



Portfolio Holder Decision
Making Session and date/time

Commissioning
Councillor Gwilym Butler
Time 10:30, Date 2 July 2014

Item

Public

FUTURE COMMISSIONING AND PROVISION OF YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Responsible Officer: Tim Smith (Area Commissioner)

Email: tim.smith@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 252411

Fax:

1. Summary

Shropshire Council and its partners are considering how to best shape and provide activities for young people in the county from 1 April 2015. The Council is also dealing with the immediate pressure of reducing the number of Council run youth work sessions from May 2014 following a reduction in the number of paid youth workers via voluntary redundancy. The Council undertook two sets of public consultations; one with proposals for a reduced youth work session model (financial year 2014/15) and another with proposals for the future commissioning model for youth activities (2015/16 onwards) to seek the views of a broad range of interested parties, in particular young people, as part of the process. The public consultations concluded at the end of March 2014.

The Council tested two local area youth boards involving young people in local assessment of needs and activities and to seek their views on local decision making. Officers also conducted a cross-organisational front line worker meeting to engage adults who work regularly with young people.

This report sets out the decisions and next steps, informed and shaped by consultation feedback, that enable the future commissioning and delivery of youth activities which place young people at the heart of decisions which support their personal and social development.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Council continue to operate the maximum number of youth work sessions possible, in areas of highest social need, until 31 March 2015 reflecting the outcomes of the consultation on the interim model 2014/15.

2.2 The Council undertakes further work to test new methods of local commissioning of youth activities, involving local joint committees and young people, ahead of the new model being implemented in April 2015, reflecting the outcomes of the consultation on the future commissioning model. This second phase of testing will be evaluated. Findings may lead to further refinement and a final model, to be agreed by the Director for Commissioning in consultation with the portfolio holder for Leisure, Libraries and Culture.

2.3 The Council seeks to procure a youth activities partner to provide infrastructure and commissioning support for local joint committees and organisations providing youth activities to ensure that the Council's statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. The final decision of choice of

provider will be made by the Director for Commissioning in consultation with the portfolio holder for Leisure, Libraries and Culture.

Reasons for decision:

To ensure that the Council complies with statutory guidance (issued June 2012) on services and activities to improve young people's wellbeing under section 507B of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

To ensure that mechanisms are in place to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, a local offer that is sufficient to meet local needs and improve young people's wellbeing and personal and social development.

Shropshire Council is moving to becoming a commissioning council.

To achieve cost savings in line with redesign activity.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

Relating to recommendation 2.1 – Interim model 2014/15

- 1) Human Rights: No adverse impact expected.
- 2) Financial: In the short term redundancy costs due to voluntary redundancies will occur; In the longer term delivery costs will reduce, contributing to future savings.
- 3) Equalities: An Equalities Impact Analysis has been developed. The risk rating for the interim arrangements are low in all options. The risks are being managed by proposing to maintain as many sessions as we can fund and to maintain sessions for vulnerable groups of young people.)
- 4) Community: The risk associated with the reduction of sessions is being mitigated by proposing to maintain as many sessions as we can fund and to maintain sessions which are well attended.
- 5) Environment: No adverse impact expected.

Relating to recommendation 2.2 & 2.3 – Future commissioning model

- 1) A risk management log will be part of the future development work. This will enable identification and assessment of risks, as well as identification of mitigating actions.
- 2) Human Rights: No adverse impact expected
- 3) Financial: Reduced levels of funding can be maintained to maximise development in areas of greatest need.
- 4) Equalities: An Equalities Impact Analysis (EIA) has been developed as part of the future development work. A consultation has enabled a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to the analysis. A low level risk has been identified: access in rural areas. It is expected that this risk will be mitigated by the infrastructure partner supporting existing voluntary sector support and developing new voluntary or part funded clubs and activities The EIA will continue to be updated over the coming months as the final model is shaped.
- 5) Community: The future development has the potential for greater self-determination in local communities. Where needs and lack of opportunities are identified, this

- development has the potential to further develop resources in local communities.
- 6) Environment: No adverse impact expected.

