

CABINET
15 OCTOBER 2015**POSITIVE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: FUTURE DIRECTION**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr J P Campion

Relevant Officer

Interim Director of Children's Services

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families recommends that Cabinet:

- (a) notes the findings of the review of County Council funded Positive Activities for young people provision as set out in paragraphs 1 – 21;**
- (b) approves the recommendation for the future funding of positive activities as set out in paragraphs 25-26;**
- (c) approves the focus of the infrastructure support funding as set out in paragraphs 28-31;**
- (d) approves the needs based formula funding and district allocation of positive activities as set out in paragraph 27;**
- (e) approves the proposed commissioning priorities and processes as set out in paragraphs 32 – 35; and**
- (f) delegates the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families.**

Background

2. Positive Activities focus on providing young people with 'things to do and places to go'. Provision is mainly delivered through traditional style openly accessible youth groups (i.e. any young person from the community can access).

3. Under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, the County Council has a duty to secure for qualifying young people (i.e. aged 13-19 and those aged 20-24 with a learning difficulty or disability), so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer of access to sufficient educational or recreational leisure-time activities and facilities that is sufficient to meet local needs and improve young people's well-being and personal and social development. There are also responsibilities to effectively publicise the overall

local offer of all services and activities available to young people and their families and to involve young people in the decision making about, and monitoring of, the relevance and effectiveness of services.

4. In November 2011 as part of the BOLD programme, Cabinet took the decision to de-commission all Worcestershire County Council Youth Services and re-commission externally provided Positive Activities (saving £1.782 million).

5. At this point it was agreed that Positive Activities provision would focus on reaching those young people who were, or were at risk of becoming, not in education, employment or training (NEET) or involved in anti-social behaviour and that provision should be targeted at vulnerable and disadvantaged young people. Targeting was therefore predominantly geographic related to such "hotspots".

6. The remaining £1 million was subsequently allocated across the six district council areas of the county using a needs-based formula (70% Needs to 30% Local Youth population) and an outcomes framework and local service specifications were created. Contracts were due to expire on 31 March 2015.

7. In 2014-15 commissioned activities reached 10,121 individual young people.

8. In addition to County Council funded positive activities there is also a wide range of provision provided by the voluntary, community and private sector. Young Solutions (previously Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services - WCVYS) currently has 88 affiliated youth organisations that reach approximately a further 10,000 young people, supported by up to 150 paid and 1,000 voluntary workers.

9. In addition, there are circa 1,300 sports clubs and organisations offering activities. This provision is not necessarily targeted at the 13-19 age range or the most vulnerable. However, it does contribute a substantial volume of local and accessible activities to the positive for the wider youth population and is important in complementing the more targeted provision commissioned by the County Council.

10. There is a good working relationship between providers of commissioned positive activities and the wider youth sector and collaboration and coordination of local provision is a function of Local Children's Trusts and their relevant sub groups.

Cabinet Report – July 2014

11. In July 2014, Cabinet approved a proposal that the current approach to Positive Activities is reviewed to ascertain whether the Council can ensure a sufficient local positive activities offer in accordance with its legal duties without any County Council funding from 2016/17.

12. To ensure stability of positive activities provision throughout this review, Cabinet also approved in July 2014 to retain the current level of funding (£1 million) for a further financial year (2015/16) effectively deferring the existing £500,000 savings from 2015/16 to 2016/17 and have a corresponding increase in the corporate budget gap of this amount for 2015/16.

Positive Activities Review - Findings

13. The Officer-led review (see Appendix 3) included in-depth meetings with each of the 19 different provider organisations delivering 23 local contracts, a survey with young people to ascertain views and a mapping exercise of the other positive activities provision available across Worcestershire. This was complemented by a Member-led review carried out by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Both review reports and the analysis of the young people's survey are available as background papers.

14. Evidence gathered through regular monitoring indicates that these services are reaching and positively impacting on individual vulnerable young people. Those providers with greater capacity and experience use nationally recognised tools such as Outcomes Stars and school attitudinal surveys (e.g. P.A.S.S) and all use case study feedback of their own and from other stakeholders, including schools and Police.

15. Ward level data from the Police indicates significant lowering of levels of reported anti-social behaviour in areas where commissioned positive activities are provided. The importance of the diversionary function of locally accessible positive activities was emphasised by the Police during the Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

16. If the County Council were to remove all of the funding from 2016/17, 26% (5) of commissioned organisations stated that they would be likely to close due to insufficient other funding to sustain core costs and activities, 32% (6) were likely to reduce levels of provision and 42% (8) were likely to stop offering positive activities for young people whilst continuing other work funded from elsewhere.

