Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET MEETING**
DATE:	**14TH JUNE 2012**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**YOUTH REVIEW – CONSULTATION RESPONSES**
PORTFOLIO AREA:	**HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

Cabinet agreed to the recommendation to carry out a review of the Herefordshire Youth Service at the Cabinet meeting on 15th December 2012.

The purpose of this follow up report is for Cabinet to be advised on the outcomes of the public consultation regarding the review; to make recommendations on a preferred model for the future delivery of youth service functions in Herefordshire, and to explain what will happen next with regard to implementation.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the County.

It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendations

THAT:

(a) Targeted Youth Support Services for the most vulnerable young people in the county should be prioritised for funding and options for future delivery will be explored through the phase 2 root and branch review. These services would not necessarily be directly provided by the council;

(b) Positive activities for young people, which can be accessed by all including through youth centres, should be delivered through a community engagement route, with local areas having access to council funding on a formula basis according to numbers of young people and the level of deprivation in the locality. This funding will be used to invest in the voluntary and community sector to develop and sustain positive activities for all young people;

(c) Outdoor Education (sailing centre and canoe centre) will be subject to market testing, but should no suitable provider be found, that the Director for People's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member is authorised to make arrangements to close the provision.

Key Points Summary

- There is a common theme running through the Children's Centre Review, the Youth Service Review and the YOS Review. These three Cabinet Reports reflect the Local Authority's approach to delivery that seeks to support disadvantaged or vulnerable children, young people and families by identifying those who need additional and early help to overcome the challenges they face. A focus on prevention and intervening early is a key feature of all of the recommendations.

- During October 2012 – March 2013 Phase 2 of the Root and Branch review will focus on children and young people in Herefordshire and will seek to establish how we can improve on the services we currently deliver and commission. Delivery of targeted youth support services will be part of that Root and Branch review.

- On the 15th December 2012 the Cabinet discussed the report titled 'The Youth Service Review' and agreed that a further report incorporating the outcomes of the public consultation was to be brought to Cabinet in June 2012.

- Consultation ran for a period of 12 weeks from January 3oth – April 20th 2012.

- We are pleased with the level of responses received regarding this consultation. There were a total of 751 individual responses. 109 were from adults over 18 years of age. 631 were from children and young people. 11 declined to give an age on the questionnaire.

- There were 602 responses from young people who are service users during a range of youth events.

- There were 149 responses to the young person, adult and carer questionnaire. 80% of responses were from adults. 50% of respondents stated that they or their children were members of a youth club or community activity group (local football club, guides, scouts, dance group etc).

- There were 9 service providers who responded to the separate online questionnaire, and they have provided high quality commentary.

- There is good support and understanding of why changes need to be made. There is also support for the Council prioritising work with vulnerable young people and for the general principle that others should run the services that the council can no longer provide. There is limited support for outdoor activities becoming self-financing, but no desire for outdoor education to cease in the county.

- In terms of the next steps, following the cabinet decisions on the recommendation we will draw together an implementation plan. We have been given 10 days free consultant support from the National Youth Agency to plan the next steps regarding developing a community engagement model for the universal youth services and to consider options for outdoor education. The NYA have completed a scoping document to outline the support they are offering.

Alternative Options

1. **Maintaining the status quo** - continuing to deliver all elements of the Youth Service as it is. The necessary budget reduction of 20% (£105,874) would result in the structure of the service being unsustainable causing overstretch and reducing quality in current provision. The service would not be able to offer extra help to those vulnerable young people who need it most and universal youth services delivered through youth centres would be reduced. Continuing to subsidise outdoor education and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme to the extent it currently is subsidised will put pressure on other youth work. Increasing income generation from outdoor education will be difficult without investment of time and funding in developing the infrastructure for marketing, promotion and bookings. This option would mean that we cannot deliver the Positive for Youth vision.

2. **Immediately ceasing LA delivery of outdoor education services** - this would entail the closure of the sailing and canoe centre. This decision would affect approximately 600 current users of the facilities including vulnerable groups such as young people with disabilities. This would save the LA approximately £92,000 per year and will release assets. This option carries a reputational risk - 81% or respondents in the consultation report said that they did not want outdoor education to stop.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. Targeting the future Council's expenditure primarily but not exclusively on positive activities for vulnerable groups of young people; investing in supporting the voluntary and community sector to develop and sustain positive activities; and allocating the council's resources to each local area and making arrangements with local partnerships to commission local delivery will enable the LA to meet its statutory duties within the budget available. These recommendations give us a year to consider options for future delivery of outdoor education and will allow sufficient time to test commercial viability of the service.

