

Report from the Task & Finish Group on the future commissioning of youth activities

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1. Summary

At its meeting of 19th October 2016 Cabinet recommended that proposals for the future commissioning of youth activities – universal support, geographically targeted support and thematically targeted support - should be reviewed by the Young People's Scrutiny Committee, and that recommendations should be brought back to Cabinet.

At its meeting on the 14th December 2016 the Scrutiny Committee confirmed Terms of Reference for a time limited Task & Finish Group.

This report summarises work undertaken by the Task & Finish Group and recommendations confirmed at its final meeting on the 26th April 2017.

The Task & Finish Group heard a variety of evidence that confirmed the positive impact of youth work, universal and targeted, on young people's lives; they wished to make a case for the retention of funding that responds to local young people's needs, existing and potential, at existing levels to the end of March 2018 and beyond.

With an eye on the long term, the Task & Finish Group recommended that work is undertaken with a broad range of interested partners over the next 18 months to develop an integrated approach to the provision of universal and targeted youth activities within the context of a wider review of Early Help provision. The provision of youth activities cuts across a range of programmes (including the Strengthening Families programme) that work with the whole family and actively support young people away from crime, anti-social behaviour, and risky behaviours, and ensure that young people feel listened to, valued and thrive in the communities where they live.

The Task & Finish group also recommended that in the medium term detailed funding proposals that meet local need should be developed for further consideration. We report on the outcomes of this work within this report.

Finally, the Task & Finish Group recognised that new arrangements need to be developed to enable young people to participate in and influence key decisions that potentially impact on young people. We report on progress with this work within this report.

2. Recommendations

- A. To confirm the recommendations made by the Task & Finish Group at its meeting of the 26th April 2017 as detailed in 3.4 below.
- B. To comment on and confirm detailed proposals for funding allocations in support of youth activity provision that respond to local need from 2018/19 onwards as detailed in Appendix 2.
- C. To note work underway on the development of opportunities and approaches for the input and review by young people in strategic and local commissioning decisions.

REPORT

1.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

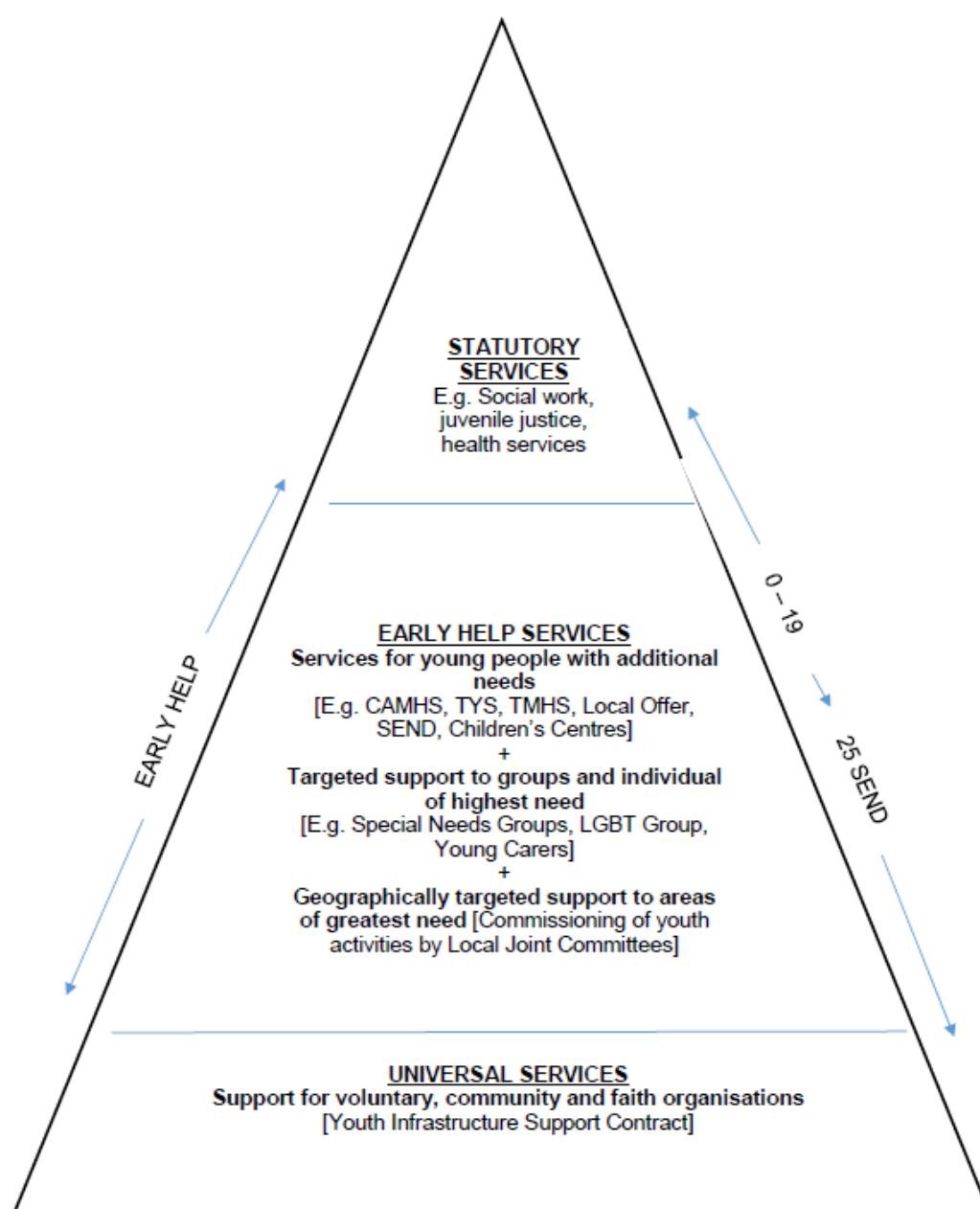
- 1.1 Local authorities have a duty to secure, so far as reasonably practical, equality of access for all young people aged 13 to 19 (24 for those with learning difficulties). The “local offer” should be the best possible to meet local needs and to improve young people’s well-being and personal and social development within available resources. Local authorities 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.
Visit: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/15549/1/statutory%20guidance%20on%20la%20youth%20provision%20duty.pdf>

