



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 15 June 2021

REPORT TITLE:	YOUTH OFFER
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an overview of proposals to implement an equitable, consistent, branded, neighbourhood youth offer for universal, open access provision. It is the final element of the Youth Offer Review to be actioned, following the consultation which took place in summer 2019 and the report to Cabinet in February 2020. The neighbourhood model responds to the views and wishes of local young people and outlines the contribution of the Local Authority, The Hive Youth Zone and other partners within the developing Wirral Youth Collective.

The report and strategy are aligned to priorities of Wirral Council's Plan 2025:

- Working for brighter futures for our children, young people and their families by breaking the cycle of poor outcomes and raising the aspirations of every child in Wirral.
- Working for safe and pleasant communities where our residents feel safe, and where they want to live and raise their families.
- Working for happy, active and healthy lives where people are supported, protected and inspired to live independently.

This matter affects residents across the borough.

This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to give delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services to carry out actions for the delivery of a universal, open access youth provision as set out in Paragraph 3.6, 3.16, 3.18 and Appendix 2 to the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Provision for universal, open-access youth activity is the final part of the Youth Offer review to be implemented. In February 2020, Cabinet requested further exploration of options which have been completed and presented in detail via a workshop for Elected Members on 12 April 2021. Feedback from Elected Members during the workshop session has been considered and amendments made to the model as appropriate.
- 1.2 Officers and Elected Members alike understand the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on young people. There have been many informative reports and surveys published, both nationally and locally, highlighting how important local youth services are in supporting young people to recovery from the effects of missed schooling, missed opportunities for social and emotional development, and responding to the impact of hidden harm. It is our duty to ensure that youth services adequately support recovery for young people and implementing a localised, youth offer is a key task in enabling that to be achieved.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Continuing with the existing provision for universal, open-access youth provision is not an option. Known as the 'youth services duty', the Council has a statutory duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people. It is the duty of the Local Authority to consult with young people as to how they would like that provision to be delivered. The Youth Offer consultation clearly outlined that the existing provision did not adequately meet young people's needs for local, equitable, high-quality activity.
- 2.2 The opportunity to commission all universal youth provision has been considered however, this option was not supported. The benefits of the Local Authority retaining the lead role in delivery of youth provision are significant, particularly in terms of maintaining quality assurance and strengthening joint working with wider Children's Services and safeguarding teams. A mixed economy of Local Authority and third sector delivery is preferable.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In the summer of 2019 we commenced a review of youth provision in Wirral. To enhance our needs analysis we undertook a consultation with young people. Asking them *how we could make Wirral an amazing place for young people* provided not only a wealth of brilliant ideas, but also an extraordinary insight into their day-to-day experience of being a young Wirral resident. Approximately 3,000 young people took part in the consultation, sharing their experiences, views and outlining what they would like from their youth offer.
- 3.2 Throughout the Youth Offer review we aimed to understand what young people in Wirral need to support their development and help them to achieve the best possible outcomes. With insight from the consultation, we worked collaboratively to develop a

Youth Offer which is accessible and beneficial to all young people in the borough. To develop the offer, five proposals were presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2020. They were:

- We will design, develop and launch a digital platform(s) for young people in Wirral.
- We will negotiate on behalf of young people with internal and external partners who can contribute to/improve the youth offer.
- We will work with Public Health, schools and further education providers to develop a curriculum for life.
- We will give young people a voice and real stake in the future of the borough.
- We will revise arrangements for delivery of youth clubs to create a consistent, equitable, branded, local offer.

3.3 The first four proposals were approved by Cabinet in February 2020, and significant progress has been made in those areas. The fifth proposal, relating to the delivery of youth clubs, was deferred so that further development of the proposal could be undertaken. Considerable work has been completed since the Cabinet meeting, and this report presents the revised arrangements for youth clubs for approval.

3.4 **The Current Offer**

The current offer is provided using the 4 localities model: Birkenhead, Wallasey, West Wirral and South Wirral. Each locality has a designated 'hub' which operates 4 evenings per week and a 'club' offer of 3 evenings per week. The current costings of running the hubs range from £35,939 to £85,787 per annum, and club costs from £26,162 to £51,132. The staffing hours available to deliver the hubs range from 36 to 100 hours per week, and club staffing hours from 28 to 44. The variation in resource has led to the offer being inconsistent across areas.

