

30 October 2007

EVERY WILTSHIRE YOUNG PERSON MATTERS

Wiltshire's response to the Government document "Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities"

Purpose of the report

- 1 To inform the Cabinet of the publication of the Government's ten year strategy for young people
- 2 To update the Cabinet on the proposed Wiltshire response to the strategy
- 3 To secure the approval of the Cabinet to the delegation of authority with regard to business transfer arrangements for the Connexions Service to the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Development.
- 4 To update Cabinet on proposed changes to the Youth Development, Connexions and Youth Offending Services from 1st January 2008

Background

- 5 The document '*Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*' was jointly published by HM Treasury and the Department for Children, Schools and Families in July 2007. This brings together a range of Government thinking and initiatives around the themes of:

- Positive activities: Improving outcomes
- Empowerment: Giving young people and communities real influence
- Access: Attracting and engaging every young person
- Quality: Effective services delivered by a skilled workforce

The document can be viewed on the following link -

www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/tenyearyouthstrategy/docs/cyp_tenyears_strategy_260707.pdf : a summary of the main elements and proposals is given in the annex to this document

- 6 This document also coincides with the publication of new Public Service Agreement targets for work with young people. These will be in the areas of:

Positive activities
Those not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
Teenage pregnancy
Substance misuse
First time offenders (aged 10 - 17) entering the criminal justice system

- 7 A detailed consultation process has already been taking place within Wiltshire concerning the development of services for young people, involving other services, partners and particularly young people themselves. The 'Every Wiltshire Young Person Matters' group has been operating since the publication of the Government 'Youth matters – next steps' document in March 2006, reporting to the Children and Young People's Trust Board (CYPTB) on a regular basis. This has concentrated on the development and coordination of the overall strategy for work with young people in the county. Separate strands of work have also been taking place to disaggregate the existing Wiltshire and Swindon Connexions partnership between the two authorities, following the decisions of both cabinets in September and October 2006, and to develop an integrated framework within Wiltshire for the management of the Youth Development, Connexions and Youth Offending Services.

Main Considerations for the County Council

Overall strategy

- 8 '*Aiming high for young people*' strongly confirms the current direction of travel for services for young people in Wiltshire in terms of integration, partnership working, commissioning and active role of young people. There is a considerable emphasis on funding, facilities, capacity building within local community areas and increasing empowerment for young people both in managing their own facilities and in participation in wider community governance. There is also a clear commitment to working with vulnerable groups, staff development and quality assurance.
- 9 The Every Wiltshire Young Person Matters Group held an open meeting to review progress against the new strategy, with partners and young people's representatives, on 17 October. A draft vision statement and strategy document were agreed to go forward to the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth on 5 November and to the CYPTB executive on 14 November. A copy of this draft will be made available to the Cabinet meeting for comment; it is proposed that the final approval of this document on behalf of the County Council be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth. It is further proposed that a seminar for all elected members be held to alert them to these new developments.

Disaggregation of Connexions Service between Wiltshire and Swindon

- 10 In September 2006 the Cabinet agreed a strategy for the disaggregation of the Connexions budget between Wiltshire and Swindon, following the Government's announcement that all Connexions funding would revert to Local Authorities in April 2008. As a result of this decision, and a parallel decision by the Swindon Cabinet, the existing Connexions Advisory Panel was reconstituted as the Connexions Transitions Programme Board, with a parallel working group of Officers from both Councils forming the Project Board for the transition process.
- 11 Considerable progress has been made, with the intention that the new arrangement will take effect from the 1st January 2008. This is to enable a run in period from January to March 2008 to enable any further issues to be identified and resolved prior to the full disaggregation of funding between the two Authorities in April 2008.
- 12 An important consequence of this work is the need to ensure that a business transfer agreement is in place between the two authorities. It is proposed that the Cabinet delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth to complete the framework agreement relating to business transfer arrangements between Wiltshire and Swindon in time for the 1st January deadline. This would include inter alia, any TUPE arrangements for transfers of staff to Swindon and the transfer of assets between the two Authorities.