Our assessment is that within the context of diminished resources and a large rural county the Council is meeting its statutory requirements with respect to provision.

- 1.2 However, the Council is currently less effective at taking the views of young people into account in making and reviewing decisions about provision, particularly at a county wide, strategic level. Previously Members of The Youth Parliament and Speak Out Group were among a number of initiatives which helped young people to share their thoughts, opinions and ideas. These are no longer in place in Shropshire.
- 1.3 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) for local targeted youth commissioning is kept under regular review. Any significant new proposals will be subject to consultation as appropriate and a review of the ESIIA.
- 1.4 Child safeguarding and welfare matters are paramount in our approach and appropriate safeguards will continue to be included in all arrangements.
Visit: <http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk/scb/>
- 1.5 Supporting early help and early prevention is a key driver for the Council¹. Support for youth activities as a “universal offer” alongside more targeted

¹ Shropshire Early Help Strategy, helping children have a safe, happy and healthy family life, June, Shropshire Council, 2014

support for young people with particular needs underpins the Council's approach to commissioning support for young people. We have shown this diagrammatically below².



- 1.6 In developing future commissioning plans it is noteworthy that there is a relatively poorly developed “provider market” in Shropshire. While there is a large amount of varied local activity for young people there are very few established organisations who employ qualified skilled youth workers.

² A note on abbreviations: CAMHS = Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service; TYS = Targeted Youth Support; TMHS = Targeted Mental Health Support Team; SEND = Special Education Needs & Disability; LGBT = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

2.0 Financial implications

- 2.1 The table below shows the available Council budget from April 2017 across the three complementary areas of youth activity - infrastructure support, geographically targeted provision, and Special Needs Groups. We have also provided an indication of the number of clubs / activities supported for each areas of work in order to give a simplistic idea of “impact”.

	Budget from April 2017	Support
Infrastructure support	£97,500 (25.7%)	x 139 clubs supported
Geographically targeted provision	£234,950 (62%)	x 70 providers; circa 100 projects
Special Needs Groups	£46,500 (12.3%)	x 4 groups
	£378,950	Circa 240+ activities

- 2.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed by full Council on 25th February 2016 confirmed the requirement to make 50% saving to the budget for targeted youth activity provision from 2017/18 onwards, leaving an available budget of £117,475 per annum.
- 2.3 Subsequent to this, Cabinet recommended at its meeting on the 19th October 2016 that, pending the outcomes of the work of the Task and Finish Group, funding should be maintained at its current level, i.e. £234,950, until the end of December 2017. This level of funding has been further confirmed until the end of March 2018.

