

OPTION: **YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICES**

BUDGET SAVING: **£1,178,000**

DESCRIPTION OF OPTION

The option in this area is to review provision of Play Schemes, reduce the outreach service and integrate all youth clubs into the 4 main Youth Hubs, where services would be centralised. It is further proposed that the Youth Opportunity Fund should be stopped. This fund provides opportunities for organisations to bid for funding to deliver projects for young people. This service will be aligned with the New Youth Zone planned for Birkenhead.

RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS

DFE benchmarking data indicate that Universal Services for young people in Wirral are high cost - spend per head of £78 compared with a statistical neighbour average of £39.

Reviewing the provisions as detailed, a budget saving of £923,000 will be achieved within the Youth Service and £255,000 within the Play Service.

IMPACT

The proposal would reduce the number of easily accessible youth facilities. It would cease the Youth Opportunity Fund, close 11 Youth Clubs, reduce Outreach, Konnectabus and management and focus provision to young people around the 4 Youth Hubs. The New Youth Zone in Birkenhead will provide a major enhanced service for young people in Wirral.

The proposal would also impact greatly on the current level of staff within the service.

Withdrawing local authority resources from youth and play provision is sensitive. Most Youth Clubs have been in operation for decades and are well embedded in local communities and valued by them.

MITIGATION

There is potential for partners and the voluntary sector to provide services which would replace the reduction in Council services, which the Council could potentially help fund.

6.0 Other Risks