



| <u>Committee and Date</u> | <u>Item</u> |
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| Cabinet | |
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Youth Support

Responsible Officer Karen Bradshaw, Executive Director of Children's Services
e-mail: karen.bradshaw@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 254201

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides feedback from the recent Youth Support consultation and sets out the Council's response to this. Cabinet approval is now sought for the implementation of a new model of Youth Support across Shropshire. This will incorporate both targeted support through outreach/detached youth work (addressing particular, complex issues faced by our vulnerable young people) and open access provision (open to all, not restricted by appointments or to certain groups of young people), whilst building a trusted and appropriate network of youth support across Shropshire. The aim is to strengthen and grow the current limited offer of support, extending the focus to incorporate Shropshire's troubled and more vulnerable young people involved in youth crime, at risk of school exclusion and exploitation.
- 1.2 The consultation evidenced that generally there is support for the model set out in the consultation, but the feedback did highlight concerns. The main concern is that the new model has limited capacity and will not be adequately resourced and could result in the potential closure of open access clubs. Areas of agreement include the need to work in partnership across all sectors, the importance of valuing volunteers and existing local provision, and the need for qualified youth workers to support those children and young people in most need.
- 1.3 Responses from town and parish councils were mixed, some acknowledging a growing concern for their local young people and keen to work in partnership to develop a model of support and others more reluctant, expressing concerns that the new model would threaten their current open access provisions and cited finding the funding for these clubs locally would be a challenge.
- 1.4 Partners from the voluntary and community sector were concerned that the model being proposed could not be delivered within the timescales set out

and that this would mean a loss of the current provision and ensuring staff delivering youth clubs are appropriately trained and supported.

- 1.5 The cross-party task and finish group considered the concerns raised during the consultation process. There was a majority agreed that, as a result of these concerns, a sensible way forward would be for a revised proposal to be put forward which allowed for a gradual implementation of the model. This would allow more time to work at a local level with town and parish councils, working initially with those areas committed to changing the support in their local areas for young people, and keen to work in partnership with us and growing this model across the county as good practise is evidenced. It would also allow us to work with the voluntary sector to re-design and implement a revised package of support for the voluntary clubs.
- 1.6 Alongside the consultation process, officers have been in dialogue with many town and parish councils. Some have committed to resource the open access offer, whilst others are yet to commit to do so.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet:

- a) Agree to cease the current commissioning model via the LJC's.
- b) Agree a new model of Targeted Youth Support, which will be managed in-house as part of Shropshire's Children's Services Early Help provision. This model will be trialled, developed and implemented between April 2020 and March 2021.
- c) Agree that further work takes place between Shropshire Council officers and town and parish councils, to agree the commissioning of open access youth support/clubs.
- d) Whilst agreeing to a new model being fully implemented by April 2021, agree to a phased withdrawal of funding for universal open access between the period March 2020-March 2021, as new agreements are made with providers.
- e) Agree that Shropshire Council explore alternative models of support to the voluntary sector, currently delivering universal open access youth clubs; this would include DBS checks, training, implementation of appropriate policies and procedures and assistance to support future financial sustainability.
- f) Agree that in the new model we will work to the principles as set out in paragraph 5.5.1.

- g) Agree to delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services the ability to deliver the recommendations as set out above in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

REPORT

3.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) was carried out in September 2019 as part of planning the changes to youth provision to consider the possible equality impacts on communities (please see Appendix A). The assessment identifies that the likely impact of a new model of youth delivery will be that more of our vulnerable young people will have direct access to support and is intended to have a positive impact on all young people in Shropshire and their families and carers.
- 3.2 Actions planned to enhance the positive impact of the proposed changes included an 8-week consultation and an extension of current contracts until the end of March 2020. Town and Parish Councils would be included in the consultation to better understand and design an offer to meet the differing needs of local areas. A cross party task and finish group made up of our elected members had been established to review and develop the model.
- 3.3 Following the consultation, the ESIIA has been updated noting concerns raised in the consultation and how these are being addressed by the revised proposal of a graduated implementation of the new model.
- 3.4 Effective and coordinated youth support minimises escalation to higher cost intervention services, thus reducing unnecessary and intrusive services wherever possible and reducing financial impact on the public sector. By aligning with Shropshire's Children's Services: Early Help, it will ensure that young people will be offered and have access to appropriate and timely support and enable the sharing of intelligence to target youth services appropriately.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The current 2019/20 budget allocated to youth provision consists of:
- LJC commissioned youth activities, core budget of £157,260
- Rurality Funding Budget of £33,000

Infrastructure Support budget of £92,626

Total budget = £282,886

- 4.2 This proposed model of youth support, once fully implemented (by 1st April 2021), would cost the Council annually approximately £365,000, which would include the costs of a team of detached youth workers and support for voluntary sector groups. It would maximise partnership working and access to shared funding opportunities.