3.5 Analysis of the current offer has been undertaken to identify strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include:

- Mixed economy of provision.
- Co-location with other services.
- Qualified and experienced workforce.
- New ways of engaging with young people through a 'blended offer'- during lockdown digital delivery has been welcomed by many young people.

These strengths are retained within the proposed model. Weakness to overcome in the new model are:

- Offer across areas is not equitable.
- Any staff absence impacts on delivery.
- Lack of consistent Youth Offer brand and quality assurance.
- Membership and footfall varies considerably across areas, and this does not correlate with spend on the offer.
- Limited career pathways for youth workers.

3.6 **The Proposed, New Offer**

The proposed model for universal, open-access youth provision seeks to provide a consistent, equitable, branded, local offer, by:

- Using the neighbourhood model to provide a consistent offer.
- Developing, with young people, a service brand and set of standards.
- Using a quality assurance framework to ensure consistency.
- Introducing a set of key performance indicators for collective impact.

3.7 The neighbourhood model, introduced by Adult Social Care and Health Services in 2018, divides Wirral into 9 areas of relatively equal population size. It was introduced in response to the King's Fund report on place-based systems of care as a way to enhance partnership working, transform the way services are delivered and improve the focus on population health and wellbeing. The neighborhoods are detailed in Appendix 1- Wirral Neighbourhoods.

3.8 The youth offer for each neighbourhood will consist of:

- A designated venue for delivery and coordination of the youth offer;
- A fulltime, qualified, Neighbourhood Youth Worker;
- 3 x weekly youth club sessions, each for 3 hours;
- Coordinated access to and support from the Detached Youth Work Team;
- 6 x hours (weekly) of counselling provision;
- A monthly, Wirral Youth Weekenders event.

3.9 The designated venue for delivery and coordination of the youth offer in each neighbourhood is identified in Appendix 2- Youth Offer Overview. Co-location with partners and other services has been identified as a strength within the current model and this will continue wherever possible. In the Youth Offer consultation young people told us that they wanted to be included in the wider community and benefit from strengthened relationships with other community groups, which co-location can facilitate.

3.10 The Neighbourhood Youth Worker will be a great asset to the offer. Working closely with all schools, community groups, public service providers and local residents in their area, the Neighbourhood Youth Worker will ensure that the youth offer is well-supported, linked to the wider system and able to respond to emerging local need. The Neighbourhood Youth Worker will act as a single point of contact for local leaders and Ward Councillors on matters regarding young people in their area.

3.11 As described in Appendix 2- Youth Offer Overview, The Hive Youth Zone, will provide the Neighbourhood Youth Worker posts for both Birkenhead A and Birkenhead B as part of their Service Level Agreement with the Council. The Service Level Agreement will ensure that there is consistency across the Neighbourhood Youth Worker role and that those delivered by the Hive Youth Zone will be part of the Youth Offer Delivery Team, attending Team Meetings, Performance Reviews and training sessions.

