



**Classification:**

Open

**Decision Type:**

Key

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> 09 March 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Establishing an Onside Youth Zone in Bury	
<b>Report of</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills	

## Summary

1. The Council proposes to develop a partnership with the charity Onside to develop a Youth Zone, providing facilities and programmed activities for young people. The proposal will contribute to the priorities for the Borough as set out in the Let's Do It strategy by creating a new facility for young people from deprived neighbourhoods to connect with each other and to develop life skills.
2. The experience from other places where Youth Zones have been provided is that choice of the right location is the most important decision determining the success of the project. Potential sites will therefore be subject to a Viability Study by Onside at a cost of £23,642 to assess all options in terms of accessibility, neutrality, prominence and sponsorship opportunities. The cost of the viability study will be deducted from a Council's capital contribution, if the Council commits to formally approving the project (including the site, capital and revenue funding requirement) within six months of the study being completed, i.e. by November 2022.
3. Following the viability study a further report will be brought to Cabinet recommending the most appropriate site. At that point a reserve of up to £350k will be recommended to fund the design stage up to the award of planning permission. Thereafter private sector funding of up to £350k raised by Onside will fund all design works from planning permission onwards, including tendering, award and final design.
4. The capital cost of the facility is £8.4m, 50% funded by the private sector through Onside and the balance to be funded by grant or capital contribution from Bury Council. The Council will seek part of these costs from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Youth Investment Fund.
5. Once funding is in place and planning agreed and subject to site abnormalities, the Youth Zone should open in April 2025 after a sixty week build period.

## **Recommendations:**

6. To approve the principle of developing the Youth Zone including a proposed launch in April 2025.
7. To note that the Chief Executive will submit a further report to Cabinet in September 2022 on the outcome of the Viability Study to determine the most appropriate site.

## **Reasons for recommendations**

To deliver a new youth facility in Bury or Radcliffe.

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

None- OnSide is developing Youth Zones around the Country and can bring additional private sector financing into Bury.

---

## **Report Author and Contact Details:**

*Name: Nicky Parker*  
*Position: Director of Transformation*  
*Department: Children and Young People*  
*E-mail: n.parker@bury.gov.uk*

---

## **Background**

8. OnSide Youth Zones is a national charity with a mission to build a network of affordable, high quality Youth Zones across the country, transforming the lives of young people, by giving them somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to. The Council and OnSide Youth Zones are discussing an investment opportunity to develop a Youth Zone in the Borough, the sixth in Greater Manchester. OnSide raise the funds from the private sector to build Youth Zones in partnership with Councils in the country's most economically disadvantaged areas. They aim to inspire young people to lead healthier and more positive lives, raising their aspirations so they grow up to become happy, caring and responsible citizens

## **Goals**

9. The benefits of Youth Zones impact positively on education and employment outcomes for young people and improve health and wellbeing.

OnSide have set five goals for the Youth Zone programme:

- Give young people exciting, safe places to connect and grow
- Help young people lead healthier, happier lives
- Enable young people to better face the challenges of life

- Support young people to raise their aspirations and fulfil their potential
- Stronger communities with empowered, active, caring citizens

## **Impact**

10. Independent research has demonstrated individual, family and community benefits from having a Youth Zone in their community including:
- 71% of parents whose child has attended a Youth Zone for over 2 years believe the membership has had a positive impact on their family life.
  - 77% of young people who are members of a Youth Zone are more self-confident and 66% say they can bounce back from setbacks and disappointments
  - 65% of members a Youth Zone felt more part of their community and 66% say they are more likely to stay out of trouble.
  - Manchester, Wigan and Oldham have all seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour since their Youth Zones have opened.
  - 17 out of 20 schools with a high density of pupils attending a Youth Zone improved their Attainment 8 scores or have seen less decline than the national average.
  - 59% members a Youth Zone said they can better control or manage their feelings and emotions and 65% said they were able to show more empathy to other people
  - 65% members a Youth Zone with a disability, considered they were healthier and 100% said the Youth Zone had moved them from an inactive to an active lifestyle
  - 89% of members of a Youth Zone taking up free school meals felt happier about their lives.

## **Reach**

11. The OnSide Youth Zone network currently has over 15,000 members, over 700 volunteers and over 650,000 visits to Youth Zones each year. Youth Zones are accessible for all young people aged 8-19 years and up to 25 with additional needs/disabilities and are open long hours every day of the year.

