



To: Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health  
Report by: Trevor Woollams (Head of Community Development)  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services October 11<sup>th</sup> 2012  
Wards affected: All

## City Centre Youth Venue

### 1. Executive summary

1. This report sets out how work was taken forward to explore whether the YMCA would be a suitable venue for a city centre youth facility and whether it would have the support of young people within the city.
2. The report explains that whilst there was some support for a facility, young people were not prepared to actively engage with officers to take the project forward. Therefore, the report concludes that it would be a significant financial risk for the Council to invest in such a facility at the YMCA and recommends that the proposal is not pursued any further.
3. The report goes on to describe plans to stage an urban sports festival and how young people are actively engaging with officers in the programming and promotion of the festival. It recommends that the informal member panel should continue to meet and proposes that learning from the urban sports festival should be used to explore other ideas for meeting the needs of young people in Cambridge.

### 2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To agree not to pursue the proposal to locate a city centre youth venue at the YMCA.
- 2.2 To ask the informal member panel to continue to meet to explore ideas for youth projects.
- 2.3 To ask officers to report back to this committee in March 2013 to outline suggestions from the member steering group for a project or projects to support young people in Cambridge.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 Members will be aware that for some time the Council has been actively seeking opportunities to help provide a venue or venues for young people in the City centre. This has proved difficult due to lack of appropriate buildings, high property prices and potential revenue costs that might be incurred. In March 2012 officers reported to this committee that they had been in discussion with the YMCA who at the time had an aspiration to redesign and refurbish the ground floor of their premises in Gonville Place. Officers and the YMCA believed that this might provide an opportunity for a dedicated facility for young people which could include things such as meeting space, games room and café facilities.
- 3.2 In January 2012, staff from the Council's Children and Young People's Participation Service (ChYpPS) surveyed young people through secondary schools in the city to get an initial view about the degree of support there might be for a city centre venue that could complement other facilities and services provided and act as a meeting place for young people. The initial survey suggested that there was some support for a city centre venue and that the YMCA might be a suitable venue but this would depend upon how it was run.
- 3.3 At the March 2012 meeting, the previous Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health agreed that the Council should work with the YMCA to explore options with young people and that officers should report back to this committee in October 2012 on progress and whether there was a viable scheme to take forward. It was emphasised that any solution must be achieved with the help and buy-in of young people. A small informal member panel comprising Cllrs Pitt, O'Reilly, Kerr and Pogonowski was set up in May 2012 to work with officers.
- 3.4 In April 2012 the Head of Community Development recruited a new Youth Officer who has been leading further consultation work with young people. This comprised:
- On-line survey of young people (January – 308 respondents)
  - On-line survey of young people (June / July)
  - Post card survey (June /July)
  - Parent mail – consultation letter to parents (July)
  - YMCA residents (June/July)

A summary of the findings is shown at Appendix A

- 3.5 The March 2012 report set out plans to take this work forward with a group of young people, recruited during the consultation. Although 93 young people expressed an interest in working with the Council on this project, when contacted, none of them were prepared to give up their time and none of them responded positively to an invitation to a focus group session at the YMCA. This was very disappointing but perhaps reflects the relatively luke-warm response to the idea of a city centre youth venue at the YMCA within the wider consultation.
- 3.6 Parents were sent a letter explaining the proposal for a youth venue at the YMCA and asking for their views. The letters were sent out through schools but no responses were received.
- 3.7 The Council's Youth Officer and the YMCA's Area Manager discussed proposals with residents of the YMCA who were generally supportive of a youth venue within their building. They felt that this was something they would want to use and that it would give them opportunities to meet other young people from Cambridge.
- 3.8 Cllrs Kerr and O'Reilly met with officers and the Area Manager of the YMCA on the 8<sup>th</sup> August to discuss the findings from the consultation and reflect on how to proceed. The general feeling was that in view of feedback from young people from the surveys and the lack of interest in any of them working with the Council to take a proposal forward, further work on the project should cease. There was a collective view that it would be too high risk for the Council to make a significant capital investment into an open access youth venue at the YMCA which may not be used or which may have a very low use by non-residents. Representatives from other partner organisations have been contacted and support this view.
- 3.9 The Area Manager from the YMCA also felt that this would be high risk for the YMCA as they would be tied (through grant conditions) into providing and operating an open access venue, into the future, even if very few young people used it. However, he emphasised that the YMCA would be interested in further partnership work should other opportunities be identified to support young people.
- 3.10 Although the member panel and officers believe it is not appropriate to pursue a youth venue at the YMCA, there is still a strong desire to respond positively to young people. The survey results suggest that young people want a range of different activities in both their local area and within the city centre. Many respondents highlighted a need for more accessible activities such as sporting activities, festivals and events as well as places where they can meet friends and chill out.

