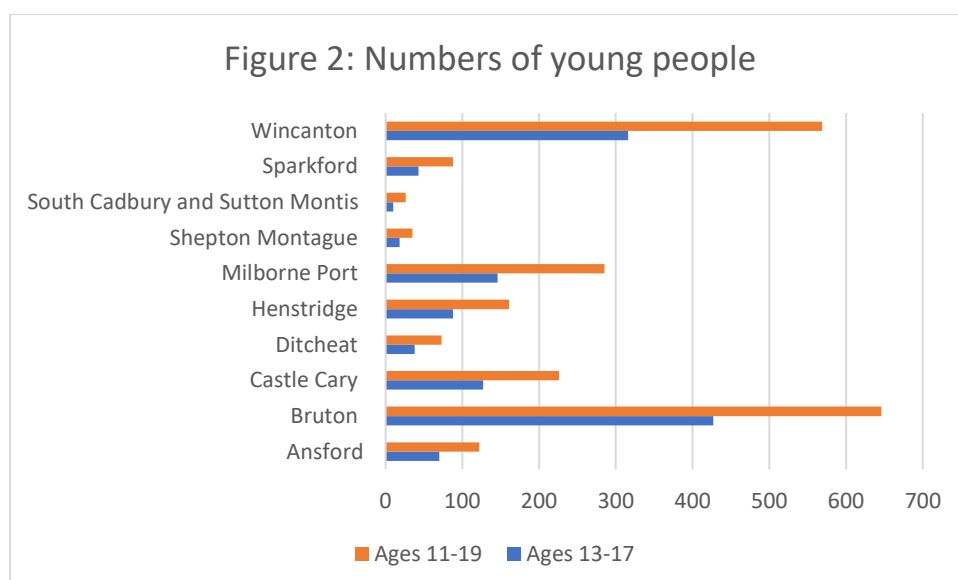
Community visits: Visits were conducted to the area looking at the available resources for young people such as parks, playing fields and community facilities. Areas in the community were visited where they were concerns about young peoples’ behaviour or places where they were known to congregate. The Project Lead also used these visits to talk to shop staff, members of the public and parents.

Numbers of young people in defined area

Data of estimated numbers of young people were supplied from Somerset County Council.

	Ages 13-17	Ages 11-19
Ansford	70	122
Bruton	427	646
Castle Cary	127	226
Ditcheat	38	73
Henstridge	88	161
Milborne Port	146	285
Shepton Montague	18	35
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	10	26
Sparkford	43	88
Wincanton	316	569

Table 2: numbers of young people

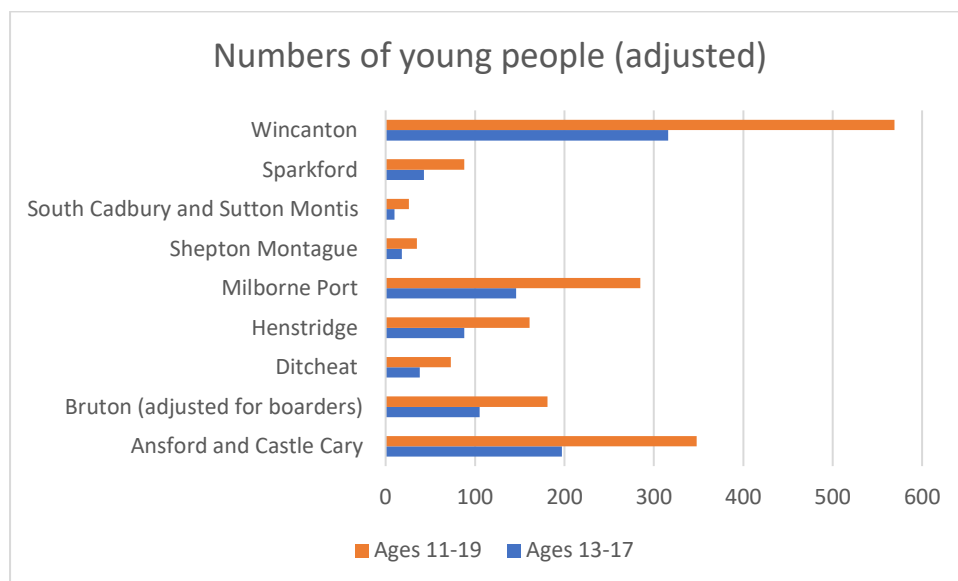


From this data shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, we can see that Bruton has the largest population of young people from the defined areas, followed by Wincanton and then Milborne Port. However, this data is affected by the boarding

schools present in Bruton. Also, Ansford and Castle Cary are connected areas physically and there is argument to view them together. In Table 3 and Figure 3 the data for Bruton has been adjusted by removing the 3 census output areas of the boarding accommodations; in addition, Ansford and Cary data has been combined.

	Ages 13-17	Ages 11-19
Ansford and Castle Cary	197	348
Bruton (adjusted for boarders)	105	181
Ditcheat	38	73
Henstridge	88	161
Milborne Port	146	285
Shepton Montague	18	35
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	10	26
Sparkford	43	88
Wincanton	316	569

Table 3: numbers of young people (adjusted)



When considered with these adjustments, Wincanton has the most young people, followed by the combined Ansford and Castle Cary area, then Milborne Port.

Community Profiles

Profile: Ansford

Resources and current activity:

Caryford Hall is a key asset in Ansford for the community but doesn't currently have an offer for young people. There are playing fields next to the Caryford hall with goal posts.

There was a Youth Club ran from the Swainson Building, this was volunteer operated by an experienced Youth worker and supported with funding by a local group Youth Matters. This club closed after the lead left for a new job and then Covid happened. (note: Youth Matters is now dissolved)

Fairfield is also in the Ansford Parish, and it has an outdoor gym, pump track and a lot of open space. This space is operated and co-owned in partnership with Castle Cary Town Council.

Community concerns (from APC and other stakeholders):

The parish council would like to work much closer with Ansford secondary school, as the council think a higher level of partnership working is important. The parish council is concerned about drug dealing, which they believe is happening close to the school.

There is concern about ASB particularly around the Caryford Hall, as there is a significant sized group of young people who congregate there. They are interfering with users at the hall, and there is also incidents of damage and some break-ins. The council feel like they are spending too much time dealing with issues of ASB, that could be spent on delivery more for their community.

Parish Council's perspectives on developing Youth Work:

Would want to work with Castle Cary to develop services because they are interconnected by geography. The parish council would like to do more positive things for young people.

What Young people think is good about Ansford?

"I really enjoy the bike track" male 14

*Please see Castle Cary profile. Young people in both areas did not identify whether they were from Ansford or Castle Cary.

What young people say is not so good about Ansford?

*Please see Castle Cary profile.

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

*Please see Castle Cary profile.

Additional observations from the outreach team:

As with the Castle Cary profile, the lines drawn by the council boundaries are meaningless to young people. Young people freely move between Ansford and Castle Cary, being where they think is best for them. Most young people didn't know if they were from Castle Cary or Ansford.

Conclusion:

Many of the conclusions for Castle Cary apply to Ansford but it is important that Ansford is considered in its own right. The ASB issues presented in Ansford are concerning, as is the potentially very public drug dealing. Engaging those young people most at risk of being involved with ASB seems important to the council, who are having to deal with the fallout from these behaviours. Focusing work in or around Caryford Hall seems like a very viable option. Some of the older young people have fond memories of the previous youth , this could be a positive thing.

