



Young People's Scrutiny
Committee

24 June 2015

10.00am

Item

8

Public

Youth Commissioning Update

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1. Summary

This report summarises progress with the local commissioning of youth activities since the last update provided to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 22nd October 2014.

Following the confirmation of a funding allocation to some Local Joint Committees (LJCs) based on local need, LJCs have been examining evidence of need, consulting with young people and stakeholders and have confirmed their local commissioning recommendations.

Although a diversity of approaches to local youth activity provision is being recommended by LJCs, including the full transfer of responsibilities from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council in Shrewsbury, in areas of existing Shropshire Council delivery there is a strong desire to continue to provide similar youth activities.

The procurement of new providers to deliver youth activities will start soon and following the completion of a formal six week consultation currently underway in areas where there is existing Shropshire Council provision.

There has been a good response to opportunities advertised through the Community Asset Transfer process for organisations to take on the management, and possibly ownership, of existing Shropshire Council owned youth club buildings.

Finally the appointment of the Shropshire Youth Association in partnership with Energize, the County Sports Partnership, as the Infrastructure Support Provider has been confirmed.

While it is too soon to draw together all the learning from this new way of working some early conclusions are provided.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Committee members provide feedback and comment in respect of the council's approach to youth commissioning, including the learning to date from the approach of local commissioning, as a new way of working.
- 2.2 That the Scrutiny Committee receives a further update in respect of youth commissioning and the impact it has had to date, in spring 2016.

REPORT

1. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 1.1 A risk management log is being maintained for local youth commissioning. Looking forward the main risk to ongoing youth provision (from September) is an absence of potential providers able and willing to bid for opportunities. To mitigate this risk we have been supporting providers to be ready to bid, e.g. at providers events. A further risk is that within the tight timescale is that those providers who are awarded grants / contracts are unable to mobilise to begin provision within September particularly in circumstances where they may need to recruit staff.
- 1.2 We have taken advice throughout the local commissioning process on child safeguarding and welfare matters and will be including the appropriate safeguards within the procurement, monitoring and review paperwork.
- 1.3 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) has been developed in support of local youth commissioning alongside the formal public consultation on future commissioning proposals. The ESIIA will be reviewed and updated as circumstances alter.
- 1.4 A project group chaired by the Director of Commissioning meets regularly to review progress and confirm actions.
- 1.5 Looking ahead and within the context of the challenging budget situation, local commissioning 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. Supporting early help and early prevention is a key drive for this approach. It is anticipated that following a review of local youth commissioning further opportunities to apply this approach will be adopted.

2. Financial implications

- 2.1 Following the application of the medium term financial savings target, an annual controllable budget of £470,700 has been set for 2015/16. This budget was allocated as follows:
- £130,000 Infrastructure support costs
 - £26,940 MYP associated costs
 - £78,810 Buildings and associated staff costs (committed to March 2016)
 - £ 234,950 Available to support local commissioning through LJC's
- 2.2 Given the later than originally planned start to new provision (September 2015 rather than April 2015) and in order to cover interim Positive Activities staffing and direct delivery costs, LJC pro-rata allocations have been made for 2015/16. The infrastructure support budget has also been reduced for 2015/16 in order to reflect the revised start date of the contract.

3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 Council agreed the medium term financial strategy which established the budgets for the way of working described within this report in February 2014. 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 service on 2nd July 2014. Approval was subsequently given by Cabinet on 10th December 2014 to confirm the funding allocation based on an analysis of need for individual LJC areas.
- 3.2 Updates were provided to the Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 30th April 2014 and 22nd October 2014.
- 3.3 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

4.0 Appointment of an Infrastructure Support Provider

- 4.1 Following a competitive procurement process the Shropshire Youth Association in partnership with Energize, the County Sports Partnership, has been appointed as the Infrastructure Support Provider. Their contract is planned to start on 13 August 2015 and, subject to built-in review milestones, run to 31 March 2017.
- 4.2 The infrastructure support partner will provide capacity building support to existing and new youth activity providers by, for example, helping them to get started, providing training for leaders and young people, advice with recruiting volunteers, etc. Affiliated youth groups can also benefit from insurance, equipment loans, mini-bus hire, and the development of policies.
- 4.3 The infrastructure support partner is also providing some support to LJsCs and the Community Enablement Team with the local commissioning of youth activities and in particular with engagement with young people and their safeguarding and welfare.