Introduction and Background

4. On the 15th December 2012 the Cabinet discussed the report titled 'The Youth Service Review' and agreed that a further report incorporating the outcomes of the public consultation was to be brought to Cabinet in June 2012. The purpose of the initial review of the youth service was to:

    - Identify ways in which the vision for young people's services could be achieved.
    - Address how youth work could be directed more toward targeted intervention, and ensuring the needs of the most vulnerable are met, utilising youth work skills.
    - Establish how communities and the voluntary sector could be better engaged in improving universal provision, and making it more locally relevant and available.
    - Identify how reductions to the current youth service budget could be achieved.

5. During the period from 30th January to 20th April 2012, the public, stakeholder organisations and staff were invited to take part in the Herefordshire Youth Review Consultation. We are pleased with the level of responses received regarding this consultation. There were a total of 751 individual responses. 109 were from adults over 18 years of age. 631 were from children and young people. 11 declined to give an age on the questionnaire.

6. The consultation document was published on the Herefordshire Councils website and respondents were invited to complete the questionnaire online or to print it off and complete. A free postal address was provided for return. There were two separate questionnaires – one for young people, carers and adults, and one for service providers. Copies of the questions are available on request. There were 149 responses to the young persons, adult and carers questionnaire. 29 of these were young people aged 11-16 (20%) with the other 109 (80%) of responses from adults (11 declined to give their age). 50% or respondents stated that they or their children were members of a youth club or community activity group (local football club, guides, scouts, dance group etc). There were 9 responses to the online service provider questionnaire however reading the comments it is clear that some responded to the other questionnaire instead.

7. In addition to this a number of youth events were held across the county making use of electronic voting buttons with focus groups of young people who are users of the youth service. There were 602 responses to these with an average of 594 responses per question. The young people were asked the same questions that were included in the on line questionnaire.

8. With support from the public experience team the LA consulted the broader community about the proposals seeking feedback from parents, carers and others with an interest. They spoke directly to 350 members of the public, and 40 made comments that have been recorded in the report. 3000 flyers were distributed to publish the details of the consultation. Information was provided to a number of community websites and was emailed to organisations, clubs and faith groups. In each locality area, the public experience team met with the public at a range of settings including stands at public events, stands at public venues including leisure centres, libraries, community centres and town centres. Stands took place at different times of the day including evenings. 550 printed questionnaires were given out at these locations and staff offered support to complete them. The team ensured that seldom-heard groups had the opportunity to take part by attending events for disabled people, and those with learning disabilities, and by contacting single parent families and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups.

9. Full reports of these questionnaire responses are available on request.

Key Considerations

10. We are pleased with the number of responses to this consultation. There were a total of 751 individual responses. 109 were from adults over 18 years of age. 631 were from children and young people. 11 declined to give an age on the questionnaire.

11. 9 service providers responded to the separate online questionnaire, and they have provided high quality commentary.

12. The key headlines from the youth focus groups and from the young person, carer and adult questionnaires are:

Q1 Do you understand the reasons why we are making changes to youth work delivery?			
	Yes	No	Unsure
Youth focus groups	92%	4%	4%
Adult, carer and young person questionnaire	89%	11%	0%

Q2 Do you think it is right that we make young people with the greatest needs our priority?			
	Yes	No	No Opinion
Youth focus groups	86%	7%	7%
Adult, carer and young person questionnaire	54%	35%	11%

Q3 So that we have enough money to help young people who are in greatest need, do you think it is right that we cut back on the services that we provide to all young people?			
	Yes	No	Unsure
Youth focus groups	43%	34%	23%
Adult, carer and young person questionnaire	21%	72%	8%

Q4 Do you think it is right that outdoor education activities should raise the money to pay for themselves?			
	Yes	No	Unsure
Youth focus groups	59%	23%	18%
Adult, carer and young person questionnaire	45%	46%	8%

Q5 If outdoor education cannot raise the necessary money through selling its services, should the activities stop?			
	Yes	No	Unsure
Youth focus groups	14%	81%	5%
Adult, carer and young person questionnaire	13%	81%	6%

Q6 Do you think it is right that we should ask other organisations to take over organising some of those activities that the Council provide so that we can concentrate on providing targeted support?			
	Yes	No	No Opinion
Youth focus groups	74%	11%	15%
Adult, carer and young person questionnaire	54%	35%	10%

It is interesting to compare the responses from the 149 young person, adult and carer questionnaire where 80% of respondents were adults, to the responses from the 602 children and young people who are service users. Whilst both groups clearly understand the reasons for change, there is clearly a difference in opinion in question 2. 86% of young people said that we should focus on the vulnerable groups, but only 54% of adults agreed. 43% of young people agreed that we should cut back on providing services for all in order to focus on the vulnerable, but only 21% of adult responses agreed. In terms of outdoor education the responses were similar and 81% clearly stating that access to outdoor education should not stop. There was mixed opinion on whether or not the outdoor education team should raise the finances to pay for itself through selling it services. Particular comments were that this might mean that some children and young people may not be able to afford to take part if they have to pay to access these activities.

