

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET 23 APRIL 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

COMMISSIONING CRITERIA FOR UNIVERSAL, OPEN ACCESS YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents Cabinet with the proposed commissioning criteria which are to underpin the process for the commissioning of Super Centre Youth Clubs and the provision of Positive Activities for Young People. Cabinet are asked to adopt both commissioning frameworks and to agree the proposed timetable for the commissioning process.

1. Background

Cabinet at its meeting on 27 November recommended that work should be undertaken to reconfigure the Youth Service to align it to the current District structure. Cabinet also recommended that as part of the future arrangements for service provision, work should be undertaken to have an operating structure that ensured there would be a youth centre in each of the eleven Area Forum areas.

In recognition of awareness generated from the submission of the My Place proposal and the proposals contained in HM Treasury's report: Aiming High a Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP), Cabinet recommended that the reorganisation of youth clubs should move to a configuration over time that results in a structure that has one large hub or super centre in each of the districts and seven satellites. The hubs will operate over six nights including Friday and Saturday and the satellites will operate over three nights. In the first instance it is intended as part of the commissioning process to identify an additional two Super Centres alongside the previously identified centres at Wallasey Fire Station and Shaftesbury Youth Club and when these are established to consider at a future date commissioning for the seven satellites.

As part of the Aiming High Proposals, additional money has been made available to local authorities under Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP). This funding has previously been routed through Connexions and was used to provide a number of support packages for young people at risk of truanting, offending, negative peer group pressure and associated health risks. Specific activities were commissioned to engage the young people during school holidays, in structured learning opportunities and for an agreed number of hours per week. Key workers have been employed to ensure the young people are provided with appropriate support and to enable the young people to maximise the opportunities presented by this programme. There is an expectation within Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) that a similar programme will be commissioned in the new funding arrangements.

In 2008-09 the funding available was £339K, in 2009-10 this is increased by £243K to £582,000 and by £417K to £756,000 in 2010/11. Guidance produced by the DCSF makes clear that this uplift in funding is to support targeted and universal week-end diversionary activities for young people and to positively impact on a number of priorities such as a reduction in teenage pregnancy, first time entrants into the Youth Justice System, a reduction in NEET and family intervention support programmes. Decisions are required regarding the commissioning of services covered by this funding stream. It is right that as Cabinet are

considering the how youth clubs will operate some consideration is given to how PAYP is commissioned.

The funding allocated under PAYP will be allocated through a commissioning process. As outlined in previous paragraphs it is essential that these funding streams are used to ensure that activities are complementary and make an impact on the priorities identified in 1.4. Appendix B is the draft commissioning criteria for the commissioning of services which are provided in response to external and internal policy initiatives.

In implementing the Cabinet's recommendations, officers from the Children and Young People's Department have undertaken a number of consultation meetings with young people, staff, representatives' of management committees on two occasions. During the second meeting, the management committee representatives were asked for their comments on the draft commissioning framework and in addition to engaging with this process, they expressed an interest in how they may work more collaboratively. There have been two meetings with the Trade Unions and at both meetings there has been consultation on the impact of the proposals and the draft commissioning framework. In addition to these meetings there have been presentations to a Neighbourhood Pathfinder and the Birkenhead District Board. The meetings provided opportunities for all stakeholders to be briefed on the reconfiguration and also to identify the criteria that should be included in the commissioning framework. Attached as Appendix A is the Draft criteria to be used when commissioning of youth clubs. There are a number of essential criteria and these seek to ensure that quality standards regarding the qualification of staff and capacity to engage with the district requirements can be met. Essentially, the criteria will be used to determine which centres will be used as either a Hub or a Satellite.

Staff already employed in youth clubs will be included as part of the resource available to the commissioned organisations. In the event that an organisation with staff is not commissioned, staff employed in that setting will be redeployed to a commissioned club. There will not be any redundancies and discussions are currently ongoing with the trade unions to identify any issues that may surface during this time.

The funding allocated under PAYP will be allocated through a commissioning process. As outlined in previous paragraphs it is essential that these funding streams are used to ensure that activities are complementary and make an impact on the priorities identified in 1.3. Appendix B is the draft commissioning criteria for the commissioning of services which are provided in response to external and internal policy initiatives.