As with Castle Cary, young people living and hanging out in Ansford said that they would like more activity. Importantly, in Ansford's case co-developing it with Castle Cary is vitally important, as young people will move across the areas and identify them with where they want to be rather than where the councils' boundaries are.

Profile: Bruton

Resources and current activity: Bruton have a large playing field with a multi-sports area and an ageing skate park. There are several sports clubs available to young people in the wider area. The large private schools provide several activities for their students, which are not accessible to all who live in Bruton. The pub in Bruton also appears to be a resource used by young people to some extent to play pool and hang out, although this usage was played down by the landlady who said that for under 18's it is rarely used.

The Bruton Community Hall has good facilities and would make an excellent space for youth provision. The playing fields would also make a great youth workspace in the summer for a mobile or detached project.

Community concerns (from BTC and other stakeholders): Concerns about drug use were high on the list for stakeholders. ketamine use was mentioned, with some suggestions that young people as young as 13 were using. A parent told of an incident where a young girl aged 14 was given a cigarette with ketamine in, but this is unverified.

Parents and residents, we spoke to suggested that there is a need for structured activities in the village, or even just somewhere safe for young people to go. Young people have been using spaces outside of the town to make places to go including an old farm building (barn) where they had put sofas and made fires. This area became a congregation and party spot. At a party there it is alleged that a young man turned up with a machete to attack another young man, allegedly from another area. This incident was very serious, we spoke to parents who were there on the night trying to find their young people and they said it was terrifying. Young people who were there confirmed that 20+ young people were there that night. They say that the sofas are now gone as the farmer burnt them.

Town council perspectives on developing Youth Work:

Bruton Town Council (BTC) believe that providing activities and support for young people is a priority. BTC say that they would consider funding Youth Work activities if a need were to be seen and a plan developed. Bruton would prefer to do something together with Castle Cary.

What young people said is good about Bruton?

"Bruton is a very pretty place, we have a train station and it's not overly built up"
(male 18)

"We have got good shops for food and snacks" (female 16)

"Our school keeps us very busy, we love it" (female 15)

"We can get on the train and go to Bath or Frome" (male 16)

"Chapel Restaurant have great pizza" (male 16)

"Our MUGA is good"

What young people say is not so good about Bruton?

"Nothing really" (male 18)

"There are crazy people, like this man who tries to get girls in his car" (female 16)

"Some people went out of bounds and a group of young people from the town pulled a knife on them" (female 15)

"Someone harassed a girl, trying to get them into their car" (female 15)

"Post office closing is very annoying" (female 15)

When discussing whether there are drug concerns in Bruton, a young man said, "I've got low concerns about drug use, there's a bit of smoking [weed], but honestly the adults are a lot worse smoking [weed] in public and doing coke"

"Shops are very expensive- it's over £3 for coffee" (female 15)

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

"Social events for all young people including the boarders, like parties (disco/rave)" (Male 16)

"The only support we get about issues affecting us are from the schools, but I don't trust them. They are s**t stirrers and involve parents straight away. Independent support from people we can trust would be good" (Male 16)

"Access to a tennis court"

"Cheap shop or a Youth Café"

"We need a youth shelter and a new skate park, a proper good one"

"Community cinema"

"We need a place to go [building]"

"I'd do youth activities or a youth club, free food would be good"

"Skate Park needs to be improved"

"There should be footballs available at the MUGA so we can always play"

“We need more shelter”

“Sports and cooking activities would be good” (female 13)

Additional observations from the outreach team: All our evening detached sessions failed to find young people. Afterschool time we found loads of young people congregating by the stones, which seems to be a key meeting point. Parents told us that young people are about in the evening and move around a lot (and stay in out of the way places). Although the train station was mentioned several times, likely because of the cover, this is not a good place for them to be. Lots of residents and shop owners are interested in supporting young people, the bookshop owner was particularly helpful. The young people we spoke to were very positive and seemed to like the idea of having more on offer away from the schools and more chances to mix.

Conclusion: There is community support for youth activities and safe places for young people, this could be in the form of youth club, youth café or activity groups. The idea of social and mixing events seems something that would be achievable too. As these would need to be built from the ground up a developmental approach to provision would be needed and involving the wider community, such as some of the local businesses might work well. Volunteers from Bruton seem likely, parents and residents may be happy to help in delivery.

In Bruton, although activities and places to be seem like the priority, there are underlying issues such as drug use and safety, that could and should be addressed through support provision. Having alternative adult support outside of the schools could add real value.

Profile: Castle Cary

Resources and current activity: Castle Cary have an established range of activities, spaces, and equipment for young people. These include Donald Pither Memorial Field (football and cricket pitch, basketball court) and Fairfield (outdoor gym equipment, pump track, open space). Activities available include Scouts, Brownies, and several sports clubs. Castle Cary Town Council (CCTC) have awarded grants to these groups and other organisations to deliver opportunities for young people. CCTC have led initiatives such as Food Hygiene Level 2 courses being offered to school leavers and working with Somerset Skills and Learning to provide traineeships. The council already support young people events such as a Skate Jam and Fun on the Field (jointly funded with Ansford Parish Council).

The Pavillion and the market house both have suitable space that could be used in the future for the provision of youth activity. In addition, CCTC are considering constructing a Youth Shelter.

Community concerns (from CCTC and other stakeholders): Anti-social behaviour has been raised by various stakeholders' different parts of Cary. The All-Saints Church has been a significant concern with issues including entering the church without permission, damaging signs and being aggressive to church personnel. The site of the closed Conservative Club also shows significant level of damage, graffiti, and drug use. However, young people have raised that they are victimised by Castle Cary residents on social media [Castle Cary Real News] and shouted at while hanging out in parks.

The police raised concerns of possible drug dealing and connections to county lines. Castle Cary young people were negatively mentioned when reaching other areas, in connection with drug dealing and a knife crime incident, although neither of these claims were verified.

Other concerns raised included:

- Poor transport links were cited as a concern reassessing opportunities and employment.
- Cost of living increases are making it more difficult for families to afford activities/clubs
- Full time education opportunities after Year 11 being limited meaning that young people have more spare time to occupy themselves

Town Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work: CCTC think that supporting young people is a priority, they have already budgeted for some activity and have provided grants to providers. Previously they did commission a Youth Work provider through Youth Matters.

What Young people think is good about Castle Cary?

"Going out with mates is good, there's a lot of us" (male 16). *He went on to say that young people travel in from nearby villages.*

"Conservative club is a good place to hang out as it had a pool table" (male 15).
(*Note: this building was closed over 8 years ago*)

"I like the football club" (14 male)

"We have a fair, it's really good, I wish it happened more often" (15 Female)

"Co-op is good, we like skating and scooting"

"The community Pantry is very good, I'm proud we have it" (16)

What young people say is not so good about castle Cary?