## **Governance**

12. One of the fundamental principles and attractions of OnSide's operation is the establishment of a standalone, locally reflective, charitable organisation within the host borough. The Trust is responsible for the operational delivery and financial viability of the venture. Under the guidance and direction of a high-profile chairperson and with local private sector and public sector membership, the Charity Board in Bury will have the professional and financial

connections to attract investment into the construction and operation of the Youth Zone. This model offers a sustainable long-term funding model and would be a four-way partnership between the private sector, Bury Council, young people and the community.

During the design and implementation stages, a joint Programme Board between Bury Council and Onside will oversee the development of the facility and an operational steering group will do the detailed work such as communications and engagement with local people.

### **Local offer**

13. The Youth Zone will complement the existing youth services provided by the Council and the voluntary, community and faith sector in the Borough. OnSide Youth Zones are built as new, purpose-built spaces with energy and highest quality facilities. They are staffed by skilled and dedicated youth workers who believe in young people – helping them see what they could achieve. The development of a Youth Zone will provide a message to young people that someone really believes in them and has invested in their future.
14. A charge of 50p is made per session giving young people access to over 20 activities each evening, occupying their bodies and minds in a fun way, while learning new skills and socialising in a safe, positive way.
15. OnSide Youth Zones provide flagship facilities for young people in prominent positions in the heart of town and city centres. They are landmark buildings which make strong visual statements and are finished to a high internal specification, with the best equipment, and a clear focus on the quality of the environment and facilities.
16. The Youth Zone buildings offer a wide range of sporting, artistic, cultural, physical and recreational activities for young people, as well as access to personal development and informal education, providing young people with the opportunities to shine.

### **Building**

17. Typically, the Youth Zone buildings include:
  - A bright attractive reception area
  - A large open recreation area, incorporating café facilities and informal activity space
  - A four-court sports hall
  - A fitness suite with boxing and martial arts facilities
  - A climbing wall

- A dance and performing arts studio
- Arts & crafts areas
- Music, film and multi-media studios
- Training facilities
- Rooms to deliver projects encouraging enterprise and improving employability
- Focused areas specialising in inclusion, health, beauty and wellbeing
- A range of other rooms/spaces suitable for flexible use and a variety of activities.
- One or more outdoor kick pitches and some external recreation areas.
- Attractive circulation spaces link the activity areas with the central open plan spaces and offer young people the opportunity for informal activity or simply the chance to socialise with friends in a bright, airy, attractive and safe environment.

## **Site**

18. An initial site appraisal exercise has focused on Radcliffe and Bury as key areas of regeneration in the Borough with excellent transport links. A location for a successful youth facility of this type is also likely to be influenced by various practical issues such as site availability and constraints and economic considerations and there is no single formula for suitability or success. However, based on the successful operation of OnSide's existing Youth Zones the following three major criteria in terms of location are applied:

- **Neutrality**

A significant feature of the success of OnSide Youth Zones is their location in sites that are considered 'neutral ground' by the large numbers of young people using the facilities. Locations for new Youth Zones that are viewed as 'on someone else's patch', are avoided as it would make them potentially popular with young people in that locality but relatively inaccessible to others.

- **Accessibility**

Youth Zones are for all children and young people. There is however a focus on engaging disadvantaged young people, and it is vital that young people should be able to get there easily by foot and public transport. The Youth Zones in Wigan, Blackburn and Oldham are at most only a couple of hundred metres from the central bus stations and most participants walk or take the bus. Accessibility also covers issues of safety, in terms of both road safety and conflicting or inappropriate uses enroute to, or in the vicinity of, the proposed Youth Zone site.

Radcliffe and Bury both have particularly strong connectivity through Metrolink which, coupled with Our Pass, would give excellent access for young people.

- **Prominence**

The ambition is to build a world-class facility for children and young people. The prominence of the site not only affects participation; by everyone knowing where it is but also makes an important statement to young people that they are valuable members of the community.

19. An initial site appraisal exercise has been carried out to find a site that is available, safe and affordable which meets the above criteria, and which will, with the right building, facilities and staff, support the participation of the largest possible number of young people, especially those from disadvantaged areas. The location criteria above mean that town centre locations are best and consequently Radcliffe and Bury Town Centre were considered.
20. The Youth Zone facilities produce a gross internal floor area of between 2,250m<sup>2</sup> and 2,500m<sup>2</sup> (preferably on no more than two floors). Adding the kick pitches, external recreation and ancillary areas produces an ideal total site requirement of between 4,500m<sup>2</sup> and 5,000m<sup>2</sup>. The constraints in areas of high-density development and/or high land values are understood and OnSide have developed a flexible model so that they can work with what is available.
21. OnSide are now completing a Viability Study which will bring forward a preferred site based on the above criteria and opportunities for private sector fundraising. The fee of £23,642 will be deducted from the Council's capital contribution, if there is commitment to the site, capital and revenue funding within six months of the study being completed, i.e. November 2022.

