

1. Introduction

The Council is facing severe financial pressures in the short and medium term.

The new Government has committed to major changes in the provision of public services and also to a programme of spending reviews designed to address the recessionary climate we are now operating in.

The Government has confirmed the savings that Bath & North East Somerset Council is required to make this year. A total of £1.8 million has been cut from Government revenue grants to support Council services 'in year' (2010/11). Government funding for the Council's Capital programme has also been cut by a similar amount (£1.785 million) and more fundamentally affected as a result of a temporary freeze of Government grants. There are also 'one off' costs in realising some of these savings of about £500k. The Council is absorbing these costs as no allowance has been made to cover them by Government.

Overall, the Council's services are funded 17% from general government grants, 31% from Council Tax, 18% from specific grants including Area Based Grants, with the remaining 34% coming from fees, charges and other external contributions. The specific grants are the ones that have been cut by Government in year (2010/11). Further cuts to these grants are expected over the next few years. Schools are funded separately and are not included in these figures.

The 'in year' cuts are just the beginning and are less than a tenth of the total level of cuts that can be expected in the public sector over the next four years. The Council's approach will be to make savings whilst minimising the impact on frontline services. However, tough decisions will have to be made and the Council expect to have to make 300 or more job losses over the next 3 to 4 years.

In year cuts- the details

The Council was advised in June that its share of the £6 billion cuts for this year is £1.8m for running (revenue) costs and in addition £1.785m for capital costs in addition to the temporary freezing of external grant support for major capital schemes

Action plan for Children's Services

To meet these challenges, we must take immediate steps to reduce the cost base in the financial year 2010/11. Longer term, there will be a fundamental review of how we work and how we can be more flexible whilst staying within budgetary limits. We should all be justly proud of the services we currently provide and the changes we are proposing in the short term will not undermine that excellence.

This Consultation paper constitutes the beginning what will be three year programme to identify efficiencies across the Council. The first stage of that process is to implement the changes contained in this document. The next stage will look at how the services are structured and managed. The initial focus is on concentrating on the delivery of Statutory Services and considering whether to continue providing non-statutory services and, if so, how this is to be achieved.

2. Current Position for the Youth service

The Youth Service provides a wide range of services mainly direct to the public that is young people aged 13 -19 yrs (up to 25 years with special needs). The Service is reliant in part on income from fees or subs for activities, charges for trips & residential activities, external funding via grants for project work

and income for renting out buildings / rooms. To support this there will be a new charging Policy in place for 1st April 2011.

The following model / option listed below will be delivered using a youth work delivery model to achieve outputs and outcomes related to young people's personal and social development, as there is much evidence to support this approach as being effective with young people. Youth work is part of community-based informal education provision, where young peoples' participation and active engagement with the wider community are important. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the provision of Positive Activities for young people and the local delivery of youth work services. The legislation that supports youth work is described in detail in the Statutory Guidance in Section 507B Education Act 1996 published in March 2008. This statutory guidance sets out the requirements for Local Authorities to provide youth work in three areas: positive activities, decision making by young people and 14-19 learning. The youth service will focus on Positive Activities from 1st April 2011 that will be focussed on targeted young people and geographical areas as defined by need.

Key to the future development of the youth service as detailed and evaluated below is an underlying principle that the youth service will support and where necessary build up the voluntary sector, working closely with them as partners within both the voluntary and private sectors and other departments within the Council to ensure that there is a sufficient "Youth Offer" available to all young people. There will also be a new full time permanent role of "Voluntary Sector Development Worker" directly managed by the Principal Youth Officer to oversee this important work in the future. The Principal Youth Officer and the Youth Officer will also take a lead on supporting the voluntary sector and will work in partnership with others where possible. The vision for the future will focus on targeted youth support work. Underpinning the strategy, increased income in the form of revenue grant funding to supplement the core work; especially in Batheaston, Keynsham and Radstock, with a view to enable youth work to be locally managed in the future linking to the Government "Big Society agenda" this strategy will need to be reviewed regularly as new Policies come in place and the funding base changes.

3. Drivers for Change

The Children's Services budget forecast is predicting an overspend of £ 321k in the year 2010/2011. This takes into account actions that have already been taken e.g. reducing the use of consultants and agency staff, deferring major projects to future years and seeking financial contributions from other service areas.

However, it is clear that further action is needed to significantly reduce costs and bring the budget back on track. If no action is taken the longer term impact would result in an additional pressure of £ 350K on next year's budget.

The following option will need to be managed and delivered within the budget of £705 k per year.

4. Aims and Objectives

The changes proposed in this document are intended to contribute to the delivery of savings in the financial year 2010-11 of £350K whilst continuing to deliver services to a high standard and retaining the skills base and some flexibility.

In order to ensure that the right outcomes are delivered, we have the following objectives. During the first phase we intend to:

- review long term vacancies
- Improve integration, coordination and efficiency and re-design the way we work so we are flexible and more efficient
- Ensure that the right skills are retained and enhanced in order to deliver the challenges of the future by developing workforce planning, succession planning and talent management
- To meet these challenges, we will have to take immediate steps to reduce the cost base in the financial year 2010/11 by ending all of the temporary contracts covering core vacant posts by 1st October 2010 following due processes.

- Fundamental review of how the Youth Service operates and how it can be more flexible, to delivery a targeted service whilst staying within the new budgetary limits. This will result in a reduction of youth hubs and projects.
- Support to the voluntary sector via a new post to develop the market, who will act as an enabler / supporter to those centres where the youth service is reducing provision and to new groups who want to develop new services / provision for all young people.
- Young people's participation processes will need to be developed through the youth hubs / mobile teams work.

5. Proposal for new structure

In this new structure the youth service will initially support 5 youth hubs and 1 mobile / street base project, these will include

1. Southside Youth Hub – building and staff
2. Radstock Youth Club – a small staff team only, the building would be managed as a Children's Centre.
3. Peasedown Youth Hub - building and staff with the full time Youth Worker overseeing Radstock Youth Club
4. Riverside Youth Hub - building and staff
5. Keynsham Timeout drop in centre - building only
6. Mobile/street based team based at Peasedown Youth Hub, initially, focusing on rural youth work in Midsomer Norton and other areas of need, Bath City centre and complimentary work to support the development of Southside regeneration programme in areas of need e.g. Twerton, Whiteway, Foxhill and Odd Down.

The youth service has already withdrawn Local Authority youth work from Weston youth club (formally Centre 69) and is planning to with draw from Batheaston from 1 April 2011. All of the County wide work will come to an end or be delivered in a different way through the commissioning process after 31 March 2011

All work will need to be focused on targeted and vulnerable young people and in geographical areas of need. All staff will be asked to attend internal training to support them with this change in focus. This will also be an opportunity to enable them to shape the future and add in their thoughts and ideas as well. At this point we will need to amend key documents / Policy as required to reflect these changes.

The youth service is currently formally consulting with the Unions and staff re this review. There will be public consultation in the next few weeks for young people, parents and members of the community, which will be advertise on the Council's web site.

Report compiled by Paula Bromley Principal Youth Officer