



A review of provision for young people in the London Borough of Southwark

A report by Shared Intelligence and Analogue Strategies

Ben Lee

James McLintock

Leon Osbourne

Claire Trafford

August 2020

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Acknowledgements:

Shared Intelligence and Analogue Strategies would like to acknowledge Young Advisers Elisha Osei and Saskia Agyemang and Southwark apprentice Tia Williams for the part they played as peer researchers in the ethnographic fieldwork during this process. Their work enabled us to collect high-quality data and they ensured that we had access to networks of young people within Southwark which we otherwise would not have had. For an outstanding contribution to the research we would like to give them our thanks.

We would also like to acknowledge the work and commitment of the Task and Finish Group members and thank them for giving their time and expertise to this project.

The review process:

This review was conducted in two stages. The first stage, running between November 2019 and June 2020, involved research and engagement with a range of people in Southwark, including young people, and was the main element of the review undertaken by Shared Intelligence and Analogue Strategies. The following report presents our findings from this engagement. The findings and conclusions were tested with stakeholders, council officers, parents and young people in a series of online workshops, and are presented in Part 1 of this report.

The second stage, running between July and August 2020, involved testing initial recommendations that had been developed out of the first stage of the review with a Task and Finish group. The Task and Finish Group comprised of youth providers and peer-researchers from across the borough. and was set up in order to further develop and refine the initial recommendations based on their in-depth knowledge of the borough and its young people.. The outcomes from this Task and Finish Group, as well as the final recommendations from the review as a whole are presented in Part II of this report.

Part I: Research and engagement in Southwark

1 Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 In late 2019, following recommendations made by the Southwark Youth Violence Panel, and subsequent consideration of these by Southwark Council’s cabinet, the council commenced a major review of the borough’s strategy for children and young people. As part of this, Shared Intelligence were commissioned to undertake a comprehensive and innovative engagement plan with young people, professionals and stakeholders. The aim of this engagement being to frame a new vision and set of objectives for the youth offer in Southwark with the scope of the review focusing on 10-19 year olds (up to 25 for those with special educational needs or disabilities). While the majority of this engagement took place before the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had fully emerged we believe that the underlying views and arguments of young people and professionals continue to be consistent and relevant despite the changing context.

Methodology

- 1.2 Our methodology was a concentric process of evidence gathering and engagement in order to attain both depth and breadth of findings from a diverse range of young people and stakeholders. Across the whole engagement process of workshops, ethnographic fieldwork and a survey of schools we gathered the views from an increasing number of young people and professionals. This was an incredibly diverse group from all ages across our target group of 10 – 19 years olds and they came from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. Additionally, our fieldwork in the borough was carried out in collaboration with three peer researchers (two Young Advisors and one apprentice) under the age of 25. Throughout the process we also engaged with Southwark Council officers and a range of youth providers from across the borough.

Findings:

Hopefulness is as important as protection

- 1.3 A clear finding from both the ethnographic fieldwork and workshops was that young people are looking to be inspired and want help to achieve protection against negative outcomes. There needs to be a shift from thinking about what young people lack and the challenges they face as being more important to focusing on what young people have and the opportunities that they seek. This was a very different way of thinking to how many youth providers we spoke to saw their role. Young people also expressed wanting to be inspired into career pathways.

Online is second best

- 1.4 Our findings paint a picture of a cohort of young people who want to chill and hang out, share meals with friends and be physically active. Many young people are currently spending a significant amount of their time socialising online but would rather be doing it in person. Alongside unstructured social time young people also indicated that the opportunity to be physically active was incredibly important as well as the opportunity to get advice from older peers outside their families. This links into the idea that young people want relatable role models that they can look up to and be inspired by.

Young people are creating their own offer

- 1.5 There is a lot on offer in the borough that young people like, but where that is provided by the council, they do not necessarily connect that with the council itself. There are also a number of young people who perceive that a lot is missing from the borough, they are looking for inspiration and new opportunities but are left searching for positive pathways to follow by themselves. While some did not know where to start, some young people are actively seeking out opportunities and creating the offer that they want for themselves and their friends, on occasions this means leaving the borough to find activities they want to take part in.

Communication problem:

- 1.6 One reason why young people do not connect parts of the youth offer with the council and are creating their own offer is that there is a significant communication and awareness problem. Many young people just do not know where to access information about what is on offer and feel that the council does not engage with them where they are. This further confirms the perception that there is a lot missing in the borough.

Cost one of the biggest barriers / enablers

- 1.7 Other than a lack of knowledge and awareness, cost is one of the biggest barriers, or enablers, for young people to take part in activities. The majority of young people spend less than £10 a week so cheap, or preferably free activities and spaces is what young people really wanted. This was particularly important as we found that young people were searching for cheap or free spaces in which to have unstructured social time with.

A youth club but not a youth club

- 1.8 In describing what they wanted from the youth offer, young people in effect described a youth club. Somewhere indoors, where they could hang out with friends, be safe and interact with relatable role models. However, they were clear that they did not want a youth club. This shows a difference in the way in which youth clubs are perceived by young people in the borough.

Conclusions

- There is a difference in how the needs and lives of young people are viewed by young people themselves and by the council and youth providers.
- Young people want, and need, to be part of the decision-making process and involved in the design of the youth offer in the borough. They want to have ownership of and feel safe in different spaces around the borough.
- Young people want to be support in terms of, creating and finding their own activities, being inspired, receiving guidance from relatable individuals and not being held back by the cost of activities
- Young people are often not aware of the range of activities on offer in the borough and this needs to be communicated to them better.

The recommendations resulting from these findings and conclusions are presented in full at the back of this report.

2 Uncertain times

- 2.1 We are writing this report during the most far-reaching global crisis most of us have seen in our lifetimes, the COVID-19 pandemic. The context is changing around us, and it is far too soon to contemplate the long-term ramifications for society, let alone for local community services in London. What we can see however, is that the global scale of this health and economic crisis means the world after COVID-19 will be different for every one of us from what was there before.
- 2.2 Besides a likely recession, and the effect of the Government's rescue package on national debt, our uncertainty over the full aftermath of COVID-19 must form a caveat around everything we say here.
- 2.3 Nonetheless, our work is based on extensive in-depth research with young people and professionals living and working in Southwark. It was gathered through many hours of conversations, observations, surveys, workshops, and data analysis. While the context will be changed by this crisis, we are also sure the underlying views and arguments (especially from young people themselves) about the needs of young people and how they can be met, have a consistency and endurance. So, while the context will undoubtedly change, the underlying needs and aspirations of young people and the things that help them enjoy an adolescence of hopefulness and fulfilled potential, may not change so much.

3 Introduction

- 3.1 In late 2019 following recommendations made by the Southwark Youth Violence Panel, and subsequent consideration of these by Southwark Council's cabinet, the council commenced a major review of the borough's strategy for children and young people.
- 3.2 Within this review of the overall strategy Shared Intelligence were commissioned to design and deliver a comprehensive and innovative engagement plan with young people, professionals and other stakeholders. The aim of this would be to frame new vision and objectives for the youth offer in Southwark to form the basis of the new strategy.
- 3.3 In line with the wishes of Southwark's Cabinet, we were asked to look at the total youth offer across the borough, and not simply the council's own service provision. Hence our work included in its scope: activities provided directly by the council or funded by them including in youth clubs, libraries, leisure centres, work experience and adventure playgrounds; activities which receive no direct council funding e.g. those organised by sporting and cultural organisations; and, activities organised by faith communities and places of worship. We also considered activities or places used by young people but which might not always be thought by adults as a 'youth offer', such as arts and cultural organisations, parks and open spaces, and other spaces relied upon by young people such as cafes and eating places.
- 3.4 In scope of our review were young people aged between 10 and 19, or up to 25 for those with special educational needs or disability. This covered the important transition years of Year 6 and 7 and the transition at the end of college and sixth form to life beyond full time education.

4 The youth offer today

- 4.1 Councils have a statutory duty to “secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people” and to ensure young people have a say in their local youth offer¹. Most English councils have tended to meet this duty in largely the same way, by funding youth clubs and centres, detached or street-based youth workers, and commissioning other organisations to deliver related services and programmes.
- 4.2 Including external funding, Southwark Council currently spends £5.5 million annually on youth provision, including four youth centres, a specialist SEN youth centre, the Damilola Taylor Centre, adventure playgrounds, independent youth clubs and programmes, and programmes supporting health and employment. Its youth offer extends well beyond ‘educational and recreational leisure-time activities’. In addition, Southwark has a rich offer of youth sports and facilities (including a competition grade BMX track), uniformed clubs, faith-led youth offers, parks, and leisure centres. The borough also hosts global arts organisations including Tate, Shakespeare’s Globe, Imperial War Museum (IWM), and other renowned performing and visual art venues.
- 4.3 Southwark’s youth offer is widely integrated with other services with 24 local plans and strategies actively referencing children and young people. This level of integration shows strategic commitment; however, it also brings the risk of losing clarity of purpose over the core aim of the youth offer.
- 4.4 Another key aspect of Southwark’s youth offer is the local mental health pledge made in 2018 that *every* child with a mental health condition will get the treatment they need (far exceeding the NHS England target of 35 per cent). This gives parity of esteem between mental and physical health care needs of young people and represents a major commitment to their emotional wellbeing and resilience.
- 4.5 While Southwark’s provision remains comprehensive, nationally, the decade-long policy of reducing local authority budgets has led to massive reductions in youth services across most of the country. The YMCA estimated recently that local public spending on youth provision across England fell from £1.4bn in 2010/11 to £398m by 2018/19 a reduction of 70 per cent². In practice this has meant a shift from universal to targeted provision, and sometimes the reduction of provision to a skeleton service.
- 4.6 The past decade has also seen growing concern over violent youth crime. Many commentators have suggested youth services cuts contribute directly to youth crime³, although formal research points to a complex mix of environmental and mental health factors⁴. As a result it has become common to view youth services as a crime prevention tool, and in 2019 the Government announced a series of new funding streams aimed at preventing violent youth crime by funding innovative new youth provision (and Southwark have emulated this with their own Positive Futures Fund).

¹ Section 507B, Education Act 1996

² Calculation made in *Out of Service*, YMCA (2020) based on published local authority budget data

³ Contributors to the Select Committee inquiry into serious youth violence (2019) make this argument

⁴ Prof. Stephen Case [has argued](#) that the causes of knife crime are much more complex than policymakers admit, and that it results from multiple environmental factors

4.7 Southwark, where knife crime has become a major concern, convened its own local inquiry into serious youth crime in 2019 and that review formed part of the rationale for this research.

5 Methodology

5.1 The engagement process was carried out by Shared Intelligence and ethnographer James McLintock and used a concentric model. At the centre of this was a core group of Southwark Council officers including three officers aged under 25 (two young advisers and one apprentice) who acted as peer researchers. This core group was closely involved in the design and delivery of the entire engagement and worked with us to analyse and make sense of the data we gathered. Beyond the core group our deepest engagement was with a small number of ethnographic subjects. Beyond the ethnographic subjects we held group discussions with young people and adults in two deliberative workshops. Finally, we received responses from 428 young people through an online survey.

5.2 The concentric circles in the diagram on the right (Figure 1) shows these different groups.

5.3 The two deliberative workshop discussions were held with young people from varied backgrounds (e.g. including members of sports clubs, school councils, young offenders, and youth club users), along with Southwark council officers, parents, and staff from commissioned youth providers. These took place in the north and south of the Borough at the Brandon Youth Centre and Dulwich Library respectively. These sessions enabled us to test reactions to data we obtained from Southwark, and also to packs of stimulus materials we created following our working sessions with the core group.

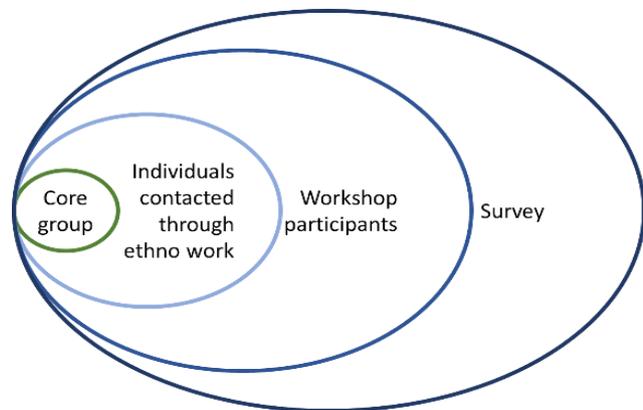


Figure 1 - our concentric model of engagement

The aim was to gather a range of perspectives about the needs of young people in Southwark and how they could be met through 'educational and recreational leisure-time activities'. The introduction of stimulus materials was designed to increase participant understanding of the issues in the course of the workshop. We used real-time electronic voting to take quick snapshots of responses, and also prepared large printed templates to capture discussions about user needs and the youth offer in a consistent format. Participants were grouped by role (service users, council officers, parents, independent providers). We observed participants' reactions to each other's views and the ways ideas changed in reaction to different views and information. Each session had an 'exhibition' phase during which each group was invited to hear or see what the other groups had discussed. The data collected from the deliberative discussions was instrumental in building up a topic guide for the ethnographic fieldwork and the survey.