3.0 The Task & Finish Group

- 3.1 At its meeting of the 19th October 2016 Cabinet confirmed the following recommendations:
- That the proposals for the future commissioning of youth activities within the context of reduced funding be referred for consideration and investigation by the Young People's Scrutiny Committee;
 - That the Young People's Scrutiny Committee considers setting up a Task and Finish Group to consider this matter and that the Task and Finish Group liaise with partners and partner organisations to consider possible options; and
 - That, in the meantime, funding for youth activities remain at its current level.
- 3.2 Terms of Reference were confirmed at the Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 14th December 2016, and included a number of headline statements:

Topic areas:

- Opportunities to sustain or grow commissioned support for the local delivery of youth activities by working with partners and partner organisations.
- Infrastructure support currently provided by SYA & Energize
- Support for Special Needs Groups
- Different mechanisms for the delivery of youth activities

Ambitions:

- To look and review, “in the round”, at how “universal” youth activities are provided and supported in Shropshire.
- To develop a broad “consortium” based approach that supports the provision of youth activities within areas and communities of greatest need, now and in the future.

Shared outcomes that respond to young people’s needs:

- A broad partnership based approach to recognising and sustaining the provision of “universal” youth activities
- Understanding of local need and how this should be best met, including funding proposals
- The role of the Council, now and in the future, in providing support to young people
- Mechanisms for the monitoring and review of support being provided to young people across Shropshire that shows the value of youth activity provision
- Cost effective sustainable provision that meets the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan

- 3.3 The Group met three times, 9th February, 13th March and 26th April 2017. The Group heard from a range of different activity providers and youth partnerships and considered a range of evidence and information including:
- The impact on need resulting from the local commissioning of youth activities (to areas of geographical need)
 - A review of different delivery options
 - The interest of potential “strategic partners” in supporting the ongoing provision of youth activities
- 3.4 The full report considered by the Task & Finish Group at its final meeting on the 26th April 2017 is included as **Appendix 1**. The following recommendations were confirmed at this meeting:
- A. To work with a broad range of interested partners over the next 18 months to develop an integrated approach to the provision of universal and targeted youth activities within the context of a wider review of early help provision. The provision of youth activities cuts across a range of programmes (including the Strengthening Families programme) that work with the whole family and actively support young people away from crime, anti-social behaviour, and risky behaviours, and ensure that young people feel listened to, valued and thrive in the communities where they live.
- B. To note the positive impact of existing youth activity provision – universal and targeted - and to recommend that the Council, pending further review in the context of wider early help provision, continues to provide on-going support for:
1. Universal provision for voluntary, uniformed and faith groups via a contract with an infrastructure support provider partner
 2. Geographically targeted support for the provision of youth activities that meet identifiable local need, existing and potential
 3. Thematically targeted support for the provision of youth activities that meet identifiable need

- C. To support the development of a broad partnership based approach to meeting the needs of young people by sharing information and agreeing local priorities.
- D. To recommend that the existing level of funding in support of geographically targeted provision, £234,950, will be maintained until the end of March 2018 and that monies will be spent in accordance with existing guidance.
- E. To review existing guidance for geographically targeted spend and to develop detailed proposals for funding allocations for 2018/19 that respond to local need, and to report these back to Scrutiny later in 2017.
- F. To develop opportunities and approaches for the input and review by young people in strategic and local commissioning decisions, and to report these back to Scrutiny later in 2017.
- G. To confirm the role of Local Joint Committees in advising on how geographically targeted need is best met; in the event of any “disagreement” with Council policy the final decision on the allocation of funding and the procurement of providers will be undertaken by officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People.

4.0 Geographically targeted support

- 4.1 Subsequent to the Task & Finish Group, a review of the allocation of funding in support of targeted youth provision was undertaken, and this is reported in full in **Appendix 2**.

The review recommends a revised and simplified funding formula based on two measures, calculated for individual LJC areas:

- Young people aged 10 to 19 years old in receipt of Free School Meals
- The relative number of 10 to 19 year olds in a LJC area

Free School Meals is an established proxy measure for deprivation and is correlated with a range of needs; it is for, example, used by the Department for Education to calculate Pupil Premium levels for schools. The number of 10 to 19 year older children allows for population size differences in individual LJC areas.

We no longer make specific reference to rurality within the proposed measures. Previously rurality funding did not necessarily correlate with need and there is no strong evidence that funding has been spent on overcoming issues of rural isolation. We will continue to work with our Infrastructure Support Provider to support clubs across Shropshire to provide activities within their local communities.

- 4.2 In allocating funding and establishing the value of the total funding pot we have overlaid the need scores with local understandings based in particular on our assessment of:
- Where support should be provided – we propose to provide funding to areas with a need score greater than 3.8%; this is both the median figure within a range from 2.4% to 15.1%, and represents a logical cut off based on need and past Council support.

