

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

13 December 2011

Report of the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults

**A NEW YOUTH OFFER**

**Purpose of the report**

To ask for Cabinet agreement to consult on a proposal that the Council should become a strategic commissioner of youth services increasing the extent and nature of provision by the voluntary, community and independent sector and a corresponding reduction in the services it provides directly.

**Information and Analysis**

**The Current Service**

The County Council's Youth Service currently offers and arranges a range of leisure and learning activities as well as guidance and support for young people in the county aged 13-19.

The activities are delivered from 155 centres of which 29 are owned or leased by the Youth Service. The centres are spread across the county but with concentrations in urban areas.

Last year the Service was used by 35% (23,234) of the young people in this age range with 28% (18,808) in regular contact. 30% of the activities (250 sessions per week) are provided directly by the council with the remaining 70% (576 sessions per week) offered via voluntary, community and independent sector organisations.

Management of the Youth Service activities was integrated into the Multi Agency Teams (MATs) when they were created in April 2011. The aim was to ensure that the Youth Service was integrated with the broader range of support for vulnerable young people and families.

**National and Local Influences**

The Government has recently published its 'Positive for Youth' strategy which has three main objectives:

- To ensure that young people at risk of dropping out or under-achieving take part and succeed in learning
- To prevent crime and risky behaviour which can undermine young people's life chances and have a cost to the wider society
- To provide opportunities for young people who do not otherwise acquire them to develop the personal and social skills they need for learning, work and transition to adulthood.

Through the Early Intervention Grant the Government has also signalled its overall policy direction in times of more limited public funding emphasising that:

- Public funding should be focussed on the provision of targeted support for young people at greatest risk of poor performance
- A greater share of publicly funded activities should be delivered through voluntary, community and independent sector providers to increase competition, responsiveness and innovation
- Local people and local organisations should be more involved in shaping and delivering services to better meet local needs
- Far greater importance should be placed on early intervention to prevent more serious difficulties for young people developing in the future.

OFSTED has also contributed to the discussions by publishing 'An Evaluation of Approaches to Commissioning of Young People's Services'. It recommends that councils:

- Take a lead in creating a partnership approach to the provision of services
- Ensure the services that are provided respond to clearly identified needs
- Ensure proper consideration is given to the use of new service providers including those from voluntary, community and charitable organisations
- Ensure a proper role for voluntary, community and charitable organisations in deciding on and monitoring the effectiveness of services
- Recognise the value of maintaining co-operation within the networks of local service providers.

Against this new national policy backdrop a review was done of youth services activities in Amber Valley to help shape future service delivery within Derbyshire.

Information on the review and the detailed results were reported to the Cabinet Member Meeting – Young People on 15 November 2011 and the main findings from the analysis are set out below. It was recognised that there was a need to:

- Increase the number of vulnerable young people who regularly engage in youth activities
- Enable young people to feel involved and engaged in planning service delivery and evaluation
- Make services available at times to suit young people and when it is most effective e.g. weekends and school holidays
- Ensure that services are of a high quality
- Make better use of the existing extensive network of service providers.
- Improve publicity and marketing of youth activities available to young people, their families and local communities

### **Key Service Principles**

Taking all the above into account, as well as recognising the need for greater efficiencies in Youth Service Activities to contribute to the Council's budget reduction requirements, **Six Key Principles** are proposed for the service:

There should be:

- **Improved and fairer access to youth service activities** for all young people wherever they live in the county
- **Improved provision of youth activities at times and in locations to suit the needs of young people** and enable the service to be more effective
- **Better and more efficient use of resources** particularly capitalising on the already extensive network of provision in the voluntary, community and independent sectors
- **Corresponding development of an effective MAT integrated approach** coupled with the streamlining of the council's own service provision

- **More involvement of young people and their families** in shaping services to meet individuals' needs within local circumstances
- **Greater concentration of resources on early intervention** with young people and families facing difficulties

### **Detailed Service Proposals**

Within the above framework it is proposed that the Council should become a strategic commissioner of youth services. The direct delivery of open access youth work (i.e. youth clubs and mobile provision) would be brought to an end. However, the council would continue to provide some serviced directly:

- The MAT areas would include partnerships with voluntary sector providers as well as district and borough councils, health, police and fire services.
- The qualified youth workers within the MAT teams would continue to support vulnerable young people and their families and would facilitate youth activities for this group.
- The majority of front-line youth activities would continue to be provided by the voluntary, community and independent sectors and direct service provision by the council would be significantly reduced.
- A Youth Activities Grants scheme would be established to support service providers and facilitate particular projects or initiatives.
- A review of the Service's existing centres would be undertaken as part of the 'Space Derbyshire' project to determine whether transfer to other providers or disposal is the best option.
- The consultation process would include details of potential alternative buildings in a vicinity that may be more suitable and available within the community.

### **Consultation Process**

The consultation will last for approximately 10 weeks and will include the use of on-line questionnaires and discussion forums as well as face to face sessions with interested groups and organisations.

Contact with vulnerable groups or those that could be adversely affected by the proposals will be an essential part of the process and will inform the Equality Impact Assessment.

### **Financial Considerations**

The County Council has to make savings of £100m over the next five years from 2011-12 to 2015-16, with the Children and Younger Adults department having an agreed contribution of £27.4m. Any reduction in spending as a result of changes to the delivery of the Youth Service would contribute towards this figure. The 2011-12 budget for providing youth clubs and positive activities is £2.2m.

### **Human Resources Consideration**

There are currently 157 individuals (39.8 FTEs) employed as Youth Support Workers within the Service.

If the proposal to end direct service provision is approved after the consultation exercise formal discussions will be held with the individuals themselves and the appropriate trade unions, Any subsequent action would be in accordance with the Council's Redundancy, Redeployment and Protection of Earnings Policy and sections 188 and 193 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992.

### **Legal Considerations**

There is a statutory duty for local authorities to secure sufficient facilities and education leisure-time activities for the improvement of the well-being of all young people aged 13-19 years, and for those young people aged 20-25 years if they have a learning difficulty.

Whilst the legislation enables a local authority to directly provide facilities and activities, the duty to ensure sufficient provision can also be met by assisting others in providing or organising activities, or facilitating access to such provision. Therefore, both the existing provision and the proposals for the future provision for youth services would satisfy the statutory obligations.

### **Equality of Opportunity Considerations**

The Equality Act 2010 requires local authorities to pay "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in respect of race, disability, gender (including gender re-assignment), age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, maternity and religion and belief. Accordingly, an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to inform Cabinet of any equality impacts arising from the proposals.

### **Property Considerations**

As detailed above.

### **Other Considerations**

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder; health; legal and human rights and transportation considerations.

### **Background papers**

1. Big Society Agenda
2. Localism Bill
3. Positive for Youth (DfE July 2011)
4. Growing the Role of the Voluntary Community Sector Organisations (DfE 2011)
5. Commissioning Services for Young People (DfE 2011)
6. OFSTED Evaluation of Commissioning Services to Young People (OFSTED, August 2011)
7. Positive for Youth Derbyshire response
8. Amber Valley – Review of Youth Service Provision
9. Processes for Commissioning Youth Work Activities
10. Bringing People Together
11. Education Select Committee – Report Young People 2011
12. Derbyshire Youth Council Consultation 25 October 2011

### **Key Decision**

No.

### **Call-in to be waived**

No.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION**

That Cabinet agrees to consultation on the future shape of youth services activities within the county as detailed in the report.

**IAN THOMAS  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNGER ADULTS**