5.4 The ethnographic fieldwork was carried out over two days in February 2020. Our aim was to gather a detailed picture of the lived experiences of young people in Southwark from the perspective of those living it, rather than one which imposes the mental models and assumptions of an external observer. It was undertaken with nine ethnographic subjects who live in Southwark, male and female, aged 12 to 19. The fieldwork was undertaken by the three under-25 Southwark officers who were co-opted

into the fieldwork team as peer researchers, alongside Shared Intelligence staff and James McLintock. The three peer researchers were trained over the course of two afternoons in a range of ethnographic interview techniques as well as data capture and coding methods. We used the peer researchers' own networks to recruit interview participants who were interviewed in situ at locations where the participants had already decided to go that day. We also carried out additional opportunistic interviews in other locations identified with assistance from Southwark Council and deliberative workshops participants. We also carried out observations at parks, activity sites, eating places, shopping centres, and libraries. We also undertook fieldwork at a church (identified by one of the peer researchers) where we had additional ad hoc conversations with young people and observed a range of activities.

- 5.5 Data from the ethnographic fieldwork and deliberative discussions were then analysed both to inform the overall findings and also to inform the design of an online survey which we targeted at young people across the Borough.
- 5.6 The survey was designed to provide breadth of response, to triangulate with the depth provided by the deliberative sessions and ethnography. The survey was sent out to all secondary and primary schools in the borough with the intention it would be answered by pupils between Year 6 and Year 13. The survey was also designed so that it could be answered by parents (using question-logic to take parents to a separate set of questions). The survey was open for the two weeks after February 2020 half term and generated 428 responses in total. Three quarters of the responses (74 per cent) came from individuals aged 10 or 11.
- 5.7 In terms of geographic and socioeconomic spread, respondents were asked to give their home postcodes and, of the 230 postcodes given, 193 were valid Southwark postcodes (most of the remainder were incomplete or unrecognised). When mapped to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), as Figure 2 below illustrates, we see respondent profile broadly matches Southwark as a whole (based on 2019 IMD data) with a slight overrepresentation of deciles three and six and underrepresentation of decile two (n.b. lower numbered IMD deciles represent greater disadvantage).

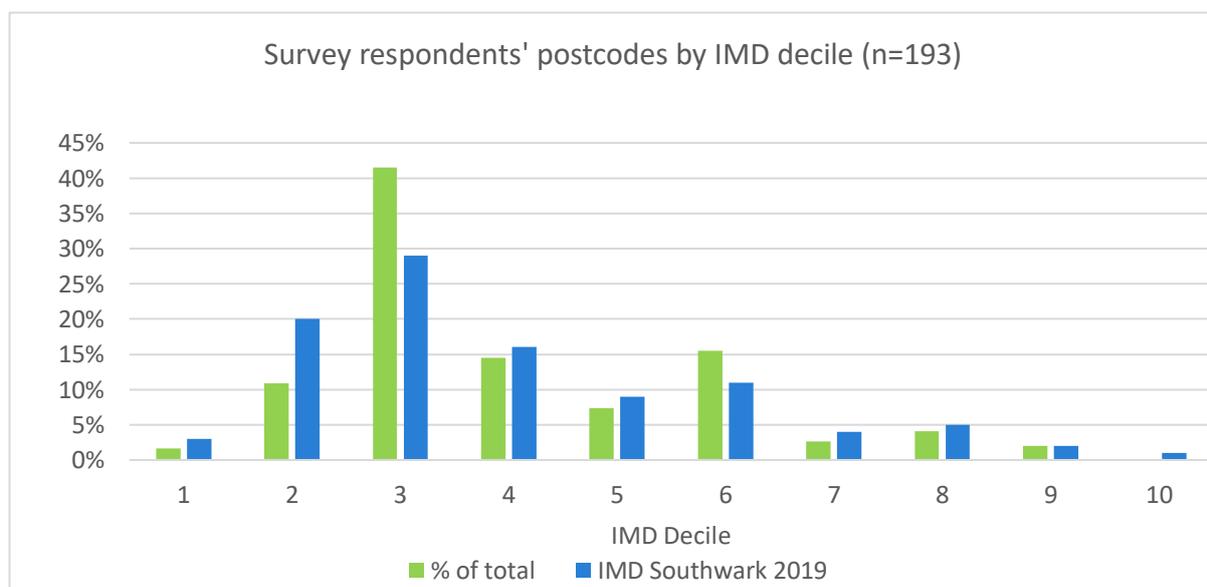


Figure 2

6.9 Young people want to be inspired, but are left searching for positive pathways to follow... “They tell you that if you fail at school you’ll end up in a gang, or they tell you not to get into drugs or crime. What you don’t hear is what else you could do”, so they create self-organised and informal coping mechanisms.

6.10 And for some the borough has an image problem... Moving around the borough is often seen as dangerous - cars hitting bikes, bikes hitting people, parents often amplify this fear. As well as this, some young people mentioned a fear of crime and perceived there to be an absence of passive surveillance.

6.11 In essence, the clearest messages from the ethnography are that young people want to create the youth offer, not just consume it, and they want help to achieve positive outcomes not just protection against negative outcomes.

Survey of primary and secondary school pupils

6.12 The survey generated 428 responses. Overall, the survey respondents represented the younger end of the 10-19 range and were more likely to be female. In other respects, they were broadly representative of the borough population.

6.13 The survey presented a list of activities generated from the deliberative discussions, ethnography, and suggestions from council officers and asked whether respondents had done any of these in the past week or wanted to in the coming month. Figure 4 compares the answers to ‘last week’ and ‘coming month’. The chart is ranked left to right by ‘activity in the last week’. This shows ‘socialised online’ as the most common response followed by sport, eating with friends, going to a park with friends, then ‘music, dance, drama, or art’. When we look at what respondents *would like to do*, we see far fewer want to socialise online in the coming month compared to those who have done this in the past week. This indicates that given the choice, they would prefer to do something else. Conversely, most other answers indicate respondents *want to do* something more than they have actually done it in the past week. These could be interpreted as activities respondents would do more of if they had the chance.

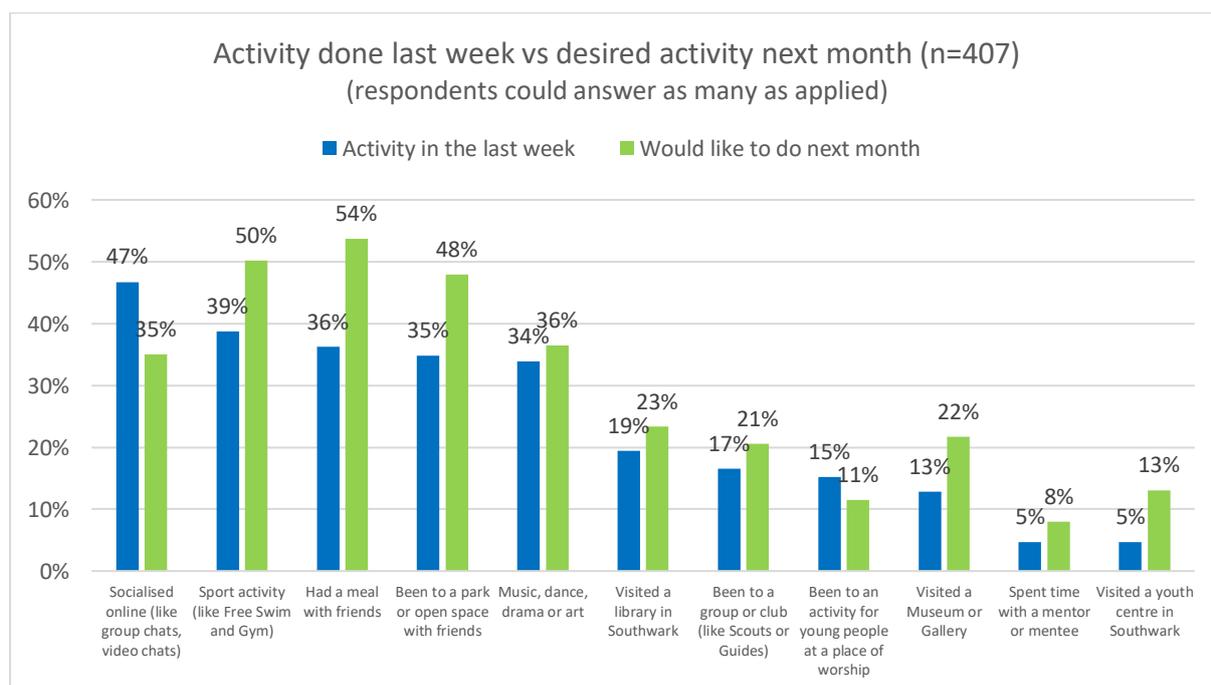


Figure 4

- 6.14 When we presented a list of issues (again generated from the workshops and ethnography) and asked what issues were most important, 'being able to do something physically active' scored highest (86 per cent 'very important' or 'important'), followed by 'having places to hang out with friends (76 per cent 'very important' or 'important'). This was followed by advice from older peers and people to talk to outside their family about worries and concerns – in other words access to guidance, support and counselling.
- 6.15 Recognition rates for youth offer activities, based on a list from Southwark Council showed that 'Free Swim and Gym' had good recognition (63 per cent having heard of it) followed by Millwall Football Club's Premier League Kicks programme (36 per cent), and 'adventure playgrounds (33 per cent). Art Block at South London Gallery and Southwark's Youth Council had some recognition, and the remainder had recognition rates of 10 per cent or under. Again, some of these results may reflect the lower average age of respondents.
- 6.16 In terms of how respondents tend to find out about things to do, the most common routes are friends, family, classmates and teachers, followed by 'Google', then 'posters'. Social media scores low as a route for finding out (again age may be a factor), as does local authority online information.
- 6.17 Most respondents (55 per cent) said they spent less than £10 each week. Besides cost, 'friends to go with' is seen as the biggest inhibitor/enabler, followed by location 'closer to home' (see Figure 5).

