

25 January 2022

Report of	Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Owen Howell ☎ 282518
Title	Recommendations from the Scrutiny sub-group on Youth Zones		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed recommendations put forward by the Panel's sub-group regarding the potential for a Youth Zone to be sited within Colchester Borough.

## 2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to consider the recommendations and points raised by the sub-group, as noted at 3.3 of this report, and to consider what recommendations the Panel may wish Cabinet to consider when it considers the draft Budget 2022-23 on 26 January 2022.

## 3. Background Information

- 3.1 At the Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 12 October 2021 the Panel recommended to Cabinet that further work be conducted by a sub-group of the Scrutiny Panel, to identify and discuss potential options for providing and funding a future Youth Zone, whilst maintaining a balanced budget for the Council.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 13 October 2021, Cabinet approved this recommendation, with the addition of the following wording:

*The sub-group should aim to work towards finding a broad political consensus on an agreed site which meets Onside's criteria, capital financing options and contingency in the annual revenue cost which recognises that £400,000 is Q1 2021 cost based and will experience cost pressure uplift by time of completion.*

- 3.3 The sub-group met twice and, at its second meeting, compiled the following list of recommendations and points for the Scrutiny Panel to consider and, potentially, put to Cabinet as formal recommendations:
- The sub-group is disappointed at the missed opportunity to provide a Youth Zone for Colchester via the Town Deal but accepts that a Youth Zone will not form one of the Town Deal projects.
  - The sub-group recommends that, in the short- to medium-term, the Council cooperates with Essex County Council to boost youth services throughout the Borough, such as those at the Town House, supporting these and an increase in outreach activities.

- It was noted that the aspiration for a Youth Zone had cross-party support in principle. The sub-group recommends that an ambition be maintained for a Youth Zone to be completed in Colchester Borough by 2030.
- It is recommended that the Council continue to engage with Onside to outline the Council's ambitions and expectations, and to understand Onside's criteria for optimum site selection and critical issues for inclusion in a business case for a Youth Zone serving Colchester Borough.
- It is also recommended that the Council engages with the One Colchester Partnership to take the ambition of a Youth Zone from principle to reality, including ways to gain contributions from partners.
- The sub-group is convinced that, for a Youth Zone to successfully serve the whole Borough, the concomitant public or project-specific transport plan for the proposed location must be comprehended, costed and funded to guarantee that a future Youth Zone in the Borough is accessible to all.

#### **4. Standard References**

- 4.1 There are no specific references to publicity or consultation considerations, equality, diversity, human rights, community safety, health and safety, environmental and sustainability or risk management implications. There may however be such considerations related to recommendations which the Scrutiny Panel may wish to put to Cabinet. Officers will assist the Panel in identifying these when potential recommendations are discussed.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

There will be direct financial/budgetary implications should the Council look to proceed with pursuing the creation of a Youth Zone within Colchester Borough. The Scrutiny Panel may, at this time, wish to make recommendations to Cabinet which could entail financial implications for the Council.

#### **6. Strategic Plan References**

- 6.1 Scrutiny and challenge is integral to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 priorities and direction for the Borough as set out under the strategic themes of:
- [Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability](#)
  - [Creating safe, healthy and active communities](#)
  - [Delivering homes for people who need them](#)
  - [Growing a fair economy so everyone benefits](#)
  - [Celebrating our heritage and culture](#)
- 6.2 This item relates to the provision of youth services within the Borough and therefore directly falls under the theme of '[Creating safe, healthy and active communities](#)' and specifically the priorities:
- Build on community strengths and assets
  - Tackle the causes of inequality and support our most vulnerable people
  - Provide opportunities for young people