

To: Customer & Communities Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

By: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member, Customer & Communities and
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Subject: Youth Service Transformation

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper outlines the responses to the consultation and corresponding recommendations for the transformation of Kent Youth Service

1. Introduction

In March 2011, Cabinet Members were asked to consider the concept of a new model of delivery for Kent Youth Service which aligned with the Bold Steps for Kent by: placing citizens more in control of deciding upon and delivering local services which are important to them; growing the Kent economy by promoting the development of new, community lead social enterprises; supporting vulnerable young people by the provision of open-access youth work through which they can gain additional support when required.

A model to deliver this philosophy was developed ready for public consultation and authorisation to carry out that process was given by Cabinet on 18 July 2011. The consultation ran from 1 August to 29 October 2011 and sought to gather the views of young people, staff, partners and communities on the proposed new methodology for the delivery of youth work activities.

The proposed model identified the potential core elements of Kent County Council's delivery and, importantly, identified the expected outcomes from the provision of youth work on a local level. The model also sought public opinion on the development of a commissioning budget for the procurement of youth work at a local level.

2. Consultation findings

A report on the findings of the consultation has been prepared in order to provide the evidence and recommendations for a Cabinet Member Decision in relation to the transformation of Kent's Youth Services. This report has now been published at www.kent.gov.uk/youth

The consultation received more than 700 responses via letter, e-mail and an online questionnaire; the responses came from a range of individuals and organisations. In addition information meetings were held during the consultation with staff, young people, partner organisations and each of the 12 emerging Locality Boards.

Key findings from the consultation across the county were as follows (additional detail by reference to each of the 12 borough/districts of Kent is available in the full report):

- (a) The strength of attachment within local communities to youth work provision in their areas.
- (b) Strong support at every stage of the consultation for continuing the delivery of open-access youth work.
- (c) Significant support for the concept of Youth Hubs, although in some areas there is a genuine debate over location. In one borough, there is no absolute sign up to the proposed new delivery model at this time although there is clear support for further discussion and work to take place in early 2012.
- (d) Clear support for increasing the resources given to voluntary and community groups to deliver youth services.
- (e) Responses supported the need to define outcomes at a local level and work with key partners.
- (f) For some communities, the youth centre building played a key role in delivering services.
- (g) New developments in how KCC works more closely with local areas, notably through the introduction of Locality Boards, provides an opportunity to ensure that local youth work outcome frameworks can be endorsed by those democratically elected representatives who are best placed to understand the needs and aspirations of their communities.

In addition to analysis and conclusions relating to the consultation, the full report sets out the results of detailed Equalities Impact Assessment which will need to form part of the future development of local outcomes frameworks.

3. Recommendations

Having considered the results of the consultation, and taken particular note of the importance of engaging Locality Boards in local decision making for service delivery, a recommendation has been made to the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities that Kent County Council exercises its statutory duty to provide educational leisure-time activities by:

- (a) Proceeding with the implementation of a new model of service delivery that will combine the best of KCC's work through the delivery of a core KCC offer of open-access youth work alongside local commitment, energy and creativity supported by a newly created commissioning fund.

- (b) Continue the delivery of key county services which offer a range of opportunities to young people through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Kent Youth County Council and Kent's Outdoor Education centres.
- (c) KCC undertaking joint work with boroughs/districts to define what youth work provision is required at a local level during the first months of 2012. During this process exploring and identifying where common outcomes can assist in aligning budgets and resources for the commissioning process.
- (d) KCC Officers seeking the endorsement of Locality Boards for local youth work outcome frameworks during March 2012.
- (e) Developing a commissioning framework which ensures the equality of opportunity for small and emerging organisations and social enterprises when tendering to deliver youth work activities within their communities.
- (f) Allocating funds for the commissioning of youth work activities at a district or borough level using the methodology of the Resource Allocation Model.
- (g) KCC, district and borough officers and Locality Boards ensuring the engagement of young people as decision-makers and evaluators of directly delivered and commissioned youth work activities.
- (h) KCC, district and borough officers and Locality Boards taking full account of the recommendations of the Equality Impact Assessment when agreeing outcomes frameworks and commissioning youth work activities for young people.
- (i) KCC's Property Group developing a means by which voluntary and community organisations will be able to lease buildings (at a sustainable cost and with suitable length of lease) in time for the approval of the commissioning process on 1 April 2012.
- (j) Shaping and implementing the new model by 1 January 2013 in close co-operation with colleagues in the boroughs and districts and other partner organisations to ensure that local needs and priorities remain at the heart of what young people will be able to access.

4. Next Steps

Once the decision to act upon these recommendations has been made, Kent County Council will be free to engage with district and borough councils in developing a clear understanding of what youth work provision is required at a local level and where this will be based.

Once local outcomes have been agreed, the development of an approach to commissioning based upon a 'framework agreement' will be developed in order to ensure that interested groups will have the greatest opportunity to submit applications whilst making sure that the process does not discourage smaller or less experienced applicants.

To date, the initial £1.2m identified through changing delivery models has been further enhanced by additional funds from the Early Intervention Grant for the

delivery of positive activities for young people allowing a increased 'starting point' for commissioning with an intention to attempt to develop this further in discussion with district and borough councils and other agencies.

The commissioning of local provision will take place with a view to commencing a new model of service delivery from 1 January 2013.

- Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

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