Offer of Youth Provision and Local Activities in Oldham

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A PURPOSE OF THE REPORT
To inform the Board about the changes made to the offer of youth service provision and activity at a local level

B SUMMARY

As part of the emergency budget report to Cabinet on 11th July 2011 there was a clear commitment to devolving a range of budgets to Neighbourhoods wherever possible including removing the ring fence from ward related budgets to facilitate greater local prioritisation in the allocation of resources.

A value for money exercise to develop a “Youth Offer” for Oldham was completed that considered not only the Council contribution to delivering youth and sport services but those services currently provided by the voluntary, community and private sectors including the development of the Mahdlo Youth Zone.

As a result of that work and in response to developing co-operative ways of working with our local communities, delivering services that local people need, it was agreed at Leadership to establish a district delivery model for youth and sport that would be managed at a local level by a District Co-ordinator

The integrated youth service was already delivering at a district level, within our local neighbourhoods and communities in a range of settings although it was centrally managed within the Council. The service worked with other local services including the neighbourhood teams, police, housing, health, voluntary and community sector.

There were and still are some roles within the integrated youth service that work within a district but operate on a more borough wide basis due to the specialist nature of their work for example the empowerment team who engage young people from across the Borough and the specialist coaches e.g. rugby and netball.

The proposal was that the youth and sports teams who were already working within the neighbourhoods would become accountable to and would be managed by the new District Co-ordinators within the new District Model of delivery.
It is important to note that the Youth Centre’s providing youth activity and sports activity are still going to be operating as they have been previously within every District however there may be need to be changes to opening times in the future in response to local demand. Current activities that are available in many of the centres are arts, music, electronic games consoles, specific programmes of accreditation such as Duke of Edinburgh award, cooking skills etc.

**Youth engagement**

- We have a strong, established and effective Youth Council that is regionally and nationally recognised as being a model of Good Practice.
- We have strong Children in Care Council that has established links with the mainstream Empowerment and Participation Team and that links directly to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- We have established student voice forums in all secondary and primary schools across the Borough with links into other formal children and young people’s involvement networks.
- We have a designated officer for the participation of children and young people with additional needs, who has developed a formal forum to enable the active involvement of this group of young people (Barrier Breakers).
- We have established a model for District Youth Forums so that young people are shaping and influencing decision making at a locality level. These forums enable young people to directly influence services at a local level. The Youth Council will link to these forums as each one will have 2 youth council representatives that sit on the forum to enable consistent and clear communication between the young peoples forums at district and borough wide level.
- We have established the Youth Mayor of Oldham based on a report initiated by young people on the Youth Council.

**How young people are involved in influencing the Youth offer.**

- We have young people involved meaningfully in the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny process. These often include services specifically for or accessed by young people.
- We have the Youth Council continuing to have strong working links and relationships with senior officers within Children’s Services as well as Elected Members. The Youth Council directly feed in to the Children's trust board, meet with the Director of Children's services and the leader of the council. Thus enabling them to have a voice on a range of issues including youth services.
- We have the Youth Council processing and directly managing a comprehensive and effective Youth Opportunities Fund. This enables young people to directly fund things to do and places to go for young people and heavily contributes to the range of activities delivered in the youth offer. This years the Youth council will directly commission 2 services Kooth.com – mental health service for young people and reconnect – emergency service for young people experiencing homelessness.
- We have strengthened youth engagement considerably at regional and national level with strong participation in the regional Youth Forum and the UK Youth Parliament and British Youth Council.
- Young people are actively involved in the Go Oldham programme and young people from the borough wide forums (OYC, CICC and BB) and the District youth forums.
will be actively engaged in shaping and influencing the Go Oldham Strategy including a process whereby young people quality assure Go Oldham Provision.

- Young peoples inspection programme – we are developing inspection processes carried out by young people for Youth and sports offer as well as specifically for Residential homes and respite centres (these inspections are carried out by members of the children in care council and the Barrier Breakers group)

**What will be different?**

Every District will have their own team of Youth and Sports staff that will report directly to the District Co-ordinator and they will work much more closely with the elected members and community development staff

Relationships with natural local leaders and community groups within the area will be strengthened and enhanced through greater involvement of them in decision making, influencing and shaping services provided within their community

There will be a greater emphasis on establishing work with the voluntary and community sector to increase the capacity and delivery of activity of youth work and sports. It is important to recognise that there are already strong links with the Alliance Forums (voluntary sector groups) in each of the Districts.

Youth development workers will build and grow the local volunteering network and work with young co-operators who will strengthen and develop the way that communities and local people work together.

At present the sports officers will actively engage with local groups and schools to develop sporting activity within the area such as basketball, football, cricket, netball and lacrosse. In the future the Youth workers will take more of this role on, linking into existing youth activity provided such as dance, arts and different types of music groups and will develop new activities were there are gaps.

The youth centre buildings within the District will be managed locally and will see greater use by the local community groups

The development of a district approach to the provision of youth and sports development services will require new ways of working with partners, communities and key stakeholders to ensure local priorities and needs are met.

Future commissioning of local youth and sports services will be steered by the District partnership through identification of community needs and priority areas of work
Critical Success Factors

It is essential that the accountability for the new youth and sports delivery model is clearly established within the District Partnership governance framework and that day to day operational management is with the District Co-ordinator.

That the overarching Youth and Sports Strategy for the Council is part of a Borough wide offer for young people and is strategically co-ordinated and developed by the Head of Integrated Youth Service with the District co-ordinators and other key influential stakeholders and providers.

That the District Partnership and their communities play an integral role in developing and shaping the new delivery model to establish the future co-operative working model.

Transition arrangements for the new delivery model will be carefully implemented to ensure business continuity and delivery of activity at a local level is sustained.

C RECOMMENDATIONS
That the Overview and Scrutiny Board ensure that what is delivered locally is what meets the needs of young people and any particular themes identified as issues are taken forward and supported at a Borough wide level

D CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN
Staff within the Integrated youth service were formally consulted over a period of 90 days
The Youth Forum and the Unions were also involved in the consultation providing feedback into the process
Neighbourhood services and District Partnerships were consulted on the proposal

Legal ☐ Finance ☐ Other ☐

E IMPACT ON COMMUNITY STRATEGY & COMMUNITY COHESION
It is intended that this work will continue to enhance and strengthen work within local communities that is focussed on providing services that they need.

The broader youth offer including Mahdlo will aim to significantly promote cohesion within the Borough.

F IMPACT ON EQUALITIES
A full equalities impact assessment has been completed

G APPENDICES
none