



Delegated decision report

DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

DECISION CANNOT BE TAKEN BEFORE MONDAY, 16 JANUARY 2012

Title	REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE: CONCLUDING STAGE
Report of	THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FIRE, CULTURE AND RESIDENT SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to approve the restructuring of the Island's statutory youth service. A restructure is needed, because currently only 13 per cent of 13 to 19 year olds make use of the service.
2. The Youth and Community Service will continue under this name, but will have a renewed focus. The service will concentrate its efforts on the age range of 13 to 19 year olds (or up to aged 24 for those with a learning disability). This is because these are the age ranges under the law for which the council has to provide youth activities. This means that the service will cease to offer youth activities to young people under the age of 13, from 1 April 2012.
3. Key to the restructuring will be targeting resources on providing year-round services and activities rather than maintaining expensive and out-dated buildings, some of which are lightly-used. There will also be more emphasis on outreach work and the new staffing structure will offer staff the opportunity of full time work, or part time work with longer hours available than now, or job shares.
4. The recommendations have been developed, taking into account several extensive consultation exercises, including those led and facilitated by the Island's Youth Council. These recommendations have been framed within the council's need to reduce its outgoings and demonstrate improved value for money.

BACKGROUND

5. The council began its review of its Youth and Community Service in 2007, with a member-led investigation into the service and its effectiveness. This followed an Ofsted inspection which found that the service was “good” overall, but that it would benefit from clearer strategic direction.
6. Over the next four years, a series of proposals were developed, on which public feedback was invited. Revised proposals, informed by the feedback, were then published for further comment from the public. However, the final proposals, published in November 2010 coincided with a significant reduction in government grant to the council. This meant that the proposals needed to be reviewed again, in light of reduced funding and the need to reduce running costs as a result.
7. The revised proposals were published and discussed at Cabinet on 21 June 2011. Following final representations from interested groups and local councils, these proposals have been further refined, and are set out below at paragraph 18. The consultation feedback from this final period for representations is summarised in paragraph 22 below, and at Appendix C.
8. The current service operates with 74 roles, of which 65 have a person employed in post. Of these, only seven are full time (six being senior youth work posts). There are 18 roles of only three hours and 42 minutes (the current session length) per week, 13 roles of seven hours and 24 minutes, and the remaining posts (11 of which are youth workers) have unique working hours associated with each.
9. The gender breakdown of roles within the current structure is 50 per cent female, 36 per cent male and the balance is vacancies. The number of posts will be reduced by approximately 58 per cent, from 74 (30 full-time employees, FTEs) to 31 (26 FTEs). The resulting workforce will comprise a mix of full time and part time roles. This mix is crucial in creating flexibility in the service, to enable it to respond to local need across the Island. Part time staff are an important and valuable part of the service delivery. The new posts will offer career progression and more meaningful pay structures, to attract people into youth work as a vocation.
10. The current service operates six days a week (Monday to Saturday), with six full time youth workers (one vacancy) responsible for running 11 youth centres across the Island. There is a range of activities provided throughout the year, such as participation in carnivals, supervised trips, or themed weeks or months, which enable the young people in the youth centres to focus on a range of issues, such as bullying, sexual health, or relationships. There is, however, no formal curriculum. Some youth centres offer activities to young people across a wide age range, but many already focus primarily on the statutory age range (as set out in paragraph 31 below) which is 13 to 19 years, or up to 24 for those with a learning disability. The service has traditionally operated on the basis of academic years, with closure in many sites for the entire summer holiday period. This will cease with the restructured service.

