



Young People's Scrutiny  
Committee

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Item

**9**

Public

## **Support for Youth Activities Update**

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### **1. Summary**

This report summarises progress with the commissioning of youth activities since the update provided to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and subsequently by way of a verbal update on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Shropshire Youth Association (SYA) in partnership with Energize, the County Sports Partnership, provide infrastructure support to the voluntary community sector. Over 100 clubs are now affiliated to SYA and receive a wide range of support.

Local Joint Committees supported by Community Enablement Team officers have made recommendations for the commissioning of activities for young people within their communities. There have been 43 separate awards to date to over 30 different providers. Awards range from small grants of less than £200, for example, for the purchase of equipment by community groups to large contracts of over £15,000 in value to established youth activity providers. In a positive development in Shrewsbury the responsibility for the delivery / commissioning of youth activities has been transferred within a formal delegation agreement from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council.

Early feedback is that awards are making a positive difference to the lives of young people. Learning from the local commissioning of youth activities is also reviewed.

Of the 6 council owned youth centres – Whitchurch, Market Drayton, The Grange, Sundorne, Monkmoor and Bridgnorth - advertised as being available on the Community Asset Transfer Register, at least one bid had been received for each property. At Bridgnorth Youth Centre an options appraisal is currently being undertaken in relation to a number of different alternatives for its future use.

The existing funding in support of youth activities is committed until the end of March 2017.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Committee members provide further feedback and comment in respect of the council's approach to providing support for youth activities.

## REPORT

### 1. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to secure, so far as reasonably practical, equality of access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help that they need to improve their wellbeing. The council must also take steps to gain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them.
- 1.2 A risk management log for local youth commissioning is kept under regular review.
- 1.3 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) for local youth commissioning is also kept under regular review.
- 1.4 Child safeguarding and welfare matters are paramount in our approach and appropriate safeguards have been included throughout the process.
- 1.5 Supporting early help and early prevention is a key driver for the Council. Support for youth activities as a “universal offer” alongside more targeted support for young people with particular needs underpins our approach to commissioning support for young people to be able to access a range of activities.
- 1.6 Learning from the local commissioning of youth activities and looking ahead within the context of the challenging budget situation, a local commissioning approach provides the opportunity to work with local communities to maximise the use of local assets – buildings, organisations, people and money – to achieve the greatest local benefit.

### 2. Financial implications

- 2.1 Within 2015/16 there is an overall annual controllable budget of £625,370 as follows:

£150,800	Available to support local commissioning (pro-rata allocation for 2015/16; 2016/17 allocation will be £234,950)
£93,370	Infrastructure support costs (pro-rata allocation for 2015/16; 2016/17 allocation will be £130,000)
£90,000	Buildings and associated premises staff costs
£26,940	Member of Youth Parliament associated costs
£218,260	Interim budget for direct delivery of youth clubs (April to August 2015)
£46,000	Ongoing annual budget for direct delivery of youth clubs for those with specific needs

Given the later than originally planned start of both the infrastructure support contract and of the local commissioning of youth activities pro-rata budget allocations were made to reflect the need to fund ongoing delivery by Shropshire Council on an interim basis.

- 2.2 Within 2016/17 there is an annual controllable budget of £527,880 as follows:

£234,950	Available to support local commissioning
£130,000	Infrastructure support costs
£90,000	Buildings and associated premises staff costs

£26,930	Member of Youth Parliament associated costs
£46,000	Ongoing annual budget for direct delivery of youth clubs for those with specific needs

- 2.3 18 LJs (out of 23) have been allocated a budget based on a funding formula that reflected local young people's needs and rurality.
- 2.4 Funding is committed to the end of March 2017 with any further funding being subject to a review.

