

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 30TH APRIL, 2018

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 26TH MARCH, 2018

“ RESHAPING OF YOUTH SERVICES (REF) –

The report detailed the necessity to change the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Support Services in order to meet the expectations of the National Youth Strategy and the Welsh Government’s Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS) Framework guidance for Local Education Authorities. Cabinet had considered the report at its meeting on 19th February, 2018 and also considered the young people’s recommendations for changes to youth provision in the context of the overall proposals for developing the Vale Youth Offer. Cabinet approval had been sought to implement changes to the way in which the service was delivered and structured subject to a period of engagement and consultation with staff, trade unions and young people. Cabinet had agreed that the proposals including the development of partnerships with national voluntary youth organisations and community groups be approved in principle as a basis for referral for consideration to the Scrutiny Committee prior to making final determinations.

The Lead officer for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing prior to providing a PowerPoint presentation informed Committee for clarification purpose that the department was not closing all youth provisions but will be reconfiguring the service. Young people had been consulted on the delivery of the service and the factors that had been considered were :

- EOTAS (Educated other than at school)
- Sufficiency audit on universal services and the youth offer
- Strength of the Voluntary sector in the Vale and the vagaries of funding
- Professional registration of staff with EWC
- Co - production of services greater value for money
- Scope for growth
- Meeting needs of young people
- Support for schools
- Children’s Commissioner / Assembly Member emphasis on universal provision.

A summary of the timeline of key activities for the project were set out at paragraph 52 of the report with implementation of changes scheduled for August/September 2018 which included a timeline provided for opportunity to engage with not only the Scrutiny Committee but staff and the trade unions on the proposed operating model. The Lead Officer stated that the Youth Service provision was presented under two themes being targeted and inclusion and Universal Access services. Universal Access Services employed 67 staff, operated 50 weeks per annum and was

delivered during week days, weekends and over the school holidays. The cornerstone of the service was the voluntary engagement of young people.

The current curriculum needed to be more challenging and varied in order to engage more effectively with young people. Universal services were on offer to young people aged 11-25 and were available on a voluntary basis, after school hours at traditional community based youth clubs, participation projects, holiday schemes and through project work. The service was delivered from community halls, schools and youth hubs across the Vale of Glamorgan. The service was predominately part time and offered after 6pm in three-hour sessions. The service was drop-in and was available to young people voluntarily. Young people attended when they choose to and as often as they wished. The purpose was to assist in the transition into adulthood and to provide a curriculum of personal and social education. This was determined by the Principles and Purposes of Youth work as prescribed by the National Youth Strategy (Appendix A).

The Targeted and Inclusion Service offered direct support to young people aged 11-25 who were identified as being involved in anti-social behaviour and were at high risk of becoming involved in crime. Support was also aimed at young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or those identified at risk of becoming NEET, including looked after children (LAC).

Changes to the structure of the Youth Service would have the most impact on the universal aspect of provision. There would need to be changes to how staff worked in order to support the quality and consistency of delivery. This would include improved recording of the impact and outcomes of the service and greater responsiveness to delivering services in line with the needs of young people. The service would support the Council Wellbeing Strategy and become more supportive of schools and address local community issues. Welsh Government had recognised this model as one which, drove up standards. By making such changes the Council could deliver an improved service and have a greater impact than at present.

The Local Authority was mindful that the policy changes described above required further collaboration or commissioning of services with external service providers in order to deliver the enhanced 'Youth Offer'. A number of well-established voluntary sector providers had ceased to operate in recent years.

The Lead Officer advised that the new model outlined in the proposal would seek to build on the current areas of provision which were successfully commissioned or provided collaboratively with national voluntary organisations and these included:

- the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in schools which is managed under direct licensing arrangements with Duke of Edinburgh Award Wales;
- Welsh language provision which is provided by Urdd Gobiath Cymru;
- outdoor pursuit and sports leadership courses which are delivered in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales.

The Council would also seek to further develop these provisions with well-established local community groups as there were several community based youth clubs who had a thriving membership with whom the service had a good working

relationship. Of note, with support the groups could apply for grant funding such as the Strong Communities Grant Fund. The Committee was further informed that the structure of the service was being proposed would alleviate the current stress factors under the existing service. It would also ensure the services offered provided greater consistency in delivering the Youth Offer, improved outcomes and impact on the lives of young people and communities and improve opportunities to access external funding together with an opportunity to seek business sponsorship.

The proposals were also consistent with the Council's Reshaping Services programme which sought to mitigate the impact of reduced financial resources and increasing service demand by evaluating and adopting alternative forms of service delivery model to protect priority services.

The proposal would include a restructuring of staff contracts and would increase staff hours and reduce the number of part time rolls. Staff would also act in a mobile or peripatetic manner supporting more than one provision in any one week. Staff would be expected to support activities organised by their work colleagues on an out of county or Vale-wide nature for example Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. The proposal would also recommend the disposal of Llantwit Major Youth Club premises. The centre had been listed for disposal for some time and leasing consultation of moving the PRU into the premises was not approved which had resulted in determination of disposal as a reality. Therefore the building had been listed for sale.