11. There are management committees which comprise volunteers, who fund raise for the youth centres and subsidise the council's operating costs for the service, by paying for equipment, or bills for the youth centre buildings. There is capital funding for the purchase of a bus-style mobile youth centre, which would be likely to be purchased and used once the decision on the service's future is made. In addition the service owns two minibuses. These are used for transporting young people on expeditions for Duke of Edinburgh award programmes and positive alternative provision for young people who are not in mainstream education.
12. There is street-based work offered by the senior youth workers, where youth workers walk around public spaces in the Island's towns to meet with young people and either work with them there, or encourage them to visit and use the services from their local youth centre. This street-based work is not targeted or co-ordinated with local partners in any strategic way across the service. There is no detached youth work offer, where specialist youth work is targeted at young people who are not coming to youth clubs and who would be at particular risk (for example who may be exhibiting risk-taking behaviour, or poor school attendance). There is therefore currently little link up with the council's Targeted Youth Support services, to ensure joined-up support mechanisms exist to help young people make safe and positive choices.
13. Young people are not represented on management or other local partnership groups, to a standard and representative level across the service. The current service is popular with its regular members (young people attending youth activities run by the service), but four years of nil staff recruitment and no expenditure on service marketing has meant that the take-up of the service has dropped even below the 2007 level of 16 per cent, to 13 per cent in 2010/2011 (academic year, September to August). It is clearly a priority, to increase the availability and accessibility of services to young people in the 13 to 19 years age range (or up to 24 for those with a declared learning disability) and to make these services better understood, with marketing and branding a key consideration for the proposed new service.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

14. The recommendation supports the Eco Island Sustainable Community Strategy themes of an *inspiring Island* because it sees the service refocused on offering young people places to go and things to do which help them to fulfil their potential; and a *healthy and supportive Island* because the service will be offering increased volunteering opportunities within communities.
15. The recommendation in the report also supports the Vision as set out in the Corporate Plan 2011-13, to challenge statutory duties and deliver services in more cost effective ways by engaging with local communities and partners.
16. The research for this review covered a wide range of sources, many of which are summarised in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for the Island. The key references are listed in the equality impact assessments for the proposals in this report, set out at Appendix E.

THE ISLAND'S NEW YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

17. The vision for the Island's Youth and Community Service is that more young people will be able to access local activities which they enjoy, and which help them to live healthier and happier lives, fulfilling their potential, regardless of background or ability.
18. At the heart of this vision is an emphasis on facilitating young people's opportunities to discover more about themselves, and the society around them, through activities which challenge and reward them.
19. This vision is summarised at Appendix A, but the implications of the recommendation are detailed here.
 - (a) The service would concentrate its resources on statutory activities for young people aged between 13 and 19 (or up to 24 for those with a declared learning disability), as defined in paragraph 31 below. This would see the council cease to provide discretionary youth activities for young people aged under 13, in those sites which currently offer this, from 1 April 2011. In practice, this would mean that attendance at council-run youth centres will commence when young people are in Year 9 of their schooling. Introductory sessions will be run for Year 8 students, as they approach the eligible age, so that they can find out about youth services and the opportunities that it offers for their leisure time. Discussions with local partners will take place, to explore how the council may support provision for under-13s to mitigate the impact of this on young people.
 - (b) The service aims to increase its usage levels, so that by April 2014, 20 per cent of eligible young people on the Island access some part of the Youth and Community Service, and that the service was able to make a measurably positive difference to those young people's lives as a result. This difference would be assessed by the use of impact measures, as discussed in paragraph 20 below.
 - (c) The service would provide opportunities for young Islanders to learn more about, and reflect upon, themselves, their friends, their local area and the society in which they play an important part. There will not be a formal curriculum which runs across the service.
 - (d) These opportunities should offer every chance for 'stretch', with young people able to grow their knowledge, skills and experience and, where possible, to gain accreditation or qualifications as a result. This would include an increased number of opportunities for physically-challenging outdoor activities and youth volunteering.
 - (e) The service would operate in three areas (see Appendix B for the operational areas map). These areas would align with ward boundaries, and coincide, to a significant extent, with the operational command areas of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police, and with health operational boundaries. This area alignment is designed to make needs analysis, and subsequent multi-agency service planning, simpler. The benefit of working within similar areas to those of partners such as the police, is that local relationships can be developed, with the same youth workers, health workers and police officers all working together to ensure young people are safe and able to enjoy themselves appropriately while accessing positive youth activities at the local level.