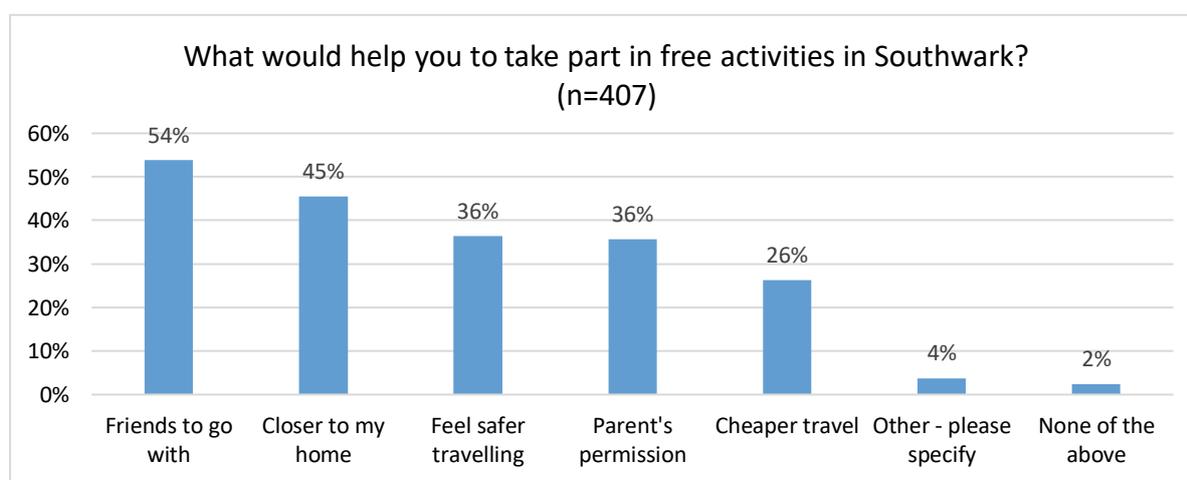


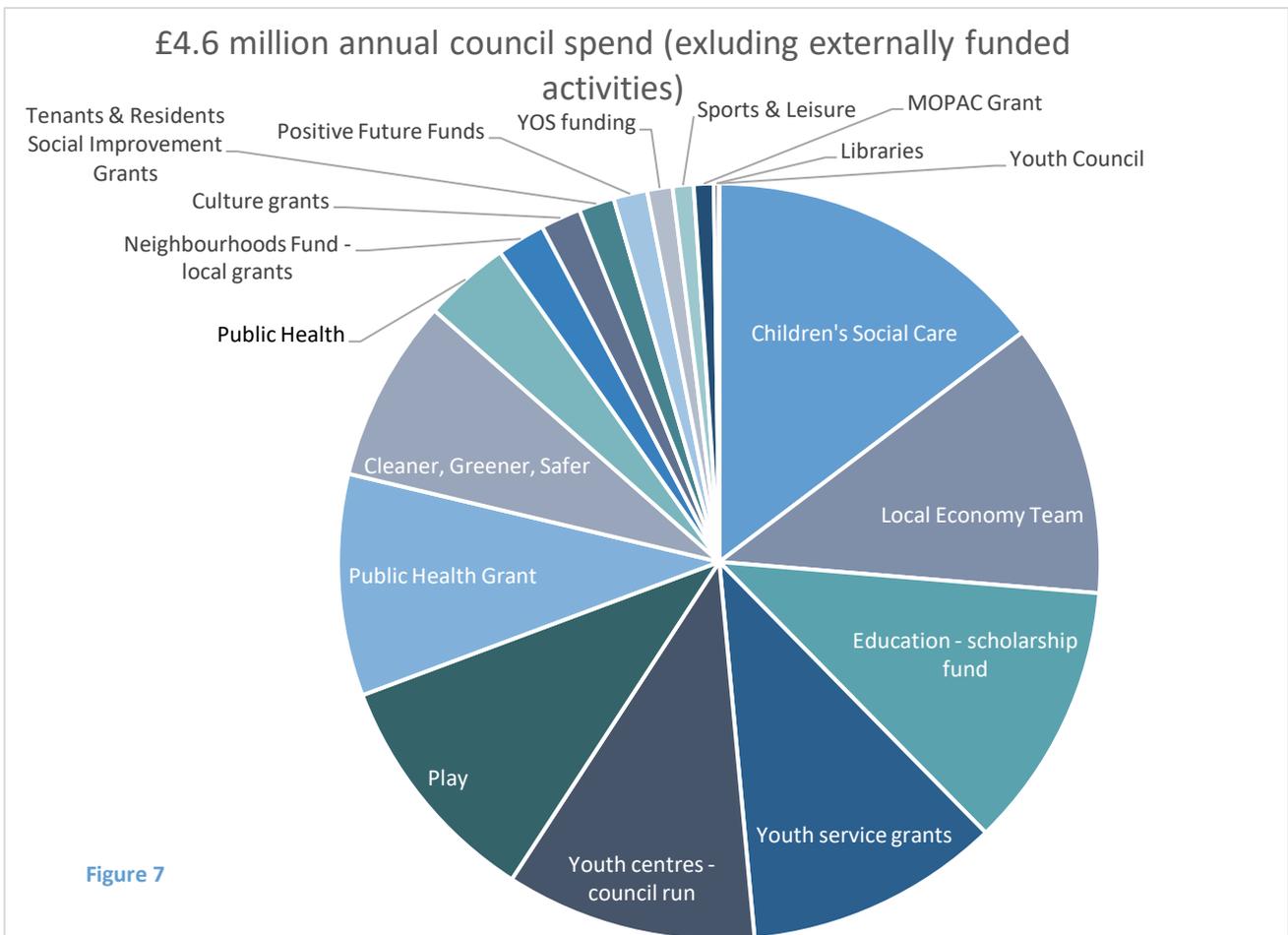
Figure 5

- 6.18 The survey also included a number of open-text fields to enable respondents to describe in their own words what they liked or wanted. Physical activities, particularly Swim and Gym and football, feature strongly in the responses. There was some variation between male and female answers with 'swimming' more common among females, and 'football' more common among males. Many young people also referred to visiting friends' homes as a favourite place.

7 Annual spending by the council

7.1 As part of this work we were asked to look at costs and usage of the youth offer. Having worked closely with council officers we concluded that while an accurate picture of council spending can be created; gathering data on use, however, presents a number of obstacles. In terms of costs and use of the wider youth offer *beyond* council-funded activity this too proved too complex for the scale of this project. What we can say however, is that of a £5.5 million annual budget for youth services, roughly £4.6 million is council, rather than externally, funded. From this council-funded part of the budget, illustrated in Figure 7, there are a small number of areas which account for over three-quarters of the youth services budget. The eight areas on which over £350,000 are spent are the following:

- **£675k** – Children’s Social Care (includes advocacy and SEND short breaks)
- **£540k** – Local Economy interventions (internships and Southwark Works)
- **£525k** – Education (Scholarship Fund)
- **£500k** – Youth Service Grants (for targeted activity and providing £5-30k grants to some independent youth clubs)
- **£491k** – Youth Centres (47% for DTC, 19% for Brandon, smaller amounts to other centres)
- **£467k** – Southwark’s five adventure playgrounds
- **£437k** – Public Health Grant (for the integrated health and wellbeing service)
- **£361k** – Cleaner, Greener, Safer Fund (made up of smaller grants including those for playgrounds, gardens and play equipment)



8 Analysis and discussion

Similar messages from all age groups

8.1 Our engagement gathered data and ideas from across the age-range of the youth offer from 10-year olds to those in their early 20s. Most of our data about younger age groups came from the survey, while our ethnography was with older individuals, yet the findings are remarkably consistent. In addition, those who took part in our deliberative workshops came from across the entire youth offer age-range and involved young people with diverse life-experiences; their views too were remarkably consistent with the survey and ethnography. With just one or two exceptions, we are confident our evidence can be used to reach conclusions about the whole youth offer across the age range.

Hopefulness is as important as protection

8.2 We heard a strong desire among young people to be supported in positive ways and to be helped to find opportunities. In the workshops in particular we saw how this can clash with the focus on harm prevention which guides youth service providers. In our workshop discussions we referred to this difference in emphasis as the difference between ‘asset’ and ‘deficit’ perspectives. In other words, there is a stronger strategic emphasis from public agencies on *what young people lack* and the challenges or dangers they face, and much less emphasis on supporting the skills, ambitions and potential *young people have*. This tendency to prioritise protection over inspiration is also apparent in the original framing of this review as a follow-up to the serious youth violence panel.

8.3 We would suggest that the focus on threats and harms over opportunities is not just at odds with the way young people see their needs, but also at odds with Southwark’s mental health pledge for young people, which aims to support their wellbeing so that all young people can feel positive about themselves and sustain hopeful view of their lives.

8.4 Furthermore, whereas adults tended to raise the issue of safety in relation to physical violence, fewer young people directly mentioned physical violence. These young people sometimes eluded to the fear of crime rather than actually feeling unsafe. They were afraid of the prospect of facing physical violence, often because of what they heard from adults. However, their primary safety concerns were often about being hit by a vehicle either as a pedestrian or cyclist. This suggests that where young people are seeking protection from physical harm, they are just as likely to be concerned about dangerous and aggressive drivers, as they are about physical violence.

Young people are creating their own offer

8.5 The data show young people are accessing a wide range of activities and support across the borough and there is a lot going on they enjoy. However, many young people are not making use of the formal youth offer either because they are unaware of it, or because they do not perceive it to be of use. Instead, many young people in Southwark are creating a youth offer for themselves which meets their own wants and needs. Sometimes this self-curated offer may include support and activities the council funds or directly provides yet young people rarely see the connection with the council or understand its role, for example, one person referred to the council a ‘company’.

“Southwark as a company are not doing enough” F, 17

8.6 This points to a general lack of awareness amongst the borough’s young population as to the different services and activities which are provided by the council. We heard, throughout the engagement process, that many young people find out about things to do from their families and social circles as well as through teachers and classmates. This suggests that communication is often ineffective. It also points to a bigger issue, that there is a considerable gap between the assumptions of providers about what young people need from a youth offer versus what young people actually want and need.

Cost is one of the biggest barriers/enablers

8.7 Young people from across the borough stated that they want more cheap or free activities to do, places to go and - across all ages – cheap or free places to talk and share meals with friends, or simply chill. In one of the largest and most expensive cities in the world this is clearly a major challenge and driver of inequality. We found young people to be incredibly resourceful in seeking out cheap or free activities but a youth offer that made things easier to find, or cheaper once there, would enable young people to put their energies into making use of opportunities rather than searching for them.

A youth club but ‘not like a youth club’

8.8 The places and spaces in which young people said they spend their time include fast food locations where shared meals provide more than social time with friends but also low-cost social space in which to hang out. Libraries, parks and leisure centres fulfil similar functions enabling young people to structure their own time with friends. Fully free access is especially prized, hence the popularity of libraries for study and sanctuary, parks for a game of football or hanging out, and Swim and Gym for sociable physical activity.

8.9 These are all, of course, opportunities available in youth clubs, yet the conundrum is that many young people were either unaware of youth clubs or dismissed them. Young people were in effect seeking a youth club which is not a youth club.

Q: If you could ask for one thing in Southwark, what would it be?

A: “A cool place for kids to hang out which isn’t like a youth club and has a variety of things to do ranging from sports to gaming”

- Survey respondent

Where are Southwark’s cultural partners?

8.10 We heard from young people travelling across London to take part in creative activities.

“We went to Thamesmead to find a dance studio we could afford” F, 15

“I don’t think I’ve seen a space in Southwark where you can actually go to, to rehearse” M, 18

8.11 We also heard from young people creating brilliant music and art with basic equipment combined with self-evident talent. This is clear evidence of the creative potential of young residents but presents another conundrum. The sense that Southwark has nothing going on, especially for creative activities, is hard to reconcile with the wealth of globally significant arts organisations in the north of the borough; we heard little about Tate, IWM, Southbank Centre, the Globe, or the many other

performance spaces along the river. We were left questioning why those institutions are not reaching Southwark's young people; are local public services reaching out to those institutions, are they receptive; is what they offer unattractive to young people; what can be done to bridge this gap?

Online is second best

- 8.12 Looking at what young people in Southwark said they had done in the past week almost half the survey respondents (back in Figure 4 above) said they had spent time socialising online, yet only one-third listed this as what they wanted to do in the coming month. This tells us that despite digital communication being second nature (almost every young person we encountered had a phone in their hand), human contact is still seen as better than virtual. The same goes for learning new skills; it can be done online, but not out of choice.

"I spend about 4 hours on FaceTime with my friends, but it would be nicer if we could meet up in person" - F, 15

"I taught myself to draw watching YouTube... if there was a place I could go for someone to look at what I can do and give me tips I would go there" - M, 16

Learning from faith organisations and cultural groups

- 8.13 The ethnographic fieldwork showed that there are entire "youth offers" contained within institutions such as churches in Southwark, completely separate from anything offered by the council and accessed by hundreds of young people. This self-contained model of provision highlights the potential for an institution led largely by adults, to facilitate the conditions in which young people can shape their own youth offer – and the commitment young people will make to creating that offer. There is a lot of learning which can be drawn from the way in which these spaces are made accessible to young people for them to curate and run the "youth offer" that they want. One church we visited was providing young people with access to everything from education, to music production to a safe space to socialise with friends, going way beyond their traditional Sunday schedule. There will be many more faith and cultural organisations which have this type of youth-led model which the council can learn from.

