

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People  
**PORTFOLIO:** Education, Children & Social Care  
**SUBJECT:** Youth Provision  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update members of the Executive Board on the Integrated Youth Support Service consultation and proposed future model.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members of the Executive Board approve:**

- i) the implementation of a new model of grant funded and commissioned Youth Provision across Halton.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**3.1 Background**

3.1.1 This report provides feedback from the recent Halton Youth Provision consultation and sets out the Council's proposed response.

3.1.2 The consultation evidenced that there is support for the proposed model. Areas of agreement included the need to work in partnership across all sectors, the importance of valuing volunteers and existing local voluntary and community provision providers, and the need for qualified workers to support those children and young people in most need.

3.1.3 Responses from both parents and partner agencies acknowledged a growing concern about young people levels of stress, anxiety, depression and lack of life skills.

3.1.4 Partners and many young people, who responded to the survey, were also unanimous in the need to develop local youth provision delivered in town centres or housing estates, in venues such as community centres or designated youth club venues.

3.1.5 The proposal put forward in this report has taken account of the

feedback, while also recognising the financial challenges we face, the changing service needs and current and future landscape due to COVID 19.

### **3.2 The National Picture**

3.2.1 With an increase in exploitation and demand on Children's Social Care, there is a growing focus nationally on the work local authorities need to undertake to ensure the most vulnerable young people can access and receive the support they need.

3.2.2 National research, evidence and guidance suggests changes are required. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Affairs; Youth Work Inquiry 2018 recognises that over the years youth work has withstood the worst of spending cuts. Recent events and reports suggest the loss of youth work has had a negative impact on young people and communities. In the face of rapid technological change and major societal challenges we need to look again at what support young people need now and to meet their needs for the future.

### **3.3 Consultation**

3.3.1 The consultation working group, that included members of Halton Youth Cabinet promoted the consultation through electronic newsletters/invitations/ messages that invited young people, parent/carers and key partners to take part. The surveys were promote on the Council web-site, Twitter and Facebook and Halton Youth Cabinet promoted the consultation via their media platforms.

3.3.2 The following three surveys were developed:

- A stakeholder survey for local organisations with an interest in youth service provision;
- A survey for children and young people;
- A survey to gather the views of parents and carers.

### **3.4 Response to the Consultation**

3.4.1 Over 50% of the young people's surveys were completed on mobile phones. The largest age group to complete the survey was the 16 to 17 years age range; however, a high number of young people declined to give their age. There were slightly more surveys completed by females than males and more young people from Runcorn completed the survey than Widnes young people.

3.4.2 55% of the young people who completed the survey had previously attended youth provision. 40% hadn't attended youth provision and 5% declined to confirm if they had or not attended.

- There were 23 surveys returned from parents/carers
- 12 from key partners, including 5 from elected members
- 223 from children and young people.
- A total number of 258 for all three surveys.

### 3.5 **Consultation – key themes summary:**

#### **What type of activity would you like to see delivered by Halton Youth Service?**

The top five activities were as follows:

- Duke of Edinburgh Awards,
- Outdoor Activities,
- Mayors Award,
- Youth Participation
- Chilling/Hanging out.

#### **Where would you prefer activities to be?**

The majority of young people wanted activities to take place in Runcorn or Widnes Town Centre or a local Community Centre. There were no suggestions of Halton needing a larger purpose build youth zone, similar to the youth centres in Wigan, Birkenhead and Chorley.

#### **What days would you prefer your activities to be held on?**

Young people identified all 7 days; however the most popular days were Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

#### **What time would you prefer your activities to take place?**

The time most young people want activities to take place was between 5pm and 8pm. There were no young people asking for activities to take place after 8pm, however young people wanted activities in school holidays to take place after 12 noon.

### 3.5 **Final Summary**

3.5.1 The Council has gained the views of young people in making decisions about the Proposed Future Model for Halton Youth Provision.