"The new estate has brought more rough people" (13 male)

"There are dodgy people [adults and other teens], wherever we sit, we get problems from people" (male 14)

"My name was put of Facebook and people were saying horrible things about me, it wasn't me that did what they said I did" (male 16)

"Some young people cause a lot of problems; they scorched the floor of the church" (Female 15)

"New estate park is rubbish" (female 13)

"When we sat in the park, a lady shouted at us because we were playing with the swings" (undisclosed 14)

"I used to go to the woods near the church, but there's a homeless man who lives in the bush, so I'm too scared to go now" (female 12) (Note: no evidence of this seems to be known locally from town councillors)

"Nothing to do"

"Other Young people smoking weed"

"People in Cary are dickheads, the dodgy adults are the ones profiling us as dodgy" (16)

“Old people make young people move on, there’s nowhere for us to be. Cary is a s**thole, it’s got nice buildings, but horrible people inside them” (undisclosed 16)

“We were told that we would get a Youth Shelter, but they [CCTC] haven’t done it” (Male 15)- *This was checked, and CCTC say no promises were made directly, but young people were consulted about the possibility of the shelter.*

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

Young people would like to see improvements to the pump track and/or a skate park facility. “The pump track is not so good; I would like an adult style skate park with ramps and stuff” (male 13). Others compared to what other areas have, such as Wincanton and feel they would like something similar.

A new Youth Shelter was mentioned several times and generally considered by young people as something they would want, favourite sites were the pump track or moat garden. The group that we met by the church say that part of the reason they stay by the church is that there is cover from the rain.

In terms of possible youth activities, young people said: “A young person’s party {disco/rave}”, “Free food is good, I would go for that”, “I would go to activities at the cricket pavilion [like a youth club]”, “Cooking activities would be good, also I would do art or music”. Generally young people said that if there were general activities, they would be interested in going. They did mention that there are different groups and mixing them would not be easy. One young person fondly remembered a Youth Club at the Swainson building and said, “I used to enjoy going, I think others would too”. Young people from all the different groups spoken to feel that there’s enough young people that would use universal youth work activities.

Additional observations from the outreach team: Almost all the young people we spoke to didn’t know what a youth worker was or does, however we were treated wonderfully and welcomed by all of them. They were a pleasure to work with. Many of the young people didn’t know if they were from Ansford or Cary. With one group they were clearly smoking cannabis heavily, but other than that there were limited signs of substance use. The damage at the church that was seen, indicates that some young people have been carrying blades.

Conclusion: A clear theme that came out is community cohesion, through the discussion about new people coming in from new developments and the perceived (by young people) dislike of young people by the older community, and behaviour issues at the church. Cary Real News posts about young people also indicate community frustrations about young people, how they are using

community assets and their behaviour. Universal Youth Work could play a role improving community cohesion through getting young people to engage in positive community activities and projects- for example, volunteer litter picks or gardening. Using CC real news as a platform we could show the great things that young people are doing in the town.

ASB was a concern raised by stakeholders, particularly around All Saints Church. People have tried to engage with the young people involved and try to stop it from happening. From meeting the group, I think this work could be built on, and through building longer consistent relationships and working on more suitable congregation areas, this situation could be completely resolved. Here a more targeted approach with the group would work through building trust and proving that engagement has rewards. Detached work in this area would defiantly need to be part of the picture. This approach will be key to challenging other issues that are apparent, such as involvement with substance use and potentially county lines.

Young people who were met were very happy to share their views. Although a traditional youth council may not be appealing to them, a link with the council through a universal provision would be great for young people to have their voice heard directly by the council. The development of a skate park and a youth shelter would be key issues, but also really good for developing a sense of ownership and community from young people in the town.

Generally, the young people who were met would try activities that were offered, there is scope for detached, open access provision and project work. The key in Castle Cary will be to develop the relationships first and then develop an offer based on the young people that want to engage, while actively targeting those young people that we want to engage (the church group).

Profile: Ditcheat

Resources and current activity:

Ditcheat have a village hall with a stage and kitchen. There is a playing field with small football goals and a cricket pitch. There is a playground for younger children. There were some uniformed groups, but these are now closed. There is a thriving rugby club, which young people are involved with. There are other sports clubs, which although are not exclusively for young people they would be welcome at, such as badminton.

Community concerns (from DPP and other stakeholders):

There is concern that with the number of families with small children and young people, that there are few opportunities for them to socialize and participate in activities in the immediate local area. The area also struggles with the lack of public transport.

Parish Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work:

The parish council would like to understand what young people would want and help them provide that. However, due to the size of the village, some facilities and activities would be too expensive to deliver/ maintain, such as a skatepark. The parish council would like to provide access to activities, this could include putting on transport to other areas to take part in other activities. The parish council would consider funding to support those from the parish who wanted to take part in activities.

Additional observations from the outreach team:

On the visits to the village no young people were found to talk with. When asking residents, they said that they didn't see young people about much, although sometimes on the playing field. Another approach would need to be taken to gather young people's views in this parish.

Conclusion:

Ditcheat needs support to interact with their young people further to find the best course of action. That said, the commitment of the parish indicates that they should be considered when any actions are formed from the back of this study. Ditcheat's number of young people is significant, if not particularly large. One option that could work well as a start is to offer school holiday activities to gauge engagement, this could be fairly cost effective. If there are activities in Ansford or Castle Cary, a transport scheme could be a good way to enable access to young people from Ditcheat.

Profile: Henstridge

Resources and current activity:

Henstridge has a village hall which is well resourced with equipment, including ping pong tables. There is a sizable recreation ground, with a medium skate park and football ground.

Henstridge has an existing youth club formally run by Young Somerset, currently this is delivered in partnership between Henstridge Youth Committee and Youth Connect South West. Youth Connect stepped in on the request of Henstridge Youth Committee after Young Somerset decided it needed to cease the delivery. The club is weekly and caters for year 6 – year 11. The club is very well attended and there is a need to split age groups to cope with the numbers.

Community concerns (from HPC and other stakeholders):

The parish council are concerned that young people do not have enough time given to them or enough healthy activities outside of school. They are concerned about mobile phone addiction and lack of access to other activities.

They are concerned about young people perceptions of the community, and think young people need to build an increased sense of community and ownership of the village in which they live.

Parish Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work:

The parish council would like to create the conditions for their young people to be drawn to healthier lifestyle choices. They would like to see competitive friendly sports brought back to the villages in the local area.

The parish council recognise that that they would like to increase their offer to young people, but to do that they need to access funding separate to what they are supplying themselves. Henstridge already fund the full cost of one Youth Work session a week.

Henstridge are willing and wanting to work with other areas, including those outside of the Somerset border. They are already in discussions with Stalbridge about sharing Youth Work provision.

*Note: Youth Connect South West have committed to support Henstridge until they can find a permanent Youth Work Provider. Youth Connect would not agree to a permanent contract for a single session and would only agree if enough sessions were funded to employ a locally based Youth Worker.

What Young people said is good about Henstridge?

"The Youth Club is good" female 11, and "Youth club is good" male 15

"Lots of friends to run around with" female 13

"We like throwing apples" male 14

"Rob is the best" [Rob is their Youth Worker] male 15

"Loads of fields to play in"

What young people say is not so good about Henstridge?

"Youth club should be free". [Subs are £1 per session] *in total 4 young people said variations of this comment.*

"Old people don't like us" male 15

"Youth club should be over 13's only" male 16

"Loads of druggies, they set a van on fire" Male 14

"Too many police" Male 14 [same one that is throwing apples]

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

"We want a McDonald's"

"New park" x3

"New skate park" x 3

Additional observations from the outreach team:

The visit was conducted during youth club, 38 young people were present. The team did questions with a focus group of 8 young people. There are older young people 17+ who do not engage in the Youth Club, but who regularly access the park area. They were asked if they would like to answer the questions, but they declined.

Young people attend Henstridge Youth Club from other villages such as Stalbridge and Milborne Port.