4. Financial Implications

	Costs		Savings Achieved/ Required	
	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital
First financial year – 2014/15 (Saving achieved ahead of introduction of new model)			138,054	
Second financial year – 2015/16 (Saving required from new model)			138,054	
Third financial year – 2016/17 (Further saving required from new model)			184,072	
Total Saving Required			460,180	
Total Saving Required from New Model			322,126	
One-off			n/a	
Please provide a summary of how costs and income/savings values are calculated.				
Please provide a summary of how the net costs will be funded.				

Calculated savings represent 15% in 2014/15, 15% in 2015/16 and 20% in 2016/17 of Positive Activities' 2013/14 controllable net budget. Redundancy costs are expected to be incurred as part of the creation of the new model. The potential for corporate funds to contribute towards the costs is to be determined.

5. Background

5.1 Shropshire Council has a duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, equality of access for all young people to the positive, preventative and early help they need to improve their well-being. Our strategic outcome 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 will be known collectively as Youth Activities and their purpose is to improve young people's well-being and to prepare for adulthood. These Future Youth Activities will be part of Shropshire's Early Help Offer.

By young people we mean those aged 10 to 19 in general and up to 25th birthday for those with learning disabilities.

5.2 By youth activities we mean services and activities that:

- 1) connect young people with their communities, enabling them to belong and contribute to society, including through volunteering, and supporting them to have a voice in decisions which affect their lives;
- 2) offer young people opportunities in safe environments to take part in a wide range of sports, arts, music and other activities, through which they can develop a strong sense of belonging, socialise safely with their peers, enjoy social mixing, experience spending time with older people, and develop relationships with adults they trust;
- 3) support the personal and social development of young people through which they build the capabilities they need for learning, work, and the transition to adulthood – communication, confidence and taking the initiative creativity, managing feelings, planning and problem solving, relationships and leadership, and resilience and determination;
- 4) improve young people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- 5) help those young people at risk of dropping out of learning or not achieving their full potential to engage and attain in education or training; and
- 6) raise young people’s aspirations, build their resilience, and inform their decisions – and thereby reducing teenage pregnancy, risky behaviours such as substance misuse, and involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour. (Points 1-6: Extract from Statutory Guidance 2012)

5.3 Youth Activities involve engaging with young people in their leisure time to deliver a fun and exciting programme which supports their personal and social education. The Council recommends that all youth sessions have staff with appropriate qualifications like youth work, first aid, safeguarding and activity specific qualifications like food hygiene if cooking, mountain leader if taking young people in the mountains etc.

5.4 In 2012/13 The Council’s Positive Activities Team employed 101 youth workers (20.6 full time equivalents) and currently deliver five strands of youth work:

1. Direct delivery: 47 youth work sessions every week, run by paid staff.
2. Infrastructure support through Shropshire Youth Association (SYA) who in turn provide support to approximately 100 voluntary clubs/sessions. By infrastructure support we mean developing new clubs and building capacity within existing clubs. This can involve safeguarding and duty of care checks, first aid training, food hygiene training, risk assessments, support worker visits, activities support etc. SYA use staff seconded from Shropshire Council and employ five workers directly (approx. 3FTE) to fulfil their role.
3. Support members of Youth Parliament, who hold the democratic mandate to represent young people strategically in Shropshire.
4. Deliver commissioned youth work sessions in Shropshire for other organisations, like National Citizenship Service, Young Health Champions, Short Breaks (for disabled young people), detached youth work for the CAP (Community Alcohol Project), Parish Councils and Social landlords. Currently this income is in the region of £200,000 per annum.
5. Funding support for county wide youth organisations (The Hive, Young Farmers, Scouts & Guides).

5.5 Shropshire Council owns 13 youth buildings and delivers youth club sessions from 9 rented buildings. The controllable net budget for the Positive Activities team was £920,360 (excluding external contracts) in financial year 2013/14. In financial year 2014/15 the budget has reduced to £792,830.

5.6 In 2012/13 Positive Activities funding supported 11,190 young people in Shropshire. This figure represents approximately 44 percent of Shropshire's 10 to 16 year olds.

Note: 2013/14 figures are not available at this time.

