

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 16 JULY 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGY**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To recommend an updated Flintshire Youth Service Strategy in order to develop and enhance the service delivered to young people in Flintshire.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

2.01 Wales is the only Country in Europe to have a statutory basis for the Youth Service. Welsh Government amendments to the Learning and Skills Act 2000 place a duty on Local Authorities to provide Youth Support Services. The service contributes to Flintshire County Council Improvement Plan priorities for Skills and Learning and Living well and Overcoming Poverty. It leads on the secondary priority of ensuring young people fulfil their potential.

2.02 This Youth Service Strategy document is focused on the provision of high quality, responsive and accessible services as a universal entitlement with a particular emphasis on the assets. A high quality Youth Service will contribute to improving the quality of life and well-being of Flintshire's young people. The development of young people's skills through informal and non-formal learning experiences will also contribute to educational achievement and to the County's economic prosperity.

2.03 The Youth Service has a strong history of working in partnership. It is committed to working with young people and with partners across sectors to make universal entitlement a reality for Flintshire's communities. The Flintshire Youth Service Strategy gives a vision of providing young people with opportunities to participate, learn, develop and engage in their communities.

2.04 Future Service development needs to be part of a coherent plan, setting out the core values and principles of Youth Work and providing a framework for its direction. The plan will be based on a clear analysis of current needs and wants identified through a review process and engagement with young people shaping Service

provision across the county and in localities. Particular emphasis will be a review of buildings currently maintained by the Youth Service, many of which are not fit for purpose in meeting the needs of a modern Youth Service. The cost of maintaining these assets, some of which are under utilised, diverts scarce financial resources from the front-line service to Young People.

- 2.05 The Service has 28 youth clubs, of which 14 are in purpose built centres, 3 are in secondary schools and the remainder are in a variety of rented accommodation. The youth clubs are open for one or two sessions each week, nominally for 52 weeks of the year with the addition of holiday programmes in some communities. Youth clubs are open for two and a half hours with staff being paid 3 hours to allow for preparation, clearing away and necessary administration and record keeping.
- 2.06 As well as working with young people in youth clubs, the service is delivered in a variety of other settings.
- 2.07 The detached/outreach team meet with young people in their localities and communities recognising that youth work can take place anywhere. They talk to and consult with them and can maintain regular contact for as long as it is deemed appropriate.
- 2.08 The Youth Forum Worker works with young people to address their issues and concerns providing an environment in which they can enjoy themselves, feel secure, supported and valued. They increase in confidence, express their views and opinions enabling them to have a voice and an influence in the services provided for them.
- 2.09 The Information Workers provide relevant advice, advocacy, information and guidance. There has been a massive increase in Social Networking in recent years and it is a challenge for the Service to respond to the way young people communicate and engage with each other. (e.g. Young Flintshire website, Facebook)
- 2.10 Youth Workers in schools help young people to develop key skills and enable young people to achieve accredited outcomes by providing learning opportunities in a more informal style of delivery.
- 2.11 The Duke of Edinburgh Worker is now delivering programmes in all the County's High Schools coordinating provision at bronze, silver and gold levels. In addition young people can access the D of E Award at the Open Award Centre in Mold.
- 2.12 The Service can also offer targeted provision for specific groups including those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS), Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transsexual or Questioning (LGBTQ), Black & Ethnic Minorities (BEM), Gypsy Travellers and those at risk of exclusion or involved with anti-social behaviour.

2.13 Estyn, in the 2011 Local Authority inspection concluded that:

'The Youth Service, in partnership with Careers Wales, makes a significant contribution to the programme of support for learners identified as being at risk of becoming young people not in employment, education or training. Effective partnership working between inclusion welfare officers and schools across Flintshire has contributed to a clear pattern of improvement in attendance and behaviour in secondary schools.'

And:

'There are effective links between the local authority's Children and Young People's Partnership and the network to ensure a coherent approach to the planning and delivery of provision for young people in Flintshire. The youth support service makes a valuable contribution to the work of the network, for example through its range of programmes to assist individuals and groups to remain within mainstream education and gain formal accreditation'

2.14 The service maintains a range of performance indicators, including in 2012:

- 2,969 young people between the ages 11 -25 registered as members of youth clubs taking part in a variety of sporting, arts and drama activities as well as being involved in issued based work.
- 273 young people achieved nationally recognised accreditations (about 10%).
- 1340 young people registered with the D of E Scheme through the 13 High Schools and the Open Award Centre in Mold. 151 young people achieved the bronze, 20 silver and 4 gold Awards in 2012. This exceeded the 10% increase target set by the National Body.
- two youth workers, based in John Summers High School, work with pupils in years 10/11 who are risk of disengagement or self exclusion. 24 participants gained a Youth Challenge Award.
- 26 outlets which offer the C Card (contraceptive card) with 407 new cards being issued in 2012. There were 832 visits by males and 377 by females.
- a partnership between the Youth Service, St David's High School and Maes Hyfryd has resulted in 21 Asdan Youth Activity Awards, 9 Asdan Peer Mentoring Awards and 14 Millennium Volunteer Awards.

- 430 young people took part in the summer holiday schemes delivered in partnership with Theatre Clwyd and Sports Wales. 30 obtained Youth Achievement Awards.
- the Quality Assurance Team has monitored Youth Service provision with 6 full inspections and 11 random inspections in 2012. Out of these full inspections, 3 received a grade 1, 2 received a grade 2 and 1 received a grade 3.
- the service has targets to increase the number of young people attaining local and national accreditation to 15% of those attending youth clubs. It aims to increase the number of D of E silver and gold awards by 10% and increase our work with schools by having youth workers attached to all High Schools. The planned restructure will enable the service to do this with full time and substantive part time staff available to work during the day.

2.15 The Service works with town councils, community councils and other partners in the 3rd sector to extend the core provision particularly during school holidays. It works with other organisations like the Young Farmers and Menter Iaith where they have a strong presence in communities, provides financial support to help them work with young people. In addition, the Service works with numerous other voluntary groups and organisations through the Revenue Grant to help deliver more varied and effective youth provision. Full list of partners is provided in Appendix B.

2.16 The Service has a licence with Quality Education Solutions Ltd for a Management Information System that enables the Service to record all necessary data, collate and analyse the data and make informed decisions with regard to the take up and future direction of provision.

2.17 The Purpose and Values of Youth Work
The key purpose of youth work is to “enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential”

2.18 Youth work in Wales is based primarily on a voluntary relationship between young people and youth workers. The Youth Service is a universal entitlement, open to all young people within the specified age range 11-25.

2.19 The type, mix and priorities of youth work are determined on a local, national and organisational level and the establishment of appropriate provision should be determined by the needs, wants, interests and aspirations of young people.

2.20 Youth work provides or facilitates:

- places and relationships within which young people can enjoy themselves, feel secure, supported and valued, learn to take greater control of their lives, and recognise and resist the damaging influences which may affect them;
- non-formal, informal and structured educational programmes which challenge both the institutions and young people themselves to enhance their personal, social and political development;
- access to relevant information, advice, guidance and counselling which includes the understanding of rights and responsibilities.

2.21 The purposes of youth work in Wales are:

- to promote and actively encourage opportunities for all young people in order that they may fulfil their potential as empowered individuals and as members of groups and communities;
- to support young people through significant changes in their lives and assist them to understand their rights and responsibilities;
- to support young people to be able to understand and exercise their rights;
- to encourage young people to gain and develop knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values and to make constructive use of their skills, resources and time.
- To promote opportunities and access for all young people whatever their race, gender, sexual identity, language, religion, disability, age, background or personal circumstances.

Source: Youth Work in Wales: Principles and Purpose (2013).

2.22 Vision Statement for the Youth Service

“Flintshire Youth Service will work with partner agencies for all young people of Flintshire while maintaining a particular focus on providing opportunities for personal and social development, and encouraging individuals to acquire core skills, and nurture the development of personal values enabling them to achieve their fullest potential and make a positive contribution to their community.”

2.23 This vision will be achieved by acknowledging the rights and entitlements of young people to participate in quality universal, open access youth work.

- 2.24 1 Flintshire Youth Service understands the need for the majority of its work to be concentrated on 'Universal Entitlement'. (e.g. Youth Clubs, Detached Youth Work, Forum Work, Lunchtime Clubs etc).
- 2.25 However Flintshire Youth Service also recognises the need to work with young people in ways and at venues not traditionally associated with Youth Work.
- 2.26 2 This includes 'Targeted Work' (e.g. BEM, LGBTQ, Gypsy Travellers, NEETS those potentially at risk of exclusion or Anti Social Behaviour).
- 2.27 3 Flintshire Youth Service also believes that it has a role to play within the Formal Education System (e.g. Schools, PRUs & Colleges) to develop key skills with a more informal style of delivery.
- 2.28 These 3 strands of work, Universal Entitlement, Targeted Work, and Schools Work are fundamental in the development of the Youth Service delivery plans.
- 2.29 Opportunities for accreditation exist in all 3 strands, with schools' work giving the greatest opportunity for the delivery and recognition of accredited outcomes.
- 2.30 Strategic Priorities
The Strategic Priorities for the Youth Service are:
- agreed direction and focus for the device and expansion of the models of effective practice currently being provided by the Youth Service.
 - the matching of resources to identified needs including securing reduced management overheads and premises costs.
 - sustainability of provision, through increased and redirected core investment.
 - high quality service provision, underpinned by rigorous performance management systems and the development of a culture of continuous feedback and improvement from our service users and partners; and
 - equality of access to service provision.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 Key recommendations for service provision include operating an expanded programme, including:

- 25 -30 individual traditional evening based youth clubs with open access. These will be open 1, 2, 3, or 4 evenings per week depending upon local need and uptake of provision. They would also act as information points for young people;
- 10-15 x ½ days per week of delivery in Schools. This will include D of E, wider key skills, peer education projects and internet safety advice and training, along with early intervention for those at risk of becoming NEET;
- 2-3 weekly D of E Open Award Centres, building on the increase in demand and take up over recent years;
- 1-2 evenings and daytime provision of the Youth Forum. This would also include working with hard to reach groups and those under represented in the local communities of Flintshire. Dependant on uptake this project may be enlarged with the main aim on integrating these young people into mainstream provision where appropriate.
- 2-3 sessions per week delivering tailored support to NEETS (in partnership with Careers Wales)
- 2-3 information outlets available during the day offering access to information relevant to young people.
- In-house and external training for young people e.g. Junior Workers, Internet safety, youth inspectors etc.
- In-house and external training for members of staff e.g. JNC recognised qualifications in youth work, Child protection, 1st aid, MIDAS, managing confrontation etc.
- The reintroduction of residential experiences for Young People both In-County, Out of County and International exchanges.

3.02 Service Accommodation

It is recognised that the Youth Service currently has responsibility for a number of buildings that are no longer fit for purpose through reduced service demand or condition.

The Council needs to plan to ensure that buildings necessary for the core operational network are developed to 21st Century Standards.

Youth clubs will be planned to be open during term time to reflect the needs of young people and based on the management information. Work will be undertaken to maximise sessional work through planning provision in partnership with voluntary sector bodies and town and community councils.

The Youth Service will work with others on development of flexible approaches to service delivery with partners and volunteer groups to provide holiday, leisure and culture programmes and other provision where there is a demand.

The youth clubs programme together with leisure and culture programmes throughout the year will be made accessible through both web and social media approaches.

Youth Clubs will only be decommissioned where a review (overseen by the Cabinet member) has been undertaken due to low participation numbers and following marketing and local partnership working approaches having been exhausted.

Buildings that are no longer required will be reviewed through corporate management arrangements, where options include community asset transfer where there are viable and sustainable community uses. This strategy accords with the policy of reducing Council liabilities for backlogs of repairs and maintenance and making savings which can be more usefully directed to safeguarding front line Council service provision.

3.03 Implementation of these actions will achieve the following:

- a modern, high quality range of provision across the county;
- increased capacity to reach more young people and promote a greater take up of the Service;
- flexible and responsive deployment of staffing;
- establishment of fit for purpose buildings; and
- a high profile for the Service within the Council and within key strategic partnerships; and
- recognition of the value of high quality youth work in responding to a wide range of needs.

3.04 Lettings Charges

The Council Executive agreed in March 2010 a 3-year incremental programme of increases to Youth Centre Lettings Charges. This period ended in March 2013. Whilst recognising the endeavour of the Authority to support community groups, including playgroups, in relation to the use of our buildings, the current scheme creates the effect of subsidising community groups from the Youth Service budget at a cost to service delivery. An increase in charges is required to reflect the costs absorbed by the Youth Service. Implementation needs to be coordinated with services supporting community groups,

including early years. This will be addressed through a report which addresses not only Youth Service needs, but also other groups.

3.05 Summary

The Service Plan needs to build on existing strengths of the Youth Service working across the 11-25 age range to:

- ensure the Youth Service makes the right and proper contribution to Welsh Government policies including Extending Entitlement and 14-19 Learning Pathways, Children and Young People: Rights to Action, The Learning Country: Vision into Action, Delivering beyond the Boundaries (Beecham), Communities First, and the All Wales Youth Offending Strategy;
- enhance the ability of the Youth Service to deliver a wide range of non-formal and informal learning opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-25 in a number of venues and locations during the evenings, daytime and weekends.
- Re-organise the staffing structure to reflect the needs of a modern and responsive service.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That members approve the report and approve the document as a strategy for the improvement and development of the Youth Service for young people in Flintshire including the vision, strategic priorities, efficient provision and to support further consultation with scrutiny and the relevant service stakeholder groups.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 This strategy sets out ways of ensuring that the service enhances front-line delivery and reduces management costs is delivered in appropriate environments and that savings may be made by not supporting under used accommodation. However, given the Council's revenue and capital pressures it cannot be assumed that the service at this level is sustainable in the long term. In common with all Council services, it will be subject to future review and possible reprioritisation.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The strategy will enable the Youth Service to work with more young people and in better environments. Increasing contact time with those Not in Education, Employment or Training and offering support and accreditation in an informal environment.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 There will be a positive impact with environmental awareness activities in youth club sessions and conservation projects with Groundwork North Wales.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 There will be an increase in direct and targeted access for more young people.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Some impact on personnel as a result of structural changes.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Consultation will take place with relevant partners, including individual communities and elected members.

10.02 Consultation will take place with young people. Welsh Government's Extending Entitlement agenda states that every young person in Wales has a basic entitlement to: "the right to be consulted, to participate in decision making, and to be heard on all matters which concern them or have an impact on their lives"

11.00 APPENDICES

Appendix A - Attendance figures for summer months 2010, 2011 & 2012

Appendix B – List of Partners

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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