



Report

To: The Chair and Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 29th September 2020

DONCASTER OFFER

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Schools	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the new approach taken to refresh the Youth Strategy, reflecting the learning from the past four years and setting the direction for the next three years. It outlines how children and young people led on the refresh, through a newly formed Youth Advisory Board, which will hold officers and the partnership to account for its delivery.
2. The Advisory Board quickly decided that the offer should be for all children and young people, not just those within the statutory age range of 13 to 19 years. The Board felt there was already lots on offer in Doncaster, and that the work should reflect that. This is not about starting again but building on the excellent support and activities already in place, therefore, they have renamed it the Doncaster Offer. They were also very clear that they did not want the refresh to be a lengthy written strategy, instead a set of **overarching principles** supported by a **robust implementation plan** and more **child and young person friendly ways of communicating the offer**.
3. To support the principles and to act as the basis for an implementation plan, **five delivery strands** have been created with key objectives.

EXEMPT REPORT

4. There is no exempt information contained in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. To consider and comment on the approach, seven principles and five strands to delivering a sustainable Doncaster Offer over the next three years, that is ambitious and *is by children and young people for children and young people*.
6. To agree for members of CYP Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive an annual report detailing progress.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

7. Youth groups that support children and young people have been the part of the fabric for many communities, for decades and offer many opportunities and benefits. Over the period of austerity, funding for such groups has been reduced, meaning Local Authorities have needed to seek new ways in delivering this support. The proposed vision and five strand model will do this and provide opportunities and benefits, which include.
8. **Health and Fitness:** Many of the activities involve a good amount of healthy exercise, which is particularly important as lockdown has brought a lack of opportunities for healthy exercise for some.
9. **Teamwork:** Another benefit children and young people can acquire is the ability to work in a team. Many activities include team run games and events where older and younger children mix, and there is a need for each child or young person to work as part of a team. This is an important skill to learn and stands children and young people in good stead for future life, whether in education, sport or other situations. A related benefit is the responsibility given to children and young people within activities.
10. **Specific Skills:** The widening of the Offer means that more children and young people will be given the opportunity to engage in a range of activities, that includes sports, arts and crafts, information technology, and others. These activities will provide opportunities for Doncaster children and young people to learn specific skills that will equip them for later life.
11. **A Sense of Identity:** Many children and young people activities are designed to help those that struggle to feel part of the wider community, allowing them to make friends and become part of social groups. For some of the more vulnerable children and young people, these may be the only opportunities they get to develop a sense of identity.

POLICY

12. The Education Act 1996 places a legal duty on local authorities to secure “sufficient activities” for 13 -19year olds and young people under 25 with special educational needs and disabilities.
13. The UN Policy Brief: the impact of covid-19 on children (2020), suggests that there are three main channels through which children are affected by the crisis. Firstly, infection with the virus itself, secondly the immediate socio-economic impacts of measures to stop transmission of the virus and finally the potential longer-term effects of delayed implementation of sustainable development goals. All of this effect’s children in multiple ways; falling into poverty, exasperating the learning gaps, risks to wellbeing and mental health and risks to child safety, in particular for the most vulnerable.
14. Young Minds the leading charity for children’s mental health has completed a second survey on investigating the mental health impact of the pandemic, which shows that many children and young people are under increasing pressure and that their mental health and wellbeing has been affected. The results of the survey reveal that 8/10 stated their mental health had been affected, 9/10 felt isolated and 4/10 whilst not needing support, felt affected. This really highlights the impact of the

pandemic on mental health and wellbeing. There are several other studies that mirror these findings.

15. The Mental Health Foundation states that, third sector organisations have a crucial role to play in providing support to children and young people post the pandemic. This includes, providing positive activities that promote social interaction, physical activities and wellbeing. The Foundation is clear that in order to do this, many organisations will need to be supported in the short-term.
16. The national guidance and findings outlined above chime locally. The children and families impact assessment, which has been developed via the Children's Cell and is based on a robust methodology identifies mental health and wellbeing, domestic violence, poverty, adverse childhood experiences, and impacts on the most vulnerable as the key areas of concern. This coupled with an increase in referrals into the Front Door means the need for a co-ordinated partnership response.