- (f) The staffing would be restructured. The restructure would introduce a new role of youth and community service manager. This role would provide the strategic leadership for the service. There would be six full time senior youth worker posts, two in each of the three operational areas. These senior members of staff would run the service in operational terms, with responsibility for staff deployment and budget management to underpin service delivery in the three areas. These senior staff would be expected to be mobile and flexible in their place of work, within their operational area, leading their teams' engagement in centre, mobile and street-based youth work as required and planned. Senior youth workers would no longer be responsible for the operation of specific buildings; this will become the responsibility of a headquarters team (see (g) below). Senior youth workers would be expected to lead on encouraging youth participation, with consideration being given to a reworked participation support role being created, to operate corporately. Senior youth workers would also be responsible for multi-agency partnership working, for partnership working within the council and to facilitate a range of challenge and accreditation opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh programme. Duke of Edinburgh awards are popular, particularly with young people with special needs, but are not as widespread as they could be, and so are not offering young people the potential for a wider range of opportunities and skills. This programme, and other similar activity-based programmes, would be encouraged as some of the ways in which young people may gain recognised awards for demonstrating their sustained commitment to skills development. Similarly, the service would look to work with organisations such as the Prince's Trust, to support young people to develop skills and to prepare for employment.
- (g) The service would be supported by a small headquarters back-office team, which will provide facilities management and administrative support. All staff would be employed centrally within the service, to be deployed flexibly as the service need demands, rather than allocated permanently to specific sites. The service's personnel support functions being handled centrally within the back-office team, rather than by senior youth workers. However, the service delivery management will be carried out by the senior staff in the operational areas.
- (h) The service will place a renewed emphasis on professional training and qualifications. There will be fewer posts, but the part-time posts will be for longer hours than at present. This is designed to attract people to youth work as a vocation. Flexible working, through job shares, will be welcomed, to retain valuable expertise within the service.
- (i) The service restructure would offer the new contracts on Isle of Wight Council terms and conditions, rather than Joint National Committee (JNC) terms and conditions. This will allow for greater service flexibility and better transparency of remuneration.
- (j) The service will be organised in hour blocks, which are linked together according to the nature of the youth work required and planned, rather than dividing up the week into ten sessions for full time workers; this is what gave rise to the current anomalous session length of three hours, 42 minutes (37 hours per week, divided into ten sessions, gives 3.7 hours per session). This change will enable sessions to be more responsive to local need as it changes, and also to allow youth workers to combine after-school activities with youth centre activities in the same evening within their working patterns, if local need requires.

- (k) The service will continue to operate from buildings, to maintain fixed points of contact. However, the service will also increase its emphasis on outreach services, with mobile provision and street-based youth work a key part of the service. This could include working with the local bus company to operate on school “lift” and late-night services, and with the voluntary sector and police, to ensure young people have access to youth workers as part of the night economy. In addition, a dedicated team of detached street-based youth workers will be developed from within the general youth service staff, reaching out to young people at risk of anti-social behaviour in the areas where they go already, rather than expecting them to come to buildings which may not always be convenient or welcoming. This is particularly important to young people who do not want to join the service, but who may value being able to access non-judgemental, safe adult support, information and advice. There is also a clear link to the council’s Targeted Youth Support team, which works with young people displaying risk-taking behaviour. It is hoped that, in the future, these service areas may be co-located so that exchanges of ideas and practice are shared.
- (l) The service will work with local councils, to hire space in some local buildings to operate youth work sessions, rather than maintain large old buildings which are increasingly difficult to run. This will offer communities valuable income streams, enabling them to hire out these venues, which will in turn offer other local groups places to meet.
- (m) The service will target young people in rural areas through the use of mobile youth provision. This will be through using van-style vehicles to take youth services to areas where public transport makes it difficult for young people to access activities.
- (n) There are a number of local action groups in existence across the Island, which were established by the police working in partnership with other local organisations to address specific issues. It is hoped that these or similar partnership groups can form the basis for youth-focused action groups in the key towns (Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown/the Bay, Ventnor, Freshwater and Newport). Representation by a range of young people will be encouraged actively, to ensure young people’s voices are heard in addressing local issues. These local partnership groups will inform the development of strategic youth work in the three operational areas, and it is hoped that representatives from these groups will come together to meet and discuss the Island-wide youth offer and develop a strategic plan. This plan will inform and fit within the overall strategic plan from the Island’s Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership.
- (o) Management committees will be invited to wind up their accounts for 1 April 2012, and to cease to support the running of council buildings from that time. Any outstanding monies which the committees have raised will be theirs to spend; none will be spent on Isle of Wight Council buildings or services from 31 March 2012.
- (p) The council will examine its commissioning of alternative provision and develop a joined-up approach to working with existing providers on the Island, such as the Island Youth Water Activities Centre in Cowes, and Challenge and Adventure in Parkhurst Forest. The commissioning process should also include emphasis on working with local councils and other partners, to maximise existing partnership working and best practice examples.