5.0 Local Joint Committees role as the commissioner of youth activities

- 5.1 Shropshire Council is committed to being a commissioning organisation and to supporting an approach that puts local communities at its heart. The fundamental premise of locality commissioning is that when community organisations work collaboratively with public sector organisations they can achieve better outcomes for their communities. Organisations have resources – buildings, finance, people, and expertise – and by aligning these together it should be possible to use them more effectively to make a positive difference to people's lives within their communities.

- 5.2 Within the new 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 for youth activities in their area.
- 5.3 Specific needs funding has been allocated to 8 LJC's based on a funding formula derived from eight measures chosen to best reflect the outcomes sought by the Children's Trust. The eight measures used in the funding formula are:
- The no of 10-19 year olds
 - The no of 10-19 year olds with a learning disability
 - The no of 10-10 year olds living in a deprived area
 - The no of 10-17 year olds offenders
 - The no of 10-19 year olds with poor school attendance
 - The no of referrals to social care for 10-17 year olds
 - Occurrence of anti-social behaviour
 - Percentage of obesity of 10-11 year olds
- 5.4 One measure, the number of 10-19 year olds per square mile, was used to distinguish rural areas from market towns. This was used to determine a specific rurality contribution, allocated separately from the main element of the funding determined by the formula described above. Rurality funding has been allocated to 11 LJC's.
- 5.5 In total 18 LJC's (out of 23) received a delegated budget based on local young people's needs supported by the evidence described above.
- 5.6 Subsequently LJC's have made recommendations on appropriate youth activity outcomes within their areas based on a local needs assessment, an understanding of existing youth provision, conversations with young people and stakeholders, and their local knowledge. Community Enablement Team officers continue to support LJC's with this work and will be responsible for procuring youth activity within the Councils' constitution and regulations.

6.0 Progress with the local commissioning of youth activities

6.1 LJC commissioning recommendations

LJC's 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. A brief summary is provided below:

Areas with existing Shropshire Council delivery	
Broseley	No future provision to be supported by Shropshire Council resulting in potential stopping of youth activities
Bridgnorth	On-going support for provision of youth activities

	Targeted outreach work
Bishops Castle	On-going support for provision of youth activities Consider provision of a small grants scheme
Craven Arms	On-going support for provision of youth activities, subject to some review / rationalisation Targeted outreach work Provide a small grants scheme
Ludlow	On-going support for provision of youth activities, subject to some rationalisation
Market Drayton	On-going provision of youth activities Targeted outreach work Provide a small grants scheme
Oswestry	Encourage and support new activity from The Centre Support for local sports clubs to encourage physical activity Provide a small grants scheme
Shrewsbury	Transfer of responsibilities for the delivery / commissioning of youth activities from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council via a "formal delegation of responsibilities". Within this provide: On-going support for provision of youth activities Specialist time limited targeted sessions Support for the establishment of a youth providers network
Whitchurch	Ongoing support for provision of youth activities Development of a "youth café"
Areas without existing delivery	
Cleobury Mortimer	Youth partnership advised on the allocation of money to local providers
Gobowen	Support for provision of new youth activities in Weston Rhyn. Targeted outreach work
Ellesmere	Support for provision of new youth activities in Ellesmere
Highley	Provide a small grants scheme
Loton, Longden, Ford & Rea Valley	Support for provision of new youth activities in Minsterley & Westbury Support for volunteer led clubs at Hanwood, Ford & Nesscliffe
Much Wenlock	Provide a small grants scheme
St Oswald	Provide a small grants scheme
Strettondale	Provide a small grants scheme
Tern & Severn Valley	Provide a small grants scheme
Wem & Shawbury	Support for provision of new youth activities in Wem & Shawbury Targeted outreach work Support for volunteer led youth activities at

It should be noted that with respect to areas with existing Shropshire Council activity consultation on the above proposal is still underway – see below.

