St Neots Town Council

Steve Van De Kerkhove Community Centre, Cemetery Rd, St Neots, PE19 2BX

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St Neots Town Council

Operational Management Statement

Proposed Youth Building

M&CO Building

25-27 Market Square

St Neots

PE19 2AR

St Neots Town Council

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Operational Management Statement has been prepared in support of the application for the change of use of the M&CO Building, 25–27 Market Square, St Neots, PE19 2AR, to a youth facility.

1.2 The purpose of the facility is to provide a dedicated space for the delivery of youth services, educational activities, recreational opportunities and support services, primarily for young people aged 8 to 17. Specific events, activities and partnership working may occasionally include older participants.

1.3 St Neots Town Council has identified the need for a dedicated youth facility to support the delivery of youth services within the town and surrounding area.

2. Description of the Facility

2.1 The proposed use comprises:

- Youth café.
- Open-access universal youth club sessions.
- Targeted youth club sessions.
- Educational and training workshops.
- Skills development activities.
- Health and wellbeing programmes.
- Arts, culture and recreational activities.
- Meetings and training associated with youth services and partnership organisations.
- Office space for the youth services team.
- Accessible space for partnership delivery of targeted youth provision.

2.2 The facility is intended primarily for young people resident within St Neots and its immediate surrounding area where St Neots is the key educational and social hub for those young people.

2.3 The building will not be used for late-night entertainment, licensed events, commercial activities, or activities generating significant noise.

3. Operating Hours

3.1 The proposed opening hours are:

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	09:00–21:00
Tuesday	09:00–21:00
Wednesday	09:00–21:00
Thursday	09:00–21:00
Friday	09:00–21:00
Saturday	09:00–19:00
Sunday	Occasional events and pre-booked activity

3.2 The building will primarily operate between 15:00 and 21:00 on weekdays, reflecting the needs of young people outside school hours. Whilst the building may be available from 09:00 for staff administration, partner meetings, targeted sessions (such as counselling for young people) and holiday activities, most attendance by young people will occur during the afternoon and early evening.

3.3 Between 09:00 and 15:00, the building will focus on staff activity, partnership work and targeted delivery. Footfall and access to and from the building will be limited to approved staff (up to three) and agreed, scheduled partners or room users, who may provide targeted support such as one-to-one counselling for young people.

3.4 Attendance between 09:00 and 15:00 may increase when the building is used for training or partnership meetings with other youth service providers but would not be expected to exceed 20.

3.5 Typical youth session times are:

- 15:00–21:00 on weekdays.
- 10:00–19:00 during school holidays and weekends.

3.6 Staff will operate from the building outside these hours for administration, preparation and maintenance purposes.

3.7 An illustrative example timetable is provided in Appendix A. This schedule is strictly indicative and provided solely to demonstrate how sessions, age groups, room allocations, and turnaround buffers will be managed within the overarching operating hours set out in Table 3.1. Specific session times, days, and activities will evolve flexibly in response to community need, young people's feedback, and partnership availability, and are not intended to form fixed or binding operational limits

3.8 Activities will be programmed and supervised. The facility is not intended to operate as a late-night venue, and routine activities will conclude by 21:00.

4. Staffing and Supervision

4.1 The facility will be staffed by suitably qualified youth workers and support staff.

4.2 Management arrangements will include:

- Designated responsible building manager.
- Minimum staffing ratios appropriate to activity type.
- Staff trained in safeguarding, health and safety and emergency procedures.
- Appropriate DBS checks for staff and volunteers where required.

4.3 The building will not operate as an unsupervised facility for young people.

4.4 The building's core operational team will comprise:

1. Youth Building Manager (Designated Safeguarding Lead).
2. Professional Youth Worker – Youth Programmes & Development (Deputy DSL).
3. Youth Support Worker / Session Coordinator (Assistant Deputy DSL).
4. Skilled Sessional Youth Workers (one per 10 young people per session).
5. Volunteers.

4.5 Staffing rotas and shift patterns will be structured around programmed session times rather than continuous single-shift coverage, ensuring appropriate rest breaks, handovers, and supervision levels are maintained throughout operating hours. Core and sessional staffing capacity will scale proportionally alongside phased development of sessions, strictly maintaining the minimum supervision ratios set out in Section 5 at all stages.