Younger ages, youth clubs, and adventure playgrounds

- 8.14 While many of the survey responses (which came from a younger age range) chimed with the views of older teenagers, some issues did seem more specific to the 10-12 age group. One issue is having 'friends to go with' which we saw (in Figure 5) was the most commonly stated factor that would help respondents take part in more activities. This may indicate a need for structured social settings where younger ages can more easily make and deepen friendships, and where it is easier to negotiate when to go because timing is determined by a programme. This strongly supports the case for youth clubs (although there is the perception issue already discussed). It also supports the case for adventure playgrounds which we did not explore in detail, but which also offer free safe space to hang out with friends, physical activity, structured programming, alongside advice and guidance from workers. We also saw that adventure playgrounds had a higher recognition rate; 33 per cent of survey respondents having heard of them.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 It became obvious in this engagement and research that the lives of Southwark's 10-19 years olds are different from how youth providers imagine them to be. The priorities and values of Southwark's young people also seem different from those of providers and commissioners. The most significant gap is between the desire among young people to explore opportunities and think positively, compared to the focus (in many ways understandable) on preventing harm among those delivering the youth offer. This suggests Southwark needs mechanisms which deliver greater involvement by young people in defining the youth offer strategically and in commissioning services and programmes. When we looked at reviews of other youth services, the need for youth involvement was one of the most common conclusions.
- 9.2 Young people across the 10-19 age range regularly create their own youth offer of educational and recreational leisure activities, often centred around social time, eating, physical activity, and creativity. In many ways this is a demonstration of their empowerment, but financial cost is a major barrier to engagement. Older teenagers will travel across London seeking affordable options, but younger ages lack this option. This could be alleviated in several ways, for example through subsidies or support directly to young people to create their own offer locally.
- 9.3 In some cases, however, young people are seeking support or programmes the council or partners are already providing, but they are not using them. This could be because that support is hard to discover, poorly communicated, or just not enticing. Again, the solution is to involve users more closely in commissioning, in order to attune programmes more closely to young people's language, lifestyles, and aspirations.
- 9.4 We have also seen how important to young people it is to have places to socialise while feeling safe, and without incurring cost. Parks and libraries offer this, as do leisure centres. Fast food places and budget eateries while not free, are cheap, and also enable young people to eat together and provide them with access to a neutral and unstructured space in which to hang out. Yet these informal spaces seem under-valued by service providers in terms of the role they play for young people. One reaction to this might be to create designated meeting spaces *for* young people, but that would probably miss the point; young people want to create their own space, but design and management of public (or quasi-public) realm can make it easier for them to find spots which are free and which are safe.
- 9.5 Lastly, as well as things to do, and places to meet, we heard from young people across the age range that they want support and guidance, either from someone a little older, or a trusted adult outside their family. This might be to discuss things they are concerned about, or for advice about education and future careers. We heard from service providers that this kind of support, guidance, and help does exist - but it can be scattered, and hard to reach.
- 9.6 The recommendations resulting from these findings and conclusions are presented in full at the end of this report. They were initially developed throughout the engagement process and then refined and developed alongside the Task and Finish Group.

Annex: Full findings from engagement

Deliberative workshop discussions at Brandon Youth Centre and Dulwich Library

9.7 The two deliberative workshops took place in late January and lasted 2 hours. Each had between 20 and 30 participants including young people and adults.

9.8 The clearest overarching theme to emerge was that over the course of each discussion, the focus of participants of all ages shifted from protecting young people from harm, to creating opportunities and supporting happiness and health. This was seen most starkly when we asked participants to rank what they felt should be the primary focus of effort and investment. In both workshops ‘protection from harm’ was ranked most important at the start, and in both workshops ‘happiness and health’ was ranked most important when the question was repeated at the end.



Figure 6 – “What are the needs of young people?” - responses from young participants

9.9 We also found that throughout each workshop young people tended to focus more on positives and opportunities such as education and work, while professionals tended to focus more on protection and support such as the need for role models or mental health support as illustrated in Figure 3.

9.10 Other themes from the deliberative discussions were:

- Consistent mentions by young people of important needs being ‘role models’, ‘safe spaces and places’, ‘food and eating’, and ‘emotional support’.
- Notable difference in the concerns of commissioned providers compared to young people, with providers most often mentioning youth clubs, as well as funding.
- Challenges from young people that it is not enough just to have “opportunities” for employment – support is needed to help young people acquire necessary hard and soft skills, and they have to be opportunities young people want to access.
- That there are gaps around: careers information and guidance in schools, and work experience; support and education in mental health; healthier food options at schools; and mobility and transport around the borough to get to things.
- A sentiment resonated which was that ‘Southwark Council needs to be ahead of the curve – life is more complex than it used to be and the council needs to make sure it can adapt to that change’.
- Questions from professionals about how you approach ‘happiness’ – how do you identify action; do you just address what is making young people *unhappy* and *unhealthy*?

Ethnographic fieldwork

- 9.11 Ethnographic research took place over two consecutive days. We wanted to conduct extended interviews and observations with a small number of young people from Southwark, talking to them, going to locations that form their routine, and observing details. It was led by our ethnographic specialist and conducted jointly with the three young peer researchers from Southwark Council.
- 9.12 We spent time with nine ethnographic subjects mixed in gender and age, who all live in Southwark. A detailed report of the fieldwork has been submitted separately to Southwark Council with photographs, pseudonymized accounts, and verbatim quotes from our time with each the research subjects. The headline findings are summarised below:
- 9.13 There's lot on offer in Southwark that young people enjoy...**
- 9.14 Libraries *"places where you don't have to pay anything and you can just go and do work or just leave the house for the day"*, fast food and casual dining places *"we're planning to go and get bubble tea on Saturday"*, Burgess Park BMX track *"everyone here is just great to ride around and be around"*, the David Idowu Choir *"bringing people together and creating an environment where people could meet"*, plus churches, and Swim and Gym.
- 9.15 But they don't associate the council with it...**
- 9.16 The existing channels used by the council aren't being engaged with by young people *"I had to click through three pages to get to the right page, and then it said "information below", and I looked and it was blank. And I know where to look!"*, instead they use their own networks to find things out *"some of my friends have an Instagram where they rate restaurants, put the prices and so on"*.
- 9.17 There's a perception a lot is missing in the borough...**
- 9.18 Young people often travel outside the borough to find affordable activities *"we went to Thamesmead to find a dance studio we could afford"*, or they simply don't do the things they want *"if you don't have money you can't do it"*, arts facilities were felt to be lacking *"I don't think I've seen a space in Southwark where you can actually go to rehearse"*.
- 9.19 One observation felt particularly telling. Two subjects asked us to meet them at the London School of Economics on Aldwych. They had got a library card through the London School of Economics' 'Pathways to Law' scheme for Year 12-13 pupils. They often spent all day there studying, staying as late as 11pm at night. They said they enjoyed being surrounded both by people and settings they saw as representing their own aspirations.
- 9.20 Young people want to be inspired, but are left searching for positive pathways to follow...**
- 9.21 *"They tell you that if you fail at school you'll end up in a gang, or they tell you not to get into drugs or crime. What you don't hear is what else you could do"*, so they create self-organised and informal coping mechanisms *"we go for walks in the park to check in with each other and talk about any problems we might have"* and they seek times and spaces to just meet and talk, without needing to participate in any kind of activity at all *"we like stuff that's low key, just enjoying each other's company"*, eating with friends can fill the gap, but if money or space is tight it's not an option.

9.22 One young person we interviewed took a very literal approach to seeking ‘inspiration’. She frequently searched online for free tickets to commercial exhibitions and trade shows. She had discovered these as great places to learn new things, have an enjoyable afternoon (often on her own), and collect bags of free samples. This had become a kind of hobby for her.

9.23 And for some the borough has an image problem...

9.24 Moving around the borough is often seen as dangerous - cars hitting bikes, bikes hitting people, parents often amplify this fear, *“I walk through there at night with my headphones in but my music low, and I say the Lord’s Prayer the whole time”*, and there is a perception there is little here, and you need to travel elsewhere to find things to do *“Southwark is Southwark. It’s boring, it’s plain”*.

9.25 In essence, the clearest messages from the ethnography are that young people want to create the youth offer, not just consume it, and they want help to achieve positive outcomes not just protection against negative outcomes.

9.26 Overall, it presents a picture of young people (of all ages but older teens in particular) creating the youth offer they want; chilling with friends, music and art creation, sport, performing arts, eating together, and studying outside school. For this they need support, which sometimes they get (from the council, sports clubs, or faith organisations) but often they don’t, because it is poorly communicated, timed, or located – or because it is absent.

Survey of primary and secondary school pupils

9.27 The online survey was conducted in the two weeks following February 2020 half term and was promoted via state primary and secondary schools in the borough. It was conducted using Southwark Council’s main online survey platform.

9.28 The survey asked what kinds of activities respondents had done, what they would like to do, how they find out about support or activities for young people, and what issues they felt were important for young people.

9.29 The survey generated 428 responses. Although we designed the survey so that it could capture the views of parents (via routing and survey logic to different questions) it was not actively promoted to adults. A number of teachers had also been approached for specific assistance in supporting their pupils to complete the survey; these teachers were in years 6 and 7 either side of the primary to secondary transition.

9.30 Overall, the survey respondents represented the younger end of the 10-19 range and were more likely to be female. In other respects, they were broadly representative of the borough population.

9.31 Almost all respondents (95 per cent) identified themselves as ‘Young person aged 10-19 (or up to 25 if SEN)’ with only a very small number saying they were a parent (3 per cent). Of those who gave their age most were either 10 or 11 years old (85 per cent), the remainder being thinly spread between 12 and 17. More said they were female (55 per cent) than male (37 per cent), with eight per cent “prefer not to say”, and ten per cent skipping the question.

9.32 In terms of ethnicity around one fifth (22 per cent) said they were ‘Black British’, the same proportion (22 per cent) said ‘Black African’, 16 per cent said, ‘White British’, and 14 per cent skipped the

question. The remainder (around 26 per cent) were spread evenly across the other ethnicity descriptors offered. Eighty-eight per cent of those who answered said they had no disability or long-term conditions, four per cent said they did, eight per cent said, 'prefer not to say'. A further eight per cent skipped this question.

9.33 As shown at the start of this report in Figure 2, based on home postcode it appears respondents came from a spread of areas broadly representative of the range of socioeconomic conditions in Southwark.

9.34 Overall, 57 per cent of respondents had taken part in an activity outside school in the past week while 40 per cent said they had not taken part in any activity outside school. This was similar across the age range of respondents.

9.35 The survey presented a list of activities generated from the deliberative discussions, ethnography, and suggestions from council officers and asked whether respondents had done any of these in the past week or wanted to in the coming month. Figure 4 compares the answers to 'last week' and 'coming month'. The chart is ranked left to right by 'activity in the last week'. This shows 'socialised online' as the most common response followed by sport, eating with friends, going to a park with friends, then 'music, dance, drama, or art'. When we look at what respondents *would like to do*, we see far fewer want to socialise online in the coming month compared to those who have done this in the past week. This indicates that given the choice, they would prefer to do something else. Conversely, most other answers indicate respondents *want to do* something more than they have actually done it in the past week. These could be interpreted as activities respondents would do more of if they had the chance.

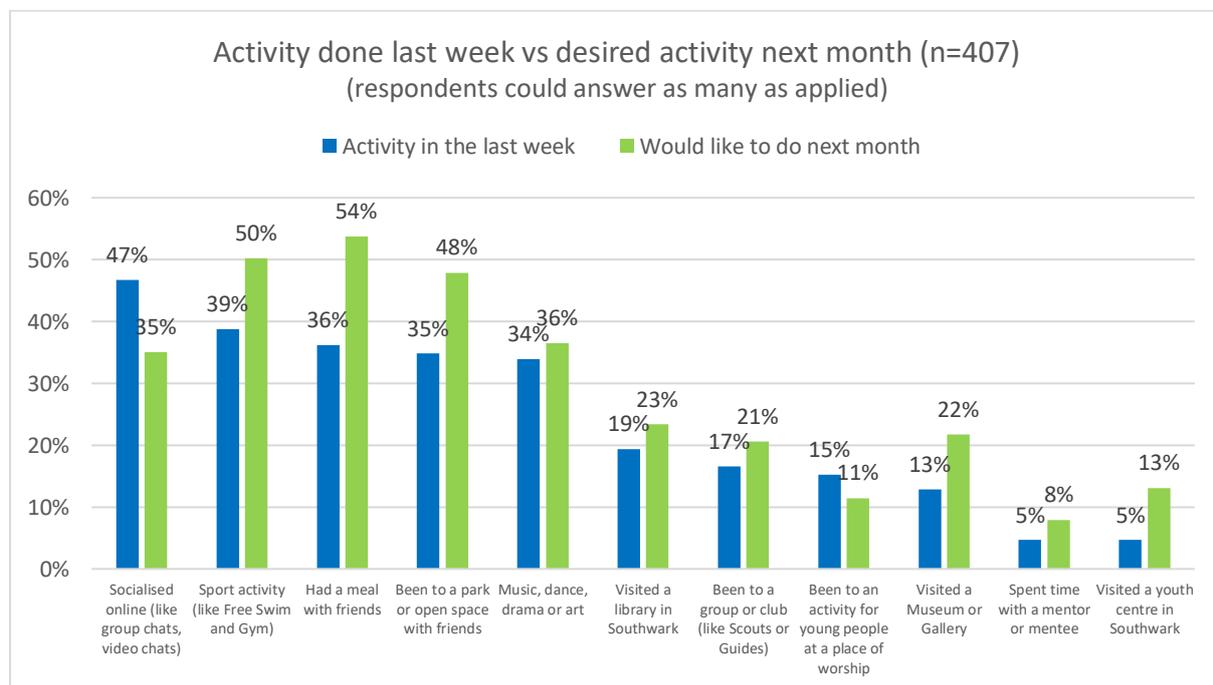


Figure 7

9.36 We should add that while 'visited a youth club' generates the smallest response (five per cent) for 'last week', a related question showed 14 per cent of respondents had visited the Damilola Taylor Centre (DTC), a similar proportion as those who had taken part in activities at a place of worship. This

discrepancy may be due to respondents not using the term 'youth club' to describe the DTC. The younger average age of respondents also puts them at the lower edge of the target age of youth clubs.