BACKGROUND

17. A review of youth provision was conducted in 2015, which resulted in a rationalising of youth clubs, buildings and provision, leading to the establishment of a middle tier organisation, which was Expect Youth, who were commissioned for three-years through a core grant. The role of Expect Youth was to deliver the universal arm of service delivery, build voluntary community capacity and provide a conduit to attract external funding as a strategic partner to develop a sustainable model. Whilst the Council retained responsibility for delivering targeted youth work, i.e. for children with special educational needs and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning groups.
18. This work was supported by the many voluntary, community and faith organisations that provide activities for children and young people, and by working together there have been a number of achievements over the past three years. The first being the broadening of the universal offer that saw more children and young people accessing activities, including the Summer programmes and the recent Doncaster Staycation, where over 6,000 took part. These are great examples of organisations working together through a co-ordinated approach to provide a wide range of positive activities.
19. Other achievements include building community capacity through external funding and the embedding of a quality mark for lots of organisations. This is reflected in the acknowledgement by the Advisory Board that there is lots on offer in Doncaster and provides a greater starting point for the next three years.
20. There has also been some really valuable learning that has directly shaped the refresh and is reflected in the approach taken. This includes the need for a forum where children and young people are the decision makers and can hold officers to account, the need for equity across the borough in terms of the offer, support for voluntary, community and faith organisations to survive the pandemic and be able to continue the work they provide and the development of a local quality mark that is more manageable and achievable for smaller organisations.

THE APPROACH

21. There was a very clear approach to the refreshing of the Youth strategy in that it should be *by children and young people for children and young people*. As such a

new Youth Advisory Board was established in July with members from a variety of backgrounds, that acts as a conduit for wider engagement. This means that children and young people are the decision makers and will hold officers and the partnership to account.

22. The Advisory Board quickly agreed that the new offer should be for all children and young people of Doncaster aged 0-25 years not just for those within the statutory age range of 13 to 19 years, which is a really positive ambition. It means that over the next three years, more children and young people will be supported, which is important considering the impact of the pandemic.
23. Encouragingly the Advisory Board felt there was already lots on offer in Doncaster and that this wasn't about starting again but building on the support and activities already in place, therefore they renamed it the Doncaster Offer.
24. Instead of a written strategy they have proposed seven principles. They want the principles to be communicated in a more child and young person friendly way and have developed a poster that will be promoted in a number of child and youth settings, including educational settings, community venues and on-line. Alongside these, short films will be created by children and young people.

Doncaster Offer

Making a Positive Difference to Lives of Children and Young People.

We will work with children and young people to develop their personal, social and mental well-being, focusing on raising aspirations and building resilience. This will support our children and young people to make positive decisions about their lives and their future and enable them to become valued members of society. We will support them to access meaningful and appropriate opportunities and we will do this by:

Offering children and young people a voice to shape, influence, design and develop services. This will be achieved through our children and young people's forums within the council and with our partner organisations, through a model of 'for children and young people, by children and young people'.

Ensuring that there is a variety and accessible offer of activities across the borough, including targeted sessions for our most vulnerable children and young people.

Working in partnership with other organisations to deliver a detached youth work programme in communities of need.

Supporting our voluntary, community and faith sector to increase high quality, accessible youth provision across the borough.

Working on a 1:1 basis with children and young people who have been referred from internal and external partners that have been identified as needing extra support.

