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| Report to: | EXECUTIVE |
| Relevant Officers: | John Blackledge, Director for Community and Environmental Services |
| Relevant Cabinet Member: | Councillor Gillian Campbell, Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth, Schools and Transience |
| Date of Meeting: | 11 July 2022 |

YOUTH PROVISION REVIEW NEXT STEPS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To outline the next steps following the recent Youth Provision Review, to ensure a collaborative approach with the third sector and wider partners to achieve the recommendations outlined in the report attached at Appendix 2a.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the establishment of a central youth service function within the local authority by 31 May 2023 that will facilitate, coordinate and work collaboratively with the third sector to achieve the recommendations within the report at Appendix 2a over the next five to seven years.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The recent Youth Provision Review has identified the need for a coordinated and consistent approach to the delivery of youth provision across the town. In addition, the report (Appendix 2a) acknowledges the need for investment from the Local Authority in order to achieve the recommendations (Appendix 2b) outlined within the report. The recommendation in this report demonstrates a commitment from the local authority through the investment in a core 'youth service' function that will oversee the coordination and consistency of youth provision as the offer across the town grows to meet the recommendation of every young person being within a 15 minute walk of youth provision.

- 3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? Yes

- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? No

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

- 4.1 To not invest in a core 'youth service' function, which is highly likely to result in the recommendations within the Youth Provision Review Report being unachievable, the relationship with the third sector organisations will decline and the young people of the town will become frustrated with the lack of progress following the review by the National Youth Association.

5.0 Council priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council priority is:
"Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 Effective youth work employed with young people can enhance life chances. It offers young people safe spaces to explore their identity, experience decision-making, increase their confidence, develop interpersonal skills and think through the consequences of their actions. This leads to informed choices, changes in activity and improved outcomes for young people. Quality youth services are important for supporting life outcomes, and they are a part of and contribute to a wider eco-system of services that support and develop young people's capabilities.
- 6.2 The recent review of Blackpool youth provision was undertaken by the National Youth Association (NYA) to capture current delivery, identify what works for young people and determine areas for development. The review, which includes findings from the desktop research, stakeholder engagement and the effective practice literature, was undertaken to inform future youth provision in Blackpool and recommends a coordinated approach to enhance our town wide offer to meet the needs of the children and young people we serve.
- 6.3 Youth work is a statutory service, as stated in the 1997 Education Act (updated in the 2006 Education and Inspections Act) and Blackpool Council has 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.
- 6.4 This is often referred to as the 'youth services duty'. The cross-cutting benefits of youth work are well documented within the review, demonstrating that universal provision can reduce the demand on more specialist children and young people services.
- 6.5 The Blackpool Youth Provision Review made a number of recommendations (Appendix 2b), at the core of which is the need for central co-ordination and youth participation. The Youth Review Sub-Group have agreed that whilst challenging, the recommendations are achievable over a longer period of time. The recommendation of providing two JNC qualified youth

workers per secondary school establishment is ambitious, however with a coordinated town wide approach to identifying priorities and applying for funding, the sub-group believe this could be achieved.

6.5 The sub-group recognised that whilst the work of the third sector youth providers is complimentary in terms of them all wanting to improve the lives of Blackpool young people, there has traditionally been conflict and silo working between providers. Furthermore, following the cessation of the youth service within Blackpool Council in 2012, the third sector providers feel there has been a significant lack of support and recognition from Blackpool Council for the work they do for young people in their areas.

6.6 **Next steps**

In order to improve the quality and consistency of youth provision across the town, through a collaborative and coordinated approach to developing, promoting and co-producing provision for and with young people, the council needs to establish a small youth work team to undertake this role.

The commitment from Blackpool Council is that there is no intention of developing a Youth Service that directly delivers youth provision. The intention of the proposed investment is to enable funding to be secured and invested in identified areas through third sector organisations to increase youth provision across the town, delivered by the third sector. The role of the local authority will be to oversee a town wide approach to developing and delivering youth provision, working collaboratively with the third sector to develop funding bids, allocate funds, monitor delivery against agreed outputs and outcomes and ultimately increase the amount and type of provision, ensuring the quality of provision is consistently high across the town.

