



Coventry City Council

## Briefing note

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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: 21st March 2019**

**Subject: Coventry Youth Partnership – Update and Relationship with Council Provided Youth Support**

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### **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To provide Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) with an update on the development of a new Coventry Youth Partnership and information about how the Partnership is working with Council provided targeted youth support.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
  - 1) Note progress on the development of the new Coventry Youth Partnership and support the ongoing development of this provision.
  - 2) Identify any further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 As part of the Connecting Communities (Phase 2) approach, the Council's Cabinet decided, on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017, that the Council would cease its provision of Universal Youth Services, delivering £630,000 savings.
- 3.2 Connecting Communities (Phase 2) focused on how services and support could be delivered differently in local communities with the greatest need. The guiding principle of this approach was to work with community groups and organisations to find community solutions.
- 3.3 Practically this meant Coventry City Council and voluntary and community sector partners starting out on a journey together to design future delivery of open access youth activities in Coventry.
- 3.4 This innovative approach, although not without risks, ultimately focused on enabling the delivery of new activities that would have positive outcomes for young people in Coventry. The approach also focused on actively encouraging partners to work collaboratively to make the most of community assets and realise shared goals.
- 3.5 Engagement with partners provoked overwhelming interest from the voluntary youth sector in providing universal youth support with several groups expressing an interest in delivery of youth work to mitigate against service reductions or wishing to establish a youth infrastructure body.

- 3.6 The purpose of the infrastructure body would be to co-ordinate future youth work activity, including training, quality, and the pattern of universal access provision, through creation and delivery of a Youth Strategy for the city, aligned to Coventry's Children and Young People Plan.
- 3.7 Groups and Organisations who expressed an interest in establishing the infrastructure body and those interested in delivering youth activities had the opportunity to apply for transition funding. These applications were then subject to a robust selection process.
- 3.8 All business cases were considered by a newly established Youth Mitigation Panel, consisting of Councillors, officers, and young people. The panel then made recommendations to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as Section 151 Officer who had delegated decision-making powers for Transition Fund awards in consultation with Cabinet Member for Children and Young people and Cabinet Member for Education.

#### **4 Awards approved for Transition Funding**

- 4.1 In May 2017, the Positive Youth Foundation were awarded funding to the value of £80,000, in order for them to take on the role of the infrastructure body.
- 4.2 Awards of transition funding for the projects delivering youth activities were then evaluated and considered using the same process, with a representative of the Infrastructure body joining the Youth Mitigation panel to act as a special advisor. The panel approved transition funded awards to 6 projects for the set up and delivery of activities for young people. The organisations leading projects which secured funding are as follows:

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Moat House Community Trust</b> | <b>Awarded £25,000 for the delivery of youth holiday activities and new evening youth sessions</b>                 |
| <b>Media Mania</b>                | <b>Awarded £25,000 for the delivery of youth holiday activities and new evening youth sessions</b>                 |
| <b>Aptitude CIC</b>               | <b>Awarded £22,186 for the delivery of open access youth clubs</b>   |
| <b>Creative Optimistic Vision</b> | <b>Awarded £20,000 for the delivery of new open access youth club</b>  |
| <b>Coventry Skatepark</b>         | <b>Awarded £20,000 for the delivery of a youth work offer involving participation in youth urban wheeled sport</b> |
| <b>Belgrade Theatre</b>           | <b>Awarded £14,528 for the delivery of an outreach programme of youth theatre activity</b>                         |

## **5 Establishing Coventry Youth Partnership**

- 5.1 On approval of Positive Youth Foundation's business case in April 2017, work began to create Coventry Youth Partnership and engage and bring together partners across the city to establish a partnership with a joint purpose. Many of these partners had not previously known of each other or been able to collaborate successfully. Equally there were significant challenges and complexities regarding bringing organisations together who had formerly competed for resources.
- 5.2 This delicate work took time and energy; however, it has resulted in a highly effective partnership with a firmly established purpose and genuine outcomes of collaboration including resource sharing, referrals, co-delivery and support.
- 5.3 Coventry Youth Partnership now has 33 partner members ranging from small local agencies to large national organisations. Strategic relationships have also been developed with the West Midlands Police, City of Culture Trust and UK Youth. Membership of this group has fostered relationships between the partner agencies and had led to positive outcomes for the sector and Young people in the City.
- 5.4 Coventry Youth Partnership have conducted a skills audit of the sector and based on this has offered significant training and development opportunities to partners. Training courses have included Youth Mental First Aid, Understanding Impact Measurement, Equality and Diversity, Boundaries in Youth Work, and various others. This has been a critical element of the support to the sector and remains a priority for the partnership.
- 5.5 The skills audit also helped to shape the support given to the 6 delivery projects awarded transition funding. Coventry Youth Partnership supports these projects and various other voluntary sector bodies such as the Coventry Boys and Girls Club to deliver universal youth services across the city. This patch work of provision gels together under the youth partnership umbrella to deliver a broad range of activities for young people.
- 5.6 This breadth of youth work includes engagement through various activities including sports and creative arts. Activities give young people the tools to help them make positive choices, build their confidence and self-esteem, and fulfil their potential. Projects also provide a safe space for young people to access support for issues with relationships, family, health and well-being and in some cases offer volunteering opportunities and inspire young people to be active citizens.
- 5.7 Although the Youth Survey undertaken last year indicated that many young people in the Coventry are not aware of youth activities taking place, indicative figures relating to attendance of activities coordinated by Coventry Youth Partnership are positive. Whilst final numbers for youth activity attendance across the partnership will be available after the end of the financial year, indications at this stage are that across the partnership, over 8,000 young people have accessed regular provision during the financial year, with over 15,000 young people accessing one-off events.
- 5.8 The activities funded by the transition fund were never designed to replicate previous provision, as this is a new innovative and collaborative way of working and is being delivered on a vastly smaller budget – however, even at this early stage initial access figures are promising and show clear positive outcomes for Coventry's youth and the establishment of Coventry Youth Partnership represents a brave approach to respond innovatively to service reduction.
- 5.9 This collaborative way of working to create a new model of youth work in Coventry has attracted a great deal of attention from other local authorities including Bradford and Shropshire and has been highlighted as good practise as part the recent LGA Peer Review Challenge review. It was also submitted as an example for the Council of the year award.

