

Appendix B: The Youth Services Provision Task Group's Response to Worcestershire County Council's Positive Activities For Young People Consultation

Please answer the questions below thinking about what is best for young people living in your local area.

Information about yourself

Who are you? E.g. young person, parent/carer, member of the public, professional:
Redditch Youth Service Provision Scrutiny Task Group

Do you currently use services for young people?– *Not Applicable*

Age: *Range from 15-66 (7 members of the group including elected councillors and one co-opted student from a local school).*

Postcode: *B98 8AH (Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall).*

Question 1: Changing what positive activities looks like

The County Council will not provide the services for young people that we have today.

The options are:

- A. Groups run by volunteers bid to the Council for money to run positive activities.
- B. The Council gives money to a local group (Local Children's Partnerships), in each area. Groups run by volunteers bid to that group to use the money on activities that young people, parents and carers have asked for.
- C. I have a better idea.

Please choose an option and say why.

We feel that Worcestershire County Council should select Option B.

Organisations operating at the local level are more likely to understand the needs and priorities of local young people. A Local Children's Partnership, involving representatives of a variety of local bodies that regularly work with local residents, would be able to utilise a wide range of existing knowledge about the local area. This knowledge could be used to identify priorities for commissioning services that address the needs of local young people. A Local Children's Partnership could also utilise this local knowledge to ensure that only bids from Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups for activities that meet the needs of young people, parents and carers are commissioned.

Question 2: Dividing up the money

The options are:

- A. Put more money into areas where there are more people who are unemployed, on low income or there is lots of crime.
- B. Split the money between each area to match the number of young people living there
- C. A mixture of options A and B
- D. I have a better idea.

Please choose an option and say why.

In an ideal world we feel that there would be no need for changes to be made to funding. However, we accept that, like Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire County Council is having to make savings and is having to focus on delivering the most appropriate and efficient services to meet the needs of residents. Under these circumstances we feel that Worcestershire County Council should select Option A.

We believe that where positive activities are available to young people who are most in need they can be helped to improve their employment prospects and discouraged from participating in anti-social and criminal behaviour. We recognise that not all young people living within Worcestershire are from socially or economically deprived backgrounds. However, young people from families living on low incomes and in more deprived communities are less likely to be able to afford to participate in positive activities unless additional support is provided to them. We would be concerned that if positive activities were not targeted at these young people they would struggle to develop the skills and to secure the opportunities needed to enable them to become productive members of society.

We recognise that in Redditch, in particular, there are higher levels of deprivation than in other parts of the county. At the local level young people in Redditch would benefit from the delivery of positive activities that would enable them to develop useful skills and to participate in new experiences. In the long-term, this would have a beneficial impact on the prospects of local young people and would help them to make a positive contribution to the local economy. A Local Children's Partnership could identify the needs of the most deprived young people living within the Borough and ensure that services are commissioned that meet these needs.

Question 3: Target Groups

Once the money is divided up, most of it will be spent on young people who need it most (vulnerable groups). What difference would you like to see this make?

For example:

- Less young people committing crime
- More young people in learning, training and jobs

Please give examples:

1. *More young people in learning, training and jobs.*
2. *More young people with healthy lifestyles.*
3. *More young people participating in sporting, leisure and cultural activities.*
4. *More opportunities for young people to participate in positive activities outside normal working hours (e.g. evening and weekend provision).*

Question 4: Positive Activities

What positive activities do you already go to and what positive activities would you like to go to? (If you are a parent/ carer answering this question please tell us what young people in your family do or would like to do.)

Activities I do	Activities I would like to do
<i>The young people we have interviewed visited local sports centres to participate in sports, particularly swimming and cricket.</i>	<i>Many of the young people we interviewed are keen to participate in a more diverse range of sporting activities at the local level.</i>
<i>A couple of the young people we interviewed enjoyed participating in joint cooking activities.</i>	<i>Many of the young people we interviewed have requested a safe space in which young people can gather to share meals, cook together and socialise. The young people have suggested this could involve introducing a local community café, where non-alcoholic drinks could be consumed and young people could participate in the performing arts.</i>
<i>One of the young people we interviewed had organised a charity music concert.</i>	<i>The young people we have interviewed have commented that they would like more opportunities to participate in musical performances locally and to listen to musicians performing live music at a location that could be easily accessed by young people living within the Borough.</i>
<i>A number of the young people we have interviewed had or were in the process of participating in the Duke of Edinburgh award.</i>	<i>A couple of the young people we interviewed suggested that they would appreciate having an opportunity to attend a summer camp. This would enable them to learn new skills and to socialise with young people from other schools located in the Borough.</i>
<i>A couple of the young people we interviewed participated in youth theatre activities.</i>	<i>Many young people we interviewed were keen to participate in youth theatre activities at the local level.</i>
	<i>A couple of the young people we interviewed suggested that local volunteering opportunities should be made available to young people.</i>

Question 5: Helping small youth groups

Most positive activities are provided by small groups and not funded by the County Council. Some might need help (for example: training, safeguarding, marketing, writing bids) to make sure they can do the best job for young people, especially groups just starting out.

Do you think the Council should support these groups?

YES

How could they help the groups?

We believe that many Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups, particularly relatively new groups, would require assistance with writing successful bids for funding. In the long-term, it is likely that further assistance would be required by many groups to enable them to identify alternative sources of funding and to develop business models that would ensure the sustainability of the projects they deliver.

We recognise that if the local commissioning model for funding positive activities is introduced (Option 1b above) it is likely that small VCS groups would need to demonstrate how their projects would meet local priorities as well as local funding criteria. The needs of young people and the funding criteria in one district are likely to vary from the priorities of young people and funding criteria in other districts. In this context, we feel that it is important that support is provided at the local level to these groups to ensure that the projects which are most likely to address the needs of local young people secure funding.

Question 6: The future of Youth Centres

These changes would affect Youth Centre buildings. If you have any ideas about how best we can use these in the future, please let us know:

We feel that the quality of the services that are delivered as positive activities to young people and the extent to which they meet the needs of local young people are more important than the locations in which those activities are delivered.

As a scrutiny group from Redditch Borough Council we do not feel it would be appropriate for us to comment on how Worcestershire County Council should best use the buildings which are currently used for Redditch Youth House, Arrow Valley Youth Centre and Kingsley Youth Centre.

Question 7: Have your say

I have strong feelings about:

We believe that local commissioning of positive activities that meet the needs of local young people will be fundamental to the successful delivery of youth services in future years. Local organisations are familiar with the needs and priorities of local young people. A Local Children's Partnership, comprising representation from local organisations, would therefore be in an ideal position to identify local priorities and to assess the suitability of suggested activities for funding.

Based on the evidence submitted during our review we feel that consideration should be given to the availability of public transport when commissioning positive activities. Due to the urban design of the

town young people can struggle to access activities in Redditch, unless they are delivered locally or within close proximity to public transport services. We think that these transportation issues should be taken into account in relation to any bids to deliver positive activities.

I want you to:

Please note the following information:

The Redditch Youth Services Provision Scrutiny review was launched in July 2011 as part of Redditch Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny process. There are seven people involved in this review including 6 elected Councillors and one co-opted member from a local school. The ages of members ranges from 15 – 66.

The information provided in this submission is based on evidence obtained from a variety of written sources as well as a number of expert witnesses including: local young people; Redditch Student Council; County Councillors; Worcestershire County Council Officers; and Redditch Borough Council Officers. The submission has not, however, been approved by the Council's Executive Committee or full Council. Therefore, this submission should not be regarded as the official position of Redditch Borough Council.