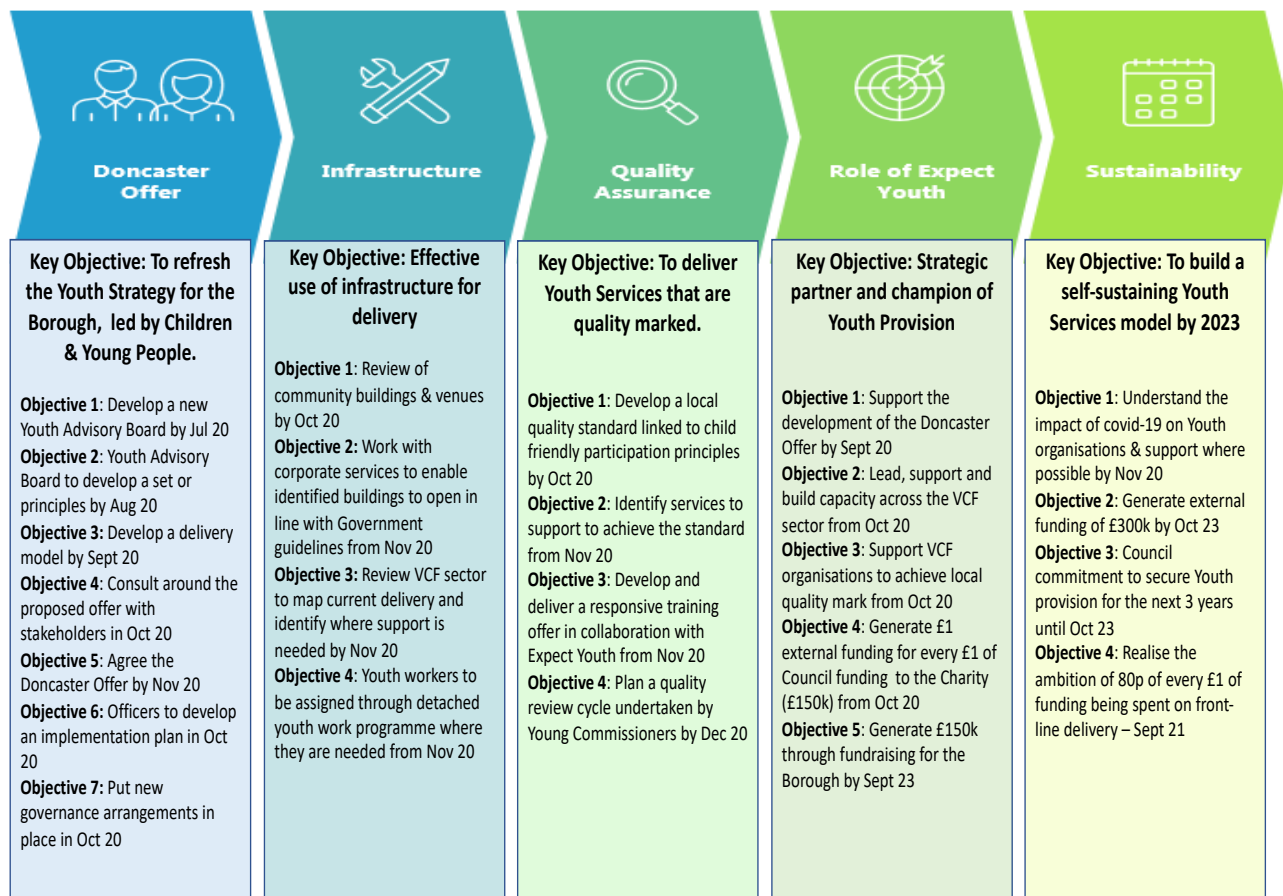
Providing suitable careers, information, advice and guidance for children and young people. This will include opportunities for national youth work programmes and initiatives such as UK Youth Awards, British Youth Council, UK Youth Parliament and Young Advisors.

Having accessible information in the form of a 'What's On' across the borough for children and young people.



FIVE STRANDS – DELIVERING A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

25. To support the principles and to act as the basis for an implementation plan, five delivery strands have been created, with key objectives, these are detailed below.



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26. This strand is around the refresh of the strategy/ offer, that will be driven by the new Youth Advisory Board. Objectives one to three have been completed and consultation with stakeholders will commence after the report has been to Executive Board.

27. The next stages are to develop the implementation plan and put new governance arrangements in place. The plan will be developed by a working group(s), that will report into the Youth Advisory Board, which will include partners from voluntary, community and faith groups, Expect Youth, Family Hubs, Children's Trust and Health.