20. Although there is a target for increasing the percentage of young Island residents who choose to use the service, the service will measure its success primarily through impact and evidence of its service quality. This evidence will be secured through the use of nationally-developed impact measures, known as “generic social outcomes”. These measures would invite young people to comment on whether the youth activities make a difference to them, in such areas as self-esteem, relationships advice, understanding others, responsible behaviour, healthy lifestyles. These would then be analysed, so that a percentage rating could be given to how many young people felt better about themselves as a result of an activity, or were better able to understand the impact their behaviour had on a community as a result of youth work intervention. These measures would be used to illustrate the different ways in which young people have taken responsibility for making informed and positive decisions about their lives. These impact measures would be short and long term, to allow for the full and lasting results of interventions and specialist support to be measured and evaluated.
21. In the financial year 2010/11, the service ran over budget by £175,000, which is an unsustainable situation. The service also employs too many posts for too great a range of working hours, in buildings which it does not use fully and which it cannot afford to maintain.

CONSULTATION

22. There have been several different consultation exercises undertaken during the four years of this review. Details of this consultation can be seen within the report to Cabinet dated 21 June 2011, analysed in Appendix B of that report. The period for final representations, offered from 22 June 2011 until 30 September 2011, resulted in 34 formal comments being received. Of these, six were from local councils, three were from management committees, one came from an independent voluntary youth centre, and 15 were from young people and private individuals, including a formal response on behalf of young people from the Island’s youth council. Six staff have taken the opportunity to feed back. The remaining responses were from a local sports organisation, a private company which hires a youth centre, and a locally-based charity. The role of the youth council in facilitating all the consultation exercises, throughout the review, leading to the recommendations in this report is noted and appreciated.
23. The key issues for correspondents, in this most recent period for final representations, were as follows:
- The potential closure or relocation of youth centres.
 - The cessation of provision to under-13s.
 - The potential reduction in opening hours.
 - The importance of the service as providing safe positive places to meet friends and access information, advice and guidance from trusted youth workers.
 - The importance of youth centres in supporting young people to acquire skills (and the confidence to start the training for those skills).
 - The need for stability and investment in the youth service.
 - The role that the service plays in local crime-avoidance.
 - The use of school buildings for youth work.
 - The need to retain local skills and capital investment in the centres.
 - A rejection of partnership boards in favour of less bureaucracy and better integration with community-led groups already in existence.

- The need for more active representation of young people on local groups (both more young people being invited, and also more young people taking up the invitation and meeting their responsibilities to those groups in terms of attendance and contribution).
 - Suggestions for where young people might also like to meet with youth workers, in addition to youth centres.
25. A full analysis of the representations received during the final period for feedback is provided at Appendix C.
24. These issues are addressed in the attached equality impact assessments.
25. In addition, the staffing structure has been informed through detailed consultation with the current senior youth workers' team, and service staff have been offered the opportunity to make suggestions or to seek clarification as part of the development of this report. The recognised trades unions have also be involved from the start of this process and consultation is ongoing, with future meetings already scheduled.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

25. In the financial year 2011/12 the Youth and Community Service budget was £987,745. There is an existing savings target of £128,000, which must be found from the service during 2012/13.
26. The savings target will in the main be met in the following way:
- Approximately £38,000 saved by closing and disposing of underused buildings.
 - Approximately £56,000 saved by terminating the external grant to the Island Youth Water Activities Centre (IYWAC) in Cowes.
 - Approximately £22,000 saved by reviewing other existing non-pay budgets across the service.
27. Other site-related savings are being investigated which could realise a further maximum figure of £13,000.
28. This saving does not take account of other indirect savings from having reduced buildings to manage and fewer members of staff to administer through HR/payroll support functions.
29. The budget, after savings have been found and the service restructured, will equate to a spend of £74 for every eligible young person on the Island (based on the latest mid-year population estimate of 11,659 young people living on the Isle of Wight in the 13 to 19 age range). This is within five per cent of the national average spend per head on youth services of £77.
30. This budget pays for the 'core' professional universal youth services (ie youth work based in centres, or as outreach street-based services in busy areas) and does not include wider youth-related costs such as subsidised school travel, subsidised school meals, or any of the alternative provision programme of activities for young people in danger of exclusion.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