2. Next Steps

If the Commissioning Criteria are approved by Cabinet the process of commissioning will start. It is anticipated that this will take up to four months with final decisions made by the end of August. The key tasks to be completed are as follows:

- Finalise Commissioning Brief
- Advertise tender
- Procurement Workshop – to explain the process to potential bidders.
- Closing Date for Pre Qualifying Questionnaire/ Tender (4 weeks)
- Tender Evaluation Stage 1 1 Short listing (PQQ / Tender Desk top evaluation) 2 weeks
- Notify short listed providers- invitation to interview
- Tender Evaluation Stage 2 – Interviews
- Report to Chair of the Procurement Panel
- Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board
- Cabinet Report recommending contract award

- Contract Awarded following Cabinet Call-in period

2.2 A transparent process is essential and in line with current practice there should be a Commissioning Group to steer the process. In recognition of the sensitivities, it is proposed that the commission group's membership should include representatives from organisations that have an interest in the agenda for young people but not providers of services. With this in mind representation from the following organisations/ departments is proposed

- Police/ Community Safety
- Fire & Rescue
- Link Forum
- 14-19 Partnership/LSC
- PCT- Strategic Lead
- Neighbourhood Pathfinder Organisation
- Children and Young People's Department
- Representative from Transport
- Members of the Executive Youth Board
- Extended Schools link
- Member of staff from Strategic Asset Review Team

3. What will be commissioned?

3.1 In the first instance the commissioning process will focus on establishing the four hubs. Once those hubs have been established at a future date a further commissioning round will take place to identify satellite provision. Shaftesbury Youth Club and Wallasey Fire Station have already been named as two of the hubs leaving a hub to be identified in both West Wirral and South Wirral.

3.2 The Belvidere Centre is open four evenings a week and caters mainly for young people with physical disabilities but also has non disabled members. There are also members with slight learning difficulties. One evening a week is used mainly by young people with Aspergers syndrome but any member may attend. Callister Youth Club opens two nights a week and its target group is Hearing Impaired, it is also attended by young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Both clubs have been in operation for some time and before progressing to commissioning for Special Needs provision it would be prudent to undertake some needs assessment to establish what is required and what will be commissioned. Therefore I am proposing that the commissioning for these youth clubs is deferred until the four super centres and seven satellites have been established to allow for the necessary needs assessment to be completed and I will be seeking Cabinet's agreement for this proposal. There are some youth clubs that within their youth offer run a night for Special Needs provision. Where this is the case, the provision will be retained as an additional night within the commissioning arrangements. This situation will be reviewed as part of the Special Needs assessment process.

3.3 This process is about commissioning of youth clubs, what is not being included is the Curriculum Development Service and the Outreach Team. The Curriculum Development service (CDS) includes the Youth Theatre, Response, Duke of Edinburgh, Participation and Special Needs/ International work. The Outreach team is a borough wide team currently deployed to a number of localities and works with young people in street settings. There are a number of areas that require further consideration and therefore the work of the CDS and the Outreach Team will be subject to review at a later stage. The reconfiguration of the youth service seeks to align the Service to the District structure. The Outreach Team will be aligned to the

district structure and will be central to any arrangements regarding the engagement of young people who are disengaged and at risk. Although the Outreach team will be deployed to the districts there will still be a link with the main Youth Service. The commissioning arrangements will apply to the youth clubs currently funded directly by Wirral or by grant aid. Within current provision, Belvidere Youth Club operates specifically for young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and the Callister Club provides for young people who are Hearing Impaired.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The required savings of £150,000 have now been identified. However in order to meet this requirement it will be necessary to re-distribute staff time across the current centres.

5. Staffing Implications

- 5.1 The proposals for the new structure can be met from within existing staffing levels. Some staff will be required to relocate to other youth clubs and any one relocated will be entitled to disturbance allowance.

6. Equal Opportunities Implications

- 6.1 The proposals for the reconfiguration of the Service and the Commissioning Criteria for Targeted and Universal Services seek to improve the quality of service provision and have more engagement with vulnerable young people.

7. Community Safety Implications

- 7.1 The work undertaken by commissioned and non commissioned services will be planned to reduce the number of First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System and thereby reduce community safety issues.

8. Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9. Planning Implications

- 9.1 There may be a need for planning permission in the development of Hubs but that requirement will not be confirmed until commissioned clubs have been identified.

10. Anti Poverty Implications

- 10.1 The improved Youth Offer will enable young people to access accreditation opportunities and enhance their training and development opportunities.

11. Social Inclusion Implications

- 11.1 The aim of targeted and universal provision is to promote greater social inclusion. Planning for youth clubs at district level will be in response to needs assessment.

12. Local Member Support Implications

- 12.1 This report affects all wards.

13. Background papers

- Cabinet Report 27 November 2008
- Aiming High – The Treasury’s Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That

- 1) Cabinet approves the criteria for the commissioning of youth clubs and Targeted and Universal youth services.
- 2) Cabinet agrees to the proposed assessment of Special Needs provision.
- 3) Cabinet approves the implementation of the Commissioning arrangements for both Youth Centres and Positive Activities for Young people with the first round of commissioning focussing on the identification of a further two Super Centres.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children’s Services