

<b>July 2015</b>		<b>Appendix 3</b>
<b>Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Staff Consultation – alternative ways of working to support young people across Thurrock</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Children’s Overview and Scrutiny to note the feedback in relation to the Staff Consultation	
<b>Report of Kate Kozlova-Boran – Engagement Manager</b>		
<b>Accountable Service Manager: Michele Lucas</b>		
<b>Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton</b>		
<b>This report is: Public</b>		

### **Executive Summary**

This report outlines the feedback gained from staff around the development of an alternative delivery model for youth related activities. The purpose was to enable staff to contribute and inform decisions around the opportunity to develop a staff mutual relating to young people’s services. This work forms a suite of reports to present to Children’s Overview & Scrutiny regarding the proposal to “spin out” youth related activities. The approach used was the development of a staff questionnaire to determine staff feelings and attitudes towards moving forward into a charity and what staff see as the key priorities over the next five years.

To facilitate this work one of our managers has undertaken a Master’s degree and the focus of this work is around development of an organisation in which staff have a voice and a way to influence decisions going forward.

To support the business plan development a questionnaire (see appendix one) was developed which included input from both staff and the university of Essex to enable the project team to both engage with and plan future communication around the development of a Charitable Trust.

A target of 100% completion was set and 93% was achieved.

## **1. Recommendation(s)**

- 1.1.1 To establish a Staff Advisory Shadow Board to oversee the consultation and communication with staff during the process of the transition of youth related services.**
- 1.1.2 To note the findings and use them to support the development of a communication strategy around the development of a Charitable Trust.**
- 1.1.3 To use the findings of the Staff Questionnaire to inform services for young people and local communities.**
- 1.1.4 To implement the findings of the Staff Questionnaire to form the basis Staff Skills Audit to identify any potential gaps in skills and/or inform future training/recruitment objectives.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1** In August 2013, Cabinet received proposals for a reduction in the youth offer across Thurrock. As a result of this decision a project group was established to develop alternative proposals for the delivery of youth related activities. To support this piece of work, the project group took advantage of training offered by the Cabinet Office to ensure that staff views were sought and heard in making these decisions. Prior to the Questionnaire being put together staff were encouraged to meet with staff from Epic, UK's first youth Mutual in the Royal Borough of Chelsea and Kensington to seek their views on their journey into a Mutual. Views from staff were collated and the two main themes (lack of communication and lack of specific skills) were taken into account and informed the final (version 9) of the Questionnaire. This meant that from the start staff had had an input in shaping the questionnaire and developed as ownership of the process.
- 2.2** The questionnaire was, therefore, developed by the Engagement Manager in consultation with staff members who had gone on a visit to Epic. The questionnaire went live on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and closed on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

## **3. Staff Questionnaire Findings**

- 3.1** The Staff Questionnaire was completed by 36 staff members out of 39, 93% achievement.
- 3.2** The highest level of responses came in the first 4 days of the questionnaire going out to staff.
- 3.3.** The comments section was populated by 10 members of staff, 28% of the respondents which provided a detailed view to the questions.

#### **4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options. (Top Issues identified by staff who completed the survey)**

4.0 The questionnaire's focus was around feelings and attitudes of staff members towards moving towards a new charitable trust out of the Local Authority. The top issues were identified throughout the questionnaire and the main focus was around staff's concerns around the current terms and conditions and the impact on young people.

4.1 Staff's concerns with regards to their Terms and Conditions. The top three responses are outlined below:-

- The process being stressful – staff felt that too many pressures were exerted on them during the process – the following is a quote from one of staff members:
- “Managing the day job/growing existing business AND developing knowledge/skills/deals/new partnerships needed for a new business is stressful and unsustainable”
- Staff wanted to have more ownership throughout the process as well as when the new company was formed – staff felt that the service had already established a good name for itself in the local community and wanted to make sure that all the local knowledge was not lost and, more importantly, was used as a sound foundation for future business – the following quote from staff confirms the point:
- “Ownership, people need to feel responsible and the work is quite personal to them...”
- Staff felt they wanted a robust communication process and to be updated on the new developments concerning the spin out – the following are two quotes from two staff members:
- “I ...would like to be consulted more”
- “Need more updates. Perhaps some FAQ online”

4.2 Staff's views with regard to the offer to Young People of Thurrock. The top three responses are outlined below:-

- Concern for funding opportunities for young people – the following quotes from two of members of staff:
- “ I have yet to be persuaded that the new service will be robust enough to survive in the private sector or that it will be able to compete against other similar private sector companies in terms of attracting sufficient funding to allow the company to grow in the future”
- “impact on delivery to schools / young peoples services”
- Developing understanding around what services could be delivered for young people – the following is a quote from one staff member
- “I am intrigued in what services we will be able to offer young people...”

- Staff strongly felt the need for a voice of young people – the following is a quote from one staff member
- “I hope there will always be a forum of service for local young people...”

#### 4.3 Staff’s views with regard to the new company, its sustainability, longevity, quality and self-sufficiency

- Staff needed reassurances that there will be sufficient opportunities for sustaining and growing the newly formed business – the following quote from a member of staff:
  - “...attracting sufficient funding to allow the company to grow in the future”
  - “I am extremely concerned about the prospect of coming out of the LA for both personal and professional reasons:...experience to run a successful business/company of this nature...”
- Staff were concerned that staff members might start leaving which would impact on the rest of the remaining staff – the following is a quote from one staff member
- “I am concerned that if people start to leave how this will impact on those who stay for example, being asked to cover each other’s responsibilities including our own”.

## 4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The findings of Staff Questionnaire clearly outline some of the key priorities that senior management face over the period of time in terms of staff engagement and involvement, communication strategy as well as making sure the service is robust in its work with young people, the community and staff members.

## 5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Consultation with staff around the new development of an organisation which is young people focused.

## 6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The youth activities directly contribute to Thurrock Council priorities 1 and 2:

- **Create a great place for learning and opportunity**
- **Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity**

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**  
[kgoodacre@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:kgoodacre@thurrock.gov.uk)  
**Finance Manager – Children’s Services**  
**01375 652466**

With the potential to develop an alternative model of delivery for youth activities we would need to work closely with finance to look at a financial model going forward – this would include some financial modelling of services, recognising the need for the Council to realise the savings that have already been agreed by Cabinet.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**  
[Lucinda.Bell@BDTLegal.org.uk](mailto:Lucinda.Bell@BDTLegal.org.uk)  
**Education Lawyer - 07805 827051**

The Committee is asked to note the report content, and make two decisions, both of which are within the remit of the Committee’s terms of reference and powers.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans Equalities and Cohesion Officer**  
[tevens@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:tevens@thurrock.gov.uk)

In giving staff the opportunity to fully engage in the decision making around the current provision and the ongoing development over the next five years recognising the need to reduce budgets we have ensured that we have undertaken both the consultation and some focus groups attended by members of staff. In the development of proposals we will need to ensure that we address the issues of engaging with vulnerable groups to ensure that they have the opportunity to contribute to the debate, this will be achieved by using a number of our networks within the community to ensure that we give vulnerable young people the opportunity to inform the decisions made around services.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9. **Appendices to the report**

Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Appendix 2 Questionnaire Analysis

**Report Author:**