

Invitation to Tender

Introduction

In 2014 - 2015, Devon County Council made the decision to withdraw funding from its youth services. The council's funding cuts meant the closure or transfer of several youth centres (including Sidmouth) and a reduction in dedicated youth services across the county, which had provided safe spaces and developmental opportunities for young people.

While Sidmouth Town Council has no statutory obligation to maintain youth services, it recognised the need to fill this potential gap for local young people. Understanding the importance of accessible recreational and support options, the Town Council facilitated the takeover of these services and acquired Manstone Youth Centre from East Devon District Council. This initiative allowed Sidmouth Town Council to continue providing essential resources and safe spaces for young people in the community in partnership with a specialist youth services provider.

During 2022 and 2023, Sidmouth Town Council commissioned Design West to undertake research to survey the opinions of young people in the Sid Valley and to ask them what they would like to see in terms of youth provision. This coincided with an ageing Youth Centre with increasing maintenance costs and safety concerns. Upon advice from surveyors, Sidmouth Town Council decided to demolish the building this year and take the opportunity to re-evaluate youth provision in the Sid Valley.

Current Service

The service provides two open access services per week and one skills session (reaching 6-8 people) per week. All evening based and term time only.

Key findings now indicate that the current service does not meet the aspirations of young people. The current service centres around supporting a small number of young people with challenging behaviour. Instances of disruptive and inappropriate behaviour discourage participation from other young people, creates safety concerns, and puts a strain on the resources required for supervision and positive engagement.

The service in its current form is far from the Town Council's original vision.

Future Service

Sidmouth Town Council wants to revitalise youth provision in the Sid Valley. The service needs to have a more flexible approach that is not defined by a building or particular location. The service needs to meet the aspirations of local young people and ensure that it is the best fit for the Town Council's voluntarily commissioned services, with other statutory and non-statutory provision.

The Town Council wants to continue its current Outreach programme and create a new fun youth service which offers a safe, welcoming space where young people feel supported, engaged, and excited to participate.

Deliverables

The service should provide:

- A Social and Inclusive Environment: Safe, inclusive spaces with a welcoming atmosphere.
- Opportunities for Socialisation: Regular social events, group activities, and games to build friendships and a sense of belonging.
- Supportive Mentors/Leaders: Staff members who are friendly, fun, approachable, and able to provide guidance and support. Staff members should create a positive and respectful dynamic with the young people.
- Youth-Centred Programmes: Young people can take part in the planning and development of activities, giving them ownership and ensuring programmes meet their interests.
- Flexible, creative and engaging activities: Activities are varied and adaptable to different age groups, abilities, and interests.
- Skill-Building and Personal Development: Workshops for Life Skills with sessions that cover useful skills.
- Career Exploration and Mentorship: Opportunities to explore career paths, job skills training, and receive mentorship to support future goals.
- Leadership Opportunities: Programmes that encourage young people to lead activities or organise events, helping them gain confidence and leadership skills.
- Behavioural management strategy: Introduce clear behaviour expectations and enforce them consistently. A strategy that plays to strengths and rewards positive behaviour alongside a robust behavioural policy that deals with disruptive and Anti-Social behaviour, efficiently and effectively.

Application process

Please provide a short-written proposal detailing your approach to the deliverables listed above. Please include proposed resourcing including subcontractors, annual fees payable for the service and timescale for delivery.

Submissions must be received by the Town Clerk, Sidmouth Town Council, Woolcombe House, Woolcombe Lane, Sidmouth EX10 9BB, no later than **NOON on Monday 10th February 2025**.

Shortlisted bidders will be contacted promptly after this time to speak with the Town Clerk and/or Officers and Cllrs regarding your proposal.