- 3.12 The weekly youth club sessions in each neighbourhood will be managed by the Neighbourhood Youth Worker. A pool of staff able to cover any absences or leave will be facilitated through the wider Children's Services staff resource, ensuring a robust, reliable offer for young people across Wirral.
- 3.13 As described in Appendix 2- Youth Offer Overview, the weekly youth club sessions in Birkenhead A and Birkenhead B will be delivered by the Hive Youth Zone as part of their Service Level Agreement with the Council. The Service Level Agreement will ensure that this provision, for young people in the two Birkenhead Neighbourhoods, is delivered as a specific local offer rather than subsumed into the wider Hive activity.
- 3.14 Each neighbourhood will benefit from continued support and joint working with the Detached Youth Work Team. Liaison between the Neighbourhood Youth Worker and Detached Youth Team Manager will seek to ensure deployment of resource to hot spots across Wirral using intelligence from Merseyside Police, Anti-Social Behaviour Team, resident and partner feedback, and notifications from Ward Councillors. The Kontactabus and Life Cycle projects will continue to be used to engage with young people in the community and specific parks and open spaces.
- 3.15 Building on the success of the counselling offer which was made available to young people in South Wirral through funding allocated by Ward Councillors, the new youth offer will replicate this across all 9 neighbourhoods. This will provide 6 hours per week of counselling in each neighbourhood which is easily accessible for young people and provided in a non-clinical, comfortable setting.
- 3.16 The proposed model will introduce a new initiative, Wirral Youth Weekenders. Building on the growing capacity and strengthening relationships of the Wirral Youth Collective, community groups will be funded to deliver this element of the Youth Offer. In each of the 9 neighbourhoods, on the last weekend of each month, an event for young people which is fun and promotes personal development, will be delivered by community organisations. Funding of £1,000 will be provided for each event, at an annual cost of £108,000 (12 events per neighbourhood, across 9 neighbourhoods).
- 3.17 Wirral Youth Weekenders will be implemented using the existing process to deliver the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF). Arrangements to report on uptake, provide case studies and feedback from events will be incorporated into the Service Level Agreements with providers. The new website for young people, Zillo, will advertise, promote engagement across Wirral and be used to showcase the Wirral Youth Weekender events. Residents, young people, community organisations and Ward Councillors will be able to find information on the events via Zillo and the Council website.
- 3.18 In addition to providing resource for Birkenhead A and Birkenhead B, the Hive Youth Zone, as part of their Service Level Agreement with the Council, will provide a further 3 elements of delivery for Wirral young people as part of the youth offer. These are:
- **Enabling inclusion in youth activity for young people with SEND-** the Hive will deliver a fixed-term project which trains mentors/supporters to support young people with SEND in accessing mainstream youth activities. This project will aim to create a sustainable approach to improving inclusion in youth activity across Wirral.

- **Increasing the reach of Hive activity across Wirral-** targets to extend the reach of Hive activity across the Wirral youth population will be explicit in the Service Level Agreement. This will include (i) outreach which takes Hive activity into the other neighbourhoods and (ii) in-reach activity which brings young people from other neighbourhoods into Birkenhead to experience the excellent Hive facilities.
- **A programme to support young people adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic-** the Hive will lead on a fixed-term, borough-wide programme helping young people to *reset* following the disruption to their lives and negative impact on their health and wellbeing. The programme will address a number of key areas for young people including mental health, confidence, future plans, friendships, and safely getting *out and about*.

3.19 The proposed Youth Offer seeks to strengthen the Local Authority resource as well as improve existing partnerships. The model promotes a consistent offer which will be delivered by the Local Authority Youth Service, the Hive Youth Zone, and third sector partners. Together these groups are part of the developing Wirral Youth Collective.

3.20 The proposed Youth Offer provides a strong response to the findings of the consultation initiated in 2019. On implementation, it is recommended that that the Young People's Action Group leads on a *You Said-We Did* communications campaign for young people and residents across Wirral.

3.21 **Measuring Impact of the Youth Offer**

Performance reporting on the current youth offer focuses mainly on the number of activities delivered, types of sessions delivered, and number of beneficiaries. Whilst these figures will continue to be collected, monitored and reported, the new model will introduce a set of impact measures for the youth offer. This set of indicators has been taken from the broader suite of performance measures for the Children, Young People and Education Committee, and includes those which the Youth Offer should have a positive impact on. They are:

- % of secondary pupils attending school
- % of secondary pupils with persistent absence from school
- The gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at Key Stage 4
- % of young people aged 16-17 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or categorized as 'not known'
- Number of young people currently missing from home or missing from care
- Number of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system
- Rate of re-offending
- Number of anti-social behaviour incidents involving young people