- 5.10 For smaller organisations membership of Coventry Youth Partnership has also provided the opportunity to share their areas of expertise. Creative Optimistic Visions for example has been active in delivering training to the partnership through its Protective Behaviours model, as well as being one of the delivery partners for Coventry Youth Partnership's nationally funded EmpowHER, women and girls' provision.

## **6 Future Work**

- 6.1 Coventry Youth Partnership have undertaken significant background work on the delivery of a youth strategy for the city and this is expected to be launched towards the end of 2018-19 financial year.
- 6.2 Coventry Youth Partnership is able to access funding not accessible to the council. The partnership has reached out to a range of funders to secure investment to undertake youth work and have successfully secured significant support. Going forward the partnership will continue to work to identify funding streams for the delivery of projects that benefit young people in Coventry.

### **Examples of funding generated in to the partnership:**

| <b>Funder</b>                               | <b>Amount</b>       | <b>Description</b>   |
|---|---------------------|--|
| UK Youth                                    | £31,320             | Female Empowerment   |
| Police and crime commissioner               | £150,000            | Work around Gangs  |
| Early Intervention Fund                     | £477,000            | Youth Crime Violence   |
| West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner | £26,000             | Crime Diversion/Knife Crime                                  |
| Home Office                                 | £11,100             | Knife Crime  |
| Sport England/CSW Sport                     | £10,000             | Imminent – sports provision                                  |
| Co-operative Bank                           | £20,000             | Loneliness Consultation                                      |
| Partners supported to access                | £185,750 - £260,000 | Range of funders. Range given due to caution of attribution. |

## **7 Communication**

- 7.1 As well as establishing and maintaining strong communications between partners, Coventry Youth Partnership understands that working to ensure young people in the city are aware of and are accessing available youth activity is vital.
- 7.2 Several communication mechanisms are being employed by Coventry Youth Partnership to achieve this. Examples include a quarterly newsletter, social media activity, and the Coventry Youth Partnership website and associated activity 'App'. Additionally, Coventry Youth Partnership have spoken at national conferences communicating the vision of the joint-approach and have released routine press releases. Coventry Youth Partnership plan to continue to promote Youth activities in the City to Young People to encourage engagement and uptake of youth activities.
- 7.3 Additionally, Coventry Youth Partnership have spoken at national conferences communicating the vision of the joint-approach and have released routine press releases. The model has attracted national interest from other local authorities and has identified Coventry City Council as an innovative authority in its approach to mitigating the changes in funding for youth service provision.

## **8 Coventry City Council targeted provision and potential for further links**

- 8.1 There are currently 8 Family Hubs in Coventry located in areas of greatest need. Family Hubs provide a mixture of activities ranging from Health clinics to advice and information services for families. Each Family Hub has one full time equivalent professional youth worker. The role of these youth workers is to deliver targeted youth work programmes for young people and in some cases to deliver work to whole families.
- 8.2 The Council's targeted youth offer is in the main delivered through one to one direct work programmes. Young people are assessed using the sign of safety approach as part of an early help assessment. Youth workers work collaboratively with the young person they are supporting to identify what is going well in the young person life but also areas for concern.
- 8.3 The youth worker will then use this information to devise a programme to support the young person. This programme is typically between 4 and 12 weeks long and the direct work can take place at either the family hub, school or young person's home.
- 8.4 Each youth worker supports a caseload of young people and in many cases the youth workers also deliver group work interventions. One example of this is the youth club delivered a Mosaic Family hub in Tile Hill. Here a programme of weekly sessions is delivered to young people. Young people access the provision and work with a youth worker to address issues that they might be facing.
- 8.5 During the first year of the Family Hub model being rolled out, youth workers have been settling in to their roles, getting to know their new teams, and undertaking necessary training.
- 8.6 Links have also begun to be established between the Council's targeted youth work and the universal community youth work. This has included targeted youth workers signposting individuals to activities taking place in their communities.
- 8.7 However, as Family Hub provision becomes more established, workers will build on this further by developing relationships across the youth sector via the Coventry Youth Partnership.
- 8.8 Council officers and members of Coventry Youth Partnership are committed to continuing to develop strong links and Coventry Youth Partnership will be meeting with Council targeted youth workers in April 2019 to further the dialogue around partnership working, to ensure the best use of limited resources.

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