Note: These figures exclude activities which are delivered by organisations independent of the council and its funded partners.

Of 11,190 young people,

- 4,290 (38%) were supported by the Council's Positive Activities Team.
- 3440 (31%) were supported by voluntary organisations affiliated to Shropshire Youth Association (SYA).
- 3492 (31%) were supported by other youth organisations.

Interim youth services model

5.7 12 youth workers left the Council by April 2014 as part of the council's recent voluntary redundancy programme. As a result, the Council launched a consultation on 17 February 2014 to seek views on delivering a service that best meets the needs for the county with the remaining resources available.

5.8 The Council published a list of the 47 youth sessions it operated prior to April 2014 and indicated a range of options to be considered (detailed below) Those youth sessions that are held in the most deprived areas, and which currently have lots of young people attending would be maintained. Furthermore the Council proposed that financial support for sessions in the voluntary sector should and will continue as they are highly valued by us and the communities that they serve.

The public were asked to consider four options:

Option 1 - Reduce the number of Council run sessions per week from 47 to 28; the remaining ones will be delivered in the areas of highest need, and to disabled and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people. This option would not allow funding to be given to Local Area Youth Boards (see paragraph 5.9) from 1 April 2014.

Option 2 – As above but reduce the number of sessions per week from 47 to 25 and operate 3 local area youth boards.

Option 3 – As above but reduce the number of sessions per week from 47 to 22 and operate 12 local area youth boards.

Option 4 – This option asked for any other suggestions and alternatives, such as volunteers coming forward to take over the running of youth sessions, recognising that there is less money to spend on youth services.

5.9 A Local Area Youth Board (LAYB) was one aspect of the original commissioning model which is currently under development. It is a way of combining understanding of local needs and resources, leading to local decision making, commissioning and greater involvement of young people.

It consists of a small group of people who represent the local community. It is made up of at least one Shropshire councillor, young people (at least half of the group), local youth leaders who support them, parish and/or town councillors and other key partners in the area. Two LAYBs were tested in Craven Arms-Church Stretton and Wem as part of this exercise.

5.10 There was a positive response to the public consultation with 1060 completed questionnaires, showing the following results:

My preferred option is...		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Option 1	69.8%	740
Option 2	6.9%	73
Option 3	4.7%	50
Option 4 (My solution)	18.6%	197
Please describe Option 4, your alternative solution here:		246
<i>answered question</i>		1060

81% of the respondents were young people aged 10 to 19. There was also an appropriate mix of gender, ability, sexuality and race, demonstrating a good spread of responses from across all sectors of the county.

5.11 Of the suggestions made in option 4, the following points were raised:

- There shouldn't be any cuts
- We would be prepared to pay a little when we come into Youth Clubs
- Secure additional funding from business', public donations, or from Health and the Police who benefit from the youth services early intervention.
- Keeps me out of trouble; its fun; keeps young people off the streets; gives young people somewhere to go.

The suggestions in option 4 have been explored. The "no cuts" suggestion could not be furthered at this time due to the council's financial situation." Free access" to attend clubs is a long standing council mandate which can be reviewed. The impact of this may have limited or negative effect as the youth work sessions operate in deprived areas where an entrance fee may prevent those most in need accessing services and reduce the impact of our early intervention. Other suggestions are being explored and implemented.

