



## Cambridge City Council

To: Executive Cllr Community Development and Health  
Report by: Trevor Woollams (Head of Community  
Development)  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services March 15<sup>th</sup> 2012  
Wards affected: All

### City Centre Youth Venue

#### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposal to work in partnership with the YMCA to explore options with young people to look at the practicalities of providing a new venue for young people in the centre of Cambridge.
- 1.2 The report summarises the findings from an initial survey of young people which is broadly supportive of the proposal. It emphasises the importance of engaging young people from the outset to completion to ensure that any facility meets their needs.
- 1.3 If this approach is supported, it is recommended that officers report back in October 2012 setting out progress.

#### 2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To agree that the Council should work in partnership with the YMCA to explore options with young people, as set out in section 4 of this report, with the aim of providing a new facility for young people in the centre of Cambridge.
- 2.2 To agree that £80,000 from the East Area Capital Grants Programme be provisionally allocated to the project until firm proposals have been worked up and agreed and costs have been established.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council is committed to prioritising services for children and young people. This commitment was reinforced in January when the

outcomes from the review of the Children and Young People's Participation Service (ChYpPS) were reported to this committee.

- 3.2 Whilst ChYpPS and the facilities they manage, including the Dec bus, the new Play Boat and the Urban Play Base at Cherry Hinton are primarily aimed at young people up to the age of 13, the Council provides and manages many other services and facilities which are used by young people from a range of ages. For example, the youth wing at the Meadows Community Centre, Brown's Field Youth and Community Centre, sports facilities and activities, arts provision and parks and open spaces. The Council also grant aids other service providers such as the Junction, Cambridge and District Scout Council, Cambridge Sea Cadets, Centre 33 and Romsey Mill and works closely with partners including the County Council on provision for young people.
- 3.3 Alongside this commitment the Council has been actively exploring further opportunities to help provide 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. However, in the last few months, officers have been in discussion with the YMCA who have an aspiration to redesign and refurbish the ground floor of their premises in Gonville Place. Officers and the YMCA believe that this could provide an opportunity for a dedicated facility for young people which could include things such as meeting space, games room and café facilities.
- 3.4 The YMCA is the oldest youth charity in the world. Although it has a Christian ethos, it is open to young men and women regardless of faith, culture or background. They strive to recognise the positive contribution that young people make to communities and society as a whole. Across the country, many YMCAs run youth clubs and sports clubs with open access for young people of different ages. For example, the Sussex Central YMCA runs weekly youth clubs for 12-14 year old and 14-25 year olds and Taunton YMCA run junior and senior youth groups.
- 3.5 Cambridge YMCA was founded in 1852 and merged with Peterborough YMCA in 2004. They are committed to supporting all young people particularly in times of need. Their work spans a number of service areas including:
- **Housing and homelessness** for single homeless men and women aged 16-35.
  - **Sport, health, exercise and fitness.** They have a gym in their Cambridge building which is open to the general public and those with

special needs. They also run community based exercise sessions for the less able

- **Education and skills.** They offer a variety of vocational school and work based learning opportunities for young people.
- **Money and work.** They provide help to young people to assist their employability.
- **Citizenship and personal development.** They work to empower young people by involving them in activities that stimulate and challenge them and help them to realise their full potential.

3.6 The Cambridge and Peterborough YMCA has local experience of managing open access youth provision. The Girton Youth Project was developed with young people and has been running since 2006. The project provides youth clubs and learning and leisure activities from Cotton Hall in Girton. They run groups on different evenings for 8-11 year olds, 11-14 year olds and 14-19 year olds. The sessions give young people the chance to meet friends, play games or just relax in a friendly atmosphere. More detail can be found from their website: <http://www.girtonyouthproject.co.uk/index.php>

3.7 To gauge the views of young people, ChYpPS staff have surveyed people through secondary schools in the city. We wanted to see what 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. If there was support, we wanted to understand the sort of facilities that young people would want to see at such a venue. Finally, we wanted to gauge opinion as to whether the YMCA might be a potential host and location for a facility.

3.8 ChYpPS carried out the survey in January and early February and this indicated that there is a significant demand for some form of central meeting place and that this *could* be provided at the YMCA but this would depend on how the facility was run. The survey results can be seen at Appendix A.

3.9 The Head of Community Development has informally discussed the results of the survey with partners who provide 'youth' services including the County Council and voluntary organisations. They emphasised the need to fully engage young people, particularly 14 and 15 year olds and said that any scheme would only work if young people had shaped both the design and management of the facility. They expressed some concern about how the two activities of an open access youth facility and supported housing for particularly 'high need' young people would co-exist on one site. They believed that the biggest challenge was to avoid compromising either of these activities and to command the confidence of teenagers and their parents.