17. Given this, the review identified that there is a risk that a number of priority localities could be left with little or no significant accessible Positive Activities provision reaching those needing it most, in particular Droitwich (including Westlands), Malvern town (including Pickersleigh), Stourport (including Walshes), Kidderminster (including Spennells), Bromsgrove (including Charford, Sidemoor, Catshill and Rubery), Bewdley, Pershore and Evesham.

18. There is a particular issue in the city of Worcester with regard to the potential impact on the scope of provision and sustainability prospects of Worcester Community Trust (WCT). Worcester was the only district area in which there was no open tendering for positive activities provision due to a Section 10 pooled funding agreement between the County and City Councils that was in place at the time. WCT delivers all of the commissioned positive activities for young people across the city in areas of highest need and also is the key provider of community and play provision for the City Council. Consequently, the future of funding streams from the two Councils is very significant to the sustainability of the organisation going forward.

19. One of the positive effects of the County Council's investment in the voluntary youth sector has been that, in supporting the core costs and staff expertise in organisations, it has enabled many of the commissioned bodies to secure further funding from other sources to enhance their work with young people. On average, organisations generate an additional 25% of income from other sources, some significantly more, with a small number still being entirely dependent on the Council.

Typically, these sources pay for additional and time limited projects and/or specific equipment.

20. An online survey of young people accessing the commissioned activities took place in May 2015. This received an excellent response from 715 young people. 47% of those responding indicated that they did not access any other activity provision in their community other than that which they may experience at school. The importance of a locally accessible, young people friendly venue and consistently available and trusted youth workers to talk to about issues and concerns were common themes emerging from the responses.

21. Given the findings of the review (in paragraphs 16-17 above) and the accepted budgetary restraints, it is important that Council investment is maintained to ensure an adequate local offer of positive activities is consistently available across the county and for the Council to consequently meet its statutory obligations. To achieve this, it will be necessary for Council commissioned services to be prioritised in areas where there would be little or no appropriate and accessible provision for young people who need it most and are unlikely to be motivated or to travel to other alternatives (see survey findings in paragraph 20 above and Appendix 2). In this way County Council funding will complement the broader range of opportunities provided by others that also comprise the local offer for the wider youth population.

22. The duty to publicise the local activity offer to young people and their families has been met through the provision of the Plug and Play website and Early Help Hub Service Directory. There is now an opportunity to review this function and to both align it with the Your Life, Your Choice website; developing the Local Offer and improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of online information, advice and guidance for children, young people and families. It would be good practice to further involve young people in the development of an App and/or social media approach that is more relevant to young people.

Future Funding for Positive Activities – Recommendations

23. The current financial savings that are attributed to Positive Activities are £1,000k in 2016/17. This would leave a budget of £100K to focus on publicising local activity and supporting the development and maintenance of the youth service market (infrastructure support).

24. The Positive Activities Review and Overview and Scrutiny processes have concluded that due to the following reasons there is a risk of leaving gaps in service availability for some of the most vulnerable young people in key areas if all County Council funding is removed given:

- the reach of positive activities to individuals many of whom do not access other opportunities
- the importance of the skills and relationships with young people of the youth workers in this sector, and
- the evidence of positive impact and contribution to wider early intervention and prevention measures.

25. However, budget pressures continue and there is still a need for the voluntary youth sector, which is still immature and comprised mainly of small local charities and social enterprises, to work towards a sustainable future that is less reliant of public sector funds. It is therefore a priority of the infrastructure support that it is recommended to continue that these should be supported to build their capacity to secure additional funding streams that can both replace the incrementally reducing contribution from the County Council and provide longer term sustainability.

26. It is therefore recommended to continue the investment in Positive Activities from April 2016 and to incrementally reduce funding over three years as outlined in the table below. This approach will allow providers to rebalance income and secure funding from other sources to sustain a positive activities offer. The allocation of £400k per annum from 2019-20 onwards will be subject to a further commissioning review.

Current funding

| | 2015-16 |
|----------------|----------------|
| Delivery Fund | £1000K |
| Infrastructure | £100K |

Proposed funding

| | 2016-17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Delivery Fund | £600K | £500K | £400K |
| Infrastructure | £100K | £100K | £100K |

27. This will revise the existing savings profile, as described below, and adjustments will be proposed in the Medium Term Financial Plan to reflect this.

