

Report of:	Rob Brown, Director of Education, Prevention and Partnerships Andy Preston, The Mayor
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Submitted to:	Executive - 14 July 2020
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Subject:	Youth Service
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
The Executive considers the statutory duties of the Council in delivering Youth Services and approves the future delivery model.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?¹
Decision	Yes	Not confidential	Non urgent

Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
Deliver the key areas of improvement within the early help strategy to manage demand and improve outcomes for children and families.		

Ward(s) affected
All wards of Middlesbrough would be affected by the proposal, wards members have not been consulted at this stage.

What is the purpose of this report?

1. The purpose of the report is to set out the statutory responsibilities of the Local Authority in delivering Youth Services and to propose a future delivery model.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. A committee report is required as this report references the development of a new Youth Service model for Middlesbrough and is a significant change to current delivery models. This requires Executive approval, given the budget allocation and as such this decision is not taken by an Officer.

Report Background

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide youth services

3. Councils have a statutory duty to “secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient provision of educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people” and to make sure young people have a say in the local offer. This is often referred to as the ‘youth services duty’ (Section 507B, Education Act 1996).

Youth Service provision in Middlesbrough

4. Local government has faced challenges in providing youth services due to austerity and budget cuts over many years.
5. Middlesbrough Council previously operated a full Youth Service with ten Youth Centres offering daily sessions and detached youth services. The Council also owned two outdoor education centres, Stainsacre and Lane Head and provided a school holiday outdoor activities programme. In light of austerity and budget cuts, these services all closed during the period 2006 to 2014 and many of the Youth Centres were either demolished (Kader, Grove Hill, Whinney Banks and Thorntree), transferred to leisure facilities (Joe Walton’s and The Manor) or converted into Community Hubs (North Ormesby and Newport).
6. Following the closures, Middlesbrough Council have responded to the statutory duty to provide youth services through a range of short grant funded projects. These services have included Hemlington Detached Youth Project (Linx), Trinity Youth & Children’s Project and Breckon Hill Community Centre. The Council’s early help and prevention service (Stronger Families) also targeted resources towards more vulnerable groups through programmes such as Operation Stay Safe, led by Barnardo’s, to provide specialist support for vulnerable adolescents who are engaging in risk taking behaviours. Activity also focussed on knife crime and most recently Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) was utilised to fund Safe in Tees Valley, Linxs and Youth Focus North East to deliver street based work and community activities.
7. This approach had resulted in short term grant funded projects which has led to Youth Services in Middlesbrough becoming fragmented with a lack of coordination and focus.

The need for youth services

8. **Access to consistent and high quality youth services** can support a young person's well-being, provide young people with a safe space to learn new skills and develop healthy relationships and can help identify and prevent potential problems in a young person's life from escalating. This includes vulnerable young people such as missing children, children with experiences of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, children experiencing and witnessing violence and abuse, children in or leaving care and trafficked children.
9. **Detached youth work can support the engagement of hard to reach groups** by engaging with young people in spaces that they choose to meet, supporting them within their communities and building positive relationships over time. These are known to be successful ways of reaching and working with young people from some of the most socially isolated groups. In terms of contextual safeguarding, reinvesting in detached youth work would have additional positive outcomes in the ability to safeguard children and young people in places and spaces outside of the family home.
10. There is value in **building trusted relationships through youth work** as it takes time to gain the trust of some children and young people, meaning that there can be a long period of time between meeting a young person and being able to start doing any effective work with them. Current, short-term, commissioning cycles can mean that youth workers can struggle to develop good trusted relationships with the young people that they work with.
11. A key consideration is to provide **age appropriate services**, as some older teenagers are often some of the most vulnerable and services for young people can overlook the needs of older adolescents, meaning that they are unable to access services at a time when they may need it the most. Youth Services should not be restricted to specific age groups, they should be designed based on contextual factors and the needs and vulnerabilities of all young people.
12. A local **Participation Strategy** is required in Middlesbrough and this will detail how the Council will include children and young people in local decision making processes in a meaningful way to ensure a wide variety of children and young people are consulted with and it should provide detail on how vulnerable or 'hard to reach' groups of young people will be included in decision making processes.

Future model for Youth Services

13. There are three key elements to the proposed future delivery model:

1) Universal Youth Zones

This would require a number of designated Youth Centres identifying across Middlesbrough. By utilising existing Council buildings such as community hubs and community centres, suitable allocated space can be identified for young people to use for delivery of youth club activities. In addition, identified spaces within buildings operated by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, Thirteen or Everyone Active could be considered for development of universal youth provision.

2) Detached and Street Based Youth Work

This would involve detached and outreach delivery of Youth Services within all wards of Middlesbrough. This model can be utilised to move around different wards according to the level of need and targeted at identified hot spot areas, working in partnership with the Community Safety Teams. It will be focused on those areas where young people are meeting where there are concerns about risk taking behaviour and exploitation or there is identified anti-social behaviour.