### **3.0 Background Information**

- 3.1 Approval was given by the Portfolio Holder responsible for youth services to modify the commissioning model in response to consultation and to procure infrastructure support services on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014. Approval was subsequently given by Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014 to confirm the funding allocation based on an analysis of need for individual LJ areas. Further approval was provided by Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to delegate the responsibility for the commissioning and delivery of youth services within Shrewsbury to Shrewsbury Town Council and to provide short-term match funding to enable the community to support the on-going development of youth activities within Broseley. Progress with the implementation of the approach has been scrutinised by the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
- 3.2 The following points underpin the Council's approach to the commissioning of youth activities:
- As a local authority, Shropshire Council has a duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, equality of access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their well-being.
  - The Council must also take steps to gain the views of young people and to take them into account in making decisions about services and activities for them.
  - The Council's aim is to ensure that as many young people as possible, can access a wide range of activities after school, at weekends and in school holidays. These activities are known collectively as Youth Activities and their purpose is to support young people's well-being, development of personal and social education and preparation for adulthood.
  - Youth Activities are part of Shropshire's Early Help Offer for young people.
  - The provision of youth activities will contribute to the following outcome areas in the Shropshire's Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014:
    1. Ensuring all Children & Young People are safe and well looked after in a supportive environment
    2. Narrowing the achievement gap in education & work
    3. Ensuring emotional wellbeing of Children & Young People by focusing on prevention and early intervention
    4. Keeping more Children & Young People healthy and reducing health inequalities
- 3.3 Following a competitive procurement process the Shropshire Youth Association in partnership with Energize, the County Sports Partnership, was appointed as the Infrastructure Support Provider from 13 August 2015. This partnership brings together the skill, experience and resource of embedding both youth and sports delivery at a local level. The contract runs to 31 March 2017 with an

option to extend it. The infrastructure support partner provides capacity building support to existing and new youth activity providers by, for example, helping them to get started; providing information, advice and guidance to ensure appropriate safeguarding awareness and procedures are in place, providing training for leaders and young people, and advice with recruiting volunteers, etc. Affiliated youth groups can also benefit from insurance, equipment loans, mini-bus hire, and the development of policies.

- 3.4 Within the new local commissioning model for youth activities Local Joint Committees, together with young people and supported by the Community Enablement Team, are responsible for making commissioning recommendations. LJC's have based their recommendations on a consideration of a local needs assessment, an understanding of existing youth provision, conversations (and formal consultation in areas of existing Council delivery) with young people and stakeholders, and their local knowledge. Community Enablement Team officers continue to support LJC's with this work and are responsible for procuring youth activity within the Councils' constitution and regulations.
- 3.5 Shropshire Council owns youth centres across the County including Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Shrewsbury (x3) and Whitchurch.

#### **4.0 Review of Infrastructure Support**

- 4.1 The first phase of the contract, involving recruitment, induction and reconnaissance, has been successfully completed. Approximately 100 clubs are affiliated to SYA. The provider has developed the use of a customer relationship management tool to help with record keeping and reviewing support. Alongside this SYA have launched a new web site, <http://www.sya.org.uk/>, which will be available for clubs to use to manage their activities, keep secure records of young people, receive support from SYA and Energize, etc.
- 4.2 Monitoring of the first 4 months of this contract demonstrates that infrastructure support is most in demand for youth groups that are community based and are run by and for local people. The support is helping local provision to develop operating practices that are safe and compliant with safeguarding requirements. This work will develop the understanding of organisational responsibilities within this sector as required by section 11 of the Children Act and clearly outlined in Working Together 2015.

We will continue to work closely with SYA and Energize to ensure that we are supporting and promoting safeguarding children welfare requirements.

- 4.3 The infrastructure contract is also providing clubs with support to access development and sustainability funding. As clubs develop their provision SYA and Energize are able to work alongside groups adding value through support for the introduction of new activities and the provision of training to staff.

The input of Energize to provide access for local youth groups to sports related funding and activities will increase physical activity in communities. This will contribute to the communication and promotion of physical activity and is a priority of the Health and Well Being Board.

The infrastructure contract includes the provision of lending equipment to local youth groups. Whilst this has longer term sustainability implications it can help in engagement and confidence building of young people and local youth groups, increasing the provision of a variety of positive activities and the development of interest and therefore the sustainability of groups.