- How many youth clubs / activities the Council should be supporting within each area - this is based on our experience over the past two years on the specific areas where Council support to create and sustain local activity is most needed.
- The cost for providing fully staffed youth clubs within the main market towns and for supporting community clubs within the smaller towns.

This is summarised below within a proposed hierarchy of delivery.

LJC Area (in descending order of needs score)	Needs Funding 2014		Needs Funding Revised		
	Needs funding	No of youth clubs supported	Needs funding	Proposed no of youth clubs to be supported*	Proposed funding £
Tier 1 – Partner delivery commissioned by Shropshire Council					
Shrewsbury	√	7	√	5	45,000
Market Drayton	√	2	√	2	18,000
Oswestry	√	4	√	2	18,000
Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley and Claverley	√	2	√	2	18,000
Whitchurch	√	2	√	2	18,000
Ludlow and Clee area	√	2	√	2	18,000
Tier 2 - Community partnership youth provision supported by Shropshire Council					
Wem and Shawbury	√	2	√	1	4,000
Craven Arms and Rural			√	1	4,000
Bishop's Castle, Chirbury, Worthen and Clun			√	1	4,000
Ellesmere			√	1	4,000
Gobowen, Selattyn, St Martin's, and Weston Rhyn	√	3	√	2	8,000
Longden, Ford, Rea Valley and Loton	√	2	√	1	4,000
Tier 3 – Community provision supported by Infrastructure Support provider					
Shifnal and Sheriffhales					
Five Perry Parishes					
Broseley and Rural					
Tern and Severn Valley					
St Oswald					
Albrighton					
Strettondale and Burnell					
Highley and Brown Clee					
Cleobury and Rural					
Much Wenlock and Shipton					
Bayston Hill					
Approximate no of areas receiving needs funding / Total no of clubs /	9 areas	26 clubs	12 areas	24 clubs	167,000

Total funding					
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It is noteworthy that the net effect of this is a redistribution of needs funding away from some of the bigger towns across a greater number of areas.

- 4.3 In setting out this proposed hierarchy of support we make a number of additional observations:
- The Council remains committed to supporting the development of sustainable youth activity provision free from direct Council financial support. This both reflects the financial context and, equally importantly, provides the best chance for local activities to be embedded within the community, using the resources of that community and reflecting its needs.
 - Local Joint Committees will continue to advise on the details of commissioned provision based on their local knowledge of need. Although we have suggested funding allocations based on the provision of support for a defined number of youth clubs in each area LJC's may wish to spend the money differently. What is important is that the money responds to local need.
 - The Council will continue to fund its Infrastructure Support Provider to provide support to clubs across Shropshire, notably in the Tier 2 and Tier 3 groupings. We recognise this as being crucial to the long term sustainability of an active and dynamic voluntary sector
- 4.4 In proposing this approach there are a number of questions that the Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider:
- *Are Free School Meals and the number of 10 – 19 year olds the right measures?*
 - *Where should the cut off for needs funding be; does 3.8% feel right?*
 - *Is the proposed hierarchy for Council support for local provision helpful?*
 - *Does the suggested number of clubs to be supported in different LJC areas feel about right?*
 - *How do we build long-term sustainability in to this approach; how do we reduce Council dependency and shift clubs in to tier 3 provision?*

5.0 Comments on funding

- 5.1 We report on the financial background in section 2. The proposals for needs funding made within this report amount to £167,000 from 2018/19 onwards. The available budget for 2017/18 is £234,950. Therefore, there is a balance on the overall budget of £67,950. Going forward, and in response to this funding difference, there are a number of options for consideration:
- a. Use some of the “underspend” to support the proactive participation of young people in operational and strategic implementation. This is explored further in the following section.
 - b. Offer the “underspend” as a year on year base budget saving. Note that this is still less than the originally planned budget reduction of £117,475.
 - c. Reallocate the funding “underspend” to geographically targeted support guided by the revised needs assessment described above and in Appendix 2.

These options are not mutually exclusive and allow a number of permutations.

5.2 *Scrutiny is asked to consider and comment on the options described above.*

6.0 Participation of young people

6.1 Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 places a specific requirement on local authorities to ascertain from young people in its area their views on existing provision of positive activities and facilities, the need for any additional provision and their access to this provision. The local authority must then secure that the views of the young people in its area are taken into account.

The local authority's understanding of young people's views should be comprehensive and detailed enough to understand the barriers they face to engaging in provision.

6.2 The Council needs to consider how best to meet these requirements in a manner that is appropriate, honest and cost effective. Whatever approach is adopted it needs to be based on an on-going dialogue with young people, rather than a one-off exercise. Ideally, the input of young people should extend to the design, delivery and evaluation of local provision.