31. The Isle of Wight Council must ensure that the statutory duty set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for youth provision is met. In respect of young people aged 13 to 19 years old (and 20 to 24 with a learning disability) the Isle of Wight Council has a statutory duty and must, so far as is reasonably practicable, secure for qualifying young persons in the authority's area access to:
 - “Sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities”;
 - “Sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities”.
32. In determining the principles for the establishment of a reorganised youth service the Isle of Wight Council has a duty to ensure that finite resources are spent in such a way as to ensure a good standard of provision and best value for money. When considering what is reasonably practicable, an authority may take into account its resources, capabilities and other priorities, as well as that of its partners in the public, private and voluntary sector.
33. The proposed changes to employee terms and conditions will be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements as set out in employment legislation and also conducted in line with the council's own employment policies and procedures. This will include adequate notice and collective and individual consultation as necessary.

HR IMPLICATIONS

34. The service restructure will involve every member of staff currently employed within the Youth and Community Service. The restructure is also part of the council's terms and conditions review, and all the new posts will have new contracts which reflect the council's new terms and conditions, based on annualised hours, to allow greater flexibility to meet service needs.
35. The restructure will follow the standard procedure, with the publication of the structure and associated roles and job descriptions following immediately from this decision. There will then be a consultation period for staff of a minimum of 30 days, during which time youth and support workers will be able to discuss and clarify concerns with their line management. At the end of the consultation period, the new posts will be advertised in accordance with council procedures.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

36. The council as a public body is subject to general and specific duties under equality and diversity legislation and as such has a duty to impact assess its service, policies/strategies and decisions with regards to diversity legislation and the nine “protected characteristics” (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex and sexual orientation).
37. Equality impact assessments (EIAs) have been undertaken to ensure that the statutory equality duties are given due regard and wherever possible, any identified negative impacts are either avoided, or mitigated against in the action plans. There are four EIAs

attached to this report at Appendix E, one covering each of the operational areas as identified in Appendix B, and one covering the impact on staff and volunteers.

38. The assessments are being taken into account in the decision making process and actions will be taken to mitigate any impact. The restructured service will promote equality and diversity and ensure that the services provided and the decisions made meet the needs of all children and young people within the statutory age range. Each change has been examined, so that the impact of that change has been considered as part of the whole restructure.
39. The proposals in the recommendation have therefore been informed by the equality impact assessment and take account of the requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and the equality duty. In summary, the EIAs noted that there is a continued need to provide positive activities for young people under the statutory age for youth services (13 years) and that the council should work with local partners to ensure that this continues, and that the premises in which local youth work takes place are more accessible.
40. As part of the ongoing duty to have due regard to the statutory equality needs, EIAs were also undertaken at the time of the previous Cabinet decision on 21 June 2011, and were attached to that report at Appendix A (i) and (ii).

PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

41. This review will result in the immediate release of some buildings for disposal, and will identify more with the potential for short-term leasehold arrangements with local partners. These arrangements could enable those partners to work with the service to identify sustainable ways of continuing youth activities in the current property, or to find alternative locations that are more sustainable and improve service provision. This refers specifically to financial sustainability, and means that the local partners would need to be in a position to pay a market rent or market price for the property by the time the lease expires. Any short term leases would be on a tenant's full repairing and insuring basis. Any such agreements will be the subject of separate reports. The table below summarises the potential implications of the recommendation, on a site-by-site basis.

Property name	What will happen to this site
Brading	Discussions to continue with the local community, with a view to finding a sustainable approach to the current site in the immediate term, and to find alternative site which offers wider community benefits within three years.
Cowes	Discussions to take place, with a view to a disposal of the property, preferably to retain the site's purpose-built facilities for the benefit of the community
East Cowes	Discussions to continue with local community, with a view to identifying alternative, more suitable premises within three years.
Newport	Site to be retained, with first floor accommodation to be considered for conversion to office space for council staff
Niton	Discussions to take place with the local community, with a view to identifying a sustainable solution for the current site.
Ryde St John's Annexe	Declare surplus to requirements, December 2011.
Ryde (Well Street)	Discussions to take place with the local community, with a view to identifying a sustainable solution for the current site.
Sandown	Discussions to take place with the local community, with a view to developing more suitable alternative accommodation in the town.
Shorwell	Declare surplus to requirements, December 2011, and explore alternative provision with the local community.
Ventnor	Site to be retained, pending more suitable accommodation being identified in the town.
West Wight	Site to be retained, pending more suitable accommodation being identified in the area.
Wootton	Discussions to take place with the local community, with a view to identifying a sustainable solution for the current site.
Yarmouth	Declare surplus to requirements December 2011 and explore alternative provision with the local community.