28. The local officer for the children's commissioner will lead on the overseeing the development and delivery of the implementation plan for the partnership, with sponsorship by the Assistant Director for Partnerships, Early Intervention and Localities.

29. The key objectives outlined in the five-strand model will be the starting point for the implementation plan, and the plan will reach down into more detail. It is expected

that the plan will be a live document, that will change to reflect the areas of focus. Initially this will be around mapping out what is in place, and how best to support community groups to continue their excellent work, alongside the development of a local quality mark.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- 30. This is a key element of the model and the principle is to support community venues to deliver activities. The starting point is to review what buildings are available and what needs to be done to get them ready to re-open to the public. There is no proposal to increase the number of venues, rather use what is already there. There may be a cost to this that will put funding back into community venues.
- 31. This will be supported by detached youth work in communities, supplementing what is already in place.
- 32. A key element of this strand is how best to support voluntary, community and faith organisations to continue to deliver activities. The starting point will be mapping out what is in place, and where (if any) support is needed. Support will be offered via the Council's participation and engagement team, including the Youth workers and Expect Youth, and may take the form of supporting bid/ grant applications, training and achievement of a local quality mark.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 33. The previous quality assurance mark was the UK Ambition Mark, and whilst this is a good quality mark, it took a lot of resource to achieve, which made it difficult for smaller organisations. Therefore, the intention is to develop a more manageable local quality mark.
- 34. The development of a local quality standard and a rolling training programme to support voluntary sector organisations, is a really important strand of the model. The local standard will link to the child friendly participation standards and will be far more manageable and achievable for organisations. The Council's Partnership and Engagement Team and Expect Youth will support organisations.
- 35. This will be underpinned by a quality review cycle completed by the Young Commissioners.

ROLE OF EXPECT YOUTH

- 36. There have been many discussions with the Expect Youth Board over the past few months on what their role could be in the new model. Pleasingly a consensus has been agreed which utilises the expertise and experiences of Expect Youth partners and retains the brand. Expect Youth are a key partner and a valuable resource to Doncaster and one of the five delivery strands.
- 37. It is necessary to provide a small amount of seed funding to Expect Youth to allow them to deliver their five key objectives. This will be £50k per year for the next three years and will be funded from the mental health trailblazers funding that is held within the Council's earmarked reserves. This reflects the role of the voluntary, community and faith organisations in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

38. The role for Expect Youth for the next three years is clear, with five key objectives:
- I. Support the development of the Doncaster offer.
 - II. Lead, support and build capacity across the voluntary, community and faith sector, through a mixture of generating external funding to devolve to voluntary, community and faith organisations as overseen by the Youth Advisory Board and sharing of skills and expertise.
 - III. Support voluntary, community and faith organisations to achieve the local quality standard.
 - IV. Generate £150k external funding over the next three-years.
 - V. Generate £150k through fundraising over the next three-years.

SUSTAINABILITY

39. The aim is to have a sustainable model within three years and the points raised above are the enablers to do this, in particular the generation of external funding.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Through the delivery of the revised Doncaster Offer, children and young people will have access to a wealth of opportunities and experiences that will support their aspirations; from programmes on essential life skills through to opportunities for social action and enterprise.</p> <p>A key principle of the Offer is the provision of suitable careers information, advice and guidance, as well as opportunities to undertake national youth work programmes including UK Youth Awards.</p> <p>This will support raising the aspirations of children and young people of Doncaster, as well as support young people to gain key skills to take into the workplace.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating 	<p>The Doncaster Offer will give children and young people access to a diverse range of activities in the area they live but also across the borough.</p> <p>Through consultation with children and young people and</p>

