

City Of York Council Youth Services

Summary

1. This report introduces a briefing on City of York Council's Youth Services, following the submission of an associated scrutiny topic submitted by Cllr Watt. Members are asked to consider the information provided and decide whether a review of the Youth Service is required.

Background

2. In June 2010, Councillor Watt submitted a scrutiny topic on the provision of Youth Clubs across the city and the use of ward funding to provide them – see Annex A. Councillor Watt and the Chair of this committee met with officers to discuss the proposed topic, and it was recognised that:
 - a significant proportion of ward funding goes to Youth Services
 - central wards and rural wards face the same funding issues
 - there is currently inequitable provision with only 4 CYC Youth Clubs across the city
3. Officers agreed that a review of the provision of Youth Services across the city would be timely due to the ongoing national debate on these services. It was recognised that external providers had a role to play in the universal youth provision across the city and their views should be sought, should a review be undertaken. It was also recognised that there were issues around increasing community involvement and supporting recruitment and training of volunteers which the council could lead on.
4. In support of this wider review of Youth Services in the city, officers agreed to provide a briefing paper on Youth Services in York, including a map of what is available where, and information on the funding providers – see Annex B.

Options

5. Having considered the information in this report and its annexes, the Committee may choose to:

- i. Proceed with a scrutiny review of CYC Youth Services and identify a remit for the review with a number of objectives
- ii. Request additional information in support of a possible scrutiny review and defer the decision on whether to proceed with a review until such time as the relevant information has been provided
- iii. Decide a review of Youth Services in York is not required

Analysis

7. It is clear that the pattern of youth provision in York reflects a range of historic decisions about buildings, facilities and other issues. This means that it is not evenly distributed, in the accepted sense of the term, across the city . On the other hand, it could be argued that where certain Ward Committees have chosen to prioritise the funding of youth provision, the results are a fair reflection of local residents' wishes. It must also be noted that young people don't always look for youth provision close to where they live - they have repeatedly told Youth Services in surveys and focus groups that their own priority would be for more facilities close to the city centre.
8. This Committee could usefully take stock of the current pattern of provision and express a view as to whether what exists at present is an inevitable and welcome consequence of devolved local decision making, or something that needs more fundamental review. The Committee might wish to seek the views of young people themselves on this matter, and this could readily be facilitated through the Youth Council.
9. That said, this potential scrutiny review takes place against the backdrop of a bigger national debate about the future of traditional youth work, and the role of local authorities in providing it. Some commentators have argued that the bulk of traditional youth work should be provided by the voluntary and community sector, with the LA's role being confined to that of a commissioner or quality controller. The debate on this has by no means reached a firm conclusion, and is unlikely to do so until after the comprehensive spending review. Officers' view is that this backdrop means a local debate on the issues would be highly topical, and would enable us to meet the challenges of the months and years ahead on the front foot in terms of understanding local Members' views.
10. With this in mind, officers agree that it is timely to examine:
 - the current pattern of youth provision across the city, who provides it, from what buildings, and with what funds
 - any future strategic steers about the distribution of such provision, incorporating young people's own views
 - the balance between what the local authority provides, and what can be provided in the voluntary and community sector - taking account of the ongoing national debate on this issue.

Corporate Strategy

11. The work of this Overview & Scrutiny Committee is inline with the Council's corporate strategy to make York the most active city in the country by providing high quality cultural and activities for all.

Implications

9. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT, Property or Other implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

Risk Management

10. There are no known risks associated with the recommendation in this report.

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to agree whether of not to proceed with a review of Youth Services in York.
12. If a decision is taken to proceed with the review, Members are asked to agree the following:
 - A remit for the review – identifying its aim and objectives
 - A timetable for the review – identifying any additional meetings dates required and a workplan

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Wards Affected:

All

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A – Topic Registration Form

Annex B – Briefing Paper of Youth Services in York