In referring to savings and risks, the Lead Officer stated that the loss of management roles from the structure would provide more operational staff but would put staff at risk of redundancy. The reduction of part time roles would result in staff at risk of redundancies. The development of community groups and sustainability issues was a potential risk, however, there had been some success in this area with community libraries attracting up to £1m additional funding. With regard to future possible incomes partnership with voluntary sectors could lead to grant funding of projects and growth and provide opportunity to link to businesses. The partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh Award would assist with outdoor pursuit training and leadership course funding and the greater co-production would offer an opportunity to grant community projects and attract grant funding.

A Member sought clarity in relation to the registration of youth workers with the Lead Officer advising that part time staff should have a Level 2 qualification as a minimum although the local authority recommended Level 3 and professional staff Level 3 or above including Degrees and Masters Degrees. This prompted a further question in relation to if the local authority was working with other community groups would they have to be Members of the Education Workforce Council. Although this was not a requirement the Lead officer stated as a Council we would be advising that they were.

The Chairman then asked the representative from the Trade Union, Unison to make their representations to the Committee. Ms. S. Townsend-Ryan advised that the national strategy recognised open access and that the current youth workers had the relevant qualifications and were registered with the Workforce Council. However, if the proposals were accepted, in the rural areas, the contact via youth workers would be with unregistered officers. She also stated that over a quarter of young people

were unaware of the universal services and that young people lived in a digital world and for a number of years a promise had been that advertising would take place on social media. However, this had not taken place. The problems she advised were in the back filling of spaces and that there would be problems to fill the hours proposed. The report also referred to the need to restructure the Youth Service with volunteers but she advised that the service should be supplemented not replaced.

Following a query re clarification, the Union representative advised that in terms of comments made re universal access and would this be the end of the qualified youth worker the suggestion was that as it would no longer be universal therefore it would not be a youth worker doing the work.

In response to queries relating to recruitment and back filling of positions Members were advised that currently the service provided 6190 hours but with the changes being proposed the future hours would be in excess of 8200 and this would make a considerable difference to the service provided to young people. There would not be as many part time positions but the number of hours would increase.

In referring to Llantwit Major Youth Centre a Member queried the running costs of the building and was advised that these were in excess of £20,000. Should a Community Asset Transfer application be made there was the possibility that the Council could itself consider provide rate relief to a group/charity organisation if they decided to take on the service. The Youth Service Department would also support a community group in their endeavours.

The Chairman referred to a letter which she had received from a local community group who had missed the deadline for registering to speak at the meeting. She would refer the queries to the officer for a response as the group were interested in developing future provision in Llantwit Major. The Lead Officer confirmed that there were a number of groups interested in the project and that he would be more than pleased to work with them if they wished to engage with the Council. He stated that there had been a significant interest in the Llantwit Major premises and Town Council had also expressed an interest.

Following a query from the Chairman as to whether the Lead Officer would commit to continued provision, the Lead Officer advised he had made a commitment to the Colwinston Group and until they were ready to take over the service the Youth Service provision would continue and that commitment could also be given to other support groups.

In further querying the qualification in relation to the Education Workforce Council registration, the Lead Officer stated that he would encourage any group to adopt the Vale of Glamorgan training approach. The Council would also check on the persons appointed to see that they were who they said they were and whether there were any issues. It was an approach they wished to ensure took place although he could not force people to register. However, he was aware that national groups already insisted that their staff were registered.

A Member of the Committee also stated that they had been a volunteer in various capacities and that the enthusiasm of people at the start of an initiative was

commendable but on occasions as it became too difficult volunteers fell by the wayside. Although noting that recruitment of volunteers was an issue the Leader officer reassured Members that the department would continue to support and work with community groups.

In referring to the costs for the Council on the number of redundancies the Lead Officer could not commit to a figure as the detail of the actual number of personnel who may leave or remain with the service could not be given at this stage. There were also some issues in relation to the number of redundancies and legal advice was being sought.

A Member, although aware that the increase in hours was important for the service, sought reassurance that the hours were being worked and not lost to unproductive hours for example driving from one place to another place. This the Lead officer stated would be addressed.

Following a query as to whether the young people would have to be members of clubs it was confirmed that they could just drop in.

Councillor N. Moore with permission to speak, queried that if the services were going to be stopped in Penarth and Llantwit Major how would the services be delivered. The report referred to savings of £244,000 but the figures in his opinion did not appear to add up. The Lead Officer advised that the budget had saved £182,000 and the services would be delivered wherever the young people requested the service. If there was a need for a mobile service that would also be provided.

Following consideration of the question and answer session, the Chairman stated that she considered that there appeared to still be a significant amount of detail that needed to be provided in particular in relation to conversations with the Third Sector providers which had not yet taken place. The Chairman stated that the Committee would welcome such information. The Lead Officer however reiterated his concern that providing further information before the consultation was concluded would cause a further delay and that it was important to restructure the service to ensure that the staff were not kept waiting any longer.

Having considered the Lead Officers representations a Member queried whether it would be prudent for the Committee to approve the report and consider calling in the structure later in the process to avoid undue delay for staff. However, a number of Members considered that they needed more certainty with regard to the proposals and following a vote it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED - T H A T Cabinet be requested to forward the final proposal post consultation to the Committee for consideration prior to the final decision being made.

Reason for recommendation

The Committee felt there was certain detail that was required following the consultation in order to make an informed decision in particular with regard to potential providers.”