Conclusion:

Henstridge has an existing Youth Club but needs to find a provider that can stay their long term and ensure the activity is sustainable. Henstridge will need to work with others to develop a larger funding base so that a provider can develop capacity for the area.

Henstridge young people, clearly value the offer they have through the numbers who attend. This offer could be widened by sports activities and other activities should funding be found. Development work like this could be done if a youth work team had the capacity for it through funding bids and developing partnerships.

Profile: Milborne Port

Resources and current activity:

Milborne port has two good size recreational areas, one with sports focus and the other with a significant sized skate park. The skate park is dated and almost unfit for purpose. Milborne Port Recreation Ground houses many well attended youth sports clubs. The village offers many other activities, but these are not exclusive to young people. Milborne Port Parish Council (MPPC) are currently consulting on developments to replace and resituate their youth shelter.

Serval uniformed groups have closed in the locality. There has been some work on establishing a youth council, but this has yet to be successful in engaging young people.

Community concerns (from MPPC and other stakeholders):

Milborne Port has working class background but is becoming more populated by people in well paid jobs that commute. There are opportunities for young people outside of the village if the family have good access to transport and can afford to access it. There is a concern there are young people from lower income families that are left isolated in Milborne Port and have less opportunities to access activities.

There are some concerns about anti-social behaviour including criminal damage. This seems to be a combination of young people who live in the village but also those that travel to Milborne, possibly from Sherborne.

There is a concern about the community divide which exists in secondary age young people, from the splitting of school catchments. There are a group who go to Sherborne and a group that go to Wincanton. Young people who were interviewed commented on this.

Town Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work:

The Parish council want young people to “grow up happily”, and they believe that supporting young people is a priority. The council would like to have an active youth council. The council does have some funds in the budget for youth activities (Youth Council) and some Section 106 for infrastructure.

Milborne Port Parish Council want to have support to get their youth offer right and they are not sure what their offer should be.

What Young people is good about Milborne Port?

"We like using the football pitches"

Young people that we managed to speak to didn't have loads of other positives to say, however they were using the Youth Shelter at Milborne Port Recreation Ground and seemed to like it.

What young people say is not so good about Milborne port?

"Boring, there's nothing to do"

"Other young people come over here from Sherborne, they think their hard... they also break stuff over here like the damage to the toilet"

"There are always police around, why are they always rolling around? There's no reason"

"Access to outside the village is very hard"

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

"Better Park at the rec"

"New youth shelter"

"Another shop in the village"

Additional observations from the outreach team:

We delivered four visits to Milborne Port; however, it was only one occasion that we found young people. The young people we did find were keen to talk and said that young people are around, they just hang out where you can't see them, but weren't willing to tell us where that is.

Conclusion:

Milborne Port has a significant number of young people and limited opportunities for them in the village. The visits seem to suggest that young people do not hang about the village much and this was the feeling of the parish council representative.

Developing work in the village would take time establishing the relationships and really getting to understand the wants of young people. A Youth Council could be a good vehicle for this, and it is something that the parish council want to develop. Professional support for this project is something that would be helpful here.

However, there are probably several young people here that would not participate in that sort of activity and several young people here that are socially isolated, without access to activity outside the village and don't uptake the sports offer. Developing a pilot activity-based project to test the level of need may show a real need. However, pilot work is not very attractive to Youth Work providers who would have to ramp up activity for a short period, and if it doesn't deliver results to get longer term funding, it can feel like wasted capacity.

Profile: Shepton Montague

Resources and current activity:

Shepton Montague is a small rural parish and has no amenities for young people. There is a small church hall.

Community concerns (from SMPP and other stakeholders):

The main concern is the rural isolation in the village, particularly how it would affect young people accessing opportunities without transport.

Town Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work:

The small number of young people and the limited budget of the parish mean that having work in the village would not be feasible. However, the parish would benefit from neighbouring areas such as Bruton or Castle Cary, as they have provision that young people from the village could access.

Additional observations from the outreach team:

On one visit that was made to the village, no young people were found. This parish is very small, and it would be hard to deliver activities in the hall located there.

Conclusion:

Shepton Montague would not be able to sustain a Youth Work offer but would benefit from other councils nearby doing so. The parish's support would be available for funding bids etc, but they would unlikely be able to provide funding. The council may be able to help with small grants if young people were accessing a provision from their area, or help co-ordinating volunteer transport.

Profile: Sparkford

Resources and current activity:

Sparkford has a park, playing field and a village hall. The parish council also own a wooded area called Daisy Woods. There is a future plan to build a new village hall.

There are Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and explorer groups in the village. There is a cricket club which supports young people. The parish council supplies grants to the Cricket Club, Scout group, Playing Field Committee and Village Hall Committee.

McDonald's is based at the end of the village and is a draw to young people. Additionally, the village pub allows young people to play pool and use the dart board.

Community concerns (from SPC and other stakeholders):

Anti-social behaviour was an issue raised around the park area; such a BBQ being lit on a wooden bench. There is also concern about groups of young people using bad language in the children's play area. Daisy Woods has had some evidence of drug use.

Poor transport links to other areas for activities and opportunities are also a concern.

An incident was raised about a large group of young people gathering for a party that was dispersed by the police. There was concern raised about excessive drug use and that young people were putting themselves in high-risk situations. It is likely that young people gathered from a wider area not just Sparkford.

Parish Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work:

The town council recognise the lack of locally available activities. They consider young people to be a priority. They currently do not have an allocated budget for addition youth activity but are giving out grants to existing organisations.

The parish council would like to see the new hall utilised more by young people; this could be an opportunity to develop more activity.

What Young people is good about Sparkford?

"I like the community; I like that there is lots of nature" Female 14

"It's alright" Male 15

"It's a nice place, good community" Male 15

"I like it here, it's fun to live here" Young person 11

"It's small" female 13

What young people say is not so good about Sparkford?

"Need more shops" Female 14

"It's kind of dead, there's nowhere to be" Male 14

"There's not much to do" male 15

"Nothing to do, needs more activities" male 11

"Not a large amount to do" Female 13

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

"Don't need anything, I access lots of clubs already I'm very busy" Female 14

"Anything so there's more to do... there should be more in park" Male 15

"I would take part in informal arranged sporting activities on the playing field"
Male 13

"Improve the park" female 13

"Park is lacklustre" male 16

"Free activities in the park" male 16 and male 13

Additional observations from the outreach team:

Sparkford was visited 3 times, there were signs that young people were congregating but we couldn't find them. The team were able to talk to young people on the times the school bus dropped off, but this was very awkward and most young people did not want to engage.

Near McDonald's there is a wood which is strewn with rubbish (alcohol containers mixed in) and some sign of drug use, that seems to be well used.

Conclusion:

The level of ASB is low, but the incidents in a village this size would stand out and they do. Any provision could work on developing respect for the community. While it is likely that the party situation was not just young people from Sparkford (or possibly any from Sparkford), the level of risky behaviour involved would benefit from easy access to support-based support and education.

More work would need to be done in Sparkford to fully understand the need but given its location and the comments about nothing to do, it likely that activities would be welcome. The numbers of young people are not huge, but this could be off set with sharing the provision with other local areas.

There does seem to be an opportunity to develop Youth Work in Sparkford alongside the development of the new hall. When developing the Hall, the council should consider this possible use in it design.

Note on South Cadbury and Sutton Montis

During the visits to Sparkford, both South Cadbury and Southern Montis were visited. No young people were found during these sessions.