42. There will continue to be youth and community services available in all the geographic areas listed above, because there are young people in those areas. The council's provision of its statutory youth offer is not dependent on the retention or disposal of any building. However, it is recognised that the discussions listed above must be brought to a successful conclusion as a matter of urgency, to draw to a close the uncertainty of which a number of correspondents in the consultation complained.

CARBON EMISSIONS

43. Through the disposal of Ryde St John's Annexe, and Shorwell and Yarmouth youth centres, the council is anticipated to save in the region of 33 tonnes of carbon dioxide and £6,216 in terms of fuel and allowances savings, each year. This is broken down as follows:

Ryde St John's Annexe	10 tonnes CO2	£1,878 annual savings
Shorwell	18 tonnes CO2	£3,431 annual savings
Yarmouth	5 tonnes CO2	£907 annual savings

44. If the council was to introduce mobile provision under Option A, there would be carbon emissions associated with the additional travel. An illustration of the potential impact might be as follows: two vehicles (under 3.5 tonnes each) driving 10,000 miles each per year, would result in 8.05 tonnes per year of carbon emissions. This is approximately one quarter of the emissions saved by the closure of the buildings above. Bio-fuels could be considered as alternative transport fuels and could result in up to 84 per cent savings in transport carbon emissions (based on the use of recycled vegetable oil).

OPTIONS

45. The options considered when making the recommendation in this report were:

Option A To restructure the Youth and Community Service as described in paragraph 19.

Option B Not to restructure the Youth and Community Service as described in paragraph 19.

RISK MANAGEMENT

46. Option A poses a medium level of overall risk to the council. This option restricts the financial risks, because it would see the service meet its savings target. It would also minimise the operational risks to the council, because the service would be restructured into a more efficient offer. This restructured offer would be better-placed to deliver the council's statutory obligations, which would further minimise the operational risk. There is the likelihood of operational risks associated with reduced numbers of young people choosing to use the new service. This risk is anticipated to be short-lived, as the new offer would make more youth activities open to more young people across the Island, and would invest in a marketing campaign to re-launch itself.

47. There would be an element of reputational risk in this option, because changes are being made and in some areas of the Island, long-held associations with specific services, properties and people would be broken. The restructuring would alter the employment terms of staff, many of whom have strong local links with the local community. This may

pose specific reputational risks in situations where staff are unable to secure a position in the new structure, or the risk of claims being made by employees alleging unfair treatment. A significant proportion of these risks could be mitigated by clear communication with young people and their families, staff, volunteers, and local communities. It is also important that the recruitment process is carried out in line with council procedures, to minimise risks of future claims.

48. Option B poses a higher level of risk to the council. The service restructure is required, to enable the service to make the savings, which have been required for a number of years but which have been put on hold during the review period. Without the service making these savings, other services across the council would be expected to make additional savings, which could pose further operational risks to the council in a separate service area. The ongoing operational and financial risks of maintaining under-used buildings would add further to the council's burden and resulting difficulties. This option also poses significant reputational risks, because the council would have spent four years consulting on and reviewing the service, only to be seen to fail to act on anything that it had discovered in that time. This would not help any future inspection of the service, nor would it underpin future engagement with key agencies involved in the field.