- 3.11 In contrast to the YMCA youth venue proposal, young people are actively engaging with officers to plan an Urban Sports Festival. This will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> November and is a project bringing together the Council's Sports Development, ChYpPS and Parking services together with the Grafton Centre.
- 3.12 Officers are working with a group of around 20 young people to design, programme and promote the festival which will include demonstrations and workshops on urban sports such as:
- BMX
  - Parkour
  - Streetwise soccer
  - Football freestyle
  - Boxing
  - Cheerleading
  - Street dance
  - Skateboarding
  - Freestyle basketball
  - Graffiti art
  - DJ music
- 3.13 The positive engagement in the planning of the festival demonstrates that young people are very willing to get involved when the subject is of real interest to them. Officers have reflected on this and discussed it with the member panel.
- 3.14 Officers propose to bring the member panel together with the young people who are involved in planning the urban sports festival to seek their views on how the more popular elements from the festival could be broadened out or repeated in the future. For example, this might be through the provision of a physical space where activities could take place or through an on-going activity programme. Central to taking forward any ideas would be that the young people themselves were fully behind them.
- 3.15 It is proposed that officers report back to this committee in March 2013 with recommendations about any ideas that emerge from this process.

#### **4. Implications**

(a) **Financial Implications**

The capital plan has included an allocation of £100,000 (funded by developer contributions) for a city centre youth venue for many years. It is proposed that this is removed from the capital

plan but retained as a provisional allocation pending the report in March 2013.

In March 2012 the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health agreed that £80,000 from the East Area Capital Grants Programme be provisionally allocated to the city centre youth venue project pending further work to establish whether the YMCA was a suitable venue. If recommendation 2.1 above is agreed, this provisional allocation will return to the East Area Capital Grants Programme.

**(b) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications.

**(c) Equal Opportunities Implications**

An EQIA will need to be carried out if a major scheme is identified and taken forward.

**(d) Environmental Implications**

None

**(e) Consultation and Communication**

Set out in the report

**(f) Procurement**

None

**(g) Community Safety**

The safety of young people will be given the highest priority as plans are progressed.

## **5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

City Centre Youth Venue - Report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee, March 2012

## **6. Appendices**

## Appendix A: Young People Survey Results

### 7. **Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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## Appendix A

### Summary of Findings from Consultation with Young People – 2012

#### January 2012 Survey

Total respondents: 308  
 Male: 45%  
 Female: 55%

Where do you prefer to hang out?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
My local area	27.4%	82
Cambridge City Centre	20.7%	62
Both	51.8%	155
<i>answered question</i>		299
<i>skipped question</i>		9

When are you most likely to go into the city centre with friends?				
Answer Options	Lots	Sometimes	Never	Response Count
Evenings	21	125	85	231
Daytime at the weekend	108	151	18	277
School holidays	114	114	24	252
<i>answered question</i>				307
<i>skipped question</i>				1

Where to you go when your in the city centre?		
Open question	Response Count	
Shops	233	
Food	35	
Cinema	81	
Parks	29	
Swimming	16	
Skateboard park (Jesus Green)	7	
Library	4	
Corn Exchange	2	
Arts Theatre	1	
Town centre (unspecified)	21	
<i>answered question</i>		292
<i>skipped question</i>		16

### What's missing for young people in the city centre?

Open Question	Response Count
Somewhere to chill out / youth centre	65
More / cheaper shops	55
Skate park / activities in parks	46
More sports facilities	38
Nothing	19
Café for young people	14
Places to sit quietly and chat	8
More bike parks	6
More accessible places for wheelchairs	3
Zoo	2
Other	26
<i>answered question</i>	
	253
<i>skipped question</i>	
	55

### If there was a venue provided where young people could hang out, what would you want it to be like?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A place where all young people could meet	43.6%	129
A place aimed at older teenagers	11.8%	35
A place open for different ages on different days	48%	142
A general space to hang out with no activities	42.6%	126
Different activities planned on different days	43.2%	128
A place where young people can buy refreshments	62.8%	186
Refreshments are not important	16.6%	49
A venue in the city centre	31.8%	94
A venue in my local area	28.7%	85
It doesn't matter where it is	26.0%	77
<i>answered question</i>		296
<i>skipped question</i>		12

### If Cambridge City Council and the YMCA worked together to provide a new venue for young people at the YMCA building near Parkers Piece, do you think you and your friends would use it?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	36.3%	105
No	8.3%	24
Depends on how it was run	55.4%	160
<i>answered question</i>		289
<i>skipped question</i>		19