- 4.4 The positive affect of the infrastructure support contract is illustrated by some case studies:-

*“Cardington Kidz Club received Sportivate funding to employ 2 coaches for 8 weeks, who were mentoring the youth workers to continue this activity after the funding run out. However, the club has been so impressed they have continued to fund the coaches. This has resulted in young people getting more active and involved in new sports which has had a positive long term impact on their health.”*

*“We have developed a series of interclub activities based around geographical areas (e.g. Llanymynech, West Felton, Knockin & Hope House) using TNS facilities, this helps promote healthy lifestyles, breaks down parochial boundaries and supports the development of club programmes, particularly for the smaller clubs who can’t afford to hire big facilities on their own.”*

## **5.0 Review of Local Commissioning of Youth Activities**

- 5.1 **Appendix 1** sets out all the grant and contract awards within 18 LJC areas that have received funding. There have been 43 separate awards to date to over 30 different providers. Further grants are still being provided. Awards range from small grants of less than £200, for example, for the purchase of equipment by community groups to large contracts of over £15,000 in value to established youth activity providers.

- 5.2 In Shrewsbury the responsibility for the delivery / commissioning of youth activities has been transferred within a formal delegation agreement from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council. There are a number of potential advantages to this approach including:
- Services that are more responsive to local need and offer the potential for greater engagement from the local community
  - Enhanced role for Shrewsbury Town Council within the town
  - Stronger customer satisfaction with services
  - Development of synergies between the public assets held by the Town Council – recreational grounds, parks, play, etc. - and the users of those facilities many of which are likely to access youth services
  - Potential to augment funding from Shropshire Council and to improve the reach of service provision and quality

Potential risks are being mitigated by including appropriate provisions within the contract arrangements, by ensuring regular dialogue with the town council and by providing them with on-going support.

- 5.3 In a positive move the Town Council has appointed a Community Development Officer to manage and develop youth service provision from the outset. The position will be part funded from Shrewsbury Town Council resources and Shropshire Council payments. Alongside this the Town Council are reintroducing youth activity sessions for juniors and are developing targeted outreach work for older young people.

- 5.4 Owing to the later than anticipated start it is not possible to provide a full account of the achievement of the various grants and contracts. Reporting protocols have been developed to reflect the wide variety of delivery including:
- Checks of organisational policies, insurance and compliance with safeguarding and health and safety requirements
  - End of project reports for small value activity including the purchase of equipment and additional youth activities; otherwise regular end of term reports in areas of new youth activity
  - Qualitative assessment of activity session/s by Community Enablement Team Officers (and Local members where appropriate) for grants in support of new youth activities
  - The review of sessions by young people in areas subject to contract and significant new activity

As well as recording numbers of activities and attendees we will be reporting on the achievement of Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014 outcomes, on how young people have been involved in the design and management of sessions, and will be providing case studies.

The average weekly attendance at eight youth clubs managed by SYA in Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Minsterley, Westbury and Whitchurch has been about 19 ranging from 7 in the Market Drayton seniors to 35 in the corresponding juniors. Clearly there have been some challenges in re-starting or starting from afresh clubs but numbers are now building up as the word get around. Participants are being actively engaged in developing their sessions and a range of activities have been provided including laser tag, dodgeball, cooking and crafts, Xbox dance, Christmas party activities, football, etc. Crime awareness, alcohol awareness and Diabetes challenge sessions have also been run.

- 5.5 Positive outcomes that have been reported include:
- Improved behaviour following the creation of “ground rules”
  - New friendships and confidence
  - Taking ownership of activities, helping to set them up and to evaluate them
  - Team work, social skills, group discussions
  - Awareness of the need to eat healthy and to exercise

The positive affect of youth work is illustrated by some case studies:-

*“Our alcohol awareness session enabled one young man to discuss how drinking too much alcohol affected him in the past and how his family had had to look after him.*

*After our session he discussed he was unaware how certain drinks could affect the body including energy drinks.*

*The group were amazed at the sugar content in energy and alcoholic drinks. This activity helped all members especially the young man to increase their knowledge helping them make informed choices, the young man discussed he would be more aware now as he wouldn’t want his family to have to look after him like that again hence the benefit of this activity.”*