- 3.10 The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health and the Head of Community Development met with the YMCA on 10<sup>th</sup> February to consider the survey results and agree whether the Council and YMCA should explore options with young people to look at the practicalities of providing a city centre venue for young people and deliver the improvements required by the YMCA. The meeting was very positive and it was agreed that every effort should be made to achieve this aim. It was emphasised that any solution must be achieved with the help and buy-in of young people who would need to be involved at every stage of the project. They should be able to influence the design of the venue, what was in it, how it would be managed and potentially decide a name for the venue which was discrete from that of the YMCA.
- 3.11 Both parties acknowledged that the degree to which a distinct identity could be established and maintained for an open access youth facility would be critical to the success of any plan – both operationally and so far as public perceptions are concerned. It was agreed that it would be a priority to address and test this before irreversibly committing to the project.
- 3.12 It was acknowledged that this might be challenging, however, each party felt that such issues could be openly discussed through discussion, consultation and negotiation.
- 3.13 As part of the way forward it was agreed that fact finding visits to other youth facilities would be helpful.

#### **4. The proposed way forward**

- 4.1 It is proposed that officers bring a report back to this committee in October 2012 to update on progress and, hopefully, to present a proposed scheme having worked closely with young people and partners to:
- a) Produce a physical design
  - b) Develop a proposed management approach
  - c) Establish how a clear identity for the youth facility can be achieved
  - d) Consult widely and publicly on the proposals with young people, parents and other interested parties.
- 4.2 We need to ensure from the outset that the project is developed with the active engagement of young people. Therefore, one of the first tasks will be to recruit a steering group of young people who will

advise officers and be able to consult their peers as proposals are worked up. Some of the young people may want to accompany officers to visit other youth facilities.

- 4.3 A small project group comprising officers from the Council and the YMCA will be set up to manage and monitor progress. They will take advice from the young people's steering group as plans are developed for construction, facility management and community access. It will also be important to involve partners from the County Young People's service, Centre 33, Romsey Mill etc.
- 4.4 Construction plans and management proposals will be drawn up by the YMCA in consultation with the project team and steering group.
- 4.5 Member engagement will be available in a number of ways. East Area Committee has the YMCA identified as a potential community facility project as part of their East Area Capital Grants Programme which is also on the Capital Plan. They will get regular updates on progress on this project as part of the programme. Members will also be invited to engage with the young people's steering group at appropriate stages to see how plans are progressing.

## **5. Resources**

- 5.1 In terms of staff resource it is proposed that the new post of 'Youth Participation Officer', agreed as part of the 2012/13 budget, will be the lead officer for the Council, under the direction of the Head of Community Development. They will liaise closely with ChYpPS and partner organisations as well as other Council officers.
- 5.2 In terms of capital, the Council's Capital Plan includes a budget of £100,000 for this purpose. The YMCA is also identified as a potential community facility in the East Area Capital Grants Programme it is proposed that £80,000 from this programme's budget is also provisionally set aside for the YMCA project and that the need for this contribution is reviewed as part of the October report. This would give a potential contribution from the Council of up to £180,000, to be met from developer contributions. It is likely that any capital contribution will be made as a grant attached to a legal agreement that will protect community access for the city's young people.
- 5.3 In terms of on-going revenue funding, it is anticipated that this would be met by the YMCA. It is proposed that there would be a close on-going relationship between the new Youth Officer post and the YMCA management to ensure the facility continued to meet the needs of young people.

## **6. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

These are set out in the report.

### **(b) Staffing Implications**

Set out in the report

### **(c) Equal Opportunities Implications**

An EQIA will need to be carried out once draft plans and access arrangements have been developed with young people but before any decisions are taken to formally commit capital resources.

### **(d) Environmental Implications**

None

### **(e) Consultation**

Set out in the report

### **(f) 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:

## **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:

Author's Name: Trevor Woollams  
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12 - City Centre Youth Venue FINAL.doc

## Appendix A

### Findings from Survey of 228 Young People – January 2012

#### Section 1: About the respondents

##### 1. Which School year are you in?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
7	35.6%	99
8	28.8%	80
9	21.2%	59
10	5.0%	14
11	9.0%	25
6th form	0.0%	0
college	0.4%	1
<i>answered question</i>		278
<i>skipped question</i>		30

##### 2. Are you male or female?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	45.1%	138
Female	54.9%	168
<i>answered question</i>		306
<i>skipped question</i>		2

##### 3. What school do you attend?

Open Question	Response Count	
Chesterton Community College	54	
Coleridge & Parkside	94	
Impington Village College	8	
Manor Community College	30	
Netherhall	74	
Sawston	2	
St. Bedes	10	
Not provided	22	
<i>answered question</i>		294
<i>skipped question</i>		14

#### Section 2

##### 4. 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



### 5. 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

### 6. 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

### 7. 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

8. 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

9. 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