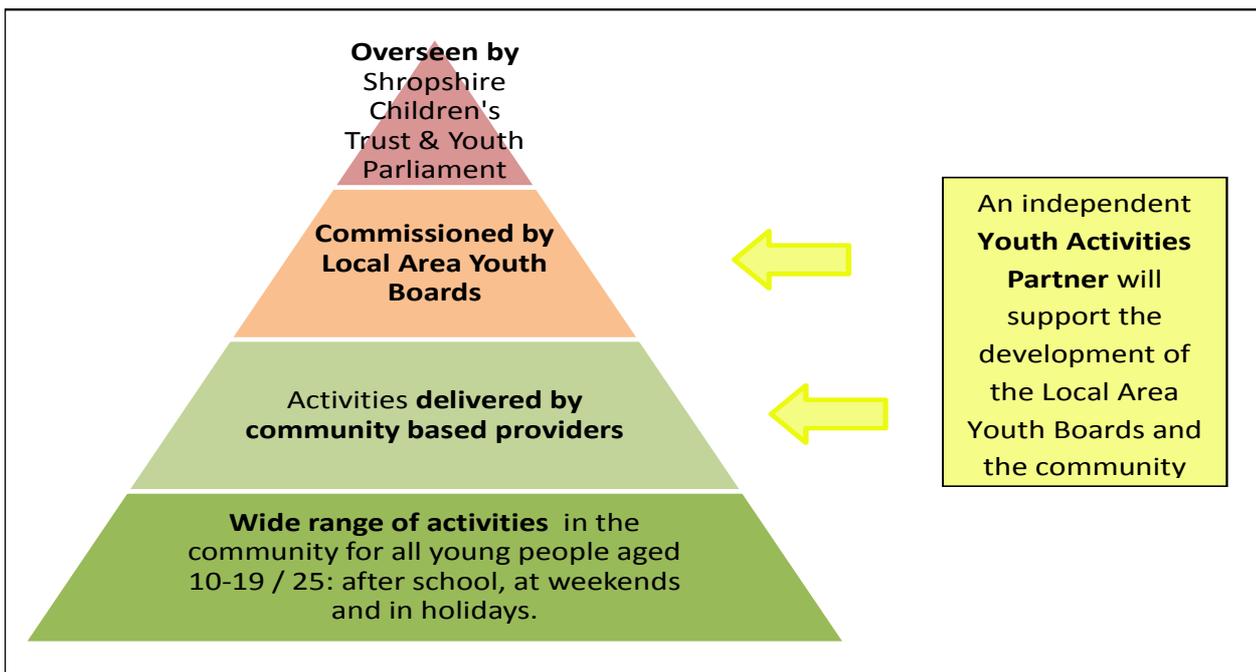
5.12 Some positive outcomes resulted from the consultation exercise. Shrewsbury Town Council allocated funds to continue to operate the Pink Spirit Girls Group (for school years 7 to 11) at Monkmoor Lodge Youth Centre. Also local funds were sourced to continue the Nescliffe Youth Club (for 10 to 16 year olds) , Smile + (for disabled young people aged 18+) and Gains Park Youth Club are setting themselves up as voluntary clubs.

5.13 On the basis of the results of this public consultation, which included several public meetings involving young people, it is recommended that the Council's Positive Activities team continue to operate 28 sessions (option 1).

Future commissioning model for youth activities

5.14 Between 9 January and 31 March 2014 the Council consulted on a new approach for the commissioning of youth activities from April 2015. The proposal is to change how youth activities are commissioned, strategically and in local communities, allowing the quality and breadth of provision to be maintained and enhanced, according to needs and with young people increasingly influencing decision making.

5.15 The following diagram summarised the proposal for the new commissioning model which was included in the consultation document. It summarises the proposed role of Shropshire Council and its partners acting as strategic commissioners of outcomes for young people, for local area youth boards to take responsibility for local commissioning, for an independent youth activities partner and for community based providers. The consultation document explained the proposed roles and functions in greater depth.



5.16 The new commissioning model described how we want to continue to improve outcomes for young people in a sustainable way. By

- 1) Gaining a better understanding of what activities young people need and want in their area.
- 2) Using this understanding and getting more young people involved in the commissioning and development of services in their area. This ensures a better fit of local resources with young people's needs.
- 3) Consider how aspirational personal and social development programmes, including National Citizen Service, and youth work and youth workers can contribute to meeting the needs of young people and reduce demand for more specialist services;
- 4) Determine which services and facilities need public funding and which can be secured through other means so that public funding is targeted primarily on young people at risk of poor outcomes;
- 5) Determine which services and facilities can be delivered by third parties so that the local authority delivers directly only where it is clearly best placed to do so.

- 6) Plan how to best Support and grow the role of the voluntary, community and faith organisations including through a transparent commissioning process, given the benefits the sector can bring to work with young people, families and communities.

