

**Representations made to  
Chair of Performance Management Scrutiny Committee  
Regarding Youth Support Call In 11 February 2020**

**UPDATED 11 FEBRUARY 2020**

**1 Mark Underwood, Member of the public**

Our Parish Clerk has just shared with us an email informing us that the decision by SC's Cabinet made on the future of Youth Support in the County has been called in by the Council's Performance Security Committee, this email also included a link to a report detailing the reasons for this and the details of the consultation that had been completed.

I would like to submit the following two comments below as a member of the public **not as a Parish Councillor** having reviewed this report prior to the meeting next week.

1. The concern around the transition of funding between current and proposal. I would suggest that funding should be secured for the proposal before any existing funding is removed to ensure continuity of services.

2. The children and young people are not as supportive of the proposal as members of the public are. This is concerning given that the children and young people are the key stakeholders. Maybe more consultation is required with this group specifically to clearly understand the reason for their concerns. It is also concerning that a significant number of Children and Young people did not have a view regarding the proposal.

**2 Councillor Ruth Houghton, Member for Bishop's Castle**

I will be intending the youth services scrutiny call in tomorrow and wish to raise the following questions regarding the EISSA:

I am concerned to note that the EISSA does not quantify the number of young people affected. How many young people will be affected by these proposed changes both positively and negatively.

There is no reference in the EISSA to the impact on young people in rural areas many of whom live in small towns and villages or isolated settlements and hamlets with very limited public transport. How will these new youth proposals support young people in rural areas? And how many young people in rural areas are affected?

Given the above omissions shouldn't a stage 2 EISSA have been undertaken?

### 3. Jonathan Kemp, Chair, Bedstone and Bucknell Parish Council

1. Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) has advised that the decision made at the Shropshire Council Cabinet meeting on 2 Feb 2020 about Youth Support has been called in for review at the aim Scrutiny Committee meeting. Additionally, it is understood that Councils have been invited to submit any representations supporting the call in of the Cabinet decision by the Scrutiny Committee for consideration at the meeting.
2. On behalf of the Bucknell Youth Club, this small Parish Council would simply want to record that, though initially receiving support three years ago from Shropshire Council via the Bishops Castle LJC, the Bucknell Youth Club has thrived by operating in an independent way with support from a strong team of parents who provide inspired local leadership. This independent approach, including applying for grants from a range of bodies (which has not involved the LJC after the initial set-up grant) delivers an innovative programme for a group whose meetings draw in an average of 15 young people per session — over 1 I3<sup>rd</sup> of the target group. The Bucknell Youth Club would not wish this independence to be circumscribed by reliance on a competitive approach to funding applications by being ring-fenced within an arbitrary LJC boundary.
3. However, the Youth Club would be very concerned by any withdrawal of support from the Shropshire Youth Association (SYA). The support with administration, advice on grants, provision of guidance, best practice advice and safeguarding is vital to the Club's success. Without that support it is felt that there simply would not be the capacity from within the leadership group to provide the level of administrative support needed.
4. Finally, I quote from the key leader's response to my invitation to comment on SC support for Youth work: "...our relationship with the SYA provides the perfect balance of support while giving us independence to develop the youth club as we wish... As volunteers we couldn't do the admin required without them [SYA] and I do think the club would close."

Now, nobody wants that, do they?

### 4. Councillor Heather Kidd

I would normally have attended this call in but am unfortunately away with the LGA.

My concerns echo those of Ruth Houghton. The south West of the County may be sparsely populated but covers around 200 sq miles. This will leave this huge area with little or no youth support.

County lines do not discriminate against rural areas. I have become aware that Cocaine is now being widely used at social functions. Our youth workers used to pick these things up and were then able to act on it. My investigations have so far proved that this has been going on for at least 2 years and in some numbers. I have told the police.

My concern now is we have no one regularly working with young people and this will make the problem worse.

The only existing youth Club in my area – which helped stop antisocial behaviour and gave young people experiences they would not have had any other way – folded when they were refused a grant by Shropshire Council as they said it could not be used for staffing. We now have no provision anywhere. The club was raising money for trips, events and running costs but to no avail. Rural young people – even if deprived – don't any longer count. There is no public transport in the evening and so accessing anything in Shrewsbury or elsewhere is impossible unless parents have a car. The Parish did support them and raises a similar precept to that of Shrewsbury.

Pease look carefully at the EISSA and give weight to the discriminatory effect of this policy for young people in rural areas who have little access to other experiences and the very real threat of county lines.

## **5.Ellesmere Town Council**

I hope this isn't too late for tomorrow's meeting with the Scrutiny Committee.

Ellesmere Town Council fully support the call in of the decision made by cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> February and would like it known that they totally agree with comments made by SYA, Ludlow, Wem, Bishops Castle & Shrewsbury Town Councils. They strongly support the following points:

Plans should be properly costed and resourced which means that funding is secured and in place prior to delivery for both elements set out in the proposal.

Transition arrangements should be made for all current provision to transfer to new funders before Shropshire Council funding is withdrawn, for commissioned clubs and for the support of over 120 voluntary clubs that are dependent upon the help currently commissioned by Shropshire Council.

## **6.Bridgnorth Town Council**

### **Shropshire Youth Support in the Community – Scrutiny Committee Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – Bridgnorth Town Council Comments**

1. Town Councils have very recently been advised that there will be a Scrutiny Committee meeting on the subject on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

2. Please be advised that the short notice notification on the meeting does not allow for the matter to be discussed by Bridgnorth Town Council and for a corporate response to be agreed. However, the Town Mayor was of the view that it was important that some community view was offered on behalf of Bridgnorth.
3. The Town Mayor in discussion with the Town Clerk has considered the report and the motion to call in for scrutiny the Cabinet decision. They were guided by previous discussions within the Town Council that led to a submission by Bridgnorth as part of the consultation in the autumn and offer the following comments:
  - a. The Bridgnorth youth club provision appears to be a little different from Ludlow, Shrewsbury and some others, in that those are under the stewardship of Local Joint Committees - not sure why ours is not.
  - b. The model proposed appears not be clear about who funds what and what will remain.
  - c. The loss of the Shropshire council youth club in Bridgnorth will undoubtedly have some negative impact on the community but we are not in a position to measure that.
  - d. The provision of youth services appears to best lie with the unitary authority as it is likely to be part of a wider child protection issue that requires multi-agency specialist input: Police social services. Well qualified and experienced professionals are needed to ensure appropriate levels of safe guarding.
  - e. The idea that larger Town Councils might fund Shropshire Council to continue current service provision is unfair when the local services are likely to cover a wider area than the parish boundary.
  - f. Town Councils are not necessarily well placed or resourced to take on complex services - that does not mean they are not interested.
  - g. Surely there might be some economies of scale available from central (county council) governance and a fairer tax burden (all residents of Shropshire) as opposed to many Town Councils setting up bespoke agreements or services.
  - h. A halt to the current proposals to ensure a thorough understanding of the rationale and likely consequences is sensible.
  - i. A Shropshire Council cabinet decision late in the budgeting season that seeks to succeed on the basis that Town Council's will fund a Shropshire Council service is most unhelpful. It appears to create an impression of panic and to put undue pressure on Town Councils to magic-up some funding at the last minute through the direct taxation of its residents.
4. The response, prepared in some haste to meet a tight deadline, should be considered indicative of a general view.

Lee Jakeman  
Town Clerk  
Bridgnorth Town Council

**7.Representations from Wem Town Council – attached separately**