The additional investment in youth support/targeted support will come from The Strengthening Families budget which has been confirmed and extended. We expect this to continue beyond the 20/21 financial year.

- 4.3 We would work to support town and parish councils to review and commission open access youth clubs locally. These clubs currently run across Shropshire at a total annual cost of £157,260 and are currently funded via the LJC commissioning arrangements.
- 4.4 During the financial year 2020/2021, a graduated model of implementation would mean that the Council would continue to fund the open access youth clubs currently funded via the LJC commissioning arrangements, to those town and parish councils who currently have not engaged with the proposed model at a potential cost of between £57,000 and £114,000. The team of detached workers would be 'grown' across the county as areas engage with the model, this is likely to cost the council £223,000 during this implementation year. This uplift will be funded on an invest-to-save basis, the implications of which will be incorporated in the financial strategy. Including the cost of support to the voluntary sector this graduated implementation model will cost in total between £340,000 - £397,000 during this period in 2020/21.
- 4.5 Overall, it is anticipated that increased costs will be offset by reduced impact on children's social care.

5:0 Background

- 5.1 Shropshire Council has reviewed the delivery of youth support in Shropshire. A cross party task and finish group explored the delivery of existing support and good practice in youth provision. A review was necessary because the current arrangements were due to come to an end and decisions needed to be taken concerning how youth provision should be delivered in the future to best meet local needs. This local work took place alongside a national review launched on the 10 July 2019 into how local authorities should secure activities and services for young people.
- 5.2 With an increase in youth crime, exploitation and demand on Children's Social Care, there is a growing focus nationally, on the work local authorities need to undertake to ensure the most vulnerable young people can access and

receive the support they need. National research, evidence and guidance suggests changes are required. The APPG on Youth Affairs; Youth Work Inquiry 2018 recognises that *“over the years youth work has borne the brunt of significant spending cuts. Recent events and reports suggest the loss of youth work has had a negative impact on young people and communities. In the face of rapid technological change and major societal challenges we need to look again at what support young people need now and to meet their needs for the future.”*

5.3 Shropshire Council proposes a new model of support to young people that would incorporate both universal, open access groups and more targeted support through outreach work (i.e. meeting young people wherever they are, in schools and in places where they choose to congregate). It is proposed that Town and Parish Councils fund local open access youth groups. These are currently funded via the LJC commissioning arrangements and Shropshire Council. Funding would be for a team of youth workers to provide an element of detached youth work across the county, focusing on our more troubled young people involved in youth crime and at risk of exploitation.

5.4 Detached youth work is a model of youth work practice, targeted at vulnerable young people, which takes place on young people’s own territory such as streets, cafes and parks at times that are appropriate to them and on their terms. The Government’s Civil Society Strategy 2018 states: *“The Government recognises the transformational impact that youth services and trained youth workers can have, especially for young people facing multiple barriers of disadvantage.”*

5.5 Shropshire’s Model for Youth Provision.

5.5.1 In the new model we will work with partners, including town and parish councils, to design and deliver a localised model of youth provision maximising the use of all available resources and funding to:

- Work with local providers/partners and voluntary sector to support the delivery of open access youth clubs.
- Target services towards those young people in most need of support including those who are vulnerable or most at risk.
- Ensure qualified youth workers are in place across Shropshire, providing the skills and experience needed to make most difference.
- Work to address emerging social issues and concerns such as youth violence and knife crime, county lines etc.
- Provide a localised youth offer – ensuring there are workers on the ground able to reach young people within the community e.g. schools/colleges, on the streets.
- Build and strengthen the system of support available to meet the needs of young people by linking qualified youth workers to other services and specialist workers.

- Improve the use of information to understand impact and enable investment to build on success.

- 5.5.2 The new model would see the Council employing a strategic lead for Youth Support who would develop the Youth Partnership model and manage a team of 3 professionally qualified youth workers, based North, Central and South, who in turn would manage teams of part time Youth Support Workers.
- 5.5.3 Town and Parish Councils ensure delivery and resourcing of open access youth groups.
- 5.5.4 Shropshire Council will explore models of support to the voluntary sector who currently deliver open access youth clubs; this would include support around safeguarding as well as DBS checks, training, implementation of appropriate policies and procedures and assistance to support future financial sustainability. There is further detailed work to be undertaken to develop an appropriate specification, but we anticipate a budget allocation of £60,000 for this activity.
- 5.5.5 The proposed model of Youth Support would cost Shropshire Council £365,000 per annum.
- 5.5.6 This model will be implemented using a graduated approach, initially by employing a strategic lead and a team of detached youth workers, working with the town councils who have expressed an interest in this partnership approach.

We are currently in discussion with four town councils and two parish councils who are keen to work in partnership to develop the model locally.

We will trial the model from April 2020, with an aim for the strategic lead to work with other town and parish councils to extend the team and be fully embedded across the county by April 2021.