It is possible to pick out a few general points from the above:

- 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 wish 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 cases “new” approaches to future provision have been developed. Noteworthy in this respect are proposals to transfer the responsibility for the delivery / commissioning of youth activities from Shropshire Council to Shrewsbury Town Council via a “formal delegation of responsibilities”. Going forward this may be an approach that other local councils may wish to consider
- A positive spin off from the work done to date is the potential establishment of new local youth forums / networks, for example in Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury
- 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

6.2 Community Asset Transfers

Shropshire Council owns youth centres across the County including Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Shrewsbury (x3) and Whitchurch (all supporting current Council provision). Following the listing of all of these buildings, excepting the lottery funded centre at Oswestry, as potential Community Asset Transfers, Expressions of Interest have been received from social enterprises / town councils in all cases (in some cases more than one). Interested parties have been invited to move to a Formal Expression of Interest stage and subject to their proposals will then be asked to prepare full business plans.

There are a variety of different interests and it is too soon to confirm whether in all cases these will align with ongoing youth club provision or indeed that the current buildings necessarily provide the best fit with future provision.

In the short term the council has made a commitment to continue to make available and to cover the running costs of all existing youth club buildings until March 2015.

6.3 Formal public consultation on youth activity

The formal public consultation on youth activity provision is now four weeks into the six week period. The consultation is predominantly web-

based, and is limited to areas that currently have Shropshire Council direct youth provision.

At the 9th June, 78 responses have been received of which 30% specifically relate to the closure proposals for Broseley. Broseley also has the most comments received to date, mainly expressing concern over the proposed withdrawal of funding for the area.

Overall 60% of respondents do not agree with the individual commissioning intentions outlined within the consultation. There are some interesting suggestions as to alternative ideas for youth provision including greater partnerships with local community groups, links to schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh and the use of alternative venues to reduce running costs.

The respondents are predominantly female (70%) and there's a high proportion of respondents within the 40-59 and 30-44 age ranges.

In addition to the online consultation discussions facilitated by SYA have taken place with young people during Shropshire Council youth sessions. These are ongoing but to date have helped to encourage young people to engage with the consultation and to work as groups in expressing their views on the proposals for their area. These sessions have demonstrated some strong connections between young people and youth workers and that there is some anxiety around potentially losing them. They have also shown a willingness amongst the young people to respond positively to new forms of provision.

7.0 Summary of early learning

7.1 While it is too soon to draw together all the learning from this new way of working some early thoughts are provided.

Positives / Opportunities	Negatives / Challenges
After an initial period of concern LJC's have taken on local youth commissioning and involved young people and stakeholders in local conversations. The process has worked best where there is strong local leadership and a diverse group of local stakeholders have been supported to get involved. Some new approaches to local youth provision, less dependent on a traditional youth club approach have emerged. Positive approach taken by some parish / town councils to finding local solutions.	Youth commissioning has been a challenging subject matter to choose as a first foray into local youth commissioning. Project management, prompt decision making, the interface between the different dependencies and communications have all been difficult to manage. It has been difficult to apply the very high level children's plan outcomes to the very local context for youth commissioning. When to use grants and contracts. A "resource hungry" and on occasions bureaucratic process.

<p>The opportunity provided to support creative local discussion about the future of youth centres within the context of the Community Asset Transfer process.</p> <p>The involvement of young people in the development of future commissioning intentions has been positive.</p> <p>The ability to co-opt stakeholders has led to a less bureaucratic process, even though process has been followed.</p> <p>Stakeholders bring different experience and expertise to the table which can benefit Shropshire Council.</p>	<p>Working within LJC boundaries sometimes fails to recognise how people use service across boundaries</p> <p>Process on occasions has felt rushed with changing project parameters. When approaching the next commissioning project firm foundations and date goals need to be set and a full understanding of the process agreed at the beginning.</p> <p>Full project risks need to be understood at the beginning and mitigated as much as possible.</p>
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<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p> <p>Changes to Youth Services, Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 30 April 2014</p> <p>Future Commissioning and provision of youth activities, Portfolio Holder Decision, 2 July 2014</p> <p>Update – Future Commissioning and Provision of youth activities, Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee, 22 October 2014</p> <p>Local Joint Committees – Update on youth commission and boundaries, Cabinet, 10 December 2014</p>
<p>Cabinet Member:</p> <p>Cllr Ann Hartley – Portfolio holder for Children's Services</p>
<p>Local Members:</p> <p>All local members</p>
<p>Appendices:</p>