

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date of Decision:	29 July 2011
Decision Title:	Youth Support Services Part A: Report on the consultation to Redesign Hampshire Children's Services Department Youth Support Service
Decision Reference:	2993
Report From:	Director of Children's Services.

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The consultation on the redesign of Hampshire's Youth Support Service began on 11th April 2011 and ended on 11th July 2011. This consultation on proposals to redesign the Youth Support Service took place in the context of the government's Comprehensive Spending Review as outlined within part B of this report. This report summarises the outcome of the consultation.
- 1.2. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services takes note of the consultation responses and considers the implications when determining the future provision of Hampshire's Youth Support Service.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1 Hampshire's Youth Support Service currently provides a service to young people between the ages of 13 and 19 years (up to 25 for young people with disabilities). The proposals seek to extend the service to 11 – 19 years (up to 25 for young people with disabilities).

- 2.2 Hampshire's Youth Support Services are provided through two main workstreams;

Youth workers, who deliver youth projects and services in the community and provide support to young people through youth clubs and drop-in centres

Connexions Personal Advisers who deliver information, advice and guidance and personal development in schools, colleges and community venues

The current staffing establishment is outlined in detail within Part B of the report.

2.3 A model with three strands was proposed for public consultation whereby expenditure reductions and changes to responsibilities could be achieved. These strands are explained in greater detail within Part B of this report but in summary are :

- **An independent careers advice and guidance service**

We propose to offer an independent careers advice and guidance service that schools and colleges could purchase from Hampshire. All schools and colleges will be required to source independent careers guidance from September 2012 but can choose which organisation to purchase this from. From September 2011 until September 2012 we propose that Hampshire will continue to deliver careers guidance to schools and colleges that goes beyond our statutory duties.

Our research, via a questionnaires to schools, demonstrates that schools and colleges view Hampshire Children's Services Department as a trusted and high quality provider and would consider purchasing a service from Hampshire subject to a satisfactory pricing structure. Where necessary, schools would also be able to buy additional time and services that secure personal development or alternative curriculum programmes for young people who may need this.

We proposed within the consultation that Hampshire would provide free of charge 43.5 (FTE) members of staff to deliver careers guidance until September 2012 when the statutory responsibility for the provision moves to schools.

- **Targeted youth support services**

We proposed to provide a targeted youth support service through our Children's Services Department, which would offer support to the most vulnerable young people in Hampshire. This would include young people within the following vulnerable groups (but not exclusively):

- Young people at risk of homelessness or involvement in crime
- Young people at risk of teenage pregnancy
- Young people with poor mental health and also at risk of domestic abuse
- Young people aged 16 + who are in care
- Young people who are care leavers
- Young people with special needs; and
- Young people not in employment or education and training (NEET).

It is proposed that there would be 56 (FTE) members of staff to meet this level of need. This would include a *Personal Adviser* role for every young person in care over the age of 16. We would also provide a small team of specialist staff to support the education of extremely vulnerable young people who have very complex disabilities.

- **Deliver local youth projects and services through the voluntary sector**

We are proposing to make available £1.8 million to the voluntary sector to deliver local youth projects. We propose to work closely with the voluntary sector and provide them with funding to deliver local youth projects and services on our behalf. We would plan this with our established Local Children's Partnerships to ensure that we understand the types of projects that are needed and likely to be effective in each local area.

Decisions on how this money would be allocated would only be made after further discussions with Local Children's Partnerships about which projects and services are priorities to be delivered in the community. We propose that Hampshire retains the role of commissioner of services.

The voluntary sector are already a successful provider of youth provision across the County and within our consultation we posed questions as to how the voluntary sector could be supported by Hampshire Children's Services. To enable this we proposed to employ Community Development Facilitators(CDF's) to support new and existing voluntary, youth, community and faith groups to offer youth projects. We proposed that the CDF's would not directly deliver youth services but would work within communities to develop the provision of youth work in local areas.