*“One young lady has recently started suffering from seizures in the session. Her friends and other young people in the session have been really supportive, understanding and caring. They each took turns to make sure she was okay and ensured someone was with her all at all times. This showed a range of*

*skills from the young people such as, communication, team work, and social responsibility.”*

- 5.6 Some of the “learning” from the local commissioning of youth activities is set out within **Appendix 2**. It is possible to pick out a few general points from this:
- LJsCs have adopted a range of different approaches to the future provision of youth activities depending on local circumstances and the different inputs of local members, stakeholders and young people.
  - In areas with existing Shropshire Council provision LJsCs have focussed their efforts on trying to find ways of sustaining existing youth activities.
  - Alongside support for the provision of regular term time youth activities a number of LJsCs have wished to support time limited and focussed activities linked to areas of particular need and sometimes anti-social behaviour. This provides a useful reference back to Bronze Level Tasking and local police intelligence.
  - In some areas additional funding is being found to allow enhanced youth activities to take place, for example via local town / parish councils and external funding sources.
  - The local commissioning of youth activities has generally worked well and provided genuine engagement at a community level; on the other hand it is a complex process that has required significant resourcing.
- 5.7 The delegation of youth service commissioning and delivery from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council is felt to be a positive move as part of the overall approach to local commissioning. Going forward this may be an approach that other local councils may wish to consider not just for the commissioning of youth activities but for other service areas.

## **6.0 Review of Community Asset Transfers**

- 6.1 Following on from the report provided on the 25 June 2015, of the 6 council owned youth centres – Whitchurch, Market Drayton, The Grange, Sundorne, Monkmoor and Bridgnorth - advertised as being available on the Community Asset Transfer Register, at least one bid had been received for each property. At Bridgnorth Youth Centre an options appraisal is currently being undertaken in relation to a number of different alternatives for its future use.

The parties were invited to proceed to Formal Expressions of Interest and we have now identified a preferred organisation for each. The Council has engaged with the organisations to produce Business Plans where appropriate, and asked them to demonstrate that their proposals for the building are viable and sustainable in the future.

The assessment process will continue through the early part of 2016 with the intention, where possible, of confirming new management arrangements in the near future. We are working with the preferred organisations to determine whether they are prepared to support ongoing youth activity where required.

It should be noted that all of these applications are subject to receipt of further information and Council processes and approvals and that no decisions have yet been taken.

The two youth centres which are not following the process set out above are

Ludlow Youth Centre and the Centre in Oswestry, both of which are being retained corporately as operational buildings but continue to support youth use.

## 7.0 Conclusions and Summary of Next Steps

- 7.1 The existing funding in support of youth activities is committed until the end of March 2017. In the context of both the learning to date and further anticipated budget constraints in the future an early indication needs to be given to the future funding commitment and direction. Early thoughts are that there is a discussion needed about the balance between support for a “universal” youth offer versus a targeted “youth work” offer, where the priorities lie, how they are resourced and the appropriate delivery mechanisms.
- 7.2 Support for the “universal” youth offer is already provided by the Shropshire Youth Association under contract to Shropshire Council, and has been for more than 25 years. A focussed targeted youth worker offer should perhaps be viewed as sitting within a broader Early Help offer alongside other support such as the Targeted Youth Service, Short Breaks, etc.

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

Changes to Youth Services, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 30 April 2014  
 Future Commissioning and provision of youth activities, Portfolio Holder Decision, 2 July 2014

Update – Future Commissioning and Provision of youth activities, Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 22 October 2014

Local Joint Committees – Update on youth commission and boundaries, Cabinet, 10 December 2014

Youth Commissioning Update, Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 24 June 2015

Delegation of the responsibility for the commissioning and delivery of youth services within Shrewsbury to Shrewsbury Town Council and recommendations for Broseley Youth Club, Cabinet, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2015

### **Cabinet Member:**

Cllr David Minnery – Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

### **Local Members:**

All local members

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – List of youth activity providers

Appendix 2 – Learning from the local commissioning of youth activities