6.3 As part of the Council's Big Conversation over 450 young people in primary and secondary schools, colleges and youth clubs across Shropshire were consulted in 2016. Using a variety of tools some key themes emerged:

- 100% of young people use a computer - They use a range of apps to communicate with Snapchat and Instagram being the most popular. Facebook is not used widely and Twitter was not mentioned at all.
- Young people are very active in their local area, taking part in 2 or 3 different clubs on average (from gardening to martial arts) - Local facilities are important to them
- Shops and local businesses are missed when they close down.
- Public transport is a lifeline to older young people - Those living in more rural areas have to rely on lifts from family/friends as public transport is less frequent
- Affording to get on the housing ladder is a concern for the older age groups.
- Have respect for older people and feel that care for the elderly is important - Older young people talked about how older people viewed them negatively.
- Thoughts on future career paths are clearer amongst younger children but get hazier as they get older.
- Young people are heavily influenced by their family and their peers on many issues from community to careers - Positive influencers include grandparents, teachers, scout leaders and youth club leaders. Family and friends are the first port of call when young people need help, although a large number say they manage themselves (not asking anyone for help.)
- The green spaces of Shropshire are valued although as they get older, young people say that this is restrictive both socially and culturally.
- Good health (physical and mental) is a familiar issue to young people and all recognise its importance and how to achieve it.

- 6.4 The Council is working with a number of Shropshire partners who have expertise and / or a shared interest in engaging with young people in the design of a long-term framework for the involvement of young people. Our first thoughts are that:
- We need a clear understanding of why we want to involve young people and a clear view of what we are hoping to achieve. We think that there are clear benefits to young people, to the Council and other organisations and to communities.
 - There are two types of involvement, operational and strategic. The involvement of young people in the day to day planning of activities works reasonably well; on the other hand the strategic role of young people in shaping the delivery of Council services is less well developed.
 - There is an opportunity to develop a collaborative approach with a range of partners and to piggyback on the back of existing networks and approaches, for example local youth forums, Young Carers, Health Champions, Young Leaders, Short Breaks, etc.
 - No one approach to involving young people is right, flexibility is important in achieving and maintaining active involvement. Virtual on-line groups are clearly important but so are actual physical conversations.
 - Strong relationships with project staff and commissioners are crucial to motivating, empowering and supporting the active involvement of young people.
- 6.5 Following further work we will report back to Scrutiny later in the year with recommendations. It is likely that a commitment to supporting the engagement of young people will need to be resourced – for example by providing facilities, transport, training and practical support.
- 6.6 *Scrutiny is asked to comment on the points raised.*

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 Youth work, universal and targeted, has a positive impact on young people's lives. Pending a further review of youth work in the context of wider early help provision, this report confirms on-going support for:
- a. Universal provision for voluntary, uniformed and faith groups via a contract with an infrastructure support provider partner
 - b. Geographically targeted support for the provision of youth activities that meet identifiable local need, existing and potential
 - c. Thematically targeted support for the provision of youth activities that meet identifiable need
- 7.2 The Council's Infrastructure Support Provider partner will continue to provide proactive support for universal provision within contractual arrangements. Its focus will be on supporting clubs that have no alternative support and vulnerable to potential closure. The Infrastructure Support Provider will continue to work with Community Enablement Team officer and local partners to develop new clubs in response to local need.
- 7.3 We have reviewed how geographically targeted support is provided and proposed a simplified needs assessment based on two indicators – Free School Meals and population density. This would result in a slight redistribution of funding away from the main market towns to a total of 12 LJC areas rather

than to the previous 9 areas.

- 7.4 We have suggested different levels of Council support within a hierarchy of delivery. We acknowledge that the aim should be to support clubs to become sustainable within their local communities outside the need for direct Council support
- 7.5 Further work will be undertaken to review arrangements for enabling young people to participate in and influence local and strategic decisions that potentially affect their lives.

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

Future vision for youth support services in Shropshire, Cabinet, 8 December 2010

Shropshire Children's Trust Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014

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, 29th July 2015

Support for Youth Activities update, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 4 November 2015

Support for Youth Activities update, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 3 February 2016

Proposals for the future commissioning of youth activities within the context of reduced funding, Cabinet, 19 October 2016

Proposals for the creation of a Task & Finish Group to consider the local commissioning of youth activities, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 14 December 2016

Recommendations for the future commissioning of youth activities, Young People Task & Finish Group, 26 April 2017

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Nick Bardsley – Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

Local Members:

All Members

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Report to the Young People's Task & Finish Group, 26 April 2017

Appendix 2 – Review of funding in support of the provision of youth activities