3.22 These performance datasets will be reported on a neighbourhood basis as well as borough wide. The Neighbourhood Youth Worker will use performance to inform their priorities for partnership working and support for young people.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The current universal, open-access youth offer costs £474,500 per year. The proposed model is £566,140 per year, an increase of £91,640. On 01 March 2021 at the Council Budget Setting Meeting, it was agreed to increase investment in the youth service by £200,000. The increased cost of £91,640 will be met through this additional investment.
- 4.2 The remaining £108,360 additional funding will be invested in the Wirral Youth Weekenders initiative.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A Service Level Agreement between The Hive Youth Zone and Wirral Council will be established in accordance with current Council procedure.
- 5.2 Commissioning of the Wirral Youth Weekenders will be undertaken in accordance with current Council procedure.
- 5.3 Robust contract monitoring arrangements will be in place for all funded activity, with performance reported to the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Implementing the neighbourhood model will require a restructure of Council staffing. This will be undertaken in partnership with Human Resources and Finance colleagues, with Trade Unions being kept informed and available to support the workforce. The restructure will be delivered in accordance with existing Wirral Council practice and procedure. The proposed model is realistic and achievable against our existing staff establishment and will create a clear pathway for professional development. There are no anticipated negative effects for staff.
- 6.2 There are no ICT implications arising from this report. Existing work to improve performance reporting and data collection will continue as planned through Liquid Logic and Power BI systems.
- 6.3 There are ongoing developments to assets which are aligned with the proposed model. Existing work at Moreton Library to develop a multi-function, community hub, from which to deliver youth activity corresponds with the Youth Offer which seeks to strengthen connectivity between young people and their communities. The new facility at the St. Anselmian's Rugby Club, another positive example of co-location, will officially launch in July 2021.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The most significant risk would be not taking action on the findings of the consultation or responding to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people. Young people have asked for a local, equitable, branded youth offer, which these proposals can deliver.

- 7.2 It is noted that capacity within the Youth Service has in previous years been stretched, and a risk in moving to a model where seven neighbourhoods are delivered by Local Authority Youth Workers, is that any annual leave or absence may impact on the ability to deliver the offer. This risk is mitigated by establishing a pool of Local Authority cover which can be called upon to deliver sessional work. The pool will include professionals from across Children's Services from a range of teams with current, relevant experience of working with young people.
- 7.2 With considerable efforts and resource being invested in the Youth Offer, it is important to ensure adequate *future-proofing*. While developing the model appropriate research has been undertaken on best-practice models in other local authority areas, advice and expertise has been sought from Youth Focus North West and the changes in the national context have been considered. It is anticipated that the Government are considering the rollout of *Youth Partnerships*, which hold responsibility for commissioning a local youth offer. Our model and Wirral Youth Collective would align very well to such arrangements, readying Wirral for a future youth offer.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Extensive consultation has been undertaken with young people in Wirral via a survey on the Youth Offer. The survey was designed in partnership with members of the Youth Voice Group and Children In Care Council to elicit views on the support and services needed for them *to be all that they can be*. The consultation was completed between June to September 2019 with almost 3,000 young people taking part. Surveys were received from 2,736 young people and several groups took part in the consultation events, forums, and workshops. Events for young people and the public were expertly facilitated by members of the Youth Voice Group.
- 8.2 Analysis of the returned surveys confirmed that the sample was representative of the population, that all groups considered had been engaged and that the response levels were statistically valid.
- 8.3 Communication and consultation with young people and stakeholders has been continuous throughout the development and implementation of the Youth Offer. The Young People's Action Group, Youth Voice Group and Children in Care Council continue to be involved and updated on the progress of the review. Bespoke engagement work has taken place with young people in areas, such as Moreton and South Wirral, where significant changes to venues are taking place.
- 8.4 Young people have contributed to a number of surveys and focus groups in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and their experiences over the past year. Learning from those engagements has been incorporated into the neighbourhood youth model to ensure there are strong links with schools and access to mental health support.
- 8.5 On 12 April 2021, a workshop for Elected Members was held to facilitate a detailed presentation on the proposed youth offer model. Feedback from the workshop has informed final amendments to the model.
- 8.6 Youth Workers and partners of Wirral Youth Collective have participated in workshops and engagement sessions as part of the development of this model. The

neighbourhood approach and strengthening of the collective approach to youth provision is welcomed.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the Youth Offer and neighbourhood youth model and can be found via this link:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The environment and climate change are becoming increasingly important to our young people. Enabling our younger residents to have a stronger voice and increased engagement in democracy through their local youth offer, we anticipate that their determination to reduce carbon emissions will positively influence our decision-making and that they will play a worthwhile role in holding residents, officers, and leaders to account.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Wirral Neighbourhoods

Appendix 2- Youth Offer Overview

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Care More About Us report and Youth Offer papers to Cabinet February 2020
([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Cabinet, 24/02/2020 10:00 \(wirral.gov.uk\)](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	24 February 2020
Elected Member Workshop	12 April 2021