

CABINET

17 DECEMBER 2013

INTEGRATING YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM AND YOUTH SERVICE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mike O'Brien, Children's Services (Lead Member)

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services

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Summary

This report:

- Provides information about how a more co-ordinated and focused 'adolescent offer' could achieve savings and better outcomes for vulnerable young people. It shows how officers propose to bring the Youth Offending Team and Youth Service into one building, further integrating their work programmes and providing savings by maximising and sharing staff and resources.
- Requests that Cabinet delegates authority to declare surplus 67 Balfour Road.
- Seeks a recommendation to Full Council to add a scheme to the capital programme

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The proposal to provide a more co-ordinated and focused service would bring improved outcomes for both clients of the Youth Offending team and Youth Service, providing a more cost effective delivery of work with challenging young people. These proposals are therefore consistent with the aims and objectives of the Council's Youth Justice Plan and Council Plan.
- 1.2 Additions to the local authority's capital programme are a matter for Council.
- 1.3 Cabinet is asked to note the proposals to integrate the service and that the Director of Children and Adults Services will approve the reorganisation under delegated authority.
- 1.4 Delegating authority to officers to declare 67 Balfour Road Surplus is a matter for Cabinet, as the capital value of the property for disposal will be over £100,000 but below £1,000,000.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current financial climate for public services remains a very difficult one, which has continued to impact upon the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and will make the financial period 2013/14 challenging in respect of balancing statutory requirements and policy commitments against the available level of resources.

All YOT principal funding agencies have confirmed their levels of contribution for the period 2013/14. However 2014/15 is unclear and changes to Remand Management costs, with the transfer of direct financial responsibility for custodial remands to the Local Authority, could present a financial risk to the Council.

- 2.2 The Youth Service has reduced its budget by 55% over the last four years. There is a statutory duty on local authorities under the **Education and Inspections Act 2006** to provide services for young people outside of the school day. The duty states that, for young people aged 13 to 19 and young people aged 20 to 25 with learning disabilities:

A local education authority in England must, so far as reasonably practical, secure for qualifying young persons in the authority's area access to:

- (a) Sufficient educational leisure-time activities, which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and
- (b) Sufficient recreational leisure-time activities, which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities.

A recent High Court judgment found that North Somerset Council had acted unlawfully when cutting its Youth Service budget by 70% over a number of years.

- 2.3 The new Minister for Youth and Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP, challenged local authorities at a recent Confederation of Heads of Young People's services meeting in November in London to 'think out of the box' and to be adventurous in how they delivered future services to young people.
- 2.4 For a number of years the Council has identified Medway YOT office 67, Balfour Rd, (As edged black on the attached plan – Appendix 1) as a potential 'property for sale' and a capital receipt will be obtained from the disposal of this property. Various alternative offices for the YOT have been identified and refurbishment costs have been calculated, however the relocation costs have far exceeded the likely capital receipt from disposing of 67 Balfour Road.
- 2.5 As demonstrated in a recent YOT and Youth Service seminar held at St George's on 14 November, there are a number of clients (47% of YOT) that both services have in common and work practices between the two agencies have also significantly developed over recent years. This was a deliberate plan of placing both services under the same Service manager.
- 2.6 Alternative and more cost effective ways of delivering key YOT programmes need to be developed as a result of falling caseloads and "Legal Aid and the Punishing and Sentencing of Offender" legislation (LAPSCO).

- 2.7 Across the country YOT teams are experiencing reduced court referrals due to new LAPSO legislation that allows for increased alternatives to secure remand and community disposals for first time or low level offences.
- 2.8 The YOT and Youth Service will work in a more integrated way, focusing on improving the tracking and monitoring of young peoples journey into and out of the Youth Justice System which will improve the safeguarding of these vulnerable young people and enhance our early help and prevention work in Medway.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed by co-locating the YOT and the Youth Service and by strengthening the work of the Youth service in prevention; a more co-ordinated, coherent response to challenging adolescents can be achieved.
- 3.2 This proposal to move the Medway YOT team and office to the upper floor of a major Youth Centre (Strood) resulting in reduced office and building running costs for both services. However, the open access work / universal youth work on the ground floor at Strood YC would be able to continue. Some relocation costs would be incurred but most of the capital receipt from the disposal of 67 Balfour Road would be available for Medway Council
- 3.3 In Surrey there is an example of this remodelling of its youth services and the Youth Justice Board has seen the integration of work practices as an example of good practice, with improved outcomes for young people. A recent inspectorate report highlighted the need for the Youth Offending Service to maintain its expertise in managing safeguarding concerns and managing risk concerns (*HMIP Surrey Short Quality screening 23/01/13*).
- 3.4 Both services would retain their respective staff structures and budgets. It would be necessary to retain the respective professional knowledge and supervision processes within each service.
- 3.5 There would need to be a refocusing of Medway Youth Services curriculum priorities to crime prevention and reducing anti-social behaviour, but they would retain their personal development ethos and continue to provide open access programmes to young people 10-19 years and 25 with special needs.
- 3.6 The integration will offer a 'step down' process for young people exiting the criminal justice system, providing a 'parachute support' for reintegrating YOT clients back into the community by accessing local youth programmes. This would improve the safeguarding support arrangements for YOT clients who often cease to have any contact with youth professionals once their court order is completed and may then re-enter the Youth Justice System.
- 3.7 Both Youth Service and YOT management teams support this major new initiative and can reflect on experiences of successful partnership working arrangements across a range of programmes and initiatives over recent years. The proposed partnership between the Youth Service and the YOT would bring improved outcomes for both sets of clients and a more cost effective delivery of work with challenging young people involved in:
- Alternatives to secure remand
 - ISS
 - Triage community disposals

- Targeted group work.