3.5.2 The Council will work with key partners, including Halton Youth Cabinet, voluntary and community groups, to design and deliver a localised model of youth provision, maximising the use of all

available resources and funding to:

- Work to address emerging social issues and concerns such as mental health issues relating to stress, anxiety and depression, etc
- Work with local providers/partners and voluntary sector to support the delivery of open access youth clubs in identified areas and outdoor environments.
- Target services towards those young people in most need of support including those who are vulnerable or most at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour.
- Ensure experienced workers are in place across Halton, providing the skills and experience needed to make the most difference.
- Continue to work in partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Team, and further develop the opportunities for young people from Halton, to take part in the award
- Support Halton Schools and Colleges to become Directly Licenced Duke of Edinburgh Centres.
- Work with and support Primary Schools to offer and co-ordinate the new Halton Certificate of Achievement Award.
- Work to address other social issues and concerns, such as youth violence and knife crime, county lines etc.
- Provide a more localised outreach/detached youth offer – ensuring there are workers on the ground able to reach young people within the community e.g. on estates, on the streets.
- Build and strengthen the system of support available to meet the needs of young people, by linking voluntary and community workers to specialist workers.

3.5.3 Imbed youth participation in to all provision and review on a quarterly basis.

3.5.4 The proposed new model is for grant funded and commissioned Youth Provision across Halton. This approach will incorporate both open access provision for young people age 10 19 years and up to 25 with additional needs and targeted group/ outreach/detached support to vulnerable groups of young people. The aim will be to strengthen the Halton preventative offer, whilst further developing and supporting a network of local voluntary and community youth provision providers across Halton.

## 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The most relevant statutory duty relating to youth services is the duty to secure access to positive activities. Under section 507B inserted into the Education Act 1996 by virtue of section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the duty requires Local Authorities to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that young people have access to sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being and personal and social development.

4.2 This includes sufficient facilities for such activities; that activities are publicised; and that young people are at the heart of decision making regarding the positive activity provision. The duty applies to the 13 – 19 age range, and up to 24 for young people with learning difficulties.

4.3 The duty is qualified by the term 'reasonably practicable', which means that the determination of whether the local authority is acting reasonably depends on the particular circumstances of the local authority and the particular requirement for access to such activities and facilities. It is important for local authorities to document their consideration of need and any decisions made on the grounds of what is judged to be 'reasonably practicable'. By doing so, the authority will be able to provide a rationale for its decision making, if challenged.

4.4 Positive activities includes; educational leisure time activities and recreational leisure time activities. The two are not mutually exclusive and many activities can fall in the remit of both. The positive activities to which access is to be secured, need not always be in the local authority's area and the duty allows local authorities to enter into cross-border co-operative arrangements in order to meet the needs of young people who must travel to specific provision, or who live on, or near the borders of different local authority areas.

4.5 There is no enforceable statutory guidance on the level of provision of youth services, however if local authorities did not meet their statutory duties, they could be challenged through judicial review.

## 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The current budget allocated for the universal and targeted youth provision is £359,583.

## 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The aim will be to strengthen the Halton preventative offer, whilst further developing and supporting a network of local voluntary and community youth provision providers across Halton.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

This provision will aim to support Halton Council in raising young peoples' aspirations and drive up participation and attainment in learning. We will seek providers that support young people who are NEET to get back into education training and employment.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

This provision will promote positive emotional and physical wellbeing to children and young people aged 10yrs to 19yrs and up to 25 for young people with additional needs or leaving care.

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

The detached work will allow Halton the opportunity to continue using to target area of greatest need with regards to reducing youth related anti-social behaviour, teenage conceptions and substance misuse.

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 It is important that the new provision reflects the views of the young people, parents and carers and other stakeholders. Regular feedback will be sought from the Youth Cabinet and the new service will be evaluated over the next twelve months.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Halton Borough Council aims to ensure that services available at all levels, reflect the diversity of the people they serve.

## **9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

To agree the future shape of youth services within Halton.

## **10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

To put the service out to the market as one commission. This was rejected as it did not allow local organisations with good local networks the opportunity to provide a service.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Consultation responses		john.bucknall@halton.gov.uk