

**Report of Youth Service Cross-Party
Cabinet Working Party**

OCTOBER 2013

Membership of the working party:

Councillor J Courtenay (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs S Carr (Vice Chairman)

Councillor M Assenheim

Councillor M Flewitt

Councillor M Grimwade

Councillor R Hadley,

Councillor Mrs A Jones

Councillor Mrs A Kaye

Councillor R Morgan

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

The cross-party Cabinet Working Party has met a total of 4 times, with the purpose of making recommendations to Cabinet on the future strategic direction of the Youth Service.

Of those members present on 2nd October 2013, the following recommendations were agreed, unanimously, for submission to Cabinet.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To ensure in developing future services provision that youth services are focussed on those young people and areas that need it the most.
- 2.2 That the proposed redesign of youth provision should not result in the loss of any youth work staff, or the number of hours provided by them, whilst retaining the ability to deploy staff flexibly as needs change.
- 2.3 To maintain one Council run youth centre in Shoebury with no reduction in the current Council provision and to increase the level of community led provision.
- 2.4 To consider capital investment on an invest to save basis to remodel the Shoebury Youth Centre inside to maximise the letting potential to the community and enhance the potential for other Council services to share the building
- 2.5 To cease current provision from Focus Youth House and re-provide by working with existing providers in alternative locations in the areas in which existing Focus users reside, seeking to extend, improve and increase their community youth work provision. In addition to work with other community groups and site to develop additional voluntary sector provision, resulting in an increased overall youth provision in Central Southend.
- 2.6 To expand outreach provision, in conjunction with the Street Engagement team, to meet the needs identified in the young people's consultation, and for activity to be focused on Friday and Saturday nights.
- 2.7 To transfer the Cluny centre to the Streets Ahead project supporting it become a self-sufficient community led and run centre by 2015 and to

maintain current youth work provision at Cluny whilst supporting the transfer.

- 2.8 To invest more staff resource to develop community activities and provision across the whole borough, including assisting community groups to identify alternative sources of funding. In addition to put in place a small Council start-up fund to aid the development of further community youth activities, emphasising and supporting an inclusive nature.
- 2.9 To work with Active Southend to explore the possibility of developing a comprehensive website detailing activities that are available to young people across the borough.
- 2.10 To explore how developments across the town can support youth provision.
- 2.11 We recognise the Council's current challenging financial situation and we have identified that this redesign could provide the Council savings of up to £150k. Whilst we recognised that budgetary decisions are a full Council decision, we were in a majority view that these savings could be delivered up towards the Council's overall savings target, with a minority view that this money should be spent elsewhere within Youth Services.

3. BACKGROUND

In September 2012 the then Children and Lifelong Scrutiny Committee considered current youth service provision, in particular the use of the Shoebury youth centre. From this debate it became clear that there were complex issues to consider as to how the youth service should be delivered by the Council and the voluntary sector going forward.

In March 2013 a cross-party Cabinet working party was established with the following terms of reference:

- (i) To develop a strategy to achieve a vibrant and growing youth provision across the town over the next decade in the context of reducing financial public sector resources.
- (ii) To explore fully costed models for the delivery of youth services, researching national and regional best practice.

- (iii) To engage and consult with young people, parents/carers and community sectors both voluntary and private providers in developing models.
- (iv) To ensure that any proposals maximise use of Council buildings and take into account the potential for shared localised delivery.
- (v) To make recommendations to Cabinet on the future provision of youth services across the town.

4. ISSUES CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 National and legal context

Section 507B of the Education & Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities' to secure services and activities for young people. However, government does not prescribe which services and activities local authorities should fund or deliver or to what level. They do state however that local authorities should determine which services and facilities are publicly funded and which will be secured through other means so that public funding is targeted primarily on young people at risk of poor outcomes.

Furthermore, current National Policy determines that local authority provided youth services have three main roles:

- (i) to make sure young people at risk of dropping out of learning or not achieving their full potential engage and attain in education or training;
- (i) to prevent crime and risky behaviours such as teenage pregnancy and substance misuse which can undermine young people's life chances and have a cost to wider society; and
- (ii) to provide opportunities for those who don't otherwise acquire them to develop the personal and social skills and qualities they need for learning, work and transition to adulthood. These skills include self-regulation, relationship-building, and decision-making. And that local authorities in particular will want to consider:
 - how they involve young people and parents in shaping services;
 - how they can build the capacity of community groups to offer clubs and other personal and social development opportunities not publicly funded;

- how available resources can be best targeted – including the potential role of open access youth centres in deprived areas including Myplace centres.

4.2 Council Context

Given the current challenging financial constraints Council services must be targeted at those most in need with the Council to supporting and encouraging community provision to meet universal need.

The Council has to continue to find significant savings. Therefore all services, including the youth service, need to be delivered in the most effective way.

4.3 The views of young people

The working party commissioned a survey of the views of young people currently accessing services. The findings of this survey are included in appendix 1. The most significant finding from this is that those young people to whom Council run youth services should be directed – those most risk of anti-social behaviour, offending or NEET - are least likely to be using the youth centres and most likely to engage with youth work interventions brought to them.

Working party members also fed in to the discussion their own understanding of the views of young people from their constituency work.

4.4 The activity and costs for the current youth centres

These are detailed in appendix 1.

The working party recognised the efforts that have been made at the Shoebury Centre to maximise its use by the private and voluntary sector. The centre's steering group have identified that the size of many of the rooms are limiting the potential use of the centre. Their view is that remodelling the inside of the building is the best way forward to maximise the use of the centre and income that it can generate.

The working party also considered that there is now no re-provision of the Focus building through the building of a new Tesco. A condition survey has been completed on the current Focus building and the total estimated cost to get the building fit for purpose is £525,185.00 over 10 years.

The current usage of the centre does not warrant this level of capital investment.

The working party wanted to ensure that youth activities are sustained and enhanced across all areas of the town and in particular our most deprived areas (e.g. Victoria). The working party also wanted to ensure that youth provision continues and develops in the Leigh area, given the closure of the Leigh Youth Centre.

4.5 Survey of current youth provision in the voluntary sector

The working party commissioned a mapping exercise of provision across the town, outside of the Council provision. This is in Appendix 1.

Whilst this could not be an exhaustive mapping, given the time and resource constraints, it does demonstrate the breadth of provision. This provision needs to be better communicated and young people need a more accessible way of searching for provision in their areas. The Council has a role to offer the community sector advice and support to assist it to develop further.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Background information considered by the working party.