	<p>heart of Doncaster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>as demonstrated in the accompanying short film, young people feel there is a diverse range of activity across the borough. The Doncaster Offer will build on this to ensure equity across the Borough.</p> <p>A key element of the Offer is that all those who are providing services for children and young do so within the context of the Child Friendly Doncaster Participation Principles and will aspire to be child-led in their approach and provision.</p> <p>In addition, a key principle of the Doncaster Offer states that the voluntary, community and faith sector will be supported to respond to the needs of their "youth" community and deliver high quality youth provision.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>The Offer will complement the outcomes delivered in corporate strategies and plans, such as the Education and Skills Strategy and building on the legacy of the Opportunity Area. It will do this by, supporting the social and personal development of children and young people, building their resilience and raising aspirations.</p> <p>It will ensure that learning is not limited to the classroom but through youth activity, social action and structured youth programmes, including Youth Awards</p>

	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>One of the key principles of the Doncaster Offer is targeted support for those children and young people who require it. This will be delivered through targeted provision in a local area or to a particular cohort of young people. Or this could be in the form of 1:1 support for individuals. This may be delivered by internal Council services or commissioned; dependent on the needs of the young people.</p> <p>The broadening of the ages to 0-25 years, will offer more opportunities for more children and young people.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>Partnership working is central to the success of the Doncaster Offer, and greater focus will be on ensuring there is support for the voluntary, community and faith youth providers, particularly over the coming months.</p> <p>Therefore, the infrastructure strand of the offer is crucial, as the workforce is critical to delivery, in particular in terms of training and development.</p> <p>In addition, as this is a child and young person led piece of work, this approach will continue and a cycle of consultation has been established with children and young people, as well as providers and voluntary, community and faith organisations.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

40. **Risk** - Failure to provide statutory functions especially in unprecedented times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. **Mitigation** – The Council owns the Offer and as such resets who leads on the statutory functions, this is important and will ensure clear accountability with organisations who deliver the offer, being clear on their roles and

responsibilities. Previously Expect Youth led on delivering the statutory functions, but as they are now widening and based on learning it is felt the Council is best placed to do this.

41. **Risk** - Failure to become self-sustainable over the next three years. **Mitigation** – Through a mixed economy of Council funding, external grant funding (accessed via Expect Youth) and fundraising, the model will become sustainable.
42. **Risk** - Failure to listen and implement the feedback from the voice of children and young people. **Mitigation** - By establishing the Youth Advisory Board in July 2020, we are confident that this will mitigate against this risk.
43. **Risk** - Due to the COVID 19 pandemic there is a risk that some of the voluntary sector organisations may no longer be able to continue to operate. **Mitigation** - By mapping out, which organisations need support to continue to operate and by working with communities to develop new organisations, the aim is to develop sustainable community lead organisations that deliver the offer.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials HMP Date 26.8.20]

44. Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 requires that every local authority must, so far as reasonably practicable, secure for qualifying young persons in the authority's area access to sufficient educational and recreational activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities. There is statutory guidance dated June 2012 providing further detail of this duty.
45. Under the Act, the Council must consider if it is appropriate for the proposed activities to be taken by another person. For Doncaster this was Expect Youth over the past three years. The Council must take all reasonable steps to enter into an agreement or make arrangements with such a person for that purpose; if it is considered expedient. The Council must also consult with such persons as it think appropriate as to whether it is expedient for the proposed action to be taken by another person.
46. In exercising their functions to provide activities , the Council must take steps to ascertain the views of qualifying young persons in the area about:
 - (i) positive leisure-time activities, and facilities for such activities, in the area;
 - (II) the need for any additional such activities and facilities; and
 - (III) access to such activities and facilities.

It must also secure that the views of qualifying young persons in the area are taken into account.

47. There is therefore a statutory duty to consult with regard to both using a third party in delivering the functions and also in obtaining the views of the young people in the area in the activities provided.. The consultation responses must be taken into account in finalising the decision. The process must comply with the established consultation principles that: consultation should occur when proposals are at a formative stage; consultation should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration; consultation should allow adequate time for consideration and response; and the decision maker must demonstrate that it has considered the consultation responses or a summary of them, before taking its decision.