The research team is willing to work with the parish council in the future to create an amendment to this report.

(Sam would like to apologise to the parish council that we were not able to give you a fuller profile in this report).

Profile: Wincanton

Resources and current activity:

Wincanton has the Balsam Centre, a well-regarded resource for support for families and the community. The Balsam Centre does provide Youth Work through a range of programmes; The Hive – an activities programme for year 7–year 10, Teen life skills and a cooking group, and a young carers group. These projects are staffed by a professional Youth Worker. The Balsam Centre benefits from grants from Wincanton Parish Council.

Wincanton has a very good skate park and large park with playing fields. It also hosts a leisure centre. There are several sports activities like boxing and martial arts. There has been some previous outreach by Young Somerset in this area.

Community concerns (from WTC and other stakeholders):

The town council is concerned that they need to do more for young people, and they think that there should be more for young people to do.

ASB is a concern in some areas of Wincanton, the council may be considering more CCTV coverage. The Park is an area of concern for ASB, there is the feeling if more things were happening there, it would increase disruption and reduce ASB.

There is a level of concern about drug dealing and county lines, but the town council isn't overly aware of any detail or levels of these issues.

Town Councils perspectives on developing Youth Work:

The town council are "open" to do more to support young people, there isn't yet a fixed aim or purpose. The town council undertook some survey work previously, but this did not lead to more service provision. Currently there is a small budget for young people, which ideally would be spent through engaging with young people. There is not a defined budget for young people's services, however there is a grant that is regularly given to the Balsam Centre. There was recognition that the council would need to alter their precept to offer more significant young people's universal provision.

There is a perception that the level of young people currently being able to access Youth Provision is lower than what the council would want and there is a need to propose a broader offer. The Wincanton representative feels that developing a Youth Work offer is a longer-term project.

What Young people say is good about Wincanton?

"Nothing" Female 13

"Skate Park, is great everyone comes here" Male 13, *several other similar comments*

"I like use the MUGA, it is good" Male 14

"Leisure centre, I like swimming" male 14 also "the Gym at the leisure centre" male 16

"It's a sticky one" [a difficult one] male 17

"I like the lotus house Chinese a lot" [possibly works at the Chinese] male 16, *Although lots of the young people agreed its very good.*

"McDonalds"

What young people say is not so good about Wincanton?

"The lights in the park don't work, can you report this to someone"

"It's boring"

"Shops are too far apart" [long way from the park]

"No 24hr shop", *several young people mentioned this is an issue [to aid snacking...]*

"Don't like school" this was from a group of 13–14-year-olds

"Cocky people, year 8's think their big" from year 7 group, *but they went on to say that the older young people 16–17 were "alright"*

"A lot" male 14

"An old lady beat me with a stick because I was stood on a bench" Male 16, *relates to a group of teenagers messing about on the benches near the shelter and a member of the public got cross with them and hit them with a walking stick. The young people found it funny, no one was injured.*

What young people say they would you like to see for young people?

The older teenagers that were spoken to really want a 24-hour shop! They felt strongly that it needed to be included as a need for them. "More supermarkets" and "Sainsburys" were also mentioned by other groups.

"Better teenage friendly park" Male 16

"More benches in the park, with more shelters" Male 15

"More free sports activities or clubs" Male 12

"More lights in the park" Female 13

"More football goals" Male 12

"Roof on skate park" Male 14

"Youth activities at the park" female 16. *Others joined in with this and we discussed different things that could happen, like cooking, sport and art. The group in this discussion thought that would be attractive.*

Additional observations from the outreach team:

The skate park, MUGA and the park itself are great spaces and well cared for. There were older (20+) people in the area every time we visited, which seemed to be smoking cannabis, there was no evidence that they were engaging with the teenager groups that were present.

From talking with one of the older groups of teenagers, there is a lot of curriculum-based work that could be done to develop their attitudes and help to decrease risky behaviours.

Conclusion:

It feels important that the Balsam Centre is central to any discussion and development around any new youth provision. Although their current work is limited around the centre, they are actively delivering services for young people in the area. Other Somerset providers who are part of the alliance will respect that the Balsam Centre is an existing provider, so based on their ethos would not try to compete for work there. This would get more complicated where Wincanton were part of a larger coalition of councils commissioning work but could be worked out through good partnership work.

Like most of the areas visited young people aren't used to Youth Workers, and their expectations of what they could have focused on the physical (like football goals) or unrelated services (like 24hr shops), rather than possible activities. Development of Youth Work in Wincanton could be quite straight forward as the skate park, MUGA and Park provide a good focal point, which attracts a wide range of young people. A detached (or outreach), or a mobile based (using a vehicle) could be effective to start to engage and figure out a longer-term plan for young people's services. This would also support disruption of ASB in that area. Listening to young people, it is likely that a large group could be easily attracted, and they would come 1-2 times a week if it was on offer. In Wincanton any provision will have a role in offering support to individuals, particularly those expressing risky behaviours.

Youth Work Sector in Somerset

There are some real strengths in the Somerset Youth Work provider sector, not least the development of the Somerset Youth Work Alliance, which has enhanced collaborative working across providers and built much needed infrastructure such as training provision for Youth Work.

With resource (funding and staffing) levels low, needs high and such a large area, competition for the limited resources available is a real concern to providers. Coupled with impact of covid, limited availability of trained staff and lacklustre funding opportunities nationally, some providers are having a really hard time. All providers have fought hard to sustain youth provision in their area, this can be understood through the history of Somerset provision as it stands now. Providers would like to see growth for their organisations, leading to increased benefit to young people, but also creating economies of scale to build their organisational infrastructures.

Somerset County Council Children Services

The County Council provides and commissions a range of early help services, including Young Carers Youth Clubs, Youth Offending service and the Family intervention Service (FIS). Some of these services are county-wide and will support young people from SES if they meet the service requirements but aren't based there. The threshold for support for FIS, means that young people would need to have a significant level of need to be picked up, this means that for most young people, schools are their primary option for support on issues that affect them that are perceived as a lower level.

Somerset County Council don't fund Youth Work anymore but do value the work and do try to support them in other ways such as supporting funding bids. Recently, Louise Palmer Strategic Commissioner for Somerset is working with Somerset Youth Work Alliance on Youth Investment bid, which is for developing Youth Work (mainly capital) in levelling up areas, SES has none of these areas.

Currently, there is work happening on the development of Family or Community Hubs, which will become focal points for services and support, including young people. This will aim to work with existing provision rather than funding new ones. There is not any fixed plan on where these hubs would be in terms of location yet, although in SES Wincanton is a likely place. Developing Youth Work around the Hubs would be desirable, so that parents and teenagers can be supported around the Hubs.

Potted History of Somerset Youth Provision

Somerset County Council had a Youth Service, which delivered youth work, supported the third sector, and held together the necessary infrastructure such as ensuring training provision for Youth Workers. Over the period between 2012 and 2018, Somerset Council reduced and reduced its service provision. In 2014/15 the service stopped being a direct delivery service and moved to become an arm's length supporting youth and community service. Almost all the professionally trained operational staff were let go and the service changed into providing resources, support, information, and guidance for others delivering Youth Work. The service also provided grant aid and that reduced over the period until the service ended around 2018-2019.

During the period of reduction, Somerset Youth Service (SYS) did a lot of work with the third sector and town/parish councils to try and enable Youth provision at a local level. This included supporting the development of new organisations such as Community Youth Project around Martock, and Active Learning and Skills around Chard. Several ex-Somerset professional Youth Workers moved over into the third sector into existing organisation or establishing new organisations around their old "patches".

