

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (TIM SADLER)
TO THE EXECUTIVE
3rd March 2006

Draft Vale Youth Development Strategy for 2006-2009

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information about the proposed draft Vale Youth Development Strategy and seek approval to delegate the authority to finalise the consultation draft.
- 1.2 The contact officer for this report is Toby Warren, Head of Innovation & Enterprise (Tel: 01235 547695).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 *Members are requested to delegate the authority to finalise the consultation draft of Vale Youth Development Strategy 2006-2009 to the Chair, Portfolio-holder for Youth Strategy and the Strategic Director.*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- 3.1 This report supports the Council's Vision and Aims
- 3.2 It does not conflict with any Council strategy or any Council policy.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2004 identified that the Council provides high quality activities for young people including after school and school holiday programmes. It also identified that there is a clear commitment, through the Youth Forum, to involving young people more in the council's decision making. However the Audit Commission considered that the council needs a strategic overview of its youth service provision
- 4.1 The 2004 Government green paper 'Every Child Matters' identified a need for organisations involved with providing services to children - from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups - to team up in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life.
- 4.2 Oxfordshire County Council now has a statutory responsibility to lead on a plan for all services for children and young people provided by Oxfordshire County Council and all relevant partners. The County Council and its partners could be subject to a 'Joint Area Review' inspection.
- 4.3 The proposed draft Vale Youth Development Strategy shows how the council will use its services to contribute to the Oxfordshire Children & Young People's Plan. The initial time period of the strategy is 2006-2009 to fit in with the initial time period of the Oxfordshire plan.
- 4.4 In writing the proposed strategy care has been taken to use as little jargon as possible. The text of the strategy is accompanied by a pictorial storyboard which summarises the main points of the strategy and brings it to life.

5.0 Identifying the Strategy

- 5.1 The structure of the proposed strategy follows the council's guidelines. It reviews the existing services, current issues and policies, sets out strategic actions and covers implementation and review. Once the consultation has been completed a more detailed implementation plan will be added.
- 5.2 The strategic vision is that every child and young person (from birth to age nineteen) in the Vale can:
- Live a healthy life;
 - Stay safe;
 - Have the chance to fulfil their potential;
 - Get the most out of life and develop the skills for adulthood.
- 5.3 The strategic principles are:
- Achieving a better understanding of the needs of all young people in all areas of the Vale. This should result in services that more closely meet the needs of children and young people;
 - A promise to consult and consider the views of young people in decisions about services provided by the council and its partners;
 - Making sure we are inclusive and help disadvantaged children and young people to realise their full potential;
 - Working in partnership wherever possible to improve services for young people, avoid duplication and make better use of limited resources.
- 5.4 The proposed strategy makes it clear that the Corporate Plan 2005/08 sets out three main priorities to which the council will devote extra focus and resource. However when planning how the council will provide services to achieve these priorities the council wants to take into account the needs of children and young people. The council also understands that because of its limited resources it can not itself properly tackle all the issues that influence the development of children and young people in the Vale. This is why working in partnership (through the Vale Strategic Partnership) with other organisations that have wider or different responsibilities for children and young peoples' issues (like Oxfordshire County Council), is so important.
- 5.5 The desired outcomes identified in the Government's green paper 'Every Child Matters' and the Oxfordshire Children & Young People's Plan fit well with the vision that is proposed for children and young people. Therefore the strategy's aims are designed to fit into the 'Outcomes Framework' which is part of 'Every Child Matters'. This design means that it is clear how the council's services contribute to the Oxfordshire plan. This clarity will be important if the council's services are inspected as part of a Joint Area Review.
- 5.6 Any strategy must be achievable and the proposed draft strategy will concentrate on the work that the council is best equipped to do using its existing resources. Some of the work it does will achieve more than one result. If you enjoy sport you are normally healthier. Arts activity is not only enjoyable but also provides a sense of achievement and may help young people make decisions about future employment.

6.0 The Strategy

- 6.1 Bearing in mind the council's priorities, its resources and the issues that are faced by children and young people in the Vale the draft strategy proposes that the council contributes to the following aims.
- 6.2 **Improving the physical health of children and young people.** This will be achieved by providing high quality sporting opportunities such as the sports holiday programmes and the Locomotion project so that more children and young people across the Vale can enter, participate and progress in their chosen sport.