48. The decision maker must also comply with the Public Sector Equality duty to consider the need to promote equality for persons with “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and have due regard to:

- i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- ii) advance equality of opportunity
- iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

49. In order to do this the decision maker will need to have sufficient information about the effects of the proposed changes on the aims of the Equality Duty. The Equalities implication section is designed to assist with compliance with this duty and so the decision maker must take that into consideration and the public sector equality duty before taking the decision.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials: AB Date: 27/08/20]

50. There are no specific financial implications arising from the refresh of the Youth Strategy and the establishment of a new Youth Advisory Board. As part of the 2020-21 Council Budget Report approved at Full Council on the 5th March 2020 an allocation of £100,000 was agreed to deliver the Youth Strategy, including funding targeted youth provision as an ongoing permanent requirement in order to deliver a universal youth service.

51. The report also includes a proposal to fund EXPECT Youth £50k per year for the next three years to focus on income generation for the strategy because as a Charity organisation that provides Doncaster with an avenue to bring new monies into the Borough that Local Authorities wouldn't be able to access. The £150k in total for the three years will be funded from the NHS England Mental Health Trailblazer funding that is held within the Council's earmarked reserves. The funding is regarded as a grant under financial procedure rules, and is subject to EXPECT Youth signing a grant funding agreement.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials JC Date 27/08/20]

52. There are no direct HR implications based on the content of this report

53. If there are HR implications for the Council arising from specific elements of the Strategy, these will be addressed at the appropriate time through the relevant governance arrangements.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials PW..... Date...26/08/20]

54. There are no specific technology implications at this stage. Where there are requirements for new, enhanced or replacement technology to support the delivery of the Doncaster Offer over the next three years, a further report outlining the requirements would need to be progressed for consideration and prioritisation by the Technology Governance Board (TGB).

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

[Officer Initials PW..... Date...26/08/20]

55. Public Health support the development of the 'Doncaster Offer'. Young people's involvement in positive activities can support better emotional and physical health,

improved skills and increased employment, and can provide a means of addressing risky behaviour. This model can support the development of an offer that is good quality and appealing to young people and provides the opportunity to identify and address barriers to participation. This all contributes to young people being supported to achieve their full potential.

56. Physical and mental health have been impacted by Covid-19. Youth activities can play an important part in helping to tackle some of these challenges. The Doncaster quality mark will ensure all activity delivered under the Doncaster Offer is of high quality, safe and influenced by the views of children and young people. Consideration for evidence-based, health promoting activities can have a further positive benefit. To ensure our most disadvantaged young people benefit from the opportunities provided, a broad range of children and young people should be represented on the Board and in consultation, including those that are seldom heard.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

57. There are no significant equality implications associated with this report. A Due Regard Statement has been undertaken to ensure compliancy with the Public Sector Equality Duty and that the work detailed in this report considers the needs of all and takes into account the equality and diversity of the borough, and that consideration has been made to for those citizens with protected characteristics. A key element of the Doncaster Offer is ensuring that there is bespoke offer for children and young people who need targeted or one to one support, this may of particular significance to those with protected characteristics.
58. A continuous cycle of consultation is planned with children and young people to ensure they are involved in the development of the Doncaster Offer and that how this is implemented.
59. In addition, consultation is being undertaken with a wider group of stakeholders, for example voluntary, community and faith groups to ensure are their involvement in the shaping on the Offer and its delivery.
This should ensure we are not only compliant in terms of our statutory duties but also with regard having a robust and fit for purpose Doncaster Offer for children and young people.

CONSULTATION

60. There has been lots of work with children and young people to shape, design and influence the Doncaster offer, as outlined in the approach section. This captures the desire and commitment to truly engage and to provide further tangible evidence that will allow Doncaster to say it is truly Child Friendly.

LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES

61. Get Moving Doncaster.
62. Doncaster Localities Model.
63. Doncaster Children and Young People's Plan.
64. Children and Families Recovery and Renewal Plan.

65. Doncaster Together.

66. Education and Skills Strategy 2030.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

67. Due Regard Statement “Doncaster Offer”

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