

Our Children, Our Community, Our future Young People’s Framework 2010-13

“Young people are the future of the Vale. By offering them opportunities to express their views and get involved in positive activities, we will help them engage with our councils and bridge the gap with other age groups”
**Cllr Tony De Vere,
Leader of the Vale of White Horse DC**



Vale Youth Cabinet members

“...we need to ensure that all partners work together to offer all young people opportunities to improve their lives”
**Cllr Ann Ducker,
Leader of South Oxfordshire DC**



Young People's Xchange

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people are an important part of our community. This framework has been developed to recognise and support the needs of younger residents, aged 13-19, in Southern Oxfordshire and to help them improve their own life chances. It builds on existing partnership working between the two councils to make best use of resources through shared projects and activities leading to improved opportunities for young people.

It hi-lights key areas, which have been identified as a priority by young people and partners which are used to inform our priority work areas these are:

- ensuring that young people can express their views at a local and national level, including on relevant council services
- providing them with the knowledge they need to be active citizens' and the opportunity to engage with their local councillors

- ensure they are aware of, and can participate in positive activities in their area
- help them into work by providing information about council and other local jobs, and offer appropriate work experience placements, including for very disadvantaged young people
- work with young people on projects which bring together different groups in the community and help them promote a positive image of themselves.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN OXFORDSHIRE – A SNAPSHOT

South Oxfordshire	Vale of White Horse
15,121 young people (10-19 years)	16,166 young people (10-19 years)
5,049 in rural areas (11.9 per cent)	3,284 in rural areas (13.6 per cent)
2,000 children dependent on benefits ¹	1,900 children dependent on benefits ²

Children living in low income households are more likely to experience issues such as ill health, underachieving at school, involvement in or a victim of crime, becoming teenage parents, higher unemployment and lower earning capacity than their peers.

A number of groups are more vulnerable such as those who are unemployed, have a disability or are young carers.

There are approximately 453 young people who are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' known as (NEET) or 'Not in Learning' (NIL) in south and vale.³

Over 3,000 young carers live in South Oxfordshire and Vale.⁴

NATIONAL CONTEXT

'Every Child Matters', (2003) introduced a set of outcomes that all children and young people, aged 0-19 years, are entitled to receive. 'The Children's Act' (2004), Youth Matters (2005) and Youth Matters Next Steps (2006) provide a national framework to help local authorities deliver these outcomes through 'Children's Trusts'. These entitlements are to: **Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution, Achieve Economic Well Being.**

COUNTYWIDE CONTEXT

The Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plans (2006-2009, 2010-2013) provide a comprehensive overview of how services will be delivered to young people. For Oxfordshire these are overseen by the Children's Trust Board and in south and vale the Southern Area Trust Board of which we are members.

¹ Oxfordshire County Council population and household forecast Aug (2009)

² Oxfordshire County Council population and household forecast Aug (2009)

³ IYSS /Oxfordshire County Council, NEET Summary Information Dec 2009 Vale and South)

⁴ 2007 Oxfordshire Children and Young Peoples survey 2007 – up from 600 in the 2001 census

WORK WE ARE DOING

It is important to provide our younger residents with things to do and places to go and with support when they are vulnerable. We do this through sports and arts development, leisure provision, economic development, planning, the community strategy, community safety and housing.

Equally important is providing an insight into national and local democracy and promoting opportunities for young people to help shape the services which affect them, empowering them to become more active citizens within their communities. Some activities undertaken to address this are included below:

The **Vale Youth Forum** was set up in 1996 to give young people an opportunity to meet with decision makers and share their views. The **Vale Youth Cabinet** was formed in 2007 to work on projects and meet more regularly.



Takeover Day 2009 childrens' rights training

The Vale Youth Cabinet secured funding from the Youth Opportunity Fund in 2007 to produce the **Vale Youth Magazine (VYM)**, which is distributed free to schools and youth groups across the Vale and South Oxfordshire.



The UK Youth Parliament elections are held annually to elect Members to represent Oxfordshire. South Oxfordshire and the Vale provide support for candidates and schools to help run elections and campaigns.



Helen Walker (far right) South MYP, Cllr
Louise Chapman, John Howells MP, Youth
parliament reps for North and City

South Oxfordshire **networking events** were set up in 2007 and a Young People's Xchange in 2009 to engage with young people from local schools and work on projects.



The Youth of Today'

A film commissioned in 2009 by both councils brought together older and younger residents to highlight the issues they face and break down barriers – it has been used by groups all over the districts to inspire projects where older and younger people can work together.



'Youth of Today' involved younger and older residents from Abingdon and Thame.



KEY ISSUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Regular surveys of young people and face to face work with them tells us that a number of issues which relate specifically to district councils matter to them ⁵. These are summarised below:

- many young people don't know what their local councils do or who their local councillor is
- many don't understand the basics of local democracy such as registering to vote or how elections work

⁵ Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Survey, (2009) 1,953 4-19 year olds, participated in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse

- young people feel they don't have enough opportunity to 'have their say' including at school
- safety – only 85 per cent say they feel safe at night and 11 per cent have been bullied outside of school
- a high number of young people think alcohol is an issue and 21 per cent drink regularly
- rates of re-offending are relatively high amongst young people
- many say they don't get enough advice about their options when they leave school, and some struggle to get relevant work experience
- many are worried about whether they will get a job
- most think there isn't enough for them to do, which often isn't the case, but they do not find it easy to access information on what's available
- many are not taught how to manage money which can lead to problems in the transition to adulthood
- generally young people are disillusioned with the image portrayed of them in the media and most want to do something to promote a positive image of themselves

POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

Young People's involvement in positive activities has been recognised nationally as important in raising self esteem, developing social skills and increasing aspirations. All local authorities have a statutory duty⁶ to provide access to positive leisure time activities for young people, take account of their views, look at barriers to accessing these activities and provide a comprehensive information service about what is available in their area. As providers of leisure and arts activities, grant providers and through our roles in policy and parish planning we have a key role to play in this; as do local providers of these activities. In addition to this our role is to ensure that information on all activities in our areas is widely available – including through the countywide 'Activities Oxfordshire' website.