- 9.37 When we presented a list of issues (again generated from the workshops and ethnography) and asked what issues were most important, 'being able to do something physically active' scored highest (86 per cent 'very important' or 'important'). followed by 'having places to hang out with friends (76 per cent 'very important' or 'important). This was followed by advice from older peers and people to talk to outside their family about worries and concerns – in other words access to guidance, support and counselling.
- 9.38 Recognition rates for youth offer activities, based on a list from Southwark Council showed that 'Free Swim and Gym' had good recognition (63 per cent having heard of it) followed by Millwall FC's Premier League Kicks programme (36 per cent), and 'adventure playgrounds (33 per cent). Art Block at South London Gallery and Southwark's Youth Council had some recognition, and the remainder had recognition rates of ten per cent or under. Again, some of these results may reflect the lower average age of respondents.
- 9.39 In terms of how respondents tend to find out about things to do, the most common routes are friends, family, classmates and teachers, followed by 'Google', then 'posters'. Social media scores low as a route for finding out (again age may be a factor), as does local authority online information.
- 9.40 Given the strong desire we heard in the workshops and ethnography for free or very low-cost activities we also asked how much respondents spend per week in total to obtain a broad picture of disposable income (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Not surprisingly most respondents (55 per cent) said they spent less than £10 each week.

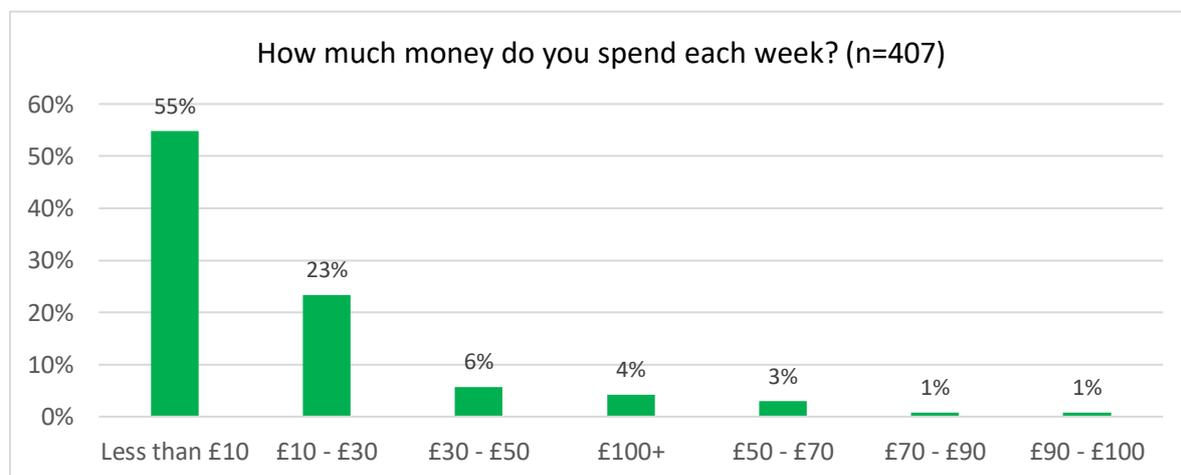


Figure 8

9.41 We also asked what would help respondents take part in free activities in Southwark. We phrased this as ‘free activities’ rather than any activity because we already knew cost was a major inhibitor/enabler and we wanted to hear what else might be identified.

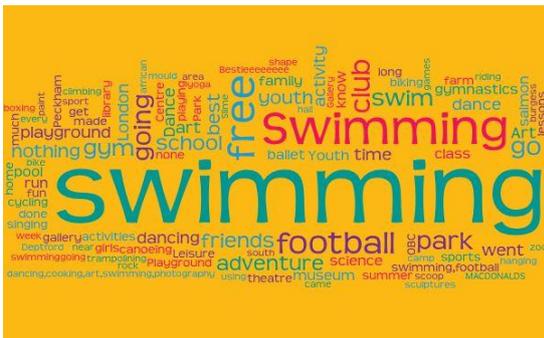


Figure 9

9.42 What this shows (in Figure 5) is that besides cost, the ‘friends to go with’ is seen as the biggest inhibitor/enabler, followed by location ‘closer to home’.

9.43 The survey also included a number of open-text fields to enable respondents to describe in their own words what they liked or wanted. These were phrased as ‘what is the best free activity you have done’, ‘how do you like to spend your free time’, ‘what is your favourite place to spend time’, and ‘if there was one thing you could ask for in Southwark what would it be’.

9.44 These questions generated 2,000 text responses. Across the responses to ‘best free activity’ and ‘how do you like to spend your free time’ physical activities particularly Swim and Gym, and football feature strongly. For ‘favourite place’, libraries, parks, cheap food and arts (theatres/galleries/art classes) feature often. There was some variation between male and female answers with ‘swimming’ more common among females, and ‘football’ more common among males.



Part II: Southwark Youth Provision Review Task and Finish Group

10 Introduction

In late 2019 following recommendations made by the Southwark Youth Violence Panel the council commenced a strategic review of the borough's services for young people and wider youth offer. As part of this, Shared Intelligence and Analogue strategies were commissioned to plan and deliver a comprehensive engagement plan with young people, youthwork professionals and stakeholders as a central workstream in the strategic review.

During May and June 2020, as part of this engagement process, draft findings and recommendations from the Shared Intelligence and Analogue Strategies were tested in a series of discussions with young people, council officers, youth providers and parents. It was apparent from this that Southwark's youth provider organisations had significantly more insight to contribute. The council therefore requested Shared Intelligence facilitate an additional task and finish group to enable youth providers to test, challenge, and contribute to the findings and recommendations in more depth.

This report summarises the deliberations of the three meetings of the task and finish group and the implications for the wider strategic review.

The terms of reference for this Task and Finish Group, as well as the membership of this group are set out in Appendix I of this report.

This report contains:

- Methodology of the process
- Key themes emerging from discussion
- A detailed look at the recommendations

11 Methodology

The Task and Finish Group process was begun after a series of workshops held with youth providers, young people, adventure play staff and parents. In the youth providers' workshop, it was noted that there was a consensus, shared by Southwark council, that there needed to be more input from those working with young people in the borough.

The decision was taken that this could be most effectively carried out with a small group of youth providers who we could meet with on a number of occasions to look in greater detail at the emerging recommendation from the research, the research itself and begin a mapping process of youth providers in the borough.

The membership of the group was decided through discussion between the council's project team and Shared Intelligence who had engaged with youth providers during the various workshops in the review process. Invitations were sent out and initial scoping calls held with each of the youth providers and young advisors, to better understand their experiences of youth provision in the borough and their understanding of the aims and scope of the Task and Finish Group.

The Task and Finish Group itself met through Zoom on three occasions in quick succession. The three sessions, over the course of a week, were thematic and each had a different aim.

The aims to the sessions were as follows:

Session 1: To establishing the group and its purpose. To talk through the methodology of the research and give the opportunity for discussion on the thoughts, comments, reactions and questions coming from the findings of the review.

Session 2: To look at each of the emerging recommendations in turn, adding depth and detail as well as practical ways in which these recommendations could be achieved in the borough.

Session 3: To begin the process of mapping youth providers in the borough based on who is currently delivering services for young people. To think about youth providers' aspirations and vision for the youth service over the next decade.

In advance of these sessions the group were given access to the final Shared Intelligence findings report and the emerging recommendations so that they had time to digest these and therefore more fully engage with them in the sessions.

The following sections set out the themes coming from the discussion across the three sessions and a more detailed look at the suggested amendments of the recommendations.

12 Discussion

Session 1

The first session of the Task and Finish Group was focused on the findings of the Youth Provision Review carried out by Shared Intelligence. Overall, positive feedback was received on the findings of the research and the methodology used. Some of the key themes of the discussion were:

Deficit to asset thinking and highlighting what young people say they want

Members of the Task and Finish Group were in agreement that this was an important point when it came to conceiving of the needs and wants of young people. They felt that the research was correct in showing that young people want to be inspired and felt that this highlighted the importance of the council and youth providers working to provide opportunities to young people which enabled them to follow their aspirations and interests, and not be there for a solely diversionary purpose. The group felt that the deficit to asset thinking should be the narrative behind engagement and the philosophy for provision, rather than being driven by a narrative of services being to prevent bad things from happening. They felt that one of the key aspects of this thinking was addressing the intersection between schools and youth provision. The very structured, and on occasion almost corporate, nature of schools can sometimes be at odds with the model which many youth providers adopt.

Provision of unstructured space, and spaces 'like youth clubs but not a 'Youth Club''

One of the biggest concerns raised by youth providers was that these spaces, however they evolve, would be completely youth-run. They were clear that these spaces still need qualified youth worker from a safety and safeguarding point of view. The group pointed to a number of examples of places where this type of space, the "youth club which isn't a youth club", is already being done and how this could be done in the borough:

- South London Gallery – Art Block: providing a supervised space for young people to come and go as they please, and also opportunities to participate in a range of contemporary arts activities. The environment (professional-looking) is one that young people are being drawn to.
- Study Cafés in South Korea - there are many café's designed to appeal to students as places for them to study, providing study space and refreshments. There is an example of a Korean run café in South London which operates in a similar way.
- Existing youth organisations could look into harnessing the opportunities of businesses paying business rates, incentives could be offered to organisations who can provide supervised space.

Enabling access to more opportunities

Enabling access was a theme which cut across discussion throughout the session. A number of individuals in the group were clear that in order for young people to truly be able to have access in the borough in which they live and go to school, this needed to be a big priority for the council. They acknowledged however, that this would require a lot of work and political will. Another key point of discussion was enabling access for young people, no matter what their background. This was particularly around ESOL provision and how for so many young people in the borough this was a gateway to having access to opportunities. One member of the group stressed how essential this was for migrant students and other young people to feel empowered and part of the community in which they were living. This all culminated in the important point that in order to enable access to

opportunities for young people in the borough this has to be a far-reaching effort across many different stakeholders and parts of the council.

Session 2

The second session looked at the recommendations in detail. The output from this session is presented in full detail in the following section. There were, however, some general themes coming from the discussion.

The council's knowledge and communication gap

Throughout all three of the Task and Finish Sessions the group commented on the rich and diverse youth offer in the borough which goes far beyond that which the council provides. However, the point was raised on a number of occasions that those who are part of delivering that offer do not feel that the council is aware of their work. This was something which was true of both established youth providers who had worked with the council for years as well as small, grassroots, youth providers. This knowledge gap works against particularly these smaller organisations being able to act as a larger whole as they are not aware of the other providers who are working in the borough.

Members of the group noted that one of the challenges with the council's ability to collect information on what is happening in the borough is that they felt there was no one within the council who has direct leadership of the youth offer. They noted that while there was direct leadership of youth centres and direct leadership on harm prevention activities, this was not true of the youth offer as a whole.

Localised and specialised opportunities

An overarching theme of the discussion around the recommendation was about where in the borough services were offered, and what type of opportunities these were. It was particularly linked to the discussion around the recommendations on communications and young people creating their own youth offer. This came from the idea that youth providers felt that young people should be encouraged to find out what was happening on their doorsteps and in their local areas. It was noted that throughout the borough there are services which operate in many different areas. Localised opportunities were defined as activities with wide and general appeal (e.g. places to hang out where activities or a meal is secondary to informal socialising) which are happening all around the borough in many different localities. Young people did not tend to want travel far for this type of provision and would use what was on their doorstep. Providers also spoke about the importance of young people knowing about more specialised opportunities (e.g. specialist arts, sports, or study opportunities) which could only be found in one or two places in the borough. These, by definition had more specific appeal and were. These were things young people would travel across the borough, or further afield, to access.

A better mechanism for young people can discover the types and location of activities they are interested in pursuing is of great importance (recommendation 1). But, just as important is ensuring the information can be accessed by as many young people as possible through a variety of mediums.