Through this enablement work, SYS tried many different approaches to developing sustainable Youth provision. In some areas where SYS was delivering before its withdrawal, the links with town/parish Councils were strong and thus it was easier for the provision to take root through the voluntary sector. Jeff Brown in his interview stated, *"This only worked well where councils provided not only moral support (which is important), but significant and sustained financial support. Another key aspect I noticed where provision was sustained is that real accountability was held on providers by commissioners and funders, not just setting something up but monitoring the quality and level of the provision"*. Of all the models of enablement tried by SYS, there was not a single outstanding way of doing it to ensure that the provision became rooted and sustainable, different things worked in some places but not in others.

Somerset Youth Work Alliance

Facilitated by SPARK Somerset and supported by the Somerset Community Foundation, the Somerset Youth Alliance brings together Youth Work providers from across Somerset. Penny Schofield (SPARK) defined it as *"A group of about 12 key providers in Somerset who really want to work together, who want to be working cooperatively rather than competitively with each other, who want to be supporting each other with shared ideas"*. In practice the alliance forms a larger

network of Youth Work organisations held together through Spark, ranging from very small volunteer providers to large providers like Young Somerset. The Alliance idea dates back to 2018, but traction for the idea really took hold in February 2021 where organisations started working together on projects most notably provision of Youth Work training, which was a shared issue for the Youth Work providers. To an extent the Alliance could replace the infrastructure and support functions offered by SYS, by focusing on shared issues such as training or accreditation.

The importance of the Alliance is not to be underestimated as it provides a focus point for Youth Sector leadership in Somerset and collaboration, this is attractive and useful to funders and commissioners. The Alliance provides a great platform for consultation and co-working with the Youth Work sector. An example of this is how Somerset County Council are working with key members of the alliance to access a government fund (YIF).

The Alliance is still developing itself, though the shared purpose and common cause is clear enough. The reduction of competition is an area that is still not well defined, organisations have their own “patches” and there seems to be tacit agreement around sticking to them and not encroaching into other organisations “patches” or specific types of delivery. In Wincanton, the Balsam Centre is delivering Youth Work and therefore this would need to be considered.

North Dorset

Though not the primary purpose of the study, it should be noted that Henstridge and Milborne Port are very close to the boarder of Dorset. There are some existing gaps in provision in Dorset, in Stalbridge for example. This does present an opportunity to work closely across the border and possibly mean that services could work across them. Not all Youth Work providers are constrained by authority boarders. This could mean that Dorset providers might be better placed geographically to support Henstridge for example.

Dorset Youth Association is looking to develop more provision in North Dorset and these developments should be considered alongside any development in SES.

Feedback Youth Work Providers and Connected Stakeholders

One of the most repeated points that came from conversations with providers and stakeholders was that while they wanted to deliver more youth work, they need to focus on work that can offer sustainability and capacity. They would be limited interest from providers for involvement in projects that are pilots, of short contract term or do not cover full cost of the work, such as management capacity. This is because of the investment needed in management and

organisational changes needed to make extra work possible. As a minimum, many providers said they would be looking for a minimum 3–5-year commitment to develop new work with parish/town councils.

Management capacity was an issue for a number of those that were consulted, the reduction of funding during Covid-19 has had an impact in this area. This means that some organisations are treading water with the work that they have rather than actively looking to expand. However, if there was an opportunity of new work that was able to build capacity for the organisation, they would be interested.

Of those providers spoken to, four said that they would be willing to tender for work in the defined area. They would generally be looking for blocks of work rather than individual sessions. The Four providers are:

YMCA

Community and Youth Project

Active Learning and Skills

Youth Connect South West (on the basis of ensuring Henstridge Youth Provision)

In addition to this, Young Somerset would be interested in working in partnership with other providers to deliver detached work, that would support its alternative education work.

Funding

As LCN's move on from the pilots and become imbedded, there may be a level of funding available. Within this study a clear plan how this would work was not found. There is some expectation that there may be a system of grants.

Somerset Community Foundation have a range of funding programmes, some of these programmes may be suitable to apply to support the development of youth work services. Engaging with Somerset Community Foundation at the earliest possible opportunity will be very important. If there is any funding available, this would be match funding and would not underwrite any service in full. There could be opportunity to gain funding here to jump start provision as councils raise their precepts. The foundation believes that sustainability is key, longer-term investment needs to be seen (5years +) and proof of sustainability of any plan would be needed to gain any additional funding.

The National Lottery is a possible funding stream. In terms of applications to either Reaching Communities (over £10,000) or Awards for All (under £10,000) it is

important that any applications show a good fit with the Fund's priorities and can demonstrate that they:

- build strong relationships in and across communities, and/or
- improve the places and spaces that matter to communities, and/or
- help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage.

They also need to be able to demonstrate how they are community-led, strengths based and connected. This latter point is especially important, as the Fund will expect them to be working with other young people developments that are happening in the county. To be successful in any lottery bid it is likely to be important that an infrastructure with funding already exists and the lottery bid would be an extension to services.

While there are the above options for funding, the key is sustainability and thus through the study, the need for councils to core fund any services from their precept was seen as the most important funding. Councils buy in through funding will really help to evidence community support beyond moral support, and it's important to remember that funding often attracts funding.

Potential Models

Given that the backbone of funding would need to come from parish/town councils, any model that could work for the SES area needs to start from the parish/town councils taking ownership and leadership of its development.

Within the study, all parish and town councils are in slightly different places in their journey towards regular universal Youth Provision. Henstridge already has an operating provision but needs to ensure a permanent provider. Wincanton said that they see it as a longer-term project over a couple of years. Some of the parish and town councils have some funds set aside and others don't. Some of the parish councils would never have enough funds to operate a provision but would like access to services for their young people.

In terms of possible models there are several points to consider, how to group councils together, where to use a Youth Work organisation for delivery or for parishes to directly employ, and if using a Youth Work organisation how to engage and monitor them.

How to operate the Youth Work

The first point to consider is who would deliver the Youth work.

Option 1a: Use an established Youth Work Provider

Strength: Established compliance and safeguarding systems, processes, and practicalities such as insurance and recording databases. Access to a wide pool of resources, experience, and professional development. Independent management structure familiar in dealing with practice issues and challenges. Access to wider professional networks. Larger capacity outside of delivery to develop more work, including new funding streams. Access to a pool of staff to increase continuity of service delivery- like in cases of staff sickness

Weaknesses: May want to parachute in and out to deliver services, rather than embracing those communities as its own and developing a larger offer. Likely to be more expensive than directly employing via council.

Option 1b: Directly employ a Youth Worker

Strengths: Potentially cheaper, thus potentially more sustainable. Could more directly input councils' aspirations/priorities into the work. More locally led (this model is more commonly used by single councils rather than collations). The Youth Work Alliance and Spark Somerset would add value to this model.

Weaknesses: If there is not the right support or infrastructure from the host council it can be restricting to the delivery, compliance, and professional development. In some areas this model has seen a very high turnover of staff, because of organisational/professional culture incompatibility. When sharing, the host council might be perceived to get more from the arrangement. This option relies heavily on the host council, who would be responsible for all safeguarding and compliance, not to mention organisational cost in time and funding. This model can be at higher risk of closure, when councils are re-elected, and Youth Work is lowered in priority.