The proposal to invest in support for the voluntary and community sector was strongly supported by 74% of young people who agreed that we should ask other organisations to take over organising some of the activities that the council provides, but only 54% of adult responses agreed.

It is clear from all of these responses that the young people who are service users generally are supportive of the recommendations.

The consultation document asked for comments to the following questions;
How do you think young people can get involved in helping to develop services?

Do you have any ideas that can help us develop this new way of working?
What are your main concerns about these changes?

There were hundreds of recorded comments with lots of ideas for how young people can get involved with developing services. Most responses were around enabling young people to take part in discussions and to get them actively involved. These comments will be passed to the youth involvement officers so that the ideas can be pursued. Hundreds of comments were made giving ideas about developing this new way of working. One key area of concern was to ensure that volunteers were given adequate support and that there was continued support for the voluntary sector. A number of voluntary sector and third sector partners were mentioned who were keen to get involved in the debate. The main concerns raised were around the impact of reducing opportunities for young people and a concern that vulnerable young people may not receive the support they need, and that activities currently organised by the LA and delivered through youth centres may stop.

Of the 9 responses from service providers, the comments were useful points to consider, and offer practical support and a keenness to become actively involved in the implementation of change.

In conclusion there is good support and understanding of why changes need to be made. There is also support for the Council prioritising work with vulnerable young people and for the general principle that others should run the services that the council can no longer provide. The majority of responses clearly state that it is right to prioritise vulnerable young people but they struggle to say that by doing so we need to reduce funding elsewhere. There is limited support for outdoor activities becoming self-financing, but no desire for outdoor education to cease in the county.

In terms of the next steps, following the cabinet decisions on the recommendation we will draw together an implementation plan. We have been given 10 days free consultant support from the National Youth Agency to plan the next steps regarding developing a community engagement model for the universal youth services and to consider options for outdoor education. The NYA have completed a scoping document to outline the support they are offering. In addition to this the forthcoming Root and Branch Review will help to inform the specification of services needed to deliver the desired outcomes.

Whilst the LA is not looking for a fully commissioned model to deliver universal youth services the main focus will be on developing a local market, which encourages and supports community engagement. Within this there may also be opportunities for worker led initiatives and support for small local charities or private sector involvement. We already have a model of working with third sector organisations to deliver universal youth services. For example in Ross on Wye the LA youth service works closely with the Basement Trust to deliver open access universal youth provision and share use of a youth centre building. There is scope and enthusiasm amongst third sector and voluntary sector providers to develop this further. There is some recognition that the timescale is very tight, but next April 2013 remains the current target to achieve this.

Further work is required to identify what is in scope of the positive activities offer. A proposed mapping activity will start immediately to identify what is already delivered and also to identify current or potential providers in each area. This will draw on information already held within the county through Community profiles, Information and Assessment co-ordinators, the Family Information Service etc.

The future role of outdoor education is part of the public consultation. Within the current year it is intended to test out options for income generation and consider future options. Support from the NYA, to provide information on other approaches that have been used around the country were requested. Market testing during 2012/13 may consider broader outdoor education provision beyond use by young people and should include exploration of wider family outdoor education

activity. Should outdoor education services not be commercially viable it is recommended that the council ceases to directly provide outdoor education by April 2013.

The following implementation plan has been agreed with the NYA.

Target Date	Activity	Days	Deliverables
April	Scoping Meeting – working Group Project Scoping Proposal	1 day	Scoping Report written and agreed by AD
May- June	Desk research, Analysis of Mapping Exercise and key documents. Focus Group with management team and strategic partners to agree vision and preferred market options	2 days	Focus Group Plan Delivery of Focus Group Summary Report
June 15th – End July	Facilitation of 6 x Community Events	4 days	Focus Group Planning Delivery of Focus Groups
End August	Draft Report to summarise market development key themes and proposals on county wide and area basis.	1 day	Draft Summary report
September	Working Group Meeting to finalise draft report Final Report with options appraisal and market development recommendations	2 days	Facilitate Review Meeting Final Report

Community Impact

1. An approach to delivery that seeks to provide services in the areas with the greatest need will see a commensurate decrease in Council funding activities in those areas deemed as having less need. A move to a community facilitation model, encouraging the engagement of people in their local areas in decision making – including young people, and the potential volunteering of adults and older young people in service delivery, will be a significant contribution to localism and the development of services as communities require them.

