

Report to:

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Relevant Officer:

Lisa Arnold, Head of Community and Wellbeing Services

Meeting Date:

2 February 2023

YOUTH SERVICE REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update following the review of Youth Provision completed last year and the commitment from the local authority to establish a small Youth Service, to provide co-ordination and support to third sector youth providers as identified through the review.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 Support the commitment by the local authority and third sector partners to grow and improve youth provision across Blackpool in line with the recommendations within the report.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation:

3.1 To improve the life chances and outcomes for young people in Blackpool.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 Delivering the outcomes identified in the Youth Review will predominantly contribute to priority two, however there is likely to also be some indirect contribution to priority 1;

- Priority One 'The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool';
- Priority Two 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'

6.0 Report Information

6.01 Background

- 6.02** 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.
- 6.03** The 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 included findings from the desktop research, stakeholder engagement and the effective practice literature, was undertaken to inform future youth provision in Blackpool and recommended a coordinated approach to enhance our town wide offer to meet the needs of the children and young people we serve.
- 6.04** 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.
- 6.05** 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.
- 6.06** The Blackpool Youth Provision Review made a number of recommendations (Appendix B), 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.
- 6.07** The sub-group recognises 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.
- 6.08** In July 2022 Blackpool Council committed to investing 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.
- 6.09** This new service will not undertake any direct youth work delivery with young people, but will focus on ensuring a town wide approach to developing and delivering youth provision,

working collaboratively with the third sector and young people to develop funding bids, allocate funds, monitor delivery against agreed outputs and outcomes and ultimately increase the amount and type of provision delivered by the third sector, ensuring the quality of provision is consistently high across the town.

6.10 The new service includes a Youth Service Manager, Grants and Funding Manager, Training and Quality Manager, Youth Engagement Officer and administration support. A Service Manager was recently appointed and is set to commence their new role at the end of March 2023. Following their commencement, the job descriptions for the remaining posts will be finalized and post advertised, with the expectation that the full team will be in post by the end of Summer 2023.

6.11 The sub group that involves third sector youth providers has continued to meet following the completion of the review to discuss next steps in relation to the recommendations. Strategic Youth Partnership models are being explored to formalize the group and ensure that positive outcomes for young people can be fully maximized by having the right partners around the table with a clear vision and shared objectives.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

7.0 List of Appendices:

Appendix 9(a): Youth Provision Review Report

Appendix 9(b): Youth Provision Review Recommendations

8.0 Financial considerations:

None

9.0 Legal considerations:

None

10.0 Risk management considerations:

None

11.0 Equalities considerations:

None

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

None

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

None

14.0 Background papers:

None