

Report for: Leader's signing 6 April 2018 10.00am

Title: Confirmation of the site proposed for a Youth Zone and approval of capital and revenue funding towards the project

Report

Author: Councillor Charles Wright, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Ward(s) affected N/A

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Key decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

This report sets out the outcome of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the Leader's decision of 19 March 2018, 'Confirmation of the site proposed for a Youth Zone and approval of capital and revenue funding towards the project' following its referral to the OSC under the Call-In process (as described in Part 4 Section H of the Council's Constitution).

2. Introduction

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Leader's decision at a special meeting on the 29th of March 2018. The Committee heard from a deputation led by Ceri Williams. The Committee also heard from the lead signatories of the two call-in requests received.

Following full discussion, there was overall concern that the current administration could decide to allocate a total of £596K of revenue funding for the Youth Zone in the third year of a budget. This was nearly 40% of the Early Years budget for this single youth provision resource. It was felt unfair that this key decision might tie the Council into this agreement with no risk assessment being completed and, at a time; when there was, a budget forecast overspend in the Children's Service.

The Committee also noted that the capital budget allocation for the Youth Zone, which would be drawn from the responsiveness budget line, was included in the budget report agreed by the full Council in February. It was concerning that, this budget allocation had not been included in the budget report considered by Overview and Scrutiny in January nor included in the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel discussions.

However, as both sufficient revenue and capital funding for the Youth Zone were included in the Council budget and MTFs agreed by full Council and these funding allocations not exceeded, the Committee did not find that the decision reached fell outside the Budget or Policy Framework.

A key theme emerging from the deputation and responses to Member questions was the lack of needs assessment and overall lack of an evidential base to support the decision on the location of the site. This was needed to provide assurance that the Youth Zone would be well used by young people across the

borough. The Committee felt it was difficult for the Leader to make a decision without this information.

A further fundamental consideration identified, was determining whether the land at Woodside School was usable for the purposes of a Youth Zone. This issue seemed currently under investigation. The Committee felt that given OnSide were committing significant funding to this project, it was prudent to be clear that the land could be used, subject to planning requirements being met.

There was also discussion about current youth provision in the borough and the need to assess what the impact would be as a result of funding OnSide for the Youth Zone. It was important to make clear the implications for other Youth Services and what will happen in 2021 when the Youth Zone is in operation. This was especially important given the issues raised on the increase in youth crime set out by the call in. The response to the recommendations should also include implications on TUPE.

The Committee proceeded to agree to refer the matter back to the Leader, as the decision maker, to reconsider its decision of 19 March 2018 before taking a final decision, as set out in paragraph 10(b) of the Call-In Procedure rules set out in Part 4 Section H of the Council's Constitution. To assist with this, the Committee makes a number of recommendations to the Leader, as follows:

3. Recommendations

- a) That there is significant clarification on the sources of funding for the Early Help and Prevention budget to provide assurance that the allocation of revenue funding for the Youth Zone, which begins in 2021, will not have a detrimental impact on statutory services and will not be at the expense of other Children's related services.
- b) That comment be provided on the reasons for the lack of needs assessment being undertaken and assurance provided that there will be a full and thorough consultation with young people on the Youth Zone 'offer' and their views taken into consideration.
- c) That the land at Woodside School, proposed for the Youth Zone site, be surveyed to understand if fit for development and that Planning requirements are likely to be met, before agreement is reached with OnSide for use of this site.
- d) That clarification be provided of the impact on Youth Service provision in the borough, following the commencement of revenue funding for the Youth Zone in 2021. This response should include potential implications relating to TUPE of staff.

4. Background

The papers considered by the Overview and Scrutiny are attached to provide the background to this paper. They are:

- Copy of the Call-in requests

- Excerpt from the draft minutes of the Leader's Signing held on 19 March 2018
- Report to Leader's Signing – Confirmation of the site proposed for a Youth Zone and approval of capital and revenue funding towards the project
- Report of the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer
- Report of the Director for Children's Services