Current savings profile

| 2016-17 |
|----------------|
| £1000K |

Revised savings profile

| 2016-17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | Total |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| £400K | £100K | £100K | £600K |

28. It is proposed to continue to use the Needs:Youth Population formula based allocation of funding on a district basis. The allocations of the funding would therefore be as follows:

| District Area | Current allocation (from £1m) | 2016-17 allocation (from £600k) | 2017-18 allocation (from £500k) | 2018-19 > allocation (from £400k) |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bromsgrove | 125,115 | 75,060 | 62,550 | 50,040 |
| Redditch | 185,083 | 111,000 | 92,500 | 74,000 |
| Wyre Forest | 191,730 | 115,020 | 95,850 | 76,680 |
| Wychavon | 186,182 | 111,720 | 93,100 | 74,480 |
| Worcester City | 202,000 | 121,200 | 101,000 | 80,800 |
| Malvern Hills | 109,574 | 65,760 | 54,800 | 43,840 |

29. It is also recommended to continue with the allocation of £100k annually for infrastructure support. The investment would partly support the post of Commissioning Manager, Young People through which management of the commissioning process, monitoring and continuous development of quality and safety of positive activities provision is ensured. It would also enable the re-commissioning of a sector specific provider of infrastructure support. This provider would be required, as has been the case to date, to provide a full programme of accessible training, both directly delivered and online, for the workforce of the voluntary youth sector.

30. It will also be required to offer on-going support to organisations that enables them to plan for and evidence the impact of their interventions with young people, to improve their capacity to attract additional and alternative funding streams and to facilitate and broker new partnerships and consortia to improve local coordination, support smaller groups with less capacity and minimise duplication and competition for resources in the sector. This sector specific support will be (as before) additional and complementary to any County Council support to the wider voluntary sector in terms of organisational development, legal constitution and governance etc. that might continue to be made following the current review of the Changing Futures Fund. It is distinct in character and content in that it addresses the effectiveness of operational delivery, quality and safety of activity provision and provides on-going support and training to the youth sector rather than shorter term packages of capacity building support to organisations.

31. In addition, the infrastructure budget will provide some capacity to develop more effective ways to promote the wide range of available activities to young people through the development of smartphone app and social media based tools.

32. The commissioning process for this support will take place in parallel to that for the direct delivery providers of positive activities.

Commissioning Priorities – Recommendations

33. It is recommended that the following priorities and principles are applied to the commissioning of targeted (not universally offered) positive activities from April 2016 onwards:

- Prioritise geographical areas of need and where little or no other significant “open door” provision would remain without County Council support
- Cease funding of activities that could/should be funded from other sources (e.g. schools)
- Greater focus on reaching disadvantaged and vulnerable young people who are most likely to benefit from positive activities provision
- Maintain an outcomes-based approach to continue the focus on making a positive difference to wellbeing, resilience, achievement etc. and consider revision of high level objectives to include prevention and support of young people’s low level mental health issues and reducing demand on social care
- Ensure alignment of priorities with the review of 0-19 Early Help and identify contribution and links to wider strategic priorities such as the developing approach to Prevention
- In order to secure funding, organisations must have or be working towards robust future sustainability plans. This will support transition to an independently sustainable sector (infrastructure support will assist with this)
- Encourage consortium approaches in areas where feasible (these can assist smaller organisations with less capacity for bidding for funds etc).

Commissioning Process - Recommendations

34. It is recommended that the Council's standard procurement process is used and that there will be open tendering in all district areas. This now includes Worcester City as the previous Section 10 pooled funding agreement has now expired. Existing contracts with all providers will cease on 31 March 2016 and new contracts will commence on 1 April 2016 to ensure continuity of provision in localities.

35. District area service specifications will be developed to reflect the above priority areas.

36. Local elected members, young people and Local Children's Trusts will be involved and consulted in the development of these specifications.

Children with Disabilities (CWD)

37. The County Council, in collaboration with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, commissions a variety of providers across Worcestershire to provide positive activities and short breaks specifically for children with disabilities. It includes contributions to

some mainstream providers within the Positive Activities programme for enhanced inclusive provision up to a value of £27,000. This has enabled a small number of commissioned positive activities providers to provide specific activity programmes for young people with disabilities and to offer opportunities for additional integration into mainstream activities where requested and appropriate to the young people involved and has been assessed as very effective provision of this type.