Respective roles of the council and the wider network of provider

The choice over what aspects of the youth offer are led by the council and that which is led by independent organisations and community groups was another key part of the discussion on the recommendations. There were certain activities which youth providers noted the council needed to take a leading role in, such as the development of a framework for capturing outcomes (recommendation 8). Here, youth providers felt that a outcomes framework which had the agreement of youth providers across the borough was something which only the council could properly do. On

the other hand, in relation to communications and ensuring that there was a full picture of what was being provided in the borough (recommendation 1), youth providers felt that they were best placed to lead this and report on what activity was happening and then have the council collate this into a centrally-managed system.

Achieving greater youth voice

How the council communicates and engages, and with whom, was an important theme in the discussion of all the recommendations. Members of the group were in agreement that the council could not just engage with a group of highly engaged young people and youth advisors (recommendation 2). They felt that while this group of young people imbedded in the council decision-making process was a good idea, this could not be instead of carrying out wider engagement with young people where they are. This could be through research such as the ethnographic fieldwork carried out, through engagement in youth clubs, schools and other outreach to collect the views and understand the needs of those young people who do not normally engage. It was further noted that in order to have young people involved in the co-design and co-creation of the “youth club which isn’t a youth club”, young people from a diverse range of backgrounds would need to be consulted, not just the “usual suspects”.

It was also noted that in order for this process to have the greatest possible impact, the council needs to be fully behind this recommendation, and must ensure the youth voice plays a strong influencing role at the earliest possible stage in decision making. The mechanism developed to feed the youth voice into council decision making processes must therefore reflect both of these elements.

Accessibility for young people

There was a strong theme that the borough could do more to normalise young people’s use of empty and informal spaces to create their own activities, to enjoy as safe spaces to relax and spend unstructured time. It was raised that currently, young people feel excluded from some spaces, feeling harassed by security and being told to move on. There is therefore a need to create spaces in which young people feel comfortable (recommendation 6) and where they are free to use these spaces in the creation of their own offer (recommendation 3). Members of the group emphasised that there is a role to play here for all the businesses, activities and spaces in the borough, from large global arts organisations to small independently owned businesses and cafes.

The role of local businesses

There were two aspects to this idea. Firstly, the role which local businesses could play in providing safe spaces for young people where they felt welcomed and had an offer for young people (recommendation 3), and as discussed above. Secondly, the role that local businesses could play in helping to provide positive pathways to work and serve as inspiration for the borough’s young people. With regard to the first idea, and linking to the theme raised above, it was discussed that business should play a greater role in normalising young people’s use of space, by providing spaces for young people to create their own activities or spaces for unstructured use of time. Members of the group felt that the council should play more of a role in engaging with the borough’s businesses to help them to create these spaces and offers which support young people. It was suggested that asking local businesses when receiving grants or council support, “How accessible is your business to the borough’s young people?” could help with this.

With regard to the second aspect, the discussion highlighted that local businesses, of all sizes, had a role to play in helping young residents into positive pathways to work, through opportunities like mentorships, work experience provision and job opportunities. This was linked to both

recommendation 4 and 7. The positive inspiration of young people, which members of the group pointed out was an important part of the research, was something they felt could be achieved by the council engaging with those working in the borough to find individuals who could act as mentors to young people.

Collaboration with youth providers

Also linked to the businesses in the borough was the idea of how local businesses from all sectors should be working with the VCS and those providing services for young people in the borough. It was raised as a big problem in working with big organisations trying to run programmes in communities across the borough that these organisations often did not know how to get young people into their provision. According to youth providers, they are often asked to go out into their networks and use their own time and resource to recruit young people into this sort of activity. Members of the group noted that working with organisations of all types looking to provide activities for young people in the community (recommendation 4) needed to be more of a partnership activity and that their knowledge and experience should not be taken for granted.

It was also important that businesses looking to engage young people should work with youth providers to bring the opportunities to where the young people are, rather than encourage young people to go to where their opportunities are.

Youth Services as harm prevention

While all members of the group emphasised the importance of keeping young people safe while moving around the they were clear that thinking and talking about youth provision as being diversionary or as being primarily about preventing harm was a mistake. They felt that this detracted from the fact that young people had clearly showed the desire to be inspired and live happy, fulfilling lives in the borough. It also, some felt, meant that there was a risk of the wrong people being involved in conversations about young people within the council with youth service conversations happening in isolation to those about education for example. The group discussed how this reduction of youth services to being about harm prevention was something which had been driven by public spending cuts, and that it was not what youth workers wanted.

Session 3

The final session of the group looked at two key things. An initial mapping of the youth providers currently working across the borough and a discussion on the group's future vision for youth provision in the borough.

Figure 1 (below) shows the list which youth providers identified in the session as being providers working across the borough. These organisations fell into a number of different categories. Arts and culture; sports; uniformed organisations; Youth Centres; Migrant-groups/culture-specific groups; adventure playgrounds; parks and nature; faith groups; community groups and libraries. The full list of organisations identified is provided in Appendix II.

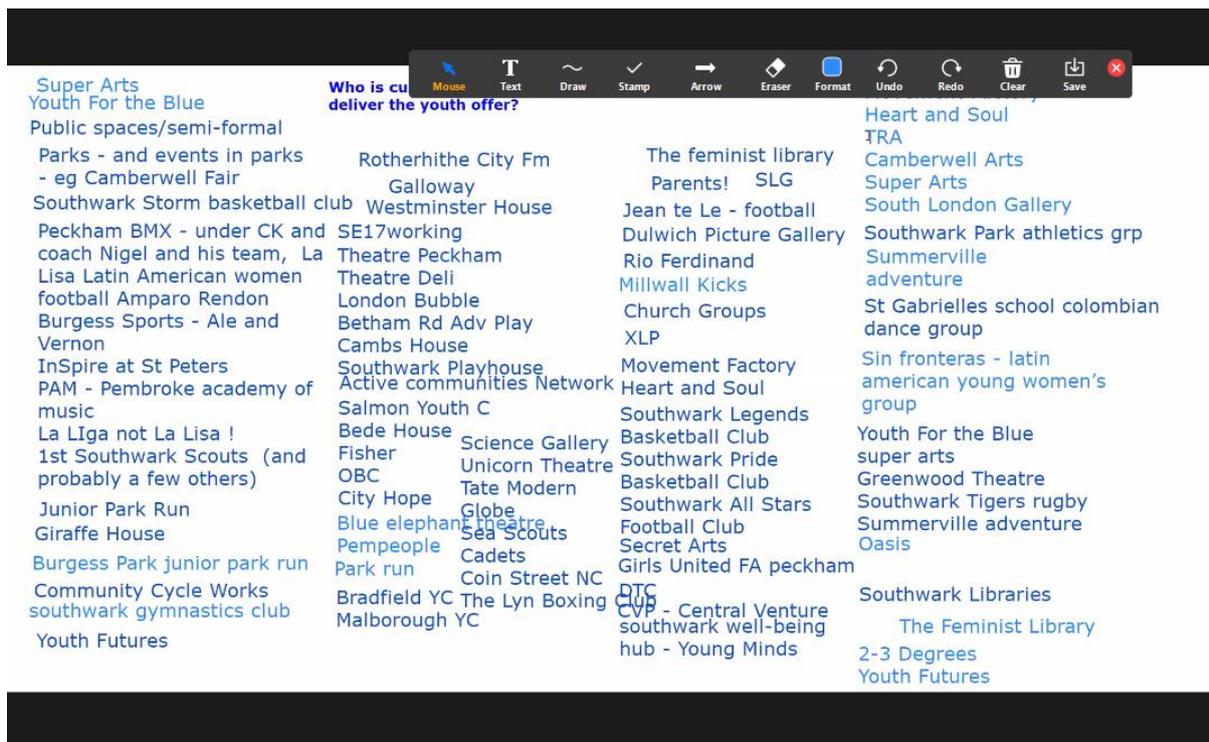


Figure 1: Whiteboard from mapping exercise of youth provision in Southwark

The Task and Finish group identified a large number of organisations providing services and activities for young people in the borough. They acknowledged that this was not an exhaustive list and that there were many more organisations and individuals operating in the borough including far more culture-specific, community and faith groups offer provision for young people. This list shows the collective knowledge of just a few youth providers and young advisers and how just a short mapping activity can bring to light so many different examples of provision. A next step would be to look at the relative visibility of these organisations and the connectiveness between them. This would help to build up a picture of what provision in the borough looks like, where that provision is, for whom and further help to identify where there are gaps and duplications in the current provision.

The future of youth provision in Southwark

In the final part of this third session we asked the members of the Task and Finish Group to think about what youth services might be like a decade from now and begin to think about their hopes for young people and the services they might interact with.

Group members were largely positive about the future and what they hoped provision might look like a decade from now. The theme of safety for young people to move around the borough was an important one, and the ability for them to feel safe, accepted and welcomed in the places that they went. Access was mentioned a number of times in relation to both the ability to access the provision which young people wanted, created and found for themselves as well as having everything that they needed within easy reach.

Below are a number of quotes which came out of that exercise, emphasising the hopeful and forward-looking nature of the members of the group and their hopes for what might come out of this review in the next decade.

“The latest generation of young people in Southwark [should be] happy, safe and healthy”

“for there to be autonomy for movement for young people so they really felt safe travelling around the borough and beyond from a young age.”

“a rich offer of the things which young people want and need on their doorsteps and diverse, world-class facilities available across the borough”

“a city which includes children in all its spaces – so young people feel that all spaces are available for them, regardless of their socio-economic bracket”

“hope that there will be enough money around so that youth work and youth provision can be developed to a level where this conversation would not need to be a conversation anymore”

“hope that there will be a revaluing of teachers and education and youth work and an offer is created which young people feel blessed to have the opportunity to take up”

“some plush places where young people could go and have a “boundaried” sense of independence”

“having an environment where community groups are supported to be more sustainable in providing their offer to young people and increasing the level of engagement with young people and their families”

“young people will know what in the borough is available to them and have their voices heard in what they want to do, what they think needs to be improved”

“the youth offer is created by young people themselves and everyone is communicating better and working together more cohesively”

“Hope that youth work will be a sustainable career that you can stay in and people can support their families on so that young people are inspired to go into this in the long term, not just temporarily to get somewhere”.

13 Consideration of the Recommendations

The table below looks at the recommendations from the Shared Intelligence review as presented to the Task and Finish Group. It looks at the general comments made about each of the recommendations, the practical considerations which members of the group brought up and, in light of these comments, any additional detail or suggested amendments which were made. The discussion of each of these recommendations is contextualised in the discussion laid out in the previous section which highlights the cross-cutting themes raised in the second Task and Finish Group session as a whole.

A full version of these re-drafted recommendations is presented in Appendix III.