3) Targeted Youth Support at Key Transition

The teenage years are a critical period of growth and an important time for making significant life choices and decisions. This can lead to changes in the nature of the relationship between young people and their parents or carers, often making it more difficult. These difficulties are for most, the normal pressures of growing up and do not lead to detrimental outcomes and most young people make the transition successfully to adulthood. However, some children and young people struggle at key transition points where there is significant change in their lives and there will be a focus in the Youth Service model on these transitions. This can include changing schools, or moving from primary to secondary school, as well as the transition from school to next steps in education or employment following year 11.

If a child or young person struggles with transition it can have a negative impact on their wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, academic achievement and future life chances. Research shows that the transition from primary to secondary school in particular can result in the widening of academic gaps between vulnerable children and their peers. Access to trusted adults via **Targeted Youth Work** programmes can support transition both pastorally and academically; this would involve identifying those children and young people who are most likely to need support. This is most effective when strong relationships are fostered and support is given through the transition period and beyond.

How Youth Services will be delivered

14. A commissioning process will be required to invite bids from key VCS organisations to deliver Youth Services, in a partnership arrangement with the Council. Bids would be identified and prioritised on the basis of match funding, tangible community benefits, youth work quality and outcomes. There will be a specific focus on supporting young people through key transition points via youth work and positive activities. Council resources from different directorate areas can be scoped into the 'Youth Offer' and this would provide additional benefits to young people, to provide increased access to the town's parks, leisure, Public Health services and cultural facilities within a corporate approach.
15. At this stage we are unable to provide detailed KPIs as the specification of services are still to be developed, however, Social Value will be part of our procurement and will draw out as much added value as possible. SMART KPIs will also be developed as part of the tender pack development and the procurement process itself will be utilised to strengthen those with the successful bidder. The Contract Manager will be supported by the Commissioning and Procurement Team to ensure that the contract is effectively monitored and reviewed over the contract period.

Tender Development	-	July – August
Advertise OJUE Notice	-	Sept 2020
Publish Tender	-	Sept 2020
Closing Date for Submissions	-	Oct 2020
Evaluation & Clarification	-	Oct/Nov 2020
Notify Bidders of Outcome	-	Nov 2020
Standstill	-	Nov/Dec 2020
Formal Award	-	Dec 2020
Contract Sign Off	-	Jan 2021
Mobilisation and Services Start	-	Jan – Mar 2021

Please note the above timeline is indicative and is subject to change.

16. The full involvement of the Middlesbrough Youth Parliament Members and Middlesbrough Youth Voice will strengthen and develop the model. This will align to the existing early help and prevention services within the Council (Stronger Families) and will be overseen by the Early Help Strategy and the Prevention Board. In addition, the development of a Youth Service will strengthen the ongoing Improvement plan in Children's Social Care.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

17. The Executive considers the statutory duties of the Council in delivering Youth Services and approves the proposed future delivery model.

Why is this being recommended?

18. As the new statutory guidance for providing Youth Services is due to be published in 2020, this will support the development of new youth service provision in Middlesbrough. Youth Services will enhance existing early help and prevention services in Middlesbrough, provide much needed support to young people, in particular to those who are vulnerable and will strengthen the Children's Services improvement journey.

19. A stakeholder consultation will be completed as part of the development of the new service and whilst existing youth services have not been examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the early help and prevention services (Stronger Families) have been examined at length.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

20. Other options include maintaining the status quo, this is not recommended as the current model does not allow sufficient youth service provision which is based on contextual factors and the needs and vulnerabilities of all young people. The current model includes a range of short term funded projects has led to a fragmented youth service model which is difficult to coordinate and lacks strategy.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

21. The decision to provide a new youth service model relates to the Statutory Guidance for Providing Youth Services 2012 (Section 507B, Education Act 1996).

Financial

Staffing Costs

22. £260,000 to fund a fully commissioned Youth Service Model.

Policy Framework

23. The decision to develop a youth service in Middlesbrough aligns to the Councils Children Services Improvement Plan, the Early Help and Prevention Strategy and Participation Strategy.

Equality and Diversity

24. There will be no adverse effects on protected groups.

Risk

25. Provision of effective Youth Services will ensure that the Council is not at risk of failing to meet its statutory duties to provide Youth Services. Children and young people will receive early help support through youth services to prevent risk taking behaviours and vulnerable children and young people will have risks identified early to prevent escalation to Children's Social Care.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

26. Following a decision from the Executive committee, the key actions will be to develop a commissioned model for Youth Service Provision with a full procurement process to commence.

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Department for Education and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport	Statutory Guidance to Improve Young People's Well-being This guidance sets out the statutory duty placed on local authorities to provide appropriate local youth services to improve young people's well-being.	Published 1 June 2012
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport	Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Providing Youth Services: A call for evidence	December 2019

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