4.6 The structure in intended to provide:

- Clear safeguarding accountability.
- Effective building and operational management.
- Professional youth work leadership.
- Quality assurance and service development.
- Appropriate supervision and support for staff and volunteers.

5. Expected Attendance

5.1 Typical attendance levels are anticipated to be:

Activity Type	Typical Attendance	Staffing
Open drop-in sessions	15–40 young people	Youth Worker Sessional workers/volunteers: one per 10 young people
Targeted provision	1–20 young people	Building Manager (DSL) Partners Sessional workers/volunteers: one per 10 young people
Planned activities/events	10–50 young people	Youth Worker Sessional workers/volunteers: one per 10 young people
Special events	Up to 50 young people	Building Manager (DSL) Youth Worker Sessional workers/volunteers: one per 10 young people

5.2 The maximum building occupancy will not exceed the capacity established through the fire risk assessment and compliance with building regulations. An early-stage assessment indicates an expected maximum of 71 people, including staff.

5.3 The operation of the facility will be actively managed by youth work staff to ensure the safe arrival and departure of attendees and to minimise any impact upon surrounding occupiers, pedestrians and users of the town centre. Activities will be programmed with appropriate spacing between sessions to avoid unnecessary congregation within or outside the building.

5.4 For programmed youth sessions, staff will be present before the advertised start time to welcome attendees and supervise the entrance area. Access to the building will be controlled and monitored by staff, with attendance records maintained where appropriate for safeguarding and operational purposes.

5.5 At the conclusion of activities, youth workers will actively manage departures from the building and remain present until attendees have dispersed. Particular attention will be given to sessions involving younger age groups where collection by parents, carers or transport providers may be required.

5.6 Where multiple activities are scheduled on the same day, session timings will be managed to reduce overlap between groups and to maintain safe circulation within the building. Age-specific activities may be programmed consecutively, with sufficient time allowed for one group to leave before the next arrives.

5.7 The facility does not include external activity space, and attendees will be directed immediately into the building upon arrival. Staff will monitor the entrance area at the beginning and end of sessions and will proactively encourage respectful behaviour towards neighbouring premises, businesses, visitors and residents within the town centre.

5.8 The majority of attendees are expected to arrive on foot, by bicycle or via public transport due to the highly accessible town-centre location. Pick-up and drop-off activity is anticipated to be limited in duration and spread across individual session start and finish times. No significant traffic or parking impacts are anticipated because of arrival and departure activity.

5.9 Staff will investigate and respond to any operational issues arising from arrivals or departures and will review programming, staffing arrangements or management procedures where necessary to ensure the continued effective operation of the facility.

6. Access and Transport

6.1 A transport assessment is provided as part of the Council's application for change of use. The majority of users are expected to arrive on foot, with a number via bicycle or existing public transport routes given the site's central location adjacent to the town centre bus stop.

6.2 The site is highly accessible via existing pedestrian routes and highway infrastructure. The building benefits from a bus stop immediately outside, cycle parking in the town centre and car parking at several sites in the town.

6.3 Pick-up and drop-off activity will typically occur over a short period at the beginning and end of sessions and is not anticipated to generate material traffic impacts. No significant increase in vehicle movements beyond those associated with comparable community uses is anticipated.

6.4 Existing parking provision within St Neots and the surrounding area is considered adequate for the proposed use, with users directed to pick-up and drop-off locations.

6.5 The proposed use is expected to generate a similar or lower level of activity than the former retail use, with arrivals and departures distributed through programmed sessions under staff supervision.

7. Noise Management

7.1 The proposed use is expected to generate lower noise levels than many alternative town-centre or commercial uses. The scale of provision, managed nature of activities, limited operating hours and on-site youth worker supervision will ensure no significant adverse impact on nearby residential properties in the town centre. The premises immediately surrounding the proposed location are businesses operating during regular business hours, further limiting residential impacts. Activities will take place within the building and under staff supervision.

7.2 The programme of activities will focus on structured youth work, education, creative arts, skills development, and mentoring rather than commercial or entertainment-led provision.

7.3 As shown on the proposed floor plans, the facility incorporates a small performance area (stage) and media station. These facilities are provided strictly as creative

resources to enable young people to learn, develop creative, audio/media production skills, host youth-led talks, and perform to each other and participate in supervised celebration events.