Recommendation	Comments from Task and Finish Group	Practical considerations for delivery	Additional detail / suggested amendments to recommendation
<p>Ensure that every young person in the borough has access to up-to-date and comprehensive information about what is available to them.</p>	<p>Youth providers agreed with the recommendation and discussed the practicalities of how this recommendation could be implemented. The council has a role to play in organising and promoting youth provision in the borough, but providers and businesses themselves also should be encouraged and supported to play in flagging their provision to the council. It must also be ensured that information about what is on offer can be sourced through a number of mediums to ensure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth providers/businesses could promote and flag their own provision in a way the council can capture, for example through increased use of social media tags. Flagging provision in this way could also become a condition of the funding agreement. • The council could ensure this live information is easily searchable/discoverable using the digital platforms and search methods young people most commonly use. This would require some ongoing curation to ensure access to information is user-friendly and clear (e.g. activities are consistently described in terms of type/location). • Using digital methods more (e.g. social media tags) could provide an upskilling opportunity - the council could provide skills training (for example, provided by young people working with the council) to teach youth providers about digital/social media promotion 	<p>No amendments to the wording of the recommendations.</p> <p>Amendment to recommendation detail to specify other methods of dissemination must be used in addition to a digital platform.</p> <p>Suggested text:</p> <p><i>“...This information must be widely accessible, promoted and disseminated through a variety of mediums. The main centralised task for this could be a council-</i></p>

	<p>this information has the farthest reach.</p>		<p><i>led effort to ensure digital information for young people, parents and other youth providers is as easy to search and discover as possible. This requires insight into how and where these groups acquire information and should include a variety of digital and non-digital methods to ensure the widest possible reach”.</i></p>
<p>Give young people influence on council decision-making, including over the youth services budget working alongside council officers and elected members.</p>	<p>There was agreement that young people should be influencing the decision-making processes of the council services that are being provided for them. There was discussion around the practical considerations that need to be made to ensure the opportunity for young people’s voices to be heard are as open and inclusive as possible, and are heard at the right time to have the greatest possible influence. The council must play a strong role in facilitating and enabling this engagement process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process could build on methods used in the ethnographic element of the research – identifying very motivated young people and developing their skills to engage with, research, and amplify the views of wider networks of other young people in their areas (e.g. in social and open spaces) to gain the views of those who wouldn’t attend a formal engagement session. • Information gathered could then be fed into a formalised structure within the council. The main role of which would be to provide a process that ensures these views influence decision-making at the earliest possible time. • The council could support young researchers to undertake engagement where young people are with their parents – for example, at parent’s evenings or careers fairs, as parents will need to feel comfortable with this process. 	<p>No amendments to the wording of the recommendations.</p> <p>Amendments to the recommendation detail to reflect the openness of the engagement process.</p> <p>Suggested additional text:</p> <p><i>“To make sure that young people’s influence is not limited to a few highly engaged voices this process will require wider engagement to reach young people who are furthest from youth provision in Southwark and not usually engaged. The council should play a facilitating role in this, building capacity among the most-engaged young people to gather and amplify views from wider and more diverse</i></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council, with young people, could undertake training in collaborative working to arm them with the skills to best facilitate the engagement process and relaying of information, supporting the development of both young people and existing staff. 	<p><i>networks to feed into the decision-making process at the most effective and impactful time.”</i></p>
<p>Support young people to discover and take part in activities and opportunities that they discover for themselves to make activities more affordable and accessible.</p>	<p>There was agreement with this recommendation although greater emphasis should be given to the role of the borough in enabling young people to create their own offer, not just consume the offer that is already created for them. There is a need to make opportunities for young people more accessible, by lowering the cost of opportunities, as well as through making unstructured spaces more accessible, enabling them to feel they are more acceptable for young people to use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council should explore opportunities to encourage businesses to play a stronger role in helping to resource the youth offer through the powers they have in budgeting and business rates. For example, when providing core grants, they could explore how accessible their services are to young people and whether there are any opportunities they could provide for young people. If there are opportunities, the council could offer incentives, for example through business rates. 	<p>Amendment to the wording of the recommendation:</p> <p><i>“Support young people to create, discover and take part in activities in the borough and make sure that these activities and spaces are affordable and accessible for all.”</i></p> <p>Recommendation detail:</p> <p><i>Addition of...”The council should further encourage all businesses in the borough to be accessible to young people, in terms of their spaces and opportunities they provide, to help facilitate the creation of a youth offer accessible to all young people. This could be achieved through an organised system of discounts, incentives,</i></p>

			<i>and offers similar in concept to the council's leisure card or the Bankside Buzz scheme."</i>
Work in partnership with arts and creative organisations in the borough, as well as businesses, cultural and sports organisations, to make sure that they are bringing their amazing opportunities into communities across the borough.	There was strong agreement from youth providers that there were opportunities that could be harnessed by both the arts, culture and creative sector organisations and youth organisations. However, these opportunities needed to involve youth organisations in a more productive way in their design and delivery. There also needed to be a greater role for arts, culture and creative sector organisations in bringing opportunities to where young people are rather than encouraging young people to go to where the opportunities are.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of this recommendation needs to ensure there is collaboration in the design and delivery of these programmes, between businesses, organisations and the youth providers who have reach into, and networks within, local communities. • The council should also use their partnerships with large and small creative organisations to bring their activities to where young people are. For example, working with Tate Modern to bring their opportunities to young people where they are, rather than encouraging young people to go to the Tate. 	<p>No amendments to the wording of the recommendations.</p> <p>Amendments to the recommendation detail to highlight the value youth providers can bring to the design and reach of these opportunities, if they are involved early on in the design process.</p> <p>Suggested amendment:</p> <p><i>"... This un-met demand presents an opportunity for the borough's leading arts organisation to work with local youth providers in developing opportunities to extend their geographic reach into communities furthest from their physical facilities, including..."</i></p>
Review accountability and governance of the youth offer within the Council to ensure the right balance	There was agreement for this recommendation and the understanding that the council has, for a variety of reasons,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically, there is a question mark over the placing of youth services within Environment and Leisure, and over the Member reporting lines to the lead for Community Safety. The T&F group agreed 	No amendments to recommendation or recommendation detail.

<p>between protecting young people from harm and enabling them to enjoy an adolescence of hopefulness and fulfilled potential.</p>	<p>focused youth services more on protection from harm than offering opportunities to young people that inspire them. There was also agreement that young people, youth providers and the council may benefit more if youth services was situated slightly differently within the council.</p>	<p>with the research findings which indicated that closer links organisationally with education, children’s services, and health and wellbeing would help achieve better balance between the asset and deficit approach. Similarly, that balance would be helped by more direct reporting at Member level to the Children and Schools portfolio.</p>	
<p>Conduct a youth-focused audit of spaces to understand how to create venues which provide the same things as youth centres but ‘which isn’t a youth club’ and understand how all spaces in the borough can be managed to provide places for young people to socialise.</p>	<p>There was agreement that an audit of spaces needs to be conducted to highlight physical spaces that provide areas of opportunity. There was also some initial thinking of how current spaces could be used differently to provide places for young people to socialise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All youth providers including the council need to ensure they understand how, where, and why young people want spaces outside school and home to socialise and pursue opportunities which they enjoy and which aide their wellbeing. Current levels of insight seemed insufficient. [BL addition in previous draft]. • The conventional youth centre offer could shift to a similar model that is provided in Norwich⁵. If there is something unique in particular youth centres, and things are kept current, the fact that this provision is offered by a ‘youth club’ wouldn’t matter. • Salmon Youth Centre could look to re-instate the D:Session (a session run by young people on music production). 	<p>No amendments to recommendation or recommendation detail.</p>

⁵ In Norwich, each youth centre has a particular ‘functionality’ or provides something that is unique to other youth centres. For example, one puts on drama performances in the evening, another puts on youth night club events.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a shift on the youth offer on a borough-wide scale would require coordination and a long-term strategy. • There is potential in the sharing of existing physical spaces and where there is space in buildings that are multi-use (where ideally one occupier is paying the majority of the running costs). For example, buildings that are currently owned by the council but are currently empty could be harnessed for space for young people, such as Study Cafés like those in South Korea⁶. • A Toolkit could be developed for which provides ideas for things they could do that tend to the interests of young people (e.g. spaces for young people to hang out). The toolkit should make clear that venues do not need to do all of the things on the list to ‘provide a lot’. 	
<p>Work with existing services which provide emotional wellbeing advice to young people, and those providing careers and skills advice – to create clearer pathways so they are more accessible and relatable to young people.</p>	<p>There was agreement with this recommendation, with much of the conversation focussed on the need to improve visibility and accessibility of, and pathways through, skills and career opportunities for young people. This could be better achieved through the development of relationships between the council, advisory services and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many examples of schemes run by businesses in London that aim to provide young people with work experience and skill development opportunities. For example, in Islington, City of London, and Tower Hamlets. • Relationships should be developed or improved between Southwark Works, other council advisory services, and the Careers Service external to help improve careers advice and guidance so young people can understand the variety of ways they can access and progress specific careers. 	<p>No amendments to recommendation.</p> <p>Suggested text for recommendation detail:</p> <p><i>“In order to support the borough’s young people in their emotional wellbeing and mental health, as well as with future positive pathways the council needs to look closely at how these services can be more</i></p>

⁶ Study Café’s in South Korea are unstructured spaces where young people can spend time studying and socialising. There is an example of a Korean run café in South London which operates in a similar way.

	businesses, both local and pan-London.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships should be developed between the council and businesses, both inside and outside of the borough, to identify those who are already providing employment and skills development opportunities to young people. Particular effort should be made in identifying opportunities that remove barriers for some groups⁷. The identified opportunities should be advertised in a centralised place, as well as disseminated out through the networks young people use. 	<i>effectively provided. Existing careers support in schools should be augmented by a youth service which gives young people access to both information about career pathways and serves as a source of inspiration. Through the development of relationships with Southwark businesses, the council should work to ensure the skills and career development and work experience opportunities provided by employers are reaching the borough's young people."</i>
Develop a framework for the council to capture the outcomes of the youth offer and provide a way for the council to continuously hear the voices of a diverse spectrum of young people and understand their needs so that the youth offer continues to be relevant	There was agreement that data collection on who the youth offer is reaching, and the impact the youth offer is having on young people, is important to both inform the services being provided and to develop an evidence-base that links provision to positive outcomes. However, there was some concern over the practicalities of data collection and monitoring for youth providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirements of youth organisations to gather data on users, outcomes and impacts needs to be realistic. The methods used to collect information on positive impacts of the services provided must not impact on their ability to deliver these services. The council itself, alongside other organisations including universities, could therefore help to support the research process. Analysis of data from social media could help determine the reach of youth provision in Southwark. 	No amendments to recommendation or recommendation detail.

⁷ For example, young people from lower income households struggle more to engage in work experience opportunities that are unpaid or where they need to buy their own suits and laptops. Bloomberg was identified as a business who runs mentoring programmes and provides young people with formal-wear.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To continue to develop and evidence-base for outcomes associated with youth provision, local universities could research the long-term impact of youth services more broadly.	
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14 Conclusions

Overall, the Task and Finish Group process provided a positive platform for the membership of the group to fully interrogate and question the findings of the research and the foundation on which the recommendations were crafted. It further allowed this small group of youth providers and young advisors to look in detail at the recommendations, add detail and engage with the practicalities of how they could be implemented. Finally, the process gave the group the opportunity to reflect on the diverse nature and sheer amount of youth provision in the borough and look forward to how this could develop over the next decade if these recommendations were implemented.

In light of the discussions and with the ability of using the insight and knowledge base of these youth providers and young people we believe that there are some slight amendments which should be made to some of the recommendations. These changes to recommendations one, two, three, four and seven, detailed in the grid above, are shown in full in Appendix III. The Task and Finish Group, on the whole was incredibly positive about the recommendations and therefore these changes are small wording changes and minor amendments rather than a complete reframing of the emerging recommendations.

As a result of our engagement throughout this review process, further enhance by this round of engagement through the Task and Finish Group, we believe that there are two missing recommendations which should be added to the existing eight.

The first of these is around the need for better engagement with the knowledge-base and insights of youth providers and the second is around the ownership, leadership and vision for the youth offer within the council.

Better engagement and communication with youth providers

The need for better engagement and communication with youth providers, stems from the fact that many of the organisations and individuals we have spoken with have access to a wide and diverse number of networks within the borough, as well as a wealth of knowledge and research, which we believe it would be an asset for the council to engage with. In terms of building up both a picture of what is happening in the borough, and for helping to build up an evidence base from which decisions, policy and strategies for young people can be made and delivered from, they are an invaluable resource. We would suggest that this recommendation could be worded as follows:

Recommendation 9: Draw on the expansive knowledge base and insights of youth providers across the borough to compliment the insights gained from young people and inform the council’s policies and strategies for young people.

This could be achieved by the council building and developing the relationship which it has with youth providers of all sizes in the borough. Having an open and continuous dialogue with these individuals and organisations working at ground-level across Southwark will allow the council’s policies, strategies and decision-making to be rooted in insights from the communities it serves. It would further allow the council to draw on a diverse and extensive knowledge base which can further enhance the insights gathered from young people.

Ownership, leadership and vision for youth services in Southwark

An issue which was mentioned throughout the process of the research and Task and Finish Group was that communication is a problem. This was communication between young people and the council, young people and youth providers and these youth providers with the council. All three of these groups were, to varying levels, unaware of the full picture of what was going on in the borough. One of the biggest challenges which we heard from youth providers was that they did not know who within the council to contact regarding provision for young people. This highlighted the importance of having a single point of contact and an individual in a coordinating role who has responsibility for the delivery of youth services and coordination of the youth offer. Having this single, and established, point of contact would make it easier for the council to engage with young people working within the council, and indeed young people across the borough. It would give youth providers a streamlined and simple way of interacting with the council and also help the council to engage with businesses from all sectors to drive forward the council's vision for the youth offer. We would suggest that this tenth recommendation could be worded as follows:

Recommendation 10: Review the ownership and leadership of youth services within the council to create simple pathways for engagement with stakeholders, youth providers and young people to coordinate the delivery of the youth offer more effectively.

Having a single point to contact to actively engage with key stakeholder groups and coordinate the youth offer would enable to council to have a more effective way of gaining insight, building relationships and delivering the youth offer. Having a person, or persons, with responsibility for outreach and engagement who have ownership and leadership of youth services and the youth offer would mean that coordination would be far easier both externally ad internally within the council and could ensure joined up working to achieve better outcomes for young people.