## **Investment**

22. OnSide bring together young people, their community, the Council and supporters from the local private sector together including businesses and philanthropists to fund and build each Youth Zone. £8.4m is required to build and fully kit out a Youth Zone, including equipment. This will be split equally between OnSide and the Council and there is potential to submit a bid to future rounds of the Government's Youth Investment Fund which will provide capital for youth facilities.
23. The land would be granted by the Council to the new Youth Zone charity in the Borough with a 125-year peppercorn lease.
24. The Council will also provide £350,000 at risk to fund the design stage to planning and the private sector will fund the £350,000 via OnSide from planning to tendering, award and final design with a legal agreement in place to recover this amount once the scheme proceeds.

## **Revenue**

25. The revenue budget would be £1.3m pa to cover £1.1m on staffing, £100,000 on building maintenance and £100,000 on consumables.
26. Young People pay an annual membership fee of £5 per annum and 50p per attendance and this with further income from a café and holiday club, brings in about £100,000 pa. OnSide fundraise £800,000 pa for the first three years. Fundraising is based on a Founder Patron campaign where local private sector businesses contribute £25,000 pa as well as a Cornerstone Patron campaign where donations are £100,000 pa. The Council will need to contribute £400,000 pa for the first three years.
27. The Youth Zone could open 2.5-3 years after Council approval if there are no unknown site issues, and the revenue funding will be required from the year before opening to enable recruitment and training of staff. If final approval is granted in September 2022, the Youth Zone could open in April 2025 and the revenue budget would need to begin in April 2024.
28. Experience around the Country has shown an 80% retention of private sector investment after the first three years and the source of income becomes more diverse. Councils also continue to support the Youth Zones after the initial three years. Wigan is the only Youth Zone where the Council continues to pay the full revenue after the first three years, Manchester City Council are continuing to pay two-thirds of the original amount. Developing a sound relationship between the Youth Zone and local private businesses to fund the on-going costs will be essential and would be a key priority for the Youth Zone's charitable organisation.
29. There are further opportunities for Youth Zones to earn income in partnership with bodies such as DWP who use the facility out of youth zone hours, and this is the model in several localities including Chorley and Blackburn.

## **Social value**

30. OnSide can evidence clearly the significant social impact that Youth Zones have by addressing disengagement, reducing school exclusions and unhealthy lifestyles and have shown a positive economic benefit for local and national government. Youth Zones in the format developed by OnSide involving early intervention and continued partnership working with a range of agencies on the ground. Youth Zones can make a real contribution to reducing the demand for a range of public services.
31. At the same time, they significantly improve the life chances of the young people that participate in the activities of the Centres. An independent study concludes that these benefits in turn will lead to significant non cashable cost savings in the future for local authorities and other public agencies in the areas served by each Youth Zone.

32. On average, Youth Zones generate £2.06 of social value for every £1 spent on running these facilities. The benefit ratio for Local Authorities is £6.66 for every £1 spent although this is not cashable.

### **Consultation**

33. Community engagement and consultation with the local community and young people will be at the heart of the proposal. Young people will be involved throughout the process of developing the Youth Zone. Amongst other things, they will be supported to develop and decide on the Youth Zone's name and branding, its interior design and to recruit the key staff who will run it.

---

### **Links with the Corporate Priorities:**

#### **Community Strategy**

34. Over the last three years the Council has brought forward ambitious proposals for the regeneration of the Borough's town centres. In Radcliffe and Bury the economic and physical aspects of the regeneration of each town centre are inextricably connected to improving the lives of the people and communities of the surrounding residential areas, which include some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the borough. The proposed Youth Zone in either town would therefore make a significant contribution to the people and community aspects of levelling up.

#### **Regeneration**

35. The opportunities brought about by the Strategic Regeneration Framework in Radcliffe with its comprehensive strategy around economic growth, people and place, the development of a proposed Public Service Hub, the Levelling Up Fund Bid, plans for Radcliffe Market and the current Library site have brought this proposal back into view.
36. Similarly, in Bury, the developing masterplan in the town centre, opportunities to remodel the transport interchange, plans to develop the Market Flexi-hall through a second Levelling Up Fund Bid also brings a discussion about a Youth Zone back into focus. A Youth Zone as part of the masterplan would bring increased footfall into the Town Centre and young people in neighbouring wards such as Bury East would be near a state-of-the-art community offer.

