

Briefing note for Scrutiny - 13 October 2015

Response to the Bloxwich Community Partnership Petition submitted on 22nd September 2015

1. Response

- 1.1 The current round of commissioning comes to an end on 31 March 2016 and is now being reviewed as part of a wider review of Targeted Youth Work in Walsall in response to the 2015-2016 budget setting process. The Council have agreed to a reduction of £1.07m in the Targeted Youth Work budget for the two year period 2015-17, reducing it from £1.96 million to £888,000.
- 1.2 It was reported to Cabinet in February this year that the budget for commissioned services for 2015-2016 will be the same as in the previous year. This will conclude the current 3 year commissioning arrangements on 31 March 2016.
- 1.3 A report is being prepared for consideration by Cabinet on 28 October 2015 which reflects on a full review of Targeted Youth Work allied to the budget reduction and the consultation outcomes. It sets out proposals for:
 - the role for independent commissioned providers
 - a new, significantly reduced, configuration for direct Council delivery, prioritising particular agendas including the reduction of Anti-Social Behaviour, support for community cohesion, support for targeted and vulnerable groups and capacity building to help locally based community delivered services, develop, thrive and be sustainable for the future.
 - changes to the Resource/Funding Allocation Model and the decision-making arrangements for commissioned services.

2. Current Consultation process

- 2.1 A consultation process has been carried out in stages looking at all aspects of the proposed changes and will conclude on 8 October 2015. The current phase of the consultation has invited responses from stakeholders, commissioned providers, area partnerships and young people to the following key areas:
 - The Resource/Funding Allocation Model for which there are 3 options for determining the allocation of funding to different parts of Walsall, all of which consider a combination of 3 factors; youth population, geographical coverage (wards) and need (deprivation).
 - A new localised decision making process for commissioned provision for which there are two options, which would be based on localities and involve local partners making local decisions.

2.2 Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has established a Task and Finish Group to look at and comment on the proposals. At the Scrutiny Committee's meeting on 8 September, it was agreed to recommend to Cabinet that:

- Area Partnerships are consulted during November 2015 to identify which of the two commissioning decision making processes they would wish to implement in their areas;
- Cabinet be advised that the Working Group recommend that option B of the resource allocation model (distribution £267k by Ward (50%) / £266k (50%) by youth population and need (30% by youth population and 70% by need) be adopted;

2.3 All of the 3 options under consideration contain a level (differentiated between each option) of: (a) weighting based on need assessed against the levels of teenage conception, youth crime, incidences of youth related anti-social behaviour and numbers of young people not in education, employment or training, (b) the size of youth population in each partnership area, and (c) a consistent allocation to each ward recognising that there are needs in all wards across the borough.

2.4 It should be noted that the Council's resources will be focused on areas of need, prioritising the most vulnerable, with a focus on anti-social behaviour and community cohesion. This resource will be used flexibly through mobile provision, and by working in partnership with commissioned providers, and with other key organisations working in localities including; police, health and schools.

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