38. It is proposed that the alignment of Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities commissioning continues in this way subject to availability of funding.

Role of Local Members

39. The role of local members continues to evolve through the implementation of the County Council's Future Operating Model. Local members have a key role as the 'go to' person within communities as well as becoming local commissioners through the discretionary use of their member budgets. It will also be necessary to enable local members to work closely with the Local Children's Trusts and other bodies to encourage effective local collaboration and avoid duplication of effort and resources.

Role of Young People

40. One of the most important defining features of the commissioning of Positive Activities to date has been the direct involvement of local young people in the decision making and review processes.

41. Throughout the review all young people who currently access County Council funded Positive Activities were given the opportunity to share their views on the current provision. 715 young people responded to the survey and these responses have been used to inform the revised funding proposals as indicated in the Young People's Survey analysis in the background papers. Of particular relevance is the fact that 47% of young people responding reported that they attend no other activity provision in their community beyond what they may take part in as part of their school time curriculum. It is therefore useful to consider any provision commissioned by the County Council in targeted areas of need and potential gaps in service as important in fulfilling the local youth offer by complementing the wider range of sports, Arts and leisure activities provided by the local authority partners, voluntary and private sector organisations for the wider youth population.

42. It has been, and will continue to be, an expectation of all commissioned organisations that they should demonstrate that they actively involve young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of their activity provision. This includes the development of young people as volunteers, enabling their contribution through members committees, local youth forums and engagement with the wider existing opportunities for young people to have their voice heard and to influence decision making such as the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet and the UK Youth Parliament.

43. To support this, steps have already been taken to include some capacity to provide the potential for on-going training and coordination of young people involved as part of the rationalisation of young people's Participation & Engagement functions in Children's Services.

44. Developing and enabling appropriate and effective involvement of young people in the functions of the Local Children's Trusts and with local members will be important to ensure that their voice and influence can continue to inform local decision making that delivers relevant and accessible activities.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

45. The statutory duties are set out in the report above. The Council must also comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, detailed in previous Cabinet reports and referenced below. There are legal implications in relation to the cessation of the current Positive Activities provider's contracts. These are standard legal procedures and will be followed in giving the required notice of cessation of contracts.

46. With regard to the proposal approved by Cabinet in July 2014, to consider the implication of removing all of the delivery fund for positive activities for young people, the recommendation to continue but incrementally reduce funding over three years will create an additional corporate financial pressure of £700k in 2016/17, £600k in 2017/18 and £500k in 2018/19. However, it will still contribute savings of £600K over the three years against the current level of spend (£1.1 million p.a.).

Equality and Diversity Implications

47. Commissioned Positive Activities provision has contributed to the Equality Duty Aims. All commissioned activities are inclusive in terms of the protected characteristics of Race, Religion and Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation and Age (Young People: 75% 13-19 yrs, 25% 11-12 yrs) and in some cases with specific provision aimed at the particular needs of groups with one or more of the following protected characteristics: Disability (e.g. physical and learning disabilities, Asperger's etc) and Pregnancy and Maternity (teenage parents).

48. Through the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) attached as Appendix 1, due regard has been given to the Equality Duty in the process of exiting current contracts as proposed in March 2016 (i.e. assessment of potential negative impact of cessation of particular services from an equalities perspective and identify mitigations) and in developing the recommendations for the future. It will continue to be necessary for us to be working with the Voluntary and Community Sector/private sector to support and enable a range of provision that meets the Duty going forward – a further justification for maintaining and re-focusing infrastructure support/capacity-building activity.

Privacy Impact Assessment

48. A Privacy Impact Assessment has been completed (attached as Appendix 1). The monitoring of the performance of Positive Activities providers includes the gathering of statistical data, outcomes and case study evidence. However, all of this information is anonymised and provider organisations do not require access to County Council systems in order to provide it. There are therefore no significant risks identified.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment and Risk and Privacy Impact Screening
Appendix 2 – Young People's Survey analysis
Appendix 3 – Positive Activities Review Report
Supporting Information – Statutory Guidance on the Role of Local Authorities in Youth
Provision – available electronically

Contact Points

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Interim Director of Children's Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny report
- Agenda and background papers for the Cabinet meetings held on 24 November 2011 and 17 July 2014 which are available from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services or on the Council's website at:

<http://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=131>