

**Executive response to the Final Report of the Positive Leisure Time Activities
for Young People Task Group**

Purpose

1. To present the Cabinet Member's response to the Final Report of the Positive Leisure Time Activities for Young People Task Group.

Background

2. On 21 January Cabinet considered a part 2 report proposing that it reviews how it meets its statutory duty to secure young people aged 13-19 access to sufficient positive leisure-time activities that improve their wellbeing, and sufficient facilities for such activities. The report set out a range of options, with a provisional recommendation to develop a community led approach, subject to formal consultation.
3. The report stated that the proposals should be robustly scrutinised by the Children's Select Committee. On 28 January the Committee established a task group to respond to the consultation and this was endorsed by the O&S Management Committee on 5 February 2014. The task group undertook an in-depth review, meeting on six occasions and receiving written and verbal evidence from a variety of witnesses.
4. The task group's final report was endorsed with one amendment by the Committee on 29 April. It was then referred to Cabinet, who took the final decision on this matter at an extraordinary meeting on 15 May 2014. The report to Cabinet, which included the task group's final report as an appendix (5), is attached in full here at **Appendix 1**.
5. In considering the report from the Corporate Direct (Children Services) and the Associate Director, Children's Social Care, Cabinet resolved to:
 - i) "Adopt the key principles for a new operating model as set out in this report;
 - ii) Authorise implementation of the community-led model for youth activities to increase the opportunities for young people's involvement and engagement;

- iii) Approve that the community-led operating model for youth activities maximises the amount of funding available to community area boards and local coordination;
- iv) Delegate authority to Councillor Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and senior officers to develop and implement the new operating model, taking account of i)-iii) above and the recommendations of the scrutiny task group."

Response to the task group's final report

In forming a response to the consultation on positive leisure time activities for young people, the task group has considered the four options proposed to Cabinet and commented on each. Having considered the evidence, the task group recommends that:

- 1. Option A is not implemented for the reasons set out in paragraphs 20 to 22 of this report;**

Executive response:

Through the Consultation; Option A* has not emerged as the approach that the Cabinet has decided to take for the future direction of the Service. Rather, an iteration of Option D has been selected.

*Retain the Service in house as it is but reduce value/budget.

- 2. Option B is not implemented for the reasons set out in paragraphs 23 to 28 of this report;**

Executive response:

Through the Consultation; Option B* has not emerged as the approach that the Cabinet has decided to take for the future direction of the Service.

* Commission the whole service out externally to a third sector product.

- 3. Option C is not implemented for the reasons set out in paragraphs 29 to 32 of this report;**

Executive response:

During the consultation; staff did not come forward with any expressions of interest to form a mutual. It is not possible to proceed without this.

- 4. Option D is implemented only if amended in the following ways:**

- a) Robust measures are put in place to ensure that the proposed ringfenced funding available to VCS youth groups through area boards**

supplements, rather than replaces, VCS groups' existing sources of funding. (see paragraph 35 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

This has been agreed by Cabinet. Officers have been tasked to deliver this as part of the implementation plan for the new operating model.

- b) Robust measures are put in place to ensure that the new ringfenced funding supplements, rather than replaces, area boards' existing (non-ringfenced) funding for positive activities for young people.** (see paragraph 36 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

This has been agreed by Cabinet. Officers have been tasked to deliver this as part of the implementation plan for the new operating model.

- c) Appropriate criteria are designed to ensure that the area board funding ring-fenced for youth activities is only used for activities and schemes of genuine benefit to young people in line with guidance under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996** (see paragraph 37 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

This has been agreed by Cabinet. Officers have been tasked to deliver this as part of the implementation plan for the new operating model.

- d) Consideration is given to the council services currently accessed by the Integrated Youth Service effectively at no cost to the Service and steps are taken to avoid these becoming additional hidden costs to VCS youth groups as their role in providing positive leisure time activities for young people increases.** (see paragraph 39 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

Consideration has been given to this. It is not possible to offer this to VCS groups. VCS groups will however be given additional funds to deliver local services and will receive support via Area Boards and professional advice from new 'Community Youth Officers'.