Option 1c: Council support and develop fully volunteer led Youth Work

Strengths: Generally low cost. Can be very community focused. Spark Somerset could help with compliance and significant resources are already available around setting up via the historic work of Somerset Youth Service (such as their handbook).

Weaknesses: Need to find very rare people that are skilled, committed, and willing to give their time up for free. Need to establish a management committee who can ensure compliance and safeguarding. This model can be great but is at risk if you lose key volunteers, so a lot of the initial work can be wasted.

Option 1d: Create a new provider just for SES

Strengths: The provider would naturally be rooted in the community and could be built from a governance perspective to be directly influenced by the councils and the communities. Shaped as a professional Youth Work organisation and properly managed, this could create a lasting solution to the provider gap.

Weaknesses: It is ALOT of work. There is no established base so everything would need to be built from scratch. It would need a significant amount of skilled support and councils' effort to establish. Even with a lot of support this model could fail before its established.

Grouping of Councils

The second point of consideration for a model is how to group parish councils together to build up the right level of funding and need to run and warrant provision.

Option 2a: Councils work alone as individual areas.

Strength: High level of anatomy for council. Quick to implement (potentially). Works well with 1b and 1c.

Weaknesses: Unless the council has access to a larger amount of funding (£30-40k p.a.), any post or contract will not be very attractive to a Youth Organisation or to a Youth Worker looking for a role. This model also doesn't capitalise on the fact that young people move between areas, thus lowering the intelligence that can be beneficial to supporting young people.

Option 2b: Councils work in small groups (2-4 areas)

Strengths: Creates a larger funding pot, making it more attractive to providers, or as a role hosted by one of the councils. If using a provider, once established this model can be low maintenance for councils, as the provider does the work and in practice councils do not require a high degree of co-operation, as this is managed by the provider. Works well with 1a, 1b. Smaller areas may feel more comfortable working together than working with the larger ones, potentially offers a greater sense of control.

Weaknesses: While this level of coalition could create a good level of capacity, this is dependent on how much funding is on offer. This model can work well for the areas involved. However, this model will only help and support the councils in the coalition who are fee paying, with a provider they may be willing to add other areas later as their capacity builds, but they may not. The same applies to a role if other areas want to pay the host council. Sometimes this model can lack a level

of scrutiny as councils become confident in providers, this can lead to quality issues.

Option 2C: Councils work in larger group/ create a SES Youth Partnership (this is not for delivery, rather for overseeing and commissioning delivery).

Strengths: It has the potential to have the largest funding pot, making a potentially very attractive offer for a provider or a strong offer for an employed worker in a host council. This model could be shaped to grow, could be established with a small number of councils, and as more become interested they could join, this means it is better for the wider area. Councils like Milborne Port, who are currently not thinking of having delivery could still contribute to access professional support. Similarly, Ditchheat could join and only require some activity as and when required, such as during holiday periods. It could be shaped so that member councils/communities have a strong level of influence on the development and operation of delivery. This partnership might also attract wider professional support from funders, commissioners, and other professionals- this could mean that independent scrutiny on the delivery is supported, which would be very preferable. Systems like quality assurance could be developed. If using a provider, it could be opened to using more than one.

Weaknesses: Depending on governance structure this could be complex to operate, such as should it need its own bank account, policies, etc. Councils would need to commit to a level of engagement to make it work well, possibly through having a councillor or clerk on the management board. This could take some time to set up effectively.

How to Engage Youth Work Provider:

Option 3a: Tender Process

*Please note that based on sector engagement, the minimum contract that should be consider is 3 years to ensure that providers engage with this, the longer the contract term the higher likelihood of strong pool of providers to select.

Strengths: There are pre-existing resources around tendering available and some support maybe available through Somerset children's services commissioning. Tendering means that providers will all get a fair shot at the work on offer, this is better for sector. Tendering will require councils to state its requirements, most importantly it should set out the aspirations and the key performance indicators expected, such as the numbers of young people to engage. This method should ensure you get the best provider (including providers partnering with each other) for the job.

Weaknesses: This does require a level of focused work and if as a coalition a level of cooperation and agreement. As these areas are mostly underdeveloped setting the key performance indicators may be tricky. Providers should be open and honest in their tendering; however, they will need to be held to account on delivering what they promised; therefore contract management is important.

Option 3b: Framework contract

This could either be a different way to contract for the tender or used as instead of a tender process. This would set up an agreement, so councils could set up terms such a payment for providers to sign up to. This allows councils to add services as things change and develop. In theory multiple suppliers could sign up to this and express an interest as offers come up from councils.

Strengths: High level of flexibility.

Weaknesses: Could create unnecessary competition rather than increase co-operation. Needs more oversight and management.

Option 3C: Strategic partnership

Rather than develop a purely contractual relationship with the provider/s, develop a relationship as partnership, where funding is granted to the provider. This would need a formal agreement.

Strengths: Closer ties and a stronger sense of shared purpose. Selection of strategic partner could take a similar approach as a tender. This level of cooperation means that providers and funders can be more innovate and build more responsively.

Weaknesses: Could create unclear accountability (unless agreement is well written)

Indicative Costs for Youth Work Delivery

Providers will have their own cost, models, and ways of working- the below is an example. This does not consider how the session will be delivered, whether detached, café, project, or youth club, rather offer the basic level in terms of capacity. The below figures use JNC which is the nationally agreed pay rate for Youth Workers.

Based on providing 1 session (2 hours) there are likely to be the following costs:

- 1) A lead member of staff (Senior Youth Support Worker or above). This role would be in charge during the session and do pre and post work, such as recording reporting, safeguarding, and planning activities. For a 2-hour

session this post would need 6 hours a week. (This is assuming that they are based in the area and are not getting paid to travel long distance.) This post would also do development such as funding bids and partnership work, this aspect would also be enhanced through management in the provider model.

- 2) An Assistant (more assistants may be needed if the numbers of young people are larger). An assistant would be needed for 3 hours a week, this includes setting up and packing up, as well as banking time for supervision with their manager. Assistants can be replaced or supplemented with volunteers; this does make it cheaper but comes with challenges.
- 3) Resource budget, for buying resources for activities or refreshments
- 4) Room hires if in a building. (Often this is negotiated for cheap or free)
- 5) Organisational and management cost. The cost of operating the service to the organisation or council.

The below approximation is based on 52 weeks a year, which includes holiday and training. In this model delivery is 44 weeks.

	Cost per year	Notes
Lead member of staff (Senior Youth Support Worker)- 6 hours	£5056	Based on JNC point 13, with NI and min pension contributions
Assistant- 3 hours	£1960.50 (This will increase as you increase the number needed)	Based on JNC point 6, with NI and min pension contributions
Resource budget	£500	This works out to approximately £11 per session. For larger groups you may wish to supplement this.
Organisational cost	£1879.12	Based on 25% of sub total cost of delivery.
Total cost of session	£9395.62	*Please note this is an approximation and inflation and wage increases, will over time increase cost.

This costing however is generally impractical as you are unlikely to employ a staff member for 3 or 6 hours. Thus, grouping more sessions together will make it more likely to employ. For example, grouping three sessions will cost: £28,186.88, then you would be able to offer an 18.5-hour post for the Senior Youth Support Worker, which is more attractive and a 9-hour assistant post. If you could group six sessions together at a total of £56, 373.75, you could employ a full time senior and several assistants, making a more attractive post and more contingency for cover with the assistants. There are challenges with this because if not all six sessions can be in the evenings, so after school and weekend delivery would need to be used.