Appendix I: Terms of Reference

Context:

In late 2019 following recommendations made by the Southwark Youth Violence Panel the council commenced a major review of the borough's strategy for children and young people. As part of this, Shared Intelligence were commissioned to complete a comprehensive and innovative engagement plan with young people, professionals and stakeholders.

The findings and recommendations of the Shared Intelligence report were tested with young people, council officers, youth providers and parents. As part of the iterative approach to this engagement, following a request for more participation from youth providers, the council has commissioned Shared Intelligence to facilitate a task and finish group to ensure that youth providers have detailed input into the process. This will help to develop the recommendations and actions contained within the report by ensuring the appropriate level of input by the professionals who are embedded in youth provision in the borough.

Shared Intelligence, as an independent organisation, will work alongside the youth providers to add more detail to the recommendations and think about the practicalities of them for the youth offer in Southwark. The outcomes of the Task and Finish group work will be reflected in the final report with recommendations and actions which will be considered by the Council's Cabinet in the Autumn.

Objectives:

The task and finish group will:

...use its collective knowledge and experience to add further depth and detail into the recommendations and actions from the review.

...consider the practical implications and the part that youth providers can play in the future.

...ensure the review is based on a complete mapping of all providers and organisations within the borough which contribute to the youth offer.

This group has been convened to develop more fully the recommendations and actions made in the Shared Intelligence review. It will meet on four occasions.

Members of the group will be asked to have an initial call with Shared Intelligence and Analogue Strategies and attend the three meetings of the group. Their role will be to share the insights they have gained from their work with young people in the borough and knowledge of the youth services landscape.

Scope:

The scope of this group is solely to add detail to, and further develop, the recommendations of the Shared Intelligence and Analogue Strategies Report.

Governance:

This group will be facilitated by Shared Intelligence (an independent organisation) reporting to the Director of Leisure. It will produce a final report of the discussions of the Task and Finish Group as well

as a more detailed set of recommendations and actions to be an appendix of the Shared Intelligence and Analogue Strategies Report.

Membership:

Name	Organisation
Rotimi Adeeko	Coach, Southwark Legends Basketball Team
Sam Adofo	
Saskia Agyemang	Southwark Young Advisor
Charlotte Benstead	Chief Executive, Creation Trust
Tamya Bustamante	Youth Coordinator, Sin Fronteras - Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)
Niamh de Valera	Executive and Co-Artistic Director, Blue Elephant Theatre
Jack James	Residents' Programme Manager, South London Gallery
Elisha Osei	Southwark Young Advisor
Oliur Rahman	Executive Director, Active Communities Network
Gabin Sinclair-Constance	Programme Manager, Leap Confronting Conflict

Work Plan:

The expectation is that members of the Task and Finish Group will attend three sessions to develop the recommendations and actions and help contribute to the future vision and objectives for the Youth Offer in the borough. The table below details the activity with members need to be available for:

Item	Date
An initial telephone/Zoom conversation with Shared Intelligence/Analogue Strategies	w/c 13 th July 2020
Session 1: Establishing the group and task. Talking through the findings and how they led to the recommendations.	Wednesday 22 nd July 2020
<i>A copy of the main findings report will be sent in advance of this session</i>	
Session 2: Looking at each of the recommendations in turn and adding depth and detail as well as practical ways in which these recommendations could be achieved in the borough.	Monday 27 th July 2020
<i>A copy of the recommendations will be sent out in advance of this session</i>	
Session 3: Looking at the recommendations and the practical aspects discussed in the previous session and discuss final details of recommendations and think about the mapping of providers in the borough and the part that they can play in these recommendations	Wednesday 29 th July 2020

Appendix II: Youth Provider Mapping

Who is currently working in the borough to deliver the youth offer?

Super arts	City Hope
Youth for the Blue	Blue Elephant Theatre
Southwark's Parks – events held in those parks such as Camberwell Fair	PemPeople
Southwark Storm Basketball Club	Bradfield Youth Club
Peckham BMX	Marlborough Youth Club
La Liga – Latin American Women's Football	The Science Gallery
Burgess Sports	The feminist library
Inspire at St. Peters	The South London Gallery
Pembroke Academy of Music	Parents
Southwark Scouts Groups	Millwall Kicks
Junior Park Run	Church Groups
Giraffe House	XLP
Southwark Gymnastics Club	Rio Ferdinand Foundation
Westminster House	Movement Factory
Se17working	Heart and Soul
Theatre Peckham	Southwark Legends Basketball club
London Bubble	Southwark Pride Basketball Club
Cambridge House	Southwark All Stars Football Club
Southwark Playhouse	Girls United FA
Bethwin Adventure Playground	DTC
Active Communities Network	CVP
Salmon House Youth Club	TRA
Bede House	Camberwell Arts
Downside Fisher Youth Club	Southwark Park Athletics Group
The OBC	Somerville

Greenwood Theatre

Southwark Libraries

Tate Gallery

Coin street NC

The Lyn Boxing Club

Sin Fronteras – Latin American Women's
Rights Service

Southwark Tiger Rugby Club

2-3 Degrees

Youth Futures

Southwark Wellbeing Hub – Young Minds

Sea Scouts

Cadets

Final Recommendations

Our recommendations are intended to help Southwark create a youth offer which supports young people to experience adolescence characterised by hope and a positive view of themselves and their community, alongside offering protection from harm. A youth offer re-calibrated in this way makes it easier for young people to socialise and form positive relationships. It helps them grow physically and emotionally, by providing resources, programmes, advice, and expertise. This approach would be directly shaped by young people at the strategic and delivery level making it more relevant and more powerful.

These recommendations cannot be made without reference to the current context of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement. All recommendations and actions must be considered in the light of the council's response to both, as well as the as yet unknown medium and long-term impacts that the pandemic will have on the borough. The conversations we have had with young people have emphasised the fact that the council which is delivering the Youth Offer should be as diverse, and supporting of diversity, as the community it serves.

In that light, we recommend that Southwark council should...

1. Ensure that every young person in the borough has access to up-to-date and comprehensive information about what is available to them.

Throughout our research we heard that awareness of the full extent of the youth offer in the borough was limited amongst young people as well as within the council. The council should collate, using the expertise and knowledge of providers around the borough, a comprehensive list of all the providers and activities going on in the borough. This information must be widely accessible, promoted and disseminated through a variety of mediums. The main centralised task for this could be a council-led effort to ensure digital information for young people, parents and other youth providers is as easy to search and discover as possible. This requires insight into how and where these groups acquire information and should include a variety of digital and non-digital methods to ensure the widest possible *reach*.

2. Give young people influence on council decision-making, including over the youth services budget working alongside council officers and elected members.

This could be achieved by giving Southwark young advisers and youth parliament members a formal role, working alongside officers and elected members in commissioning the youth offer. In budget terms, this youth role in decision-making should begin with the eight largest budget lines (which make up more than three quarters of the overall budget) in order to have transformational impact. These young people should also have a role in communications and promotional activity relating to the youth offer so that it is reaching young people in the right places and using the right language. To make sure that young people's influence is not limited to a few highly engaged voices this process will require wider engagement to reach young people who are furthest from youth provision in Southwark and not usually engaged. The council should play a facilitating role in this, building capacity among the most-engaged young people to gather and amplify views from wider and more diverse networks to feed into the decision-making process at the most effective and impactful time

3. Support young people to create, discover and take part in activities in the borough and make sure that these activities and spaces are affordable and accessible for all.

This could be delivered through something like the Swim and Gym or the Bankside Buzz schemes. It would highlight the opportunities available to young residents in the borough and would also provide young residents with benefits and discounts on meals, days out, classes, access to spaces to study or exclusive opportunities with sports and cultural organisations. The organisations featuring on this platform would be selected by young people, based on the values and contributions these activities, services, and organisations make to young people through the scheme. An emphasis should be given to highlighting the opportunities provided by small, independent, and local businesses within the borough through the scheme. The council should further encourage all businesses in the borough to be accessible to young people, in terms of their spaces and opportunities they provide, to help facilitate the creation of a youth offer accessible to all young people. It must have recognisable and consistent branding and be hosted on an online platform and mobile application, drawing on the mechanisms young people are already using to discover activities and opportunities. This could be achieved through an organised system of discounts, incentives, and offers similar in concept to the council's leisure card or the Bankside Buzz scheme.

4. Work in partnership with arts and creative organisations in the borough, as well as businesses, cultural and sports organisations, to make sure that they are bringing their amazing opportunities into communities across the borough.

This research has shown multiple examples of the creativity of the borough's young people and their hunger for access to creative facilities and opportunities. This un-met demand presents an opportunity for the borough's leading arts organisation to work with local youth providers in developing opportunities to extend their geographic reach into communities furthest from their physical facilities, including, including to young people from families who do not engage in the arts. The council should use this as the basis of partnership building with those organisations. The same could also be done with the borough's businesses, academic, cultural and sports institutions.

5. Review accountability and governance of the youth offer within the Council to ensure the right balance between protecting young people from harm and enabling them to enjoy an adolescence of hopefulness and fulfilled potential.

This could be achieved by reviewing the mechanisms which link the services relating to emotional wellbeing, to the youth offer and the youth services strategy – for example reporting for the youth services strategy could be altered so it comes under **joint control** of the portfolios for Children, Schools and Adult Care as well as the portfolio for Community Safety and Public Health. Consideration should also be given to ensuring a more seamless approach between the youth offer available through adventure playgrounds (run by the council and by community organisations), and all the other elements of the youth offer.

6. Conduct a youth-focused audit of spaces to understand how to create venues which provide the same things as youth centres but 'which isn't a youth club' and understand how all spaces in the borough can be managed to provide places for young people to socialise.

This should use methods similar to those used for this review (conducted by young peer researchers, informed by ethnographic methods) to look at existing buildings and other infrastructure, youth clubs and centres, adventure playgrounds, leisure centres, parks, libraries, and other venues and recommend (a) how youth centres can re-set perceptions of young people and their parents and increase their relevance and (b) how other spaces can contribute to delivery of the youth offer.

7. Work with existing services which provide emotional wellbeing advice to young people, and those providing careers and skills advice – to create clearer pathways so they are more accessible and relatable to young people.

In order to support the borough's young people in their emotional wellbeing and mental health, as well as with future positive pathways the council needs to look closely at how these services can be more effectively provided. Existing careers support in schools should be augmented by a youth service which gives young people access to both information about career pathways and serves as a source of inspiration. Through the development of relationships with Southwark businesses, the council should work to ensure the skills and career development and work experience opportunities provided by employers are reaching the borough's young people.

8. Develop a framework for the council to capture the outcomes of the youth offer and provide a way for the council to continuously hear the voices of a diverse spectrum of young people and understand their needs so that the youth offer continues to be relevant. This could include:

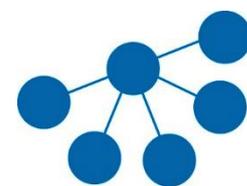
- reach - is it reaching those who might benefit most?
- perception - do young people see the offer as beneficial and attractive?
- wellbeing - does the offer contribute to emotional and physical wellbeing and resilience?
- safety - does the offer prevent harm?
- opportunities - does the offer enable young people to do things or access opportunities they would not have done otherwise?

9. Draw on the expansive knowledge base and insights of youth providers across the borough to compliment the insights gained from young people and inform the council's policies and strategies for young people.

This could be achieved by the council building and developing the relationship which it has with youth providers of all sizes in the borough. Having an open and continuous dialogue with these individuals and organisations working at ground-level across Southwark will allow the council's policies, strategies and decision-making to be rooted in insights from the communities it serves. It would further allow the council to draw on a diverse and extensive knowledge base which can further enhance the insights gathered from young people.

10. Recommendation 10: Review the ownership and leadership of youth services within the council to create simple pathways for engagement with stakeholders, youth providers and young people to coordinate the delivery of the youth offer more effectively.

Having a single point to contact to actively engage with key stakeholder groups and coordinate the youth offer would enable the council to have a more effective way of gaining insight, building relationships and delivering the youth offer. Having a person, or persons, with responsibility for outreach and engagement who have ownership and leadership of youth services and the youth offer would mean that coordination would be far easier both externally and internally within the council and could ensure joined up working to achieve better outcomes for young people.



Shared Intelligence

Three Tuns House
109 Borough High Street
SE1 1NL

020 7756 7600

www.sharedintelligence.net
solutions@sharedintelligence.net