3. Consultation

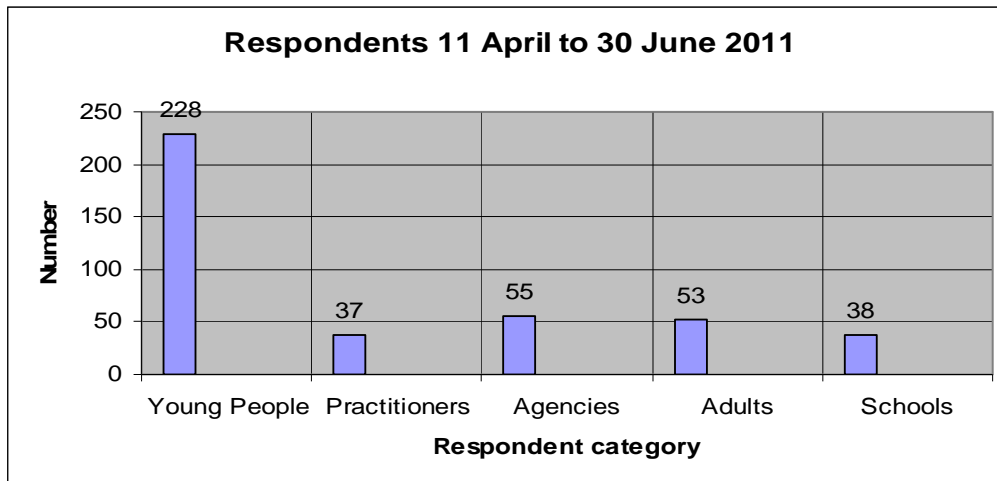
- 3.1. On 11 April 2011, Hampshire County Council's Children's Services Department launched a 90 day consultation regarding the future delivery of Targeted Youth Support Services. It was aimed at young people, practitioners and community members and sought to find out what they thought about proposed changes to the way in which services for young people would be offered. The paper asked respondents a range of questions relating to future delivery style, priorities, and inter-agency relationships
- 3.2. The consultation was promoted through a number of publications including youth tube, schools communications and newsletters. A consultation document was produced which was made available electronically on youth tube which attracted over 17,000 hits at the peak of the consultation period in May. Versions in large print and other formats were available on request. The document set out the context for the proposals and provided a response sheet for respondents to return their comments either by paper or electronic submissions. A frequently asked questions section on the intranet was established and updated regularly. There were also a series of meetings, (see Appendix 16) with practitioners, managers, partners and stakeholders to explain the proposals.
- 3.3. An initial consultation document for schools received a low response however the responses received were consistent and enabled Children's services to have further discussions with a Schools and Colleges reference group. As a result all schools and colleges were asked two further questions for response within the overall consultation period
- 3.4. A complete list of the consultation questions is included in Appendix 1, 2, and 3. Copies of all consultation responses will be made available in the Members' Room for seven days before the decision day meeting.

4. Responses to the consultation: respondents

- 4.1. In total there were 411 responses to the consultation using the consultation response forms of which the majority were from young people although they also included responses from agencies representing young people, education establishments, district, borough, town and parish councils, Unison and groups of

young people which indicated a wider involvement in the consultation than the number of responses suggests.

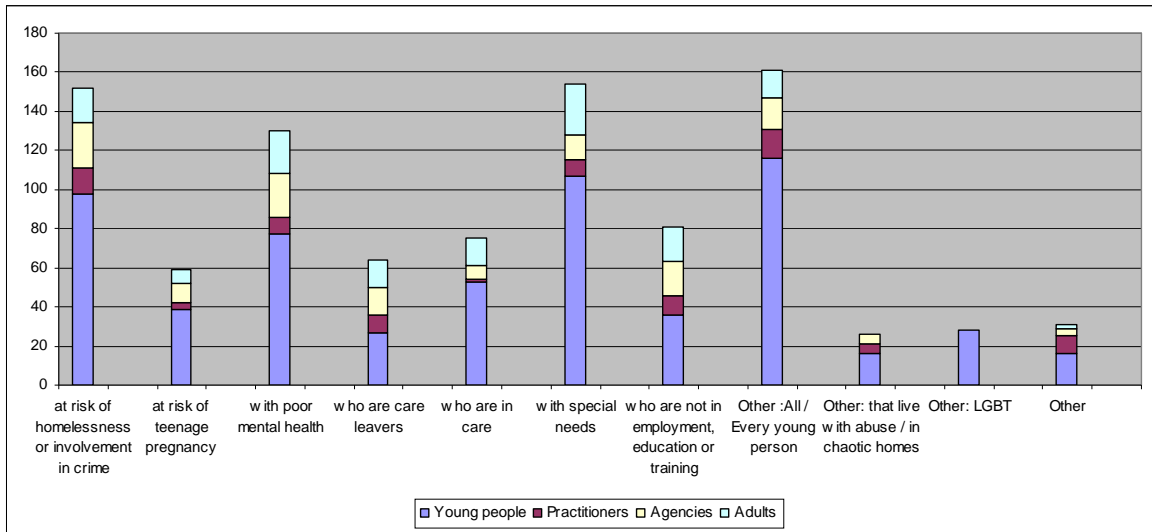
- 4.2. Whilst respondents could complete forms designed for young people, schools, and others, many chose to complete the form they deemed most appropriate, informing us of their involvement with young people through a response to question 12 of the on line form. Respondents are therefore known to be young people, internal and external practitioners, residents, parents, local councillors, voluntary agencies, LCP representatives and schools.
- 4.3. Chart 1: respondents data



- 4.4. The majority of responses were received from young people accounting for 55% of the responses.