(Points 3-6: Extract from Statutory Guidance 2012)

- 7) Developing a commissioning model, which allows us to manage smaller budgets, based on evidence and outcomes and is more closely integrated with other support for children and young people.
- 8) Minimising bureaucracy and making best use of existing resources in the community and within the council.

5.17 These intentions contribute to two outcome areas in the Shropshire's Children, Young People and Families Plan 2014, namely

No. 3 Ensuring the emotional wellbeing of children and young people by focusing on prevention and early intervention.

No. 4 Keeping more children healthy and reducing health inequalities.

The plan emphasises the aim 'to add value by working together' and 'to build communities'. This development has the potential to contribute to both aims through local infrastructure development.

5.18 Shropshire Council is moving at pace to becoming a council that does more commissioning of activity and less direct delivery of services. From April 2015, the Council plans to commission youth activities in a different way. Aspects of the new commissioning model were tested over nearly a 4 month period. We recorded 591 responses from the consultation, including 289 young people.

From the consultation, the test board activity and the frontline workers meeting we heard that most stakeholders agree with:

- Future youth activities should continue and can be sustained in the future
- Future youth activities continue to meet young people's needs and are provided to a safe standard
- More young people are actively involved in commissioning
- Commissioning on the basis of achieving outcomes
- Increased community involvement in supporting activities
- Better knowledge and use of existing resources
- Appointment of a Youth Activity Partner, responsible for county-wide support of LAYBs (Local Area Youth Boards) and community based providers
- Increased integration between youth activities and other services supporting young people

Stakeholders expressed concerns or confusion about:

- Aims & outcomes of local boards and local commissioning
- Increased bureaucracy, leading to less money spent on activities
- Defining the size of localities
- Sourcing information about local needs and resources
- Right representation for young people
- How to make local boards young people friendly

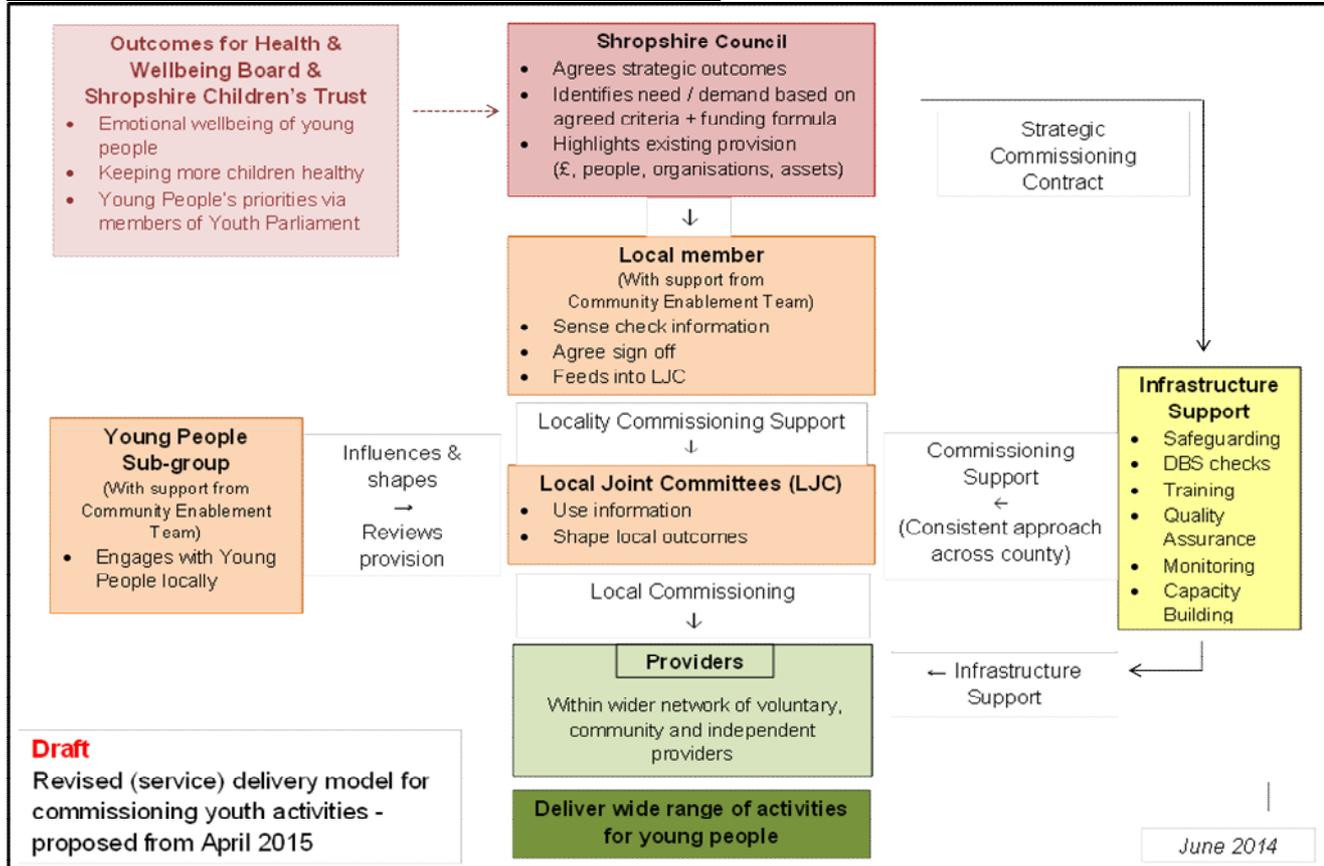
- Prospect of the council delivering fewer activities
- The VCS's and communities' capacity to become increasingly involved.