- 5.6 *“A consequence of funding reductions to local authorities has been a decrease in the infrastructure required to support good quality youth work. This can mean that even when there is a significant amount of provisions available for young people in an area, this can be provided by a range of organisations including the voluntary sector, housing associations and community groups, and a lack of coordination can result in duplication, difficulties for young people and their families in finding out what is available, and limited training and support for providers. It is also difficult to know the quality of youth services available when there is limited understanding of the full range of provision across sectors”, Local Government Association.*
- 5.6.1 It is our intention through a team of youth workers with a strategic lead, to build a network of youth support across Shropshire, including education, health, the police, local Council's and the voluntary sector, to maximise use of

funding to ensure a provision of youth support that will meet local need and ensure that our most vulnerable young people are being identified and supported appropriately. We will take a partnership approach to ensure both a universal and targeted offer of support for young people, providing a menu of youth provision which will be coordinated and overseen by the local authority.

5.7 Relevant national reports;

The National Youth Agency and All-Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Affairs' inquiry into Youth Work available here: <https://nya.org.uk/appg-inquiry/>

A Commons Select Committee report on Serious Youth Violence: <https://www.parliament.uk/commons-select/serious-youth-violence-report/>

The Government's Civil Society Strategy 2018: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-society-strategy-building-a-future-that-works-for-everyone>

6.0 Consultation feedback

6.1 The 8-week formal consultation period on the proposed model of youth support ran from 9th September to 31st October 2019. The proposals put forward in this report have taken account of the feedback, specifically in relation to:

- Phasing the implementation of the model
- Support for the voluntary sector.

6.2 The consultation.

- a) There were 24 electronic newsletters/invitations/ messages issued to invite key stakeholder groups to participate in the consultation and 3 public news articles.
- b) Stakeholders were offered a range of options for responding to the consultation including in writing/by email, face to face engagement or online surveys.
- c) The consultation research included a review of local research reports, face to face discussions with children and young people (a separate report detailed the feedback received), a review of written consultation responses and survey analysis.
- d) Three surveys were carried out: a stakeholder survey for local organisations with an interest in youth service provision; a survey for children and young people; and a public survey to gather the views of parents, grandparents, carers and other individuals.

6.2 Response to the consultation.

- a) There were 342 surveys returned: 126 from members of the public, 70 from groups and organisations and 146 from children and young people.
- b) There were 1,361 comments from the 342 survey respondents. Each of these was read and categorised.
- c) 9 written consultation responses were received.
- d) 155 children and young people were engaged face to face.

7.0 Consultation – key themes summary

- 7.1 In general, 70% of the public agreed with the new model, along with organisations and partners. Young people provided a different view and concerns were raised about the need to have both detached youth provision and universal open access youth clubs, where young people would feel valued and listened to. Partners from the voluntary and community sector were concerned that they would lose the support provided to ensure staff delivering youth services are DBS checked, as well as training for staff to update skills and knowledge in working with young people, provided by the current commissioned infrastructure contract.
- 7.2 All three groups highlighted the following issues as impacting on young people in local areas in order of priority.
 - a) **Public:** Boredom/nothing to do, loneliness and isolation, drugs/county lines, smoking.
 - b) **Org/partners/groups:** Boredom/nothing to do, loneliness and isolation, lack of life skills, drugs/county lines
 - c) **Young people:** Bullying/gangs and violence, crime, drugs/county lines, stress/anxiety/low mood and depression.
 - d) A range of questions were provided as part of the consultation – designed to solicit a wide range of views and opinions. A snapshot of the responses is provided below.
 - e) **Where do you think youth support should be based?**
Public opinions included - on the streets, schools, colleges = open access, and where need is identified. Young people preferred youth clubs, in their own home, parks and open spaces, and schools and colleges.
 - f) **If you think vulnerable young people need support, which groups of young people should support be aimed at?**

The response to this question was comparable from all groups – with most expressing that support should be aimed at those young people who are rurally isolated, at risk of offending, and at risk of abuse or violence. Young people also identified young people who have special educational needs and disabilities.

f) **What type of support should be offered?**

The majority of young people referred to youth clubs as being the type of support that should be offered – this is not surprising as the majority of young people asked where attending youth clubs at the time. The public opinions included workers in the community, open sessions and drop in, group work and access to specialist support for particular needs.

The full consultation feedback report is attached at Appendix B.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet report 18th October 2017: Local Commissioning of Youth Activities: proposals for consultation on changes to the funding of targeted geographical provision

Cabinet report 28th February 2018: Local commissioning of youth activities - proposals for changes to the funding of targeted geographical provision.

Public consultation document.

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Edward Potter

Local Members:

All Members

Appendices

Appendix A Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) (Sep 2019)

Appendix B Youth Support Consultation 2019 Feedback Report (Nov 2019)