Services for Young People

- 13 A major outcome of the early discussions on Youth Matters Next Steps was the proposal to bring together the three core services of Youth Development, Youth Offending and Connexions into a single service by April 2008. This was consistent with advice from the Government Office of the South West on the integration of Connexions services within Local Authorities and has been pursued as part of the overall Every Wiltshire Young Person Matters and Connexions transition plans. Following internal management discussions the existing Student Finance Service will also be incorporated in the Services to Young People framework, as an outward facing support service for young people and their families.
- 14 Detailed consultations have taken place with staff, other services, other stakeholders including the Children & Young People's Trust Board Members and Schools, and especially with young people themselves. An overall framework of the new service has been agreed and a detailed staffing structure will be published early in November, following the current round of MTFS budget discussions.

Environmental considerations

- 15 The Wiltshire Assembly of Youth already has a high profile in promoting environmental issues and awareness among young people, and this has frequently been cited in surveys as a major consideration for young people within the county as a whole. The disaggregation of the Connexions service with Swindon will lead to reduced mileage for some senior managers, while the progressive integration and co-location of the three core services will over time reduce building management costs. In the longer term, if the major changes envisaged in the government's strategy with regard to the quality and nature of accommodation for young people's activities can be realised, there will be a further reduction in the environmental impact of unsustainable and inefficient buildings.

Risks and financial implications

- 16 There are two major financial implications for the Council following the developments outlined above. The first relates to the business risk involved in the transfer of Connexions services to Swindon, and the integration of the Wiltshire based services within the Council as a whole. This will be particularly important during the period between the initial transfer date for staff and assets on 1 January 2008 and the final transfer of all remaining business liabilities on 1 April.
- 17 The second implication relates to the budget for the new services for young people. It is anticipated that the overall budget of the service will remain at present levels. However, each of the three main constituent services has a slightly different funding route. The Youth Development Service is largely reliant on core WCC funding, whereas the Connexions funding will be paid through the LAA Grant. The majority of the Youth Offending Service funding is provided through matched grant from the Youth Justice Board, as well as contributions from partner agencies. Work is currently being undertaken within the MTFs process to realise efficiencies and economies of scale within the new service in order to meet current financial constraints and budget requirements, without diminishing the impact of frontline services.

Equalities implications

- 18 *'Aiming high for young people'* is fundamentally concerned with providing non stigmatising services and appropriate intervention to raise the attainment, aspirations and life chances of disadvantaged and/or vulnerable young people.

Reasons for the proposals

- 19 These proposals are presented to enable the Council to respond constructively to the challenges presented by the ten year strategy, and the creation of an effective and integrated service for young people.

Proposals

20 The Cabinet is invited to:

- i) note this report
- ii) comment as appropriate on the draft strategy document
- iii) support an information seminar for all elected members on the implications of '*Aiming high for young people*'
- iv) approve the delegation of responsibility for completing the Connexions business transfer documentation to the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth

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Annex: 'Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities,' HM Treasury and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, July 2007.

Annex

'Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities'

Summary

The document can be viewed on the following link -

www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/tenyearyouthstrategy/docs/cyp_tenyearstrategy_260707.pdf.)

The strategy, which focuses on empowerment, access and quality, includes a strong role for local authorities. Key points include:

- The **Comprehensive Spending Review** will include extra funding to underpin the youth strategy for the period 2008-11 (amount to be confirmed shortly).
- An unspecified amount obtained from **dormant bank accounts** to fund integrated youth centres, refurbish existing premises and build smaller mobile units
- **Private finance** will be sought to provide fifty per cent matched funding for youth facilities (based on the city academies model).
- An £8m pilot scheme run with ten councils in deprived areas to pioneer '**local capital strategies**' to adapt buildings into youth facilities.
- The **Youth Opportunity Fund** and **Youth Capital Fund** will be extended until at least 2011 – with extra resources for the most deprived areas.
- Five per cent of **spending on youth services** to be decided by young people by 2010, to increase to 25 per cent by 2018.
- By 2010, 30 per cent of places for young people to go are to be **run/ managed by young people**.
- A **National Institute of Youth Leadership** will be created to 'support young people's ability to bring about social change' and local councillors will be trained to gather young people's views.
- The government will consider whether to introduce a '**Youth Week**' based on the Australian model, to promote positive images of young people.
- Improving performance management arrangements, increasing the role of the local authority and the Lead Professional. This will include **pooling** a proportion of youth offending and primary care trust budgets.
- Establishing a **Centre for Excellence and Outcomes** which will lead on supporting local delivery.