- 3.8 The Youth Service would be able to access assessment tools and specialist professional advice that could assist them in the development of work with young people where a social work or health intervention might be appropriate, enhancing their early help and prevention work
- 3.9 This proposal initiates the future possible development of youth multi agency hubs in young people friendly buildings, offering youth support services in counselling, housing, health, jobs and training advice involving agencies such as; DAAT, Sexual Health, Public Health and emotional health support, YES.
- 3.10 The disposal of Balfour Rd will generate a sizeable capital receipt for the Council.
- 3.11 This proposal could be implemented within a short period of time and would not jeopardise the Youth Services European funding via the Cyber Youth Connection programme, which terminates in April 2015. In future, any commissioned outsourcing of the Medway Youth Service, post 2017, would still be possible should that be the wish of the Council.
- 3.12 A rationalisation of Service Manager Responsibilities within the Inclusion and School Improvement Division would bring about a reduction of one Service Manager Post in the second year.

4. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
• Political- structural	• Integration means that the YOT would need to be outsourced with the Youth Service in future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work practices only are integrated • YOT and Youth service have their own SMTs • YOT and Youth service have own budgets 	LOW
• Lack of engagement from stakeholders	• Challenge to the proposal from Staff and Management committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of YOT and Head of Youth service have contributed to this paper 	LOW
• Lack of engagement from stakeholders	• Youth Service staff are unhappy to take on YOT statutory responsibilities with young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with management committees to explain and support in-house option • Consultation and negotiation with staff about role change 	LOW

5. Consultation

- 5.1 A consultation would be advisable with Youth service staff on the refocusing of roles and responsibilities. Voluntary management committees would want assurances on the future direction and ethos of the services work, but would welcome the Council's clarity in the direction of Youth Service development over

the next few years. Strood Academy will need to be consulted on the closure of Strood YC training room to the school, for their 'Springboard' programme from July 2014 with the Council using best endeavours to find alternative locations for them to hire.

6. Financial and legal implications

6.1 Financial savings would be achieved by:

Revenue – ongoing savings	
Year 1	
Administration and cleaning savings -	£30k
Premises utilities reductions -	£16k
Grants to voluntary management committees -	£38k
Delete YOT vacant post -	£35k
Loss of income from fees and lettings -	(£17k)
Yr 1 total = £102k	
Year 2	
Reduce service manager posts -	£80k
Youth Service supports to delivery of ISS -	£50k
Yr2 Total = £232k	

6.2 The relocation would release 67 Balfour Road for disposal, but part of the capital receipt would be needed to fund the investment outlined below. This investment will be an addition to the Capital programme.

Capital Investment	
Development of open plan office in Strood YC training room	£50k

6.3 Therefore the net year 1 savings amount to £119,000 - £17,000 = £102,000, increasing to £232,000 in year 2.

6.4 Loss of income from lettings needs to be balanced against the fact that each time potential new premises have been identified for the YOT in order to release a capital receipt, the rental cost has been at least £25,000 per annum.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 requires the council to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable when it disposes of its surplus properties.

7.2 Under Part 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, the decision to dispose of the property is one for Cabinet as the value of the property is between £100,000 and £1,000,000.

7.3 The Constitution enables Directors to agree reorganisations within their departments subject to their being:

- No significant service policy implications or clear departure from existing Council policies
- No expenditure in excess of budget
- No growth in net expenditure beyond the current year
- No changes affecting directors or assistant directors
- Consultation with the Assistant Director Organisational Services.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Cabinet is asked to note the proposal to integrate some of the working practices of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the Youth service and note that the Director of Children and Adult Services will undertake this reorganisation under delegated authority.
- 8.2 Cabinet is asked to delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Legal and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, to declare surplus 67 Balfour Road when it is clear that the property is no longer needed for service provision so that the property can be disposed of by the Assistant Director, Legal and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance for best consideration.
- 8.3 Cabinet is asked to recommend to Full Council to add up to £50,000 for the development of the Strood Youth Centre Training Room, as outlined in paragraph 6.2 of the report as an addition to the Capital Programme.

9. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

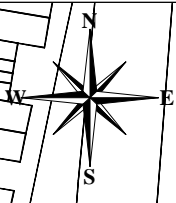
- 9.1 This provides the Council with revenue savings, a capital receipt and seeks to improve service delivery for young people

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Background Papers:

None



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