5.19 An evaluation of the pilot local area youth boards was conducted as part of this exercise. The views of front line workers, paid and volunteers, who represented a cross section of providers was also sought via face to face meetings. The results of the public consultation, the evaluation of the pilot LAYBs and the front line workers meetings have each been recorded and validated by young people and officers.

5.20 Officers have listened and collated a large amount of information and feedback from the consultation exercise. Taking this information and feedback into consideration the model has been revised to reflect this feedback. The amended approach has retained most of the original aspects and has improved in other areas including

- I. Reducing bureaucracy by using existing local governance arrangements, such as Local Joint Committees (LJCs), as opposed to establishing separate Local Area Youth Boards.
- II. Further testing of a less formal and more young people friendly approach to engagement which will encourage active participation and better representation.
- III. Providing greater clarity on the role and function of key stakeholders in the proposed commissioning model.
- IV. Communicating our plans as clearly as we can and to continue to engage with stakeholders to keep them informed of progress.

As a result, we have revised our model as follows:



6. Conclusions

6.1 The main conclusion drawn from the findings and feedback from the extensive public consultation exercise is that there is general support for the new commissioning approach as detailed in 5.15. Further work is now required to test the changes to the proposed commissioning model, following consultation, before embarking on the procurement of a youth activities partner.

6.2 Officer recommendations are set out in paragraph 2. Further briefings and feedback will be provided for Elected Members and all key stakeholders, in particular young people and people directly engaged in providing activities for young people, throughout the year and ahead of the new model being implemented in April 2015. A decision on the final commissioning model is expected after the second phase of testing is completed and evaluated.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information):
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Statutory guidance, EIA associated with interim model 2014/15 (31 March 2014), EIA associated with future commissioning model (31 March 2014), responses to consultation associated with interim model 2014/15, responses to consultation associated with future commissioning model.

Key Decision: Yes

Included within Forward Plan: Yes
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If a Key Decision and not included in the Forward Plan have the General Exception or Special Urgency Procedures been complied with: No

Name and Portfolio of Executive Member responsible for this area of responsibility: Councillor Gwilym Butler

Local Member: All local Members
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Appendices:

Declaration of Interest

- I have no interest to declare in respect of this report

Signed Date

NAME:

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR:

- I have to declare an interest in respect of this report

Signed Date

NAME:

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR:

(Note: If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter.)

For the reasons set out in the report, I agree the recommendation(s) in the report entitled

Signed

Portfolio Holder for

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and pro-forma is returned to Democratic Services for processing.

Additional comment :

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Note: If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Chief Executive and the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance (S151 Officer) and, if there are staffing implications the Head of Human Resources (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Portfolio Holder: Your decision will now be published and communicated to all Members of Council. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication.