

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM 7

REPORT TO CABINET

15 JUNE 2006

REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION

Children and Young People- Lead Cabinet Member- Councillor Cunningham

YOUTH MATTERS: NEXT STEPS

1. Summary

In July 2005 the Government published its Green Paper 'Youth Matters' that set out a vision to transform the lives of every young person through a radical reshaping of provision. Following consultation with key stakeholders, including young people, Stockton-on-Tees Council submitted its views on the Youth Matters proposals in October. In March 2006 the Government published its response to the national consultation in 'Youth Matters: Next Steps'. This report details:

- the key messages in 'Youth Matters: Next Steps';
- the proposed arrangements for the use of the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Capital Fund;
- the consultation that has taken place on services to support young people;
- the work that has been done with partners on developing local integrated youth support services;
- a proposal on how a local youth offer might be delivered in the context of geographically based Extended School clusters and Integrated Service Areas.

2. Recommendations

- (i) Cabinet agrees to officers undertaking consultation with all stakeholders on the proposals set out in the report for the development of a local youth offer through the development of integrated youth support services and, that a report detailing the outcomes of the consultation, with a proposed structure for developing and delivering local integrated youth support services, is considered at a future meeting of Cabinet and the Children's Trust Board.
- (ii) A report detailing the local implications and implementation of any future guidance issued by the Government is considered by Cabinet and the Children's Trust Board when the guidance becomes available.
- (iii) Cabinet agrees the allocation of £113,272 released by the Department for Education and Skills for the Youth Capital Fund be included in the Council's 2006-2007 Capital Programme.
- (iv) Cabinet supports the proposed arrangements for the deployment of the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Capital Fund and that a further report on the

potential location of subsequent youth cafes is brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The Children's Trust will be expected to deliver the Government's vision to transform the lives of all young people by empowering them to be at the heart of service design and delivery and by enabling them to have easy access the services they need. In order to deliver a local youth offer that enables all young people to receive the support they need to become responsible and productive young citizens it is necessary to develop a more integrated approach to service delivery across all service providers, informed by the views of young people. It is also necessary that systems are developed and put into place to enable all young people to make positive decisions about the things that are important to them and the use of resources to meet their priorities.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (paragraph 8) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (paragraph 10 of the code of conduct).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held, whilst the matter is being considered; not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (paragraph 12 of the Code).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc.; whether or not they are a member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting, and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room during consideration of the relevant item.

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MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION

YOUTH MATTERS: NEXT STEPS

SUMMARY

In July 2005 the Government published its Green Paper 'Youth Matters' that set out a vision to transform the lives of every young person through a radical reshaping of provision. Following consultation with key stakeholders, including young people, Stockton-on-Tees Council submitted its views on the Youth Matters proposals in October. In March 2006 the Government published its response to the national consultation in 'Youth Matters: Next Steps'. This report details:

- the key messages in 'Youth Matters: Next Steps';
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- the work that has been done with partners on developing local integrated youth support services;
- a proposal on how a local youth offer might be delivered in the context of geographically based Extended School clusters and Integrated Service Areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet agrees to officers undertaking consultation with all stakeholders on the proposals set out in the report for the development of a local youth offer through the development of integrated youth support services and, that a report detailing the outcomes of the consultation, with a proposed structure for developing and delivering local integrated youth support services, is considered at a future meeting of Cabinet and the Children's Trust Board.
2. A report detailing the local implications and implementation of any future guidance issued by the Government is considered by Cabinet and the Children's Trust Board when the guidance becomes available.
3. Cabinet agrees the allocation of £113,272 released by the Department for Education and Skills for the Youth Capital Fund be included in the Council's 2006-2007 Capital Programme.
4. Cabinet supports the proposed arrangements for the deployment of the Youth Opportunities Fund (£130,962) and the Youth Capital Fund (£113,272) and that a further report on the potential location of subsequent youth cafes is brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

DETAIL

1. In July 2005 the Government published the Green Paper, 'Youth Matters', that sets out a vision to transform the lives of every young person through a radical reshaping of provision. To inform the Council's response a series of local consultation events with key stakeholders, including young people, were held and the formal response was considered, and approved by Cabinet, in November 2005 and sent to the Department for Education and Skills. Further details of the views that emerged at the two seminars held in September 2005 are attached as Appendix 1 to the report.
2. In March 2006, following an unprecedented consultation response, Youth Matters: Next Steps (Something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk to....) was finally published. The proposals in Youth Matters were welcomed overall. The vast majority of people strongly supported its main theme – the engagement of young people in shaping local services. 19,021 young people responded and an additional 5000 from group consultations. 1,045 responses were received from organisations, professionals and parents. A summary of the national consultation statistics is attached to the report at Appendix 2
3. The proposals in Youth Matters, and the Government's response in 'Youth Matters: Next Steps' respond to four main challenges:

Empowering Young People: Things to do and places to go.

Statutory Duty and National Standards

Subject to Parliament, a new duty on local authorities will ensure that young people have access to a wide range of positive activities. There will be a strong local offer of 'places to go and things to do', in the context of national standards. There will be statutory guidance how the national standards relate to the new duty. Statutory guidance will not be issued until late 2006 but a briefing should be available by Summer 2006. The annual local offer about the opportunities and activities available in an area will be covered in the statutory guidance.

The Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund

These initiatives will put funds directly into the hands of young people to spend on activities in their local area. They will work together at local level so that young people can develop projects using both streams of funding. Nationally a total of £115m is available over the next two years with Stockton-on-Tees being allocated £113,769 Youth Capital Fund and £130,962 Youth Opportunities Fund each year for 2006/07 and 2007/08. Separate guidance on the funds has been issued, stressing the importance of focusing on disadvantage. A summary of this is attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

Youth Opportunity Card

The Card is being piloted in 10 areas over the next two years. Two different amounts, are being tested: one at £12 a month and another in selected areas at £25, to identify the most effective level. The main aim in testing the Card is to find out whether giving young people spending power to engage in positive activities increases take-up and makes providers more responsive to young people's needs and wishes. The pilots are being developed to address the concerns from the consultation.

Supporting Choices: Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Wider Access

An integrated service will be built up that gives young people access to a variety of channels for information, advice and guidance, whether in learning, in the community or on the internet. A simple, innovative service is to be developed for young people using modern technology and including a helpline. The recommendations of the Women and Work Commission to improve IAG are welcomed and they will be reflected in the quality standards.

Quality Standards

There will be wide consultation during the development of new quality standards. Draft standards will be produced by November 2006 and a final version in April 2007.

Partnership

Children's trusts, schools and colleges should work in partnership and agree new arrangements for delivering these services. IAG arrangements will be kept under review to provide assurance about quality and impartiality.

Young People as Citizens: Volunteering

The new Russell Commission Implementation Body is making good progress: £600,000 has already been awarded under a small grants programme to 45 organisations; seven organisations are being funded to support capacity-building; organisations will be invited to bid to deliver a range of volunteering opportunities from Spring 2006 as the first stage in commissioning provision; the Implementation Body will look at ways in which young people's volunteering efforts are recognised. and how to accredit volunteering activity through the new qualifications framework will be explored with the Implementation Body, the Learning and Skills Council and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Children's Trusts will be encouraged, through guidance, to work closely with the Implementation Body in ensuring that volunteering opportunities are available in each area.

Peer mentoring schemes for young people in 180 secondary schools are being set up.

All young people achieving: Reforming targeted support

Testing about how integrated targeted support might be delivered has already commenced: targeted youth support pathfinders in 14 local authority areas are underway; a short intensive review of issues facing children's trusts in delivering targeted support has started; the action in the Respect Action Plan and the Social Exclusion Report Transitions to support vulnerable teenagers will be implemented.

These projects will report over the course of this year and more detailed guidance on integrated targeted support will be issued.

'Making it Happen'

Implementation will be completed by April 2008. Local partners will work through children's trust arrangements and plans for young people will be included in Children and Young People's Plans.

The children's trust will provide the local strategic vision and leadership for all policies, services and activities relating to young people.

The critical factors for achieving change include commissioning and contestability (including working with a range of partners including the voluntary and community sector and private sector) and the smooth transition of Connexions into the new arrangements. Parents must be engaged too.

Workforce development will be an important factor. The Children's Workforce Strategy supports delivery of Youth Matters. Professionals will need to work in different ways but it will be vital to preserve existing skills and expertise. The development of the workforce will be supported through leadership and management development, and through guidance on multi-agency working and the role of the Lead Professional.

Progress against the plans will be monitored through the improvement cycle for children's services. Central Government and Government Offices will provide advice and support in addressing youth issues.

4. LOCAL ACTION

The anticipated publication of the Green Paper 'Youth Matters' prompted consultation with young people about what it was like to be a teenager growing up in Stockton-on-Tees through the ezeelive questionnaire, which 800 young people completed. The results of this, and the authority's response to what the young people said will be fed back to young people and the Children's Trust Board at an event being planned for July. A range of consultation and young people's activities has taken a place since the 'Youth Matters' consultation, a brief summary of which is attached at Appendix 4 to the report.

5. The allocation of the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Capital Fund require that arrangements are in place to enable young people to determine the use of these grants. The conditions linked to this allocation of resources bring an element of urgency to utilising the funds. Whilst the annual capital resource allocation can, in part, be rolled forward from 2006/07 into 2007/08, resources cannot be rolled forward beyond that. In order to release the next tranche of the grant, the Authority will need to be able to demonstrate to Government Office after six months (September) that suitable arrangements and systems are being developed to place the decision making firmly in young people's hands.
6. The information emerging from the work of the Select Committee into Youth Clubs and the ezeelive questionnaire suggested that there was support from young people to develop the idea of 'youth café's' where they could 'chill out' with friends. Specific consultation on this showed that a significant majority of the young people who responded also supported this idea. The ezeelive questionnaire also showed that the other two priorities for young people centred on things to do near where they live.
7. It is proposed that:
 - the Youth Capital Fund in year one is primarily used to develop a centrally located Youth Café in the Connexions One-Stop Shop on Bishopton Lane and extend the mobile Youth Bus provision;
 - in year two, further Youth Café provision is developed elsewhere in the borough. A report detailing the options for this and the views of young people on where this should be located will be brought to Cabinet for consideration on where the provision should be developed;
 - in year two, five thousand pounds be given to each of two youth clubs for refurbishment and improvement, with the relevant young people's management committee determining how the funds should be utilised. This will enable the young people and the authority to monitor the impact of better quality youth provision on young people's participation and usage. It is suggested that the two youth clubs to receive the grant are identified by young people through the Youth Assembly framework.
8. For the Youth Opportunity Fund, it is proposed that in the first instance the now formally established and accredited Youth Bank, affiliated to the Stockton Youth Assembly, is initially the primary young people's decision making body for this grant. Members of the Youth Bank would be tasked with identifying effective ways of seeking representative views of all young people to inform their decision-making. (The use of Youth Banks is given as an exemplar of good practice in the guidance on the use of Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds.) Discussions have taken place, and agreement reached, with the Chairs of the Local Area Partnerships that feed into Renaissance, to have young people representation on the Area Boards. This in turn should facilitate the creation of local area Youth Banks that can determine how resources such as the Youth Opportunity Fund can be used to commission services at a more local level to meet young people's needs.

9. YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

In anticipation of the publication of Youth Matters: Next Steps, and since its issue in March 2006, exploratory discussions about its implications for local service delivery have been held with key managers of youth services from across the statutory and voluntary sectors. There have also been two practitioner events to raise awareness of the new youth agenda, identify existing successful cross -agency working and to identify the opportunities and challenges in developing the local youth offer. The views emerging from these discussions, the information that came from the stakeholder consultation events held in September, and the views of young people have been taken into account when developing the proposals for the future shape of youth services in Stockton-on-Tees that are attached at Appendix 5 to the report. Wide consultation with all stakeholders on the proposed direction of travel is now needed to reach agreement on the broad framework around which the youth offer will be designed and developed. Once a broad agreement is reached, detailed work on the service delivery model and structure will be undertaken to reflect the views of young people, their parents and carers and professionals in the context of local need, other initiatives such as Integrated Service Areas and the Extended Schools programme and future guidance from central government.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

In 2006/07 and 2007/08 grant is available through the Youth Opportunity Fund and the Youth Capital Fund (£229,234 in total for each year) to support young people in developing the activities and services they need.

As services to support young people work more closely together and realign to more effectively meet young people's needs it is anticipated that, in the first instance, pressure to develop services will be met from within existing resources. Any future identified financial pressures that cannot be met from existing available resources will be identified through the Medium Term Financial Planning process.

Legal

Children Act 2004

RISK ASSESSMENT

Developing a local youth offer to meet the requirements of Youth Matters: Next Steps is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

Links to Community Strategy across all thematic partnerships.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

All Ward Councillors were invited to attend the consultation seminars in September 2005 along with representatives from across all Children's Services. Members of the Education, Leisure and Culture Select Committee undertook a review of Youth Club provision in Stockton-on-Tees.

Young people have been consulted on general and specific issues as set out in Appendix 4.

Representatives from youth services across the statutory and voluntary sectors have been informally consulted on local issues and implications arising from Youth Matters: Next Steps.

Ward Councillors and all stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in the formal consultation process.

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Background Papers:

Youth Matters (July 2005)

Youth Matters: Next Steps (March 2006)

Report to Cabinet on Youth Matters Consultation Response (November 3 2005)

Report to Cabinet of the Select Committee on Youth Clubs (January 2006)

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: All Wards and Ward Councillors

Property

As more detailed work is undertaken on the development and delivery of services to support young people it is possible that there will be a need to provide a number of services to young people from a dedicated building and location. This may mean that suitable accommodation for this is identified and that existing accommodation is no longer needed.