OUR PRIORITIES

With the resources available we recognise the need to work in partnership, although we will not undertake any activity that is the responsibility of other agencies. Working in partnership is a key to the success of this framework. Schools and youth clubs provide us with access to young people, so building relationships with these organisations is essential. Our work with the county council, town and parish councils and the police is also important as it means that we can get common messages across to young people, avoids duplication of effort and often adds value.

We will therefore focus our activity over the next three years on:

- ensuring that young people can express their views at a local and national level, including on relevant council services
- providing them with the knowledge they need to be active citizens' and the opportunity to engage with their local councillors
- ensure they are aware of, and can participate in positive activities in their area

⁶

(Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act (2007))

- help them into work by providing information about council and other local jobs, and offer appropriate work experience placements, including for very disadvantaged young people
- work with young people on projects which bring together different groups in the community and help them promote a positive image of themselves.

We enjoy:

“Understanding the council, discussing ideas”

“Discussing the problems of young people”



Young People's Xchange members 2009

Appendix 1

CONSULTATION

Consultation with young people and partners has been undertaken to review current priorities and identify any gaps in existing provision. A full summary of feedback is available separately. A number of key issues for young people have been identified and used to inform this plan.

- Henley Town Youth Council
- Networking Event (SODC)
- Young People's Xchange (SODC)
- Vale Youth Cabinet
- Fitzwaryn School, Wantage
- Partner workshop
- councillors, VWHDC
- councillors, SODC
- staff VWHDC
- staff SODC
- South Oxfordshire Citizen Panel Survey Questionnaire.

"We got to offer our own opinions on social issues"
South Oxfordshire District Council Young People's Networking Event

STRATEGIES USED TO INFORM THIS FRAMEWORK

This framework links to and supports delivery of the following strategies:

Vale Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-16) Sets out how the Vale Partnership will work together to provide services to improve and maintain communities locally, including priorities that will benefit young people.

South Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (2009-26) Identifies how public, private and voluntary sectors can work to improve the quality of life for people of all ages living and working in the area.

Corporate Plans for the Vale (2009-12) and South (2008-12) Links the councils' visions with the services they provide to meet the needs of local communities.

Community Safety Strategy for the Vale and South (2008-11). Shows the key areas of work for the councils and police to keep residents safe.

Climate Change Strategy Vale of White Horse DC (2008-10) Sets out how the council will work to promote and support the issues associated with climate change.

Leisure / Sports and Arts Development Plan (2007-12). Sets out how the councils will provide these services for residents.

Homelessness Strategy for the Vale (2006-11) and South (2008-11). Shows the way the councils will support and deliver housing provision.

Joint Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy (2009) Shows how the councils aim to implement statutory safeguarding requirements and keep young people and vulnerable adults safe.

Equality and Diversity Schemes for Vale (2008-2010) and South (2009-12).

Appendix 2 - Action Plan 2010 – 2013

Action	How will it be delivered
provide young people with the knowledge they need to be active citizens and opportunities to engage with their local councillors	<p>promote the work of local councils, and raise awareness of national and local democracy and citizenship through young peoples events, youth executives, councillor visits to schools and work experience</p> <p>promote volunteering opportunities to encourage young people to participate in their communities</p>
ensure that young people can express their views at a local and national level, including on relevant council services	<p>ensure that young people in southern oxfordshire are aware of opportunities to represent their views</p> <p>support young people to take part in UKYP and ensure that young people in southern oxfordshire have the opportunity to participate in UKYP elections</p> <p>participation in the countywide forums such as the Oxfordshire Youth Parliament, and Sounding Board</p> <p>support teams to consult with young people on relevant council services</p>
ensure young people are aware of and can participate in positive activities in their area	<p>work with partners to ensure that the positive activities information/website is known to young people</p> <p>encourage all providers of activities for young people to raise awareness of their activities through the website</p> <p>promote the duty on all councils to provide positive activities internally and promote feedback from young people to inform planning of services for young people across the council</p>

Action	How will it be delivered
<p>help young people, including more vulnerable groups, into work by providing information about council and other local jobs, and providing appropriate work experience placements</p>	<p>identify suitable placements to promote the work of the council, provide careers information and enable young people to learn skills</p> <p>work with special educational schools and other partners working with vulnerable young people to develop and facilitate work experience placements e.g. for those with disabilities, NEET (Not Education Employment or Training) and care leavers</p> <p>provide information about council and other local jobs through careers fairs, sessions at young peoples events and VYM</p> <p>provide information to young people about how to get involved in volunteering as a way of gaining relevant 'work' experience</p> <p>promote and support volunteering opportunities for vulnerable young people</p>
<p>work with young people on projects which bring together different groups in the community and help them promote a positive image of themselves</p>	<p>projects with youth executives (cabinet/xchange) to bring together older and younger people to break down barriers and misunderstanding</p> <p>provide opportunities for young people to publicise the positive things they do</p>
<p>develop links with partner organisations working with vulnerable young people</p>	<p>build relationships with those in southern oxfordshire who support young people e.g. Vale of White Horse Foyer (supported housing), Didcot Train (drug and alcohol education, information and advice), youth workers in south and vale and South Oxfordshire Housing Association (young peoples forum)</p>