Total respondents: 181  
 Male: 52%  
 Female: 48%

**What do you do in your spare time?**

<i>Open Question</i>	<i>Response Count</i>		<i>Response Count</i>
Computer gaming	52	Prey	1
Computer / Internet	30	Drink	1
Friends	48	Breath	1
• Family	7	Library	1
TV	27	Live	1
Revise	25	Cambridge United	1
Reading	18	Smoke	1
Shop	13	Travelling	1
Listen to music	12	Sports	20
• Radio	1	• Football	17
Go out / Go to town	10	• Dancing	8
• Park	5	• Swimming	7
Sleep	9	• Running	4
Cinema	7	• Cycle	3
• Theatre	1	• BMX / Skate Board	2
Work	6	- Rollerskate	1
• Babysit	4	• Boxing	3
• Volunteer	1	- Judo	3
Play music	5	• Tennis	3
• Singing	2	• Basket ball	3
• Piano	6	• Horse ride	3
• Clarinet	1	• Work out	3
• Violin	1	- Yoga	1
• Guitar	1	• Sailing	2
Youth Groups	3	- Rowing	1
• D of E	3	• Rugby	1
• Army cadets	2	• Netball	1
• Guides	1	• Baseball	1
• Drama club	1	• Archery	1
Walk / train dogs	4	• Skiing	1
Art	3	• Bowls	1
• Photography	1	• Fishing	1
• Writing	1	• Walking	1
Eat	3	• Motocross	1
• Cooking	3	• Gokarting	1
Nothing	3	• Flying	1

## Do you go to any clubs or groups?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Yes	50.6%	88
No – I don't want to	24.7%	43
No – there aren't any in my area	6.3%	11
	Answered Question	174
	Skipped Question	7

## What would you like to see provided for young people in Cambridge?

38 Socialise / Café / food / drinks	7 Bigger Libraries / places to revise
15 Youth Club / Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Table Tennis</li> <li>• 1 Snooker</li> </ul>	6 Parks / Green spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Theme Park</li> </ul>
19 Festivals / Events for young people	
15 Sports facilities / activities / Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Ice Skating</li> <li>• 4 Basketball</li> <li>• 2 Gym</li> <li>• 2 Football astro</li> <li>• 2 Indoor Tennis</li> <li>• 1 Volleyball</li> <li>• 1 Karate</li> <li>• 1 Karting</li> <li>• 1 Paintball</li> <li>• 1 Sky Diving</li> </ul>	1 Arts & Crafts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Dance</li> <li>• 2 Drawing</li> <li>• 1 Photography</li> </ul>
	2 Skate Boarding / Scooters / BMX /
	1 Restaurant

## How often do you go in to the City Centre?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Daily	16.1%	28
Weekly	34.5%	60
Monthly	20.7%	36
Sometimes	24.1%	42
Never	4.6%	8
	Answered Question	174
	Skipped Question	7

### How much time do you spend socially in your area?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Daily	23.0%	40
Weekly	29.9%	52
Monthly	2.3%	4
Sometimes	31.0%	54
Never	13.8%	24
Answered Question		174
Skipped Question		7

### Would you use a City Centre Venue?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Yes	44.9%	75
No	55.1%	92
Answered Question		167
Skipped Question		14

### How would you get there?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Public Transport	45.6%	72
Walk, cycle or skate	46.2%	73
Get a lift	30.4%	48
Other	31.0%	10
Answered Question		158
Skipped Question		23

### When would you most use the venue?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
After School	28.0%	42
Weekday evenings	8.7%	13
Weekend daytimes	33.3%	50
Weekend evenings	20.0%	30
School Holiday daytimes	39.3%	59
School holiday evenings	26.7%	40
Answered Question		150
Skipped Question		31

### What ages do you think it should be for?

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>
11	24
12	35
13	86
14	105
15	122
16	115
17	81
18	65

### Have you ever been to the YMCA?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Yes	4.8%	8
No	95.2%	160
	Answered Question	168
	Skipped Question	13

### Would you come to a youth venue at the YMCA?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Yes	34.4%	54
No	65.6%	103
	Answered Question	157
	Skipped Question	24

## Post Card Survey June/July 2012

Total respondents: 197

### Would you use a Youth Venue based at the YMCA?

<i>Answer options</i>	<i>response percent</i>	<i>response count</i>
Yes	75.0%	147
No	25.0%	50
Answered Question		197
Skipped Question		0

### What would you like to do at a Youth Venue at the YMCA?

#### 63 Socialise

#### 27 Café / food / drinks

- 21 Pool
- 20 Wifi access / computer games
- 10 Table Tennis
- 9 Listen to music
- 8 TV / watch films
- 5 Table Football
- 2 Air Hockey
- 2 Board Games
- 1 Darts
- 1 Quizes

#### 14 Arts & Crafts

- 14 Dance
- 4 Drawing
- 4 Singing
- 3 Making Music
- 3 Drama / acting
- 2 Music events
- 2 Graffiti
- 1 Djing

#### 7 Sports facilities / activities

- 12 Football
- 3 Gym / Gymnastics
- 3 Paintball
- 2 Badminton
- 2 Basketball
- 2 Swimming
- 1 Fencing
- 1 Exercise classes
- 1 Archery
- 1 Boxing
- 1 Karate
- 1 Softball
- 1 Ice Skating
- 1 Karting

#### 16 Cooking

#### 8 Skate Boarding / Scooters / BMX