---

### **Equality Impact and Considerations:**

37. A full Equality Analysis will be completed if the proposed project receives approval to proceed beyond September 2022 when the outcome of the Viability Study will be brought back to Cabinet with a site recommendation. As this project intends to add to the local offer, it is not envisaged that there will



be any specific human rights considerations. There has been no recent direct engagement with young people.

### **Environmental Impact and Considerations:**

38. Bury has set out its ambitions to be carbon neutral by 2038.
39. There is a desire for all Youth Zones developed by OnSide to be sustainable buildings in the community aligning the design with both the operational requirements of the OnSide model and local strategic policies and agendas such as sustainability and de-carbonisation. The Youth Zone design will consider all the aspects of Bury Council's Climate Action Strategy and will be a positive neighbour in the borough helping to reduce carbon emissions and providing the community and future generations of Young People with a sustainable legacy far into the future. The Youth Zone design will be reviewed at the outset to investigate the possible options of Low and Zero Carbon Technologies taking account of all relevant National Planning Policy Guidance, local government policies and best practice such as the BREEAM standard.
40. Ultimately, OnSide projects aim to reduce carbon emissions and atmospheric pollution by encouraging local energy generation from renewable sources, to supply a proportion of the energy demand in line with planning requirements and by implementing the most suitable low and zero carbon technologies applicable to the development. They adopt a low carbon design strategy for reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and energy consumption within Youth Zone developments and embrace a Lean, Mean and Green approach as defined below:
  - **Lean** – the use of advanced building modelling software and passive construction techniques (Improved building fabric parameters over those required by Building Regulations Part L2A, High thermal insulation, high air tightness, fabric first approach)
  - **Mean** – Incorporation of high-efficiency systems and effective plant and controls throughout the design. (Efficient LED lighting and controls, highly efficient heating systems, heat recovery plant, inverter controls)
  - **Green** – Incorporation of renewable energy sources where possible (Solar PV, CHP, Air Source/Ground Source heat pumps, wind)
41. Other sustainable interventions common on a Youth Zone project are; a move away from gas in all new buildings going forward, green roof and increased biodiversity such as wild flower planting and habitat creation, wind catchers to promote natural ventilation, cross ventilation, a sustainable drainage system (SUDS) to ensure no impact on the local drainage network, a sustainable travel plan that promotes public transport and the use of cycle networks, use of local labour and contractors and where practical the use of locally sourced building materials from sustainable materials.

### Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The proposal will generate a state-of-the-art Youth facility for the Borough	
The partnership with Onside will bring private sector investment into the Borough	
There is a risk that we won't be able to benefit from the next round of the Youth Investment Fund	Viability Study will identify sponsorship opportunities and inform the Sept 22 go/no go decision
There is a risk that after 3 years, the Council may still need to put revenue budget into the scheme	Viability Study, recruitment of a well-connected and influential Chief Executive and a strong and effective Board.

---

### Legal Implications:

Members are asked to note that at this stage a viability study is being undertaken. A further report will be provided to Cabinet in September 2022 setting out the outcomes and seeking a range of decisions from Members relating to the financial proposals and details of a preferred site. Advice will be provided at an appropriate stage in relation to the establishment of any charitable arrangements with Youth Zone.

---

### Financial Implications:

There is no financial commitment at this stage. A further report will be brought to Cabinet in September when if the decision is to progress the Council will be asked to set aside a reserve of £350k. This is not in the budget recently approved by Council so will need to be earmarked from existing reserves.

Capital costs are expected to be circa £8.4m which will be shared equally between Onside and the Council, with the Council seeking grants to part fund its contribution. If approved the capital costs will be built into future years capital programmes.

Thereafter running costs are estimated to be £1.3m per annum with the Council contributing £400k per annum for the first three years. Funding would be required from the financial year 2024/25 and will need building into the medium term financial plan when this is refreshed later this calendar year.

---

**Background papers:**

None.

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

Term	Meaning
BREEAM Standard	BREEAM is the world's leading sustainability assessment method for master planning projects, infrastructure and buildings.
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
LED	A light-emitting diode
Solar PV	A solar PV system is a sustainable, low-maintenance option for anyone who wants to contribute to a greener environment, as the system does not cause any pollution or emissions and has numerous advantages. Photovoltaic systems use photovoltaic cells to collect solar energy from the sunlight and converts it into direct current (DC) electricity.
CHP	Combined heat and power (CHP) is a highly efficient process that captures and utilises the heat that is a by-product of the electricity generation process. By generating heat and power simultaneously, CHP can reduce carbon emissions by up to 30% compared to the separate means of conventional generation via a boiler and power station.
SUDS	Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are designed to manage stormwater locally (as close its source as possible), to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation and passive treatment