- 6.3 **Encouraging healthy lifestyles by helping young people to make the decision not to take illegal drugs or get involved in substance misuse or underage drinking.** This will be achieved through education programmes at secondary schools in the Vale and debates at the Youth Forum meetings.
- 6.4 **Reducing accidental injury and death amongst children and young people.** This will be achieved through education programmes focusing on road safety.
- 6.5 **Reducing crime & anti-social behaviour in and out of school.** This will be achieved using mentoring (advice and support) schemes to steer young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 6.6 **Helping children and young people make friends and achieve personal or team success.** This will be achieved using sports and arts programmes, the provision of play areas and support for voluntary organisations that provide play opportunities.
- 6.7 **Allowing young people to be involved in decision making.** This will be achieved through the Vale Youth Forum which allows for the active involvement of young people in the work of the council and its partners.
- 6.8 **Helping children and young people to successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges.** This will be achieved through partnership working with organisations that provides non judgemental advice and support.
- 6.9 **Encouraging enterprising (ambitious) behaviour.** This will be achieved by encouraging young people to gain sports coaching qualifications and also by encouraging involvement in the Young Enterprise initiative.
- 6.10 **Helping young people prepare for the world of work.** This will be achieved through the council, as an employer, offering work experience placements and encouraging other employers to do the same.
- 6.11 **Helping children and young people to live in decent homes and communities.** This will be achieved by encouraging improvements in the quality of community sports clubs and by providing advice on energy saving and waste reduction.
- 6.12 **Helping children and young people to live in households free of low income.** This will be achieved through partnership working with organisations like the Citizens Advice Bureau which provides advice about claiming state benefits and dealing with debt.

7.0 The Strategy Consultation

- 7.1 It is very important that the council seeks the views of children and young people. Consultation about the proposed draft strategy will initially take place with the Vale Youth Forum after which its content will be finalised. It is intended that meetings will also take place with groups of young people from the Abingdon Bridge, the Foyer in Abingdon, the Sweat Box in Wantage and Faringdon Youth Project. Details will also be placed on the Youth Forum's website www.spired.com/vale.
- 7.2 The strategy will only succeed if partners in the public, voluntary and private sector are committed to the same strategic aims. Therefore the Vale Strategic Partnership and other relevant organisations will be specifically invited to comment on the draft strategy.
- 7.3 The proposed draft strategy will be placed on the Council's website and a press release will be issued.
- 7.4 The final version of the strategy will include information about the comments received during the consultation period.

7.5 A consultation period of twelve weeks will allow sufficient time to organise a series of consultation meetings.

7.6 Once the consultation has been completed a further report will be submitted to the Executive as part of the process of formal adoption..

8.0 Financial & Legal Implications

8.1 The proposed draft strategy does not have any additional financial implications. The strategic intention is to deliver improved outcomes from existing services.

8.2 The proposed draft strategy show how its children and young peoples' services contribute to the overall Oxfordshire Plan. Joint Area Review inspection activity will seek to identify clear outcomes for children, and be focussed on the user, unconstrained by service boundaries

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 The 'Outcomes Framework' which is part of 'Every Child Matters' includes several the 'Outcomes Framework' which is part of 'Every Child Matters' key aims which are not in the proposed draft strategy. However it is the priority and legal responsibility of other agencies to achieve these aims. The Council does not have the powers, resources or expertise to 'achieve stretching national education standards at primary schools' or to help young people 'engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school'.

9.2 The Council will still have a strong interest in the work of other agencies in improving outcomes for children and young people in the Vale. Co-operation with the County Council will assist the Council in monitoring the performance of other agencies. The Vale Strategic Partnership will also be able to help in monitoring performance and in taking action to deal with any issues relating to underperformance.

9.3 The Vale Youth Forum has frequently commented that the quality of a service is as important as the type of service provided. Once the final version of the strategy has been adopted the Council's Youth Development Co-ordinator will have an important role to play in monitoring the strategy, reporting to the Youth Forum and feed backing to councillors and officers.

TOBY WARREN
HEAD OF INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE

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PORTFOLIO-HOLDER
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Background Papers:

Draft Vale Youth Development Strategy 2006-2009