

# **FUTURE COUNCIL**

## **Chief Executive's Budget Proposal**

### **OPTION: Youth and Play**

<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
450	-	450

### **SUMMARY OF OPTION**

The Council has committed to making a major capital investment in a state of the art new Youth Zone, to be built in Birkenhead. This option would see the Council reduce the funding associated with the existing youth service while that facility is developed.

The Youth Service currently costs the Council £2.38 million, and this option proposes a saving of £450,000; around a 19% reduction.

Initially, this option would involve closing four satellite youth centres. The Council will continue to deliver provision within the four larger youth 'hubs' (currently located in Birkenhead, West Kirby, Wallasey and Eastham), however, this will reduce from five to four evenings per week.

The option would also see the Council stop the funding associated with the three current 'Play Schemes', Wirral Play Council, the Civic Award Scheme and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

There is a potential for voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to provide services which would replace the proposed reduction in Council service. There could also be funding made available through constituency committees to support youth work, particularly outreach work in areas of high risk, throughout their communities.

### **IMPACT ON RESIDENTS**

In 2013/14 approx 8,000 individual children and young people aged 6-19 years, used the service, a majority of who are targeted within areas of high socio-economic deprivation. 88% of young people using the provision are from the 20% most deprived districts in Wirral.

The service responds to local need through experienced, specialist, professional staff and benefits from responding to and contributing to regional and national agendas. Key to its sustainability is how it builds social capital and ensures young people contribute as respected and respectable citizens within

their own communities, the workplace, education and within the youth community.

## **IMPACT ON PARTNERS**

To enable the strategic co-ordination of Youth and Play work activities and facilities across Wirral and to avoid duplication, the service currently works closely with a variety of partner agencies including Public Health, Merseyside Police, Wirral Brook and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

The Youth Support Service has aligned provision across the four constituencies and works with partners to plan and meet the needs of young people by identifying gaps, sharing resources and good practice and ensuring that activities and facilities are co-ordinated and any duplication is avoided. Youth Outreach Teams target hot spot areas for youths causing disruption.

Withdrawal and/or reduction of Youth and Play services would reduce its ability to do this which will impact on the contribution the Service makes to partners' targets (e.g. teenage conception rates, substance misuse, youth crime, anti-social behaviour). This could result in partners not realising national and local performance indicators.

## **IMPACT ON COMMUNITY, VOLUNTARY AND FAITH SECTOR**

The Youth Support Section has aligned provision across the four constituencies and its managers work closely with other community, voluntary and faith sector youth providers in each constituency. Through these close links, partnership work ensures joint planning to meet the needs of young people, identification of gaps in provision, sharing resources and good practice and ensures that activities and facilities are co-ordinated and duplication is avoided.

If this option was accepted, funding would be made available for local constituency committees to commission their own youth outreach work in their local communities to mitigate the reduction of services provided directly by the Council.