2. Community groups and voluntary organisations will be interested in the commissioning approach to be used. In consultation with groups such as Close House, Young Farmers, CLD and HYCVS all have declared an interest in being part of a commissioning approach for the delivery of youth work functions.

3. Surveys of council tax payers usually identify the provision of places and activities for teenagers to be in the top quartile of preferred services on which to spend council tax. It is clear from the interim responses that the community does not want outdoor education services to stop. There is a mixed response in terms of cutting back universal youth services to support a more targeted model.

4. Using a model which will enable the allocation of funding on needs based model will increase transparency, and will allow services to be developed on a variable scale according to the needs of local communities.

Equality and Human Rights

5. This decision pays due regard to our public sector equality duty. The recommendations consider the needs and rights of different members of our community. We have considered how the recommendations will impact on particular equality groups in particular the impact on young people.

6. The initial Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) has been updated. The reduction in positive activities spend will potentially have a negative impact on the range of provision to young people. However this is mitigated by the fact that funding will be targeted on young people with the greatest need, and the proposed investment in building local voluntary sector provision.

Financial Implications

7. The Council is facing significant challenges in financial terms and through the national settlement and reductions in funding. The Council's five year financial strategy includes an estimated 29.7% reduction in government formula grant. Budget decisions have been based on a set of core principles that include Supporting the Vulnerable. The process also includes fundamentally challenging what the council does to ensure appropriate use of public funding and quality of service.

8. A budget breakdown was provided in the previous cabinet report and is attached at Appendix A. The recommendations made in this paper allow for the delivery of all statutory services within a budget set for 2012/13 which has been reduced by 20%, however this does mean that we need to reduce direct delivery of a number of youth work sessions. Supporting the community engagement model will mean that that LA can withdraw from some direct delivery, with the voluntary and third sector being funded to meet local need. For 2012/13 we have allocated sufficient budget to subsidise outdoor education to enable the LA to test if the activity could become commercially viable. Funding to subsidise outdoor education is unlikely to be available in 2013/14.

Legal Implications

9. The policy must comply with the council's duties under the Education and Skills Act 2008 and under S507(b) of the Education Act 1996 as noted below.

10. Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 requires that every local authority in England must, 'so far as reasonably practicable, *secure* for qualifying young persons in the authority's area *access to:*

a) Sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and

b) Sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities.

11. This duty is clarified and expanded by Statutory Guidance on S 507(b) of the Education Act 1996: March 2008.

12. 'Positive for Youth' confirmed the Government's intention to retain the duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is practicable, services and activities for young people. (See section 507B of

the Education Act 2006). This duty also requires local authorities (LAs) to take into account young people's views and publicise information about what is available. The guidance is being revised and is published for consultation now. The Department would welcome responses from LAs and other groups with an interest in this area – in particular those that represent the views of voluntary and community sector organisations, and young people themselves. The draft new statutory guidance is available on request.

13. In general terms it is for the local authority to determine what would amount to reasonable provision of sufficient activities but the judgment of what is 'sufficient' should be by reference to the needs of young people in the area.

Risk Management

14. Risks arising under legal implications are entered into the CYP Risk Register at line 010 - Failure to secure access to adequate and sufficient educational positive activities for young people in their leisure time and line 011 - Failure to provide a Targeted Youth Support Service for vulnerable young people referred by schools and the new all age careers service. The Council has a legal duty to secure access to positive activities. It does not have to provide these activities directly.

15. Risk if the LA ceases to directly provide Outdoor Education facilities:

- Reputational risk to LA – public/legal challenge as seen in other LA areas. Mitigate by opportunity for needs and delivery to be identified and met locally.
- 81% of consulters expressed a clear view that they did not want outdoor education facilities to close
- Loss of facilities for a range of children and young people including those most vulnerable. Mitigate by exploring outsourcing of delivery rather than ceasing delivery and funding will be targeted on young people with the greatest need, and the proposed investment in building local voluntary sector provision.

Risk of developing community engagement model for delivery of positive activities:

- More complex delivery arrangements leading to confusion and potentially overlapping services. Mitigate with clear commissioning framework and support to advise on local need and provision.
- External organisations readiness/ market ability to deliver universal services.

Consultees

16. Widespread consultation has been undertaken across the county with young people, parents and carers, community groups and third sector organisations for a period of twelve weeks in order to consider the issues and proposals set out in this paper. A full report on the consultation feedback is available on request.

Appendices

17. Appendix A – finance information.

Background Papers

Background papers were attached to the original Cabinet Report 'The Youth Service Review' dated 15th December 2011.