7.4 To protect neighbouring residential and commercial amenity, the use of performance and audio space will be strictly controlled. The premises will not operate as a live music venue or host open-access public entertainment events. All use of the stage and any media equipment will take place indoors as part of structured, staff-supervised sessions. Sound levels will be actively monitored and capped by youth work staff at an appropriate background or workshop level, with acoustic improvements incorporated into the internal refurbishment. All external doors and windows will remain closed during any music, media, or performance activities or workshops.

7.5 Management measures include:

- Activities conducted indoors.
- Activities limited to manageable numbers.
- Activities limited to appropriate hours.
- Staff supervision of arrivals and departures.
- Requests for visitors to respect neighbouring properties.
- Doors managed appropriately during activities.
- Acoustic improvements incorporated into refurbishment.
- Clear code of conduct for users.
- Engagement between youth workers and neighbouring premises as part of building relations between the building and the town centre.

7.6 Staff will remain on site following sessions to oversee dispersal.

8. Complaints Procedure

8.1 The Youth Centre Manager will maintain a formal procedure for the receipt, investigation and resolution of complaints associated with the use and operation of the premises.

8.2 Any complaint relating to noise, anti-social behaviour, arrivals and departures, parking, litter, or other operational matters shall be submitted to the Centre Manager via the published contact details. All complaints will be recorded in a Complaints Register and acknowledged within five working days.

8.3 The Centre Manager shall investigate the matter, review any relevant records, and determine whether the issue is attributable to activities associated with the Youth Centre. Where appropriate, corrective actions will be implemented to address substantiated concerns and minimise the likelihood of recurrence.

8.4 A written response outlining the findings of the investigation and any proposed mitigation measures will normally be provided within ten working days of acknowledgement.

8.5 The Complaints Register shall be retained by the operator and reviewed periodically to identify recurring issues and opportunities for operational improvement. Records of complaints and actions taken shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority upon reasonable request.

8.6 SNTC will also include a section on the Youth Centre building and operation on its website with further contact details to allow businesses or the general public to reach out.

9. External Areas

9.1 The building has no external areas associated with its use. It is acknowledged that the management of the building will need to include management of entrance and exit to avoid congregation on the highway outside the entrance to the building.

9.2 Young people attending the facility will be engaged in structured and supervised activities within the building. Staff will actively monitor entrances, exits and external areas.

9.3 Users will be encouraged to arrive shortly before sessions commence and to leave the site promptly following activities. This message will be reiterated through youth workers' engagement with young people.

9.4 Managing attendees within the building's entrance area will help mitigate impacts on the public highway.

9.5 Staff will be present at the entrance throughout the start and end of sessions.

9.6 A key part of the building's purpose is to enable youth workers to engage proactively with young people, build relationships and establish standards of behaviour and codes of conduct.

10. Safety and Security

10.1 Measures will include:

- Controlled access arrangements through staff supervision.
- Collection of attendance information.
- Staff supervision during operating hours.
- CCTV where appropriate.
- Building alarm systems.
- Safeguarding procedures.
- Emergency evacuation procedures.

10.2 The facility will be managed in accordance with the Council's health and safety and safeguarding policies.

11. Deliveries, Servicing and Waste Management

11.1 Deliveries will be limited to normal daytime hours.

11.2 No regular commercial servicing, heavy goods vehicle movements, or industrial activities are proposed. Deliveries will be limited to supplies for the youth café, which will be managed and brought in by staff, as opposed to any commercial deliveries.

11.3 Waste collection arrangements will utilise existing arrangements serving the site and area. St Neots Town Council will take HDC advice on this matter and will follow any waste collection proposals put forward. Given the site's established High Street

location and absence of rear servicing access, waste collection arrangements will operate in a manner consistent with other town centre commercial and community uses.

11.4 Waste storage outside of collection days will be safetly contained at the rear of the side alleyway to the property without hinderance to fire exit routes.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The proposed youth facility will provide an important community resource while operating in a manner that is compatible with surrounding uses.

12.2 The proposed management arrangements, operating hours and mitigation measures will ensure that the development does not result in unacceptable impacts relating to noise, traffic, parking or residential amenity.

Appendix A: Youth Centre Example Timetable