

**Notice of Motion No. 32 – Community Youth Officers
Councillors Glenis Ansell and Gordon King
Officer Response**

- 1) Essentially, this was a decision to reduce the number of staff supporting the Community Led Youth Model and *not* to change the model itself. This was also explained in the 'Member Briefing' which went out as soon as the staff were advised of the decision to review the number of roles. As such, the 'Compact' was not activated and there was no case to consult more widely with any parties other than those directly affected by the proposals (staff). Council protocol and policy is to advise staff first directly (which was undertaken on 23/03/16) before advising wider (indirectly affected) stakeholders – which officers undertook the same day after meeting with staff. The overall decision and process was undertaken within the context of appropriate Human Resources support and specific guidance was obtained from senior officers that the suggested review did not trigger the 'Compact'. Overall, any decision to directly reduce staffing through formal HR processes does not include scrutiny by and receiving feedback from Members before those review programmes commence. This would set an unhealthy precedent. This is not the role of Members in these scenarios, and it is never appropriate (in general) for Members to be advised first (before staff) that individual work roles are being put 'at risk'. The 45 day HR timetable in respect of the staffing review commenced on 23/03/16 and ends on 15/05/16. On the basis of direct feedback from staff and unions, we have decided to continue with the proposals, and to reduce the current compliment of 18 Full Time Community Youth Officers to 7 Full Time Equivalent Locality Youth Facilitator roles with effect from 01/06/16.
- 2) The intended changes were discussed (confidentially) with Children's Select Committee Positive Activities Task Group which is currently analysing the effectiveness of the Community Led Youth Model. The Corporate Director for Children's Services and the Associate Director for Operational Children's Services met with the Task Group (chaired by Cllr Jon Hubbard) 22/03/16. This meeting took place before staff were advised of the proposals, and key information from the PowerPoint Presentation (shown to staff on 23/03/16) was subsequently shared with Task Group on 7 April via the Corporate Office. It is understood that Task Group will respond with regard to the proposals in their feedback to Children's Select Committee, therefore it can be argued that there is a relevant level of Member Scrutiny in this matter.
- 3) Within the staffing review; officers have ensured that the ability to deliver our council statutory duty under S507B (of the Education Act) to 'promote and

secure youth activities in each area' has not been reduced. This is because we are not seeking to change the model, only the amount of staff time devoted to supporting the model, because in accordance with the council's Business Plan, we expect communities to 'do more for themselves'.

- 4) The operational decisions with regard to the subsequent staffing implications were the delegated responsibility of managers of the service. All managers in the Council carry this responsibility and in exercising this, do so with the professional advice of HR. On this occasion the Cabinet member was also consulted. It was also made clear that following approval of the Budget for 2016/17 by members at full Council in February, Associate Directors and Heads of Service will be held to operational account for implementing the financial savings that have been attributed to their service areas.
- 5) The review of staffing has been prompted by the need to find significant savings across the council (£25m), of which £3.25m needs to be found from within Children's Services; including £0.504m from Early Help where the Community Youth Officer posts are situated. Decisions had to be taken in association with the Head of Service who provided advice on which areas within Early Help; savings might be made without directly affecting any Early Help statutory duties.