Additionally, the senior post could be upgraded to a professionally qualified Youth Worker, this would cost approximately an additional £6,426 pa, (£62800 total in the 6-session model). This would hopefully mean a more experienced and qualified member of staff, who could do a significant amount of development. With this example, councils would buy share of the service delivery at £10,466 per session.

	Cost per session for councils (Share)	Total Cost
Senior Youth Support Worker lead (full time) 6 sessions	£9395.62	£56, 373.75 via 6 shares
Senior Youth Support Worker lead (half time) 3 sessions	£9395.62	£28,186.88 via 3 shares
Professionally qualified worker (fulltime)6 sessions	£10466.68	£62,800 via 6 shares
Professionally qualified worker (Half time) 3 sessions	£10466.68	£31,400 via 3 shares

This model could benefit from additional funding, which could be bolted on to raise capacity, particularly for development, professional support, or holiday work. This would work well with the partnership model proposed in 2c.

Recommendations

If it is the intention of councils to consider the wider area not just their own, then the recommendation would be to start and operate a SES Youth Partnership of

councils (2c). This model could include any council that wished to be involved not just those who can afford to pay for sessions. In addition to councils buying session shares, this could include some basic level of financial buy in to access support, such as for engaging young people in consultation and to be included in funding bids. As shown in the costing section, the more money put into delivery increases flexibility/contingency and scope for high quality staff to be recruited. If councils were pursuing this model, then either using a host council to employ a team or engage a youth work provider are the strongest delivery models. If this partnership model is pursued the study would recommend engaging a provider (1a) as these organisations are built for purpose, while a council hosting a team at scale would create a strain on a council. In terms of how to engage a provider, a tender process is probably the fairest way to approach this and should be for a minimum of 3-5years. The process is likely to lead to a strong result, however this depends how councils buy into the partnership and how further work would be engaged. Following the lead from the Somerset Youth Alliance, once a provider is established, other providers would not actively compete with them in that area, so further tenders might not be as important, and that provider could be moved to the position of a strategic partner within the SES Youth Partnership.

If, however councils would prefer to focus on the immediate needs for delivery, then creating a smaller grouping of councils (all who wish to pay for delivery) is the quickest and most effective way forward. Delivery either through hosting a team in a council or engaging a provider are the best way to do the delivery. Hosting a team would only work if a council was willing to do it, as it is a significant amount of work compared to monitoring a contract with a provider. In the event of this model being chosen and the decision to engage a provider, a tender process is likely the strongest route for this.

Whichever approach is taken, if a provider is involved it is important, they are based in SES and they are committed to developing this area beyond just what is contracted.

Conclusion

There are several areas where there is a clear aspiration for more services for young people, need for Youth Work and are sizable enough to raise funds, particularly Ansford, Castle Cary, Bruton and Henstridge. Wincanton already has some limited provision and there is a clear aspiration to expand this, but this is seen as a longer-term project. In Wincanton the Balsam Centre should be considered as existing Youth Work provider and therefore under the tacit agreement of the Somerset Youth Alliance be not competed against. Sparkford and Ditchheat have smaller numbers of young people and as smaller areas less potential funding, but they would benefit from a young person's offer. The smaller areas such as Shepton Montague could not fund provision and does not have the numbers of young people to justify such an investment if they did. Milborne Port is undoubtedly a bit of an anomaly in so much as it has a high number of young people, but limited evidence of need, and council aspirations are more focused on understanding the need rather than instigating delivery.

As in the community profiles, what is important isn't how young people are engaged (type of delivery), but rather that there is capacity to engage and develop ways of working appropriate to each area. The recommendations offer two ways forward, which offer the real opportunity for capacity to be developed in a sustainable way.

Councils need to decide how they want to proceed, and it is on the councils to take a lead on this to push the agenda forward. All councils stated that young people are a priority, therefore developing a plan to move this forward from the back of this study should also be priority.

There are several key individuals who would be willing to help move this plan forward (marked in appendix 1) who were involved as stakeholders in this study and any plan should try to engage them. Additionally, whatever the way forward, engaging with the Somerset Youth Work Alliance is very important and it will be even more important as delivery is started.

About the Authors

Sam Plummer is a JNC qualified Youth Worker, qualified at University of Gloucestershire in 2013 with first class honours. Sam also holds a Master of Business Administration with Distinction from Bath Business School, alongside a Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership. Currently, Sam is undertaking a PHD at Bath Business School with a focus on non-profit financial sustainability. Sam started his Youth Work career as a volunteer in 2007 with Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council Youth Service, staying with the Youth Service (at that time called Youth Connect) until its spinning-out in 2019. Sam worked significantly on the feasibility study and business planning leading to the creation of Youth Connect South West (YCSW), a charity and public service mutual. Sam is currently Senior Operational Manager at YCSW.

Daisy Church is a qualified young person. Aged 17 and at the start of this project she was NEET. Daisy has been engaged on and off with youth services since she was 11. Daisy has lots of interests including making music, attending festivals, and having good friends. Daisy in general finds Youth Workers annoying but sees Youth Work as an important support for young people. Since September, Daisy has started to study a level 3 in Health and Social care at Bath College.

Appendix 1

Local council surveys: who submitted them	
Ansford	Chris Edwards
Bruton	Ewan Jones
Castle Cary	Lisa Davis
Ditcheat	Charles Evans
Henstridge	Jane Rose
Milborne Port	Tim Carty
Shepton Montague	Alison Willasey-Wilsey
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis	
Sparkford	Lisa Davis
Wincanton	Not submitted

Local councillor/officer interviews:		
Ansford	Chris Edwards Barbara Peter Clark Angela (Parish Clerk)	Note: All were present at same interview
Bruton	Ewan Jones	Note: Informal meetings held before commencement of research.
Castle Cary	Lisa Davis	Note: Informal meetings held before commencement of research.
Ditcheat	Charles Evans	
Henstridge	Jane Rose	Note: Informal meetings held before commencement of research.
Milborne Port	Tim Carty	
Shepton Montague	Alison Willasey-Wilsey	
South Cadbury and Sutton Montis		
Sparkford	Lisa Davis	
Wincanton	Emma Hix	

Professional stakeholder consultation and interviews:		
SPARK Somerset (Somerset Youth Work Alliance)	Penny Schofield	
Balsam Centre	Sue Palace + Balsam centre Youth Worker	Note: Informal meeting held before commencement of research.
YMCA Mendip	Mark Wilcox	Note: Informal meeting in Frome
Young Somerset	Alex Walker	
Community Youth Project	Elaine Harris	Via email
Active Learning and Skills	Pete May	Informal chat after Somerset Youth Alliance meeting.
Somerset Youth Alliance	Various members	During a Somerset Youth Alliance meeting.
Dorset Youth Association	Mike Bennet	
Somerset Community Foundation	Val Bishop	*Val would be willing to support the development of a plan to move this forward.
National Lottery	Sarah Dummer-Wade MBE	
Former Volunteer Youth Worker- Bruton	Tim Cook	
Former Principal Youth Officer for Somerset/ Service Manager, Stronger Communities	Jeff Brown	*Jeff would be willing to support the development of a plan to move this forward.
Somerset Strategic Commissioner	Louise Palmer	* Louise would be willing to support the development of a plan to move this forward.
Somerset Violence Reduction Unit	Claire Maidment	Via Telephone