EVALUATION

49. Under Option A, the spend per head of eligible population on the Island would alter from the £72 per person per year in 2007, which was noted at the start of the review, to approximately £74 per person per year. This increase is modest allowing for inflation, and is now within a five per cent margin of the new national average of £77 (as at June 2011). The new spend per head will see a more efficient and targeted service, operating in a way which makes better use of resources, and available to more young people across the Isle of Wight.
50. The proposed restructure would put in place a balanced mix of full and part-time youth workers, who would have more career progression opportunities. It is hoped that staff would consider a wide range of employment options, such as job-share arrangements, thus retaining valuable skills within the service. In addition, however, the roles on offer would represent new opportunities for employment within youth work, hopefully attracting new staff with new skills and perspectives into the vocation on the Island. This would provide the opportunity for a refreshed range of youth services to young people.
51. The proposed operating areas offer the best fit with partners' operational boundaries and, as such, could provide a sound basis for developing partnership working. This would be crucial to the ongoing success and increased impact of the service. The service must develop the "community" element more, offering volunteering opportunities to adult helpers, and enabling young people to play a positive role in activities in their local areas. The service would work in partnership with local councils and public sector agencies (such as the police and health) and, most importantly, young people themselves, so that youth services and activities are better joined-up at the local level. This would result in different local organisations and agencies all having a clearer and shared picture of young people's needs for activities in an area, and also a shared understanding of what wider issues those young people might be facing (low family income, family illness, school attendance, bullying etc).
52. In the 21 June Cabinet decision paper, it was proposed that partnership boards be established. Following consultation feedback from local councils, these are no longer

proposed. This is because they represented an additional layer of bureaucracy, which was unnecessary. Instead, the intention in the recommendation is to form local youth-focused action groups, perhaps in association with the existing partnership groups led by the police, to permit targeted discussions to take place which reflect local need and inform local youth work provision as a result. The service would work with partners, particularly through its senior youth workers and participation and representation officer, to recruit young people onto these action groups. The youth representation on these groups should offer a voice to a wide range of young people, including those outside the education and training system, and those who are clients of the Youth Offending Team. This representation role is intended to support young people in understanding their responsibilities and meeting them within their local community.

53. The focus on the specific age range in the statutory duty would mean that there are some young people, who currently benefit from the service, who would be ineligible to use it, temporarily. The consultation showed that this is a topic of general concern in local communities across the Island. The service would therefore need to focus on developing its partnerships with local councils and other organisations, to see how it can support positive activities to the under-13 age range, without diverting resources away from the statutory age range. This support might include enabling training, without which volunteer-run “junior nights” could not run, or offering youth workers to be funded by other local organisations, to advise on provision or even to run groups, if their costs were paid by the local community. Support could also be making buildings available to the local community. This support is a key element in the action plan associated with the attached equalities impact assessment.
54. Option A is recommended because it offers the council the best way to make necessary savings and offer a good quality statutory service to young people across the Island.
55. Option B would see the council retain its youth and community service in its present form, funded within current budgets. This would be a rejection of all the research, consultation and review activity that has taken place since 2007. This would, in turn, open the council to accusations of an unpreparedness to take decisions, regarding local services, and also of wasting public money with the extensive consultation exercises.
56. The current service runs over-budget, so some change would be inevitable, for the service to continue in a sustainable manner. There are too many posts, and few of these offer career progression opportunities.
57. This option would not see the service offer reviewed, therefore service improvements would not be made as a result of the consultation. The service currently operates with low take-up figures for its usage, because there has been a lengthy period during which recruitment of staff was frozen and marketing of the service was minimal. If no service restructure is put in place, the budget will continue to fail to provide for adequate marketing, and there will continue to be inadequate staffing levels due to the need to find savings. The usage figures would be likely to continue at inadequate levels, but the spend per head of the service would continue to be significantly higher than the national average, with minimal appreciable benefit.
58. Option B is not recommended, because it does not enable the council to make savings, nor to improve the structure and offer of the service.

RECOMMENDATION

59. **Option A** To restructure the Youth and Community Service as described in paragraph 19.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

- [Appendix A](#) – Vision statement for the Youth and Community Service.
[Appendix B](#) – Proposed strategic operational areas map.
[Appendix C](#) – Summary of representations received prior to 21 June 2011 (formerly Appendix B to the 21 June Cabinet decision) and then from 22 June to 30 September 2011.
[Appendix D](#) – Draft equality impact assessments, plus supplementary data. annexes.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011](#)
- [Office of National Statistics population figures, Mid-year estimates 2010](#)
- [National Youth Agency profile for Isle of Wight 2009/10](#) (last edition, no longer produced)

Contact Point - Astrid Davies, Commissioning Manager for Building Community Capacity,
☎01983 821000, e-mail astrid.davies@iow.gov.uk

IAN ANDERSON
*Strategic Director for Community Wellbeing
and Social Care*

COUNCILLOR BARRY ABRAHAM
*Cabinet Member for Fire, Culture and
Resident Services*

Decision

Signed

Date
