

## Achieving Excellence for Young People

Frequently asked questions

### **Is this purely about budget cuts?**

Money is certainly a consideration and the way that the youth service operates currently cannot be justified financially. At the moment only 15,902 young people across the county use the youth and community service – that means that county wide four out of five young people do not use our services. In some areas, attendance is less than 1 in 10, as low as 7%. Radical changes are needed to ensure that young people have access to the information and services they need to make informed decisions locally. We will then work with partners to provide highly specialist and targeted support to those who need it most. This model will not only help us to achieve the best results for young people but will provide the tax payer with better value for money.

### **Why are you doing this?**

The existing model simply isn't working in terms of what young people say they want or in terms of the sensible use of public money. Four out of five young people currently do not use our services.

Our proposals are designed to increase young people's access to activities, targeting resources at the most vulnerable young people, and putting more focus on local provision, all while providing value for money for our tax payers.

### **How much will this save?**

Through the proposed approach it is anticipated that council budget savings of £2.8m in 2014/15 rising to £4.5m annually by 2020/21 will be achieved.

### **Does the proposal meet the council's statutory duties?**

Local authorities have a number of different statutory duties with regard to young people. The most relevant to youth services is the duty to secure access to positive activities. 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. This proposal will ensure the County Council meets its statutory duties, which apply to the 13 – 19 age range, and up to 25 for young people with learning difficulties.

In particular, local authorities are charged with addressing the needs of young people at greatest risk of negative outcomes and whose engagement in positive activities is often limited, and by doing so, increase their participation through securing access to appropriate provision.



The new proposal will ensure that all young people are able to access excellent universal provision that will give them the skills they need to become work and life ready. It will provide high quality targeted and specialist services for vulnerable young people with the highest level of needs including those with physical or learning disabilities, as well as those young people who are at greatest risk.

**Were any other options considered?**

A number of alternative models have been considered during the process including changes to existing arrangements, looking for a single partner to provide youth services, and stopping all investment. None of these approaches would enable the County Council to deliver on its future offer which is a balance between protecting support for the vulnerable whilst allowing the community, with support, to meet the needs of its young people.

**Are you shutting youth clubs?**

This proposal is about achieving the best outcomes for young people and outlines how we could remodel the service to achieve better results, particularly for the most vulnerable in our communities. No decisions have been made and much will depend on the results of the consultation, but if the proposal is approved, we would look at every aspect of the service.

**What will you do with Youth Service premises?**

No decisions can be made until the outcome of the consultation is known. If there are cases where buildings are no longer needed, we will look to ensure that they are used for the benefit of the local community.

**How can we expect the voluntary and community sector to take on work when they are struggling with their budgets?**

There is a vast amount of provision already available through the voluntary, community and private sectors for young people, and these services are already used by people in large numbers. Just consider the number and extent of local sports clubs, institutions such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, to name just a few. Under the proposal, we would continue to work with the most challenged young people and would support our partners to provide a wide range of activities for all young people in Staffordshire.

**How many young people are in the scope of this work?**

This proposal is about making sure every young person in Staffordshire can achieve their potential, and are able to take control of their lives with support by and in their communities if they need it. There are more than 73,000 young people in Staffordshire. 15,902 of them attend activities run by Staffordshire Youth and Community Services in 2012 / 13 while nearly half of them (34,513) attended clubs and activities provided by the voluntary sector.



### **How do you know what young people want?**

We have asked them. We have done a range of surveys with young people to understand their wants and needs, and since September have been talking in detail with a range of organisations to understand how we can make Staffordshire one of the best places in the country for young people to grow up.

Young people tell us that they want access to positive activities, support for vulnerable groups and those in need, and a focus on transport and the transitional stages of life.

We already have a good track record in supporting young people to be independent. For example, the Your Staffordshire Card, which allows holders to pay just £1 per journey, is currently used by over 30,000 young people. We may look at how we could extend the scheme to allow even more young people to benefit from the card under this proposal.

### **How will you look after young people who cannot afford to access other services in the private/community sector? What about young people from ethnic minorities or other groups who live in rural areas?**

We are producing a thorough Community Impact Assessment that will enable us to identify those groups of young people, including those who are disadvantaged, from a BME background, or are affected by their geographical location when accessing services, to ensure that they receive the support they need. We will ensure that we continue to fund targeted support services for young people who are most in need and will also have a local budget that can also address issues for those young people, or may have issues in relation to accessing services.

### **Is this a done deal?**

No decisions have been made.

### **What considerations have been made to the impact on young people?**

The wellbeing and future prospects of young people are at the heart of this proposal. We have researched in depth the outcomes this approach will achieve for Staffordshire's young people, and the public consultation and community impact assessment will take this work forward.

### **How can this be a countywide decision when each district has different needs?**

We recognise that the needs of communities are very different, and that one size does not fit all. Part of this proposal is to support a strong local offer in each community, which the county council will manage to provide truly local provision.