- e) **Consideration is given to establishing a mechanism by which communities can employ a youth worker through the council, providing a way in which employment issues can be effectively and affordably managed. Public and employer liability insurance should also be taken into account when developing this framework. (see paragraph 39 in the task group's report)**

Executive response:

Council policy makes it clear that communities can not employ a Youth Worker directly through the Council who has accepted voluntary redundancy for a period of 12 months from the date of departure (where the Council are the employer). VCS organisations can however employ ex-Council staff directly or contract with them in a self-employed capacity. Area Boards are a part of the Council and are therefore bound by its policies. As part of the Employee Assistance Programme staff will also be offered the opportunity to learn how to set up their own business.

- f) **Mechanisms are put in place to monitor what positive activities for young people are provided in each community area to ensure that an appropriate range for all young people is provided and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and responsibilities under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 are met. (see paragraph 41 in the task group's report)**

Executive response:

This is agreed. A mechanism will be put in place. At this stage this is a work in progress. It is a priority action.

- g) **The proposed area board sub-groups responsible for developing youth provision are given clear and specific parameters to work within and clear guidance on how their ringfenced youth activity budgets can be spent, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 (see paragraph 41 in the task group's report)**

Executive response:

This is agreed. A mechanism will be put in place. At this stage this is a work in progress. It is a priority action.

- h) **The proposed level of support for the area board sub-groups responsible for developing youth provision is enhanced significantly to ensure that an appropriate range of positive activities for all young people is provided and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and responsibilities under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 are met**

across every community area. (see paragraph 42 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

A 'Community Youth Officer' will be employed for every Area Board area – so each AB will have a named professional who will have the role to enable and enhance.

- i) The proposed level of support for Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs) is enhanced significantly to ensure the continuance and growth of the valuable development opportunities YAGs provide and reflecting feedback from young people that they should have greater influence on services that affect them.** (see paragraph 43 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

A 'Community Youth Officer' will be employed for every Area Board area – so each AB will have a named professional who will have the role to enable and enhance.

- j) The proposed level of support for providing professional advice and an enabling and coordinating function for VCS youth groups is enhanced significantly so that the resources available across each community area can be considered strategically and used in a joined-up way that meets local needs and circumstances.** (see paragraph 44 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

A 'Community Youth Officer' will be employed for every Area Board area – so each AB will have a named professional who will have the role to enable and enhance.

- k) Some council resource for facilitating open-access youth work is retained in every community area, to ensure that:**

- **young people can continue to access and develop supportive relationships with youth workers whom they feel able to confide in;**
 - **the vital early intervention work undertaken by youth workers with young people before they reach the tier 2 level of need continues, avoiding significant additional costs in the long term.**
- (see paragraphs 45 to 55 in the task group's report)

Executive response:

The new operating model provides funds to each Area Board to develop and deliver positive youth activities in their area. This is supported by new Community Youth Officer (X18) and Youth Support Worker (x3) role. Job Descriptions for both roles are attached.

- l) The proposed Youth Support Worker role is clearly defined as working with young people at the tier 2a and 2b level of need, rather than young people at the edge-of-care or tier 3 level of need (who are currently supported by the council's Adolescent Support Workers). (see paragraph 56 in the task group's report)**

Executive response:

The Youth Support Worker role is primarily defined as work in Tier 2a and 2b and not in Tier 3 (formal Children's Social Work Team involvement). There are no plans to change this.

- 5. The Cabinet considers adopting the principles behind Option D+ (set out in Appendix 2), which is an indicative delivery model that achieves the necessary savings from the budgets in scope and addresses the weaknesses of Option D set out under Recommendation 4.**

Executive response:

Cabinet has taken into account the key principles outlined in the model put forward by the Task Group and has embedded these in the new proposed operating model. The delivery model (and costings) set out in the Task Group report was not realistic in the context of the cost of the right level of staff (specifically Community Youth Officers; who need to be working at a higher and more sophisticated level. These costs have been adjusted and reviewed in the final model.

Cllr Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Appendices

Appendix 1 Report to Cabinet, 15 May 2014 ("New operating model for community youth activities (review of positive leisure-time activities for young people")

Background papers

Job Descriptions:

- Community Youth Officer
- Youth Support worker