The service will focus on working collaboratively with the third sector and young people to deliver the recommendations within the review. A costed proposal to establish a 'Youth Service' function within the local authority has been developed that will support and co-ordinate the work of the sub-group, improve the quality of provision through training and development support and seek to secure external funding to support the development of youth work across the town. A proposed structure can be found at Appendix 2c.

The proposal requires an investment of £225,00 per year which will be identified from corporate contingencies in year for 2022/23 with the intention of it becoming part of the core budget for 2023/24 onwards.

Delivering the recommendations within the report will require a Service Manager with significant knowledge and experience of youth work provision along with excellent collaboration and negotiation in order to build on the partnership that has been established with the third sector and wider partners.

The Grants and Funding Manager will seek to identify, apply for and secure funding to deliver on the agreed actions within the development plan. The funding bids will likely range in scale with a mixture of capital and revenue. A coordinated and collaborative approach to applying for external funding will increase both the success rate and financial contribution input into youth provision across the town, ensuring all partners benefit from this post.

One of the key areas within the review focuses around the youth sector workforce and the recognition that the sector has suffered nationally with a significant loss in qualified youth workers. The need to develop a high quality and consistent work force of both paid and voluntary staff is key to providing the support, guidance and role models that young people need. A dedicated training and quality manager would monitor and oversee the quality of provision across the town as well as provide ongoing training to both the direct youth sector workforce and training to wider support services to embed key youth worker skills and approaches within other services that support and engage with young people.

The Youth Engagement Officer would lead on the recommendations regarding involving and engaging young people across Blackpool, taking a co-production approach to developing and shaping youth provision. The approach will need to be multi-pronged to ensure input and involvement from as many young people as possible, using a number of different engagement and feedback techniques. This role is important to ensure young people co-produce the development plan and have input and oversight of the sub-group and its progress against the recommendations.

The NYA recommends that this service sit within Community and Environmental Services rather than Children's Services as youth services should be a universal provision open to all. Recognising the pressures that Children's Services face, there is a danger that this new resource could be focused on targeted interventions or its focus diluted to support other areas. However, there is a need to ensure a collaborative and joined up approach between the Head of Community and Wellbeing Services, and the Head of Adolescent Services to ensure that the service compliments and dovetails with existing services such as Leisure, Family Hubs and targeted provision for our most vulnerable such as our Care Leavers, Children in the Youth Justice System and our Adolescents in need of support due to homelessness, drug, alcohol or sexual health concerns.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 2a: Blackpool Youth Provision Review Report
- Appendix 2b: Blackpool Youth Provision Review recommendations table
- Appendix 2c: Proposed Youth Service Structure

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The Youth Service pro-rata investment for 2022/23 will be found from corporate contingencies. The £225,000 ongoing revenue commitment will be identified within the existing corporate budget for 2023/24 onwards.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 If the proposals are not taken forward it is highly likely to result in the recommendations within the youth Provision Review Report being unachievable, the relationship with third sector organisations will decline and the young people of the town will become frustrated with the lack of progress against the recommendations within the report.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 In the course of undertaking the review and developing the proposals, we have considered whether there could be unintended adverse impacts on people because of shared characteristics protected by the Equality Act. We believe the proposal will not have any adverse impact and will in fact provide greater opportunities for those protected by the Equality Act to benefit from an increased range of youth provision opportunities and the wider benefits this will bring.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Provision within a 15 minute walk of every young person supports the focus on reducing car mileage and encouraging young people to walk or cycle to provision. Any investment in assets as the provision expands will include sustainable energy solutions, where possible.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Extensive consultation has taken place throughout the recent Youth Provision review undertaken by the NYA, which has helped shape the recommendations. Approval of these proposals will ensure consultation, collaboration and co-production takes place with all key stakeholders as the part of the ongoing process in achieving the Youth Provision Review recommendations.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

- 15.1 Is this a key decision? Yes
- 15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 11/2022
- 15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
- 15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

- 16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No
- 16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 1 July 2022 Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1

19.0 Summary of Discussion:

19.1

20.0 Executive decision:

20.1

21.0 Date of Decision:

21.1

22.0 Reason(s) for decision:

22.1

23.0 Date Decision published:

23.1

24.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

24.1

25.0 Executive Members in attendance:

25.1

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

27.0 Notes:

27.1