

## UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE COMMUNITY YOUTH SERVICE TOWARDS NEW STANDARDS

Report By: Community Youth Service Manager

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

1. To advise Members on the restructuring of the Community Youth Service and progress towards the revised planning guidance (December 2003), and the national standards and performance indicators in youth work.

### Financial Implications

2. The Community Youth Service has a predicted underspend in the region of £120,000; this is primarily due to a vacancy rate of twenty five percent within the staff team and the inability to deliver associated projects and their planned expenditure. The Youth Service will require £50,000 underspend to be carried forward to assist with recruitment and retraining activities. The remaining £70,000 is committed expenditure that will not be spent before the year-end.

### Considerations

#### *New Planning Guidance*

3. The first national planning guidance and performance standards for all local authorities was first published in December 2002, it set out the governments expectations for local authority youth services in both terms of:
  - ◆ Numbers, range and key targets groups of young people with whom the service should work
  - ◆ The quality and range of the curriculum that is delivered
  - ◆ The standard and range of outcomes and outputs.
  - ◆ The resources allocated to Youth Service (set through funding matrix)
  - ◆ Inspection and intervention framework for local authorities not meeting the standards set
4. Revised guidance and definitions have been received in December 2003, which place further emphasis on four key targets and particularly on the accreditation of young peoples' learning. It also introduces a four-year cycle of Ofsted inspections to coincide with LEA inspections (due autumn 2004).

5. The Youth Service is achieving four out of the five key performance targets however it is not achieving the accreditation target, which is one of the government's most important indicators. Additional support and training has been provided for staff, all systems and structures are in place and more accreditation activity is happening but the service is not making fast enough progress to achieve the target by the year-end. This is partly due to the high vacancy rate and not having enough staff on the ground to deliver new programmes.
6. The Youth Service has restructured in light of these changes to provide more face-to-face work hours by staff with higher and or more training required to deliver this intensive work. More full time staff will be employed through the reduction of part time staffing which will allow for further training and development of staff, this will be delivered with no redundancies.

### ***Recruitment***

7. Nationally recruitment for youth workers is very difficult with all local authorities experiencing high vacancy rates and inability to recruit suitable qualified and experienced staff. Locally this picture is repeated and currently we have a vacancy rate in excess of twenty five percent. Our restructuring and subsequent recruitment campaign is aimed at addressing this, but within the national climate it is unlikely that we will achieve a full compliment of staff without further recruitment activity placing significant extra cost on the service. We have engaged consultants to help us to develop a range of recruitment activity beyond the standard adverts and have developed partnership with other agencies to employ trainee youth workers (see next section).

### ***Partnerships***

8. The service has developed good working relationships with a range of key partners particularly with Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (HCVYS) and has in place agreements for delivery of a range of youth work programmes and work including the management and delivery of a grant programme through funding drawn down from DFES. Similarly we have established joint working with the Connexions Service on a number of programmes at both a strategic and operational level. In 2004 we have started a joint funding arrangement to employ and train trainee youth workers with The Rural Media Company. The first two trainees have been appointed to Ross on Wye and Kington Youth Centre and take up post in January.

### ***Funding and Resources***

9. The Youth Service receives funding through the Education Formula Spending Share (FSS) based on the numbers of 13-19 years old resident in the county. The amount indicated is the level of funding the government calculates sufficient to run a youth service and funding below this level may result in the loss of additional funding e.g. Transforming Youth Work and SENDA Grants. Ofsted inspections include resources allocated as an indicator of commitment by the local authority and in calculating the final assessment of the service.
10. The Youth Service has been successful in attracting external funding through the use of current resources and underspends as match funding for a range of work areas e.g. Ross Creative Learning Centre, Dinedor Youth Camp, SRB S Wye Youth Forum, Rural Media Youth Work trainees, Youth Portal / e gateway and others. This success

distorts the financial picture of the service as large elements of the underspend is funding for specific pieces of committed work.

***Risk Management***

11. The Youth Service has undergone considerable changes since the De Montfort review in 1998: - taking on the transforming youth work agenda, the creation of the Connexions Service, new planning guidance and targets, high vacancy rates in most staffing teams this coupled with the current restructuring process and a Ofsted inspection in the autumn term will leave the service with a concern over capacity particularly if we are not successful in our first round of recruitment for the majority of posts. We are currently exploring using temporary or consultancy staff to assist with Ofsted planning and covering other areas of work.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Committee note the report.**