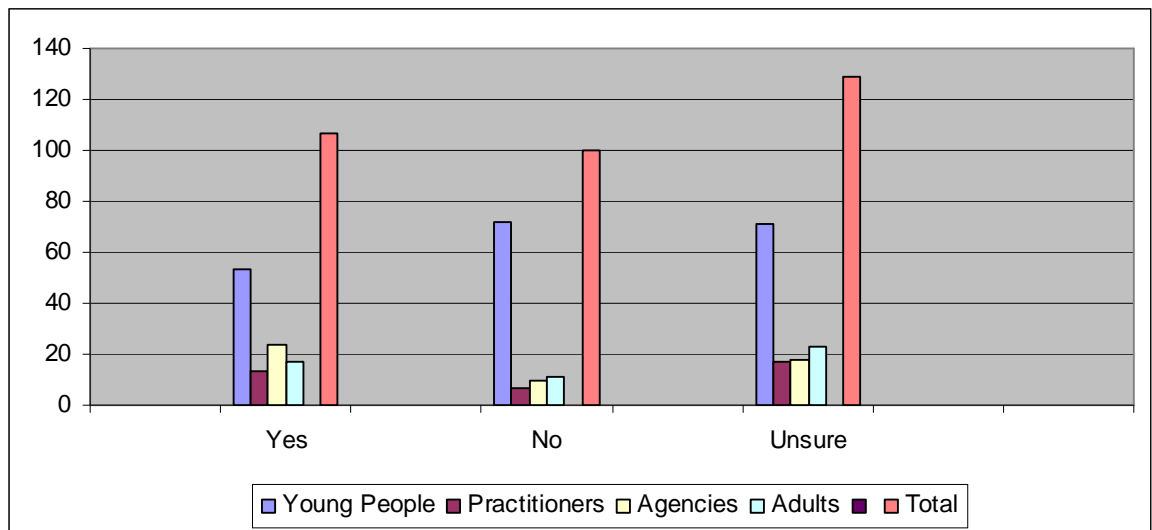
5. Key findings – responses to the consultation questions

- 5.1. Overall, when considering responses to the first two questions regarding support for the principles and proposals for delivery of a targeted youth support service, it is not supported (See appendix 4, 6, and 8). No alternative model was suggested however, the consistent theme was that youth support activities should not be reduced or changed.
- 5.2. Q3 asked respondents to identify the groups of vulnerable young people they thought should be most important, these were intended to help identify the priorities for delivery. There was considerable difference between respondent categories in their response to this question, however a clear concern for those who are homeless, or have special needs.



The proposed model would offer a progressive universal service, based on Local Childrens Partnerships (LCP) identifying local need. The above information can be helpful in identifying the vulnerabilities thought to be important.

5.3. Q4 asked respondents to consider the whether the LCP's are the right group of people to decide where funding is spent.

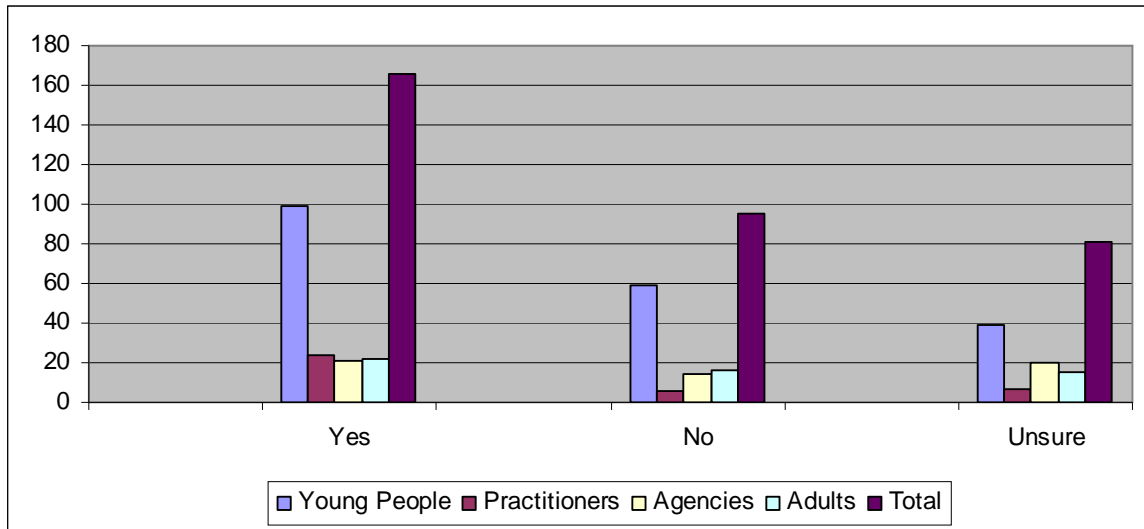


Whilst the majority clearly stated unsure to this question, in commenting the statements show they either did not know of the LCP; did not know who were members of the LCP; felt the LCP had too great an emphasis of head teachers as members, and too few young people / voluntary sector representation. A clear message that LCP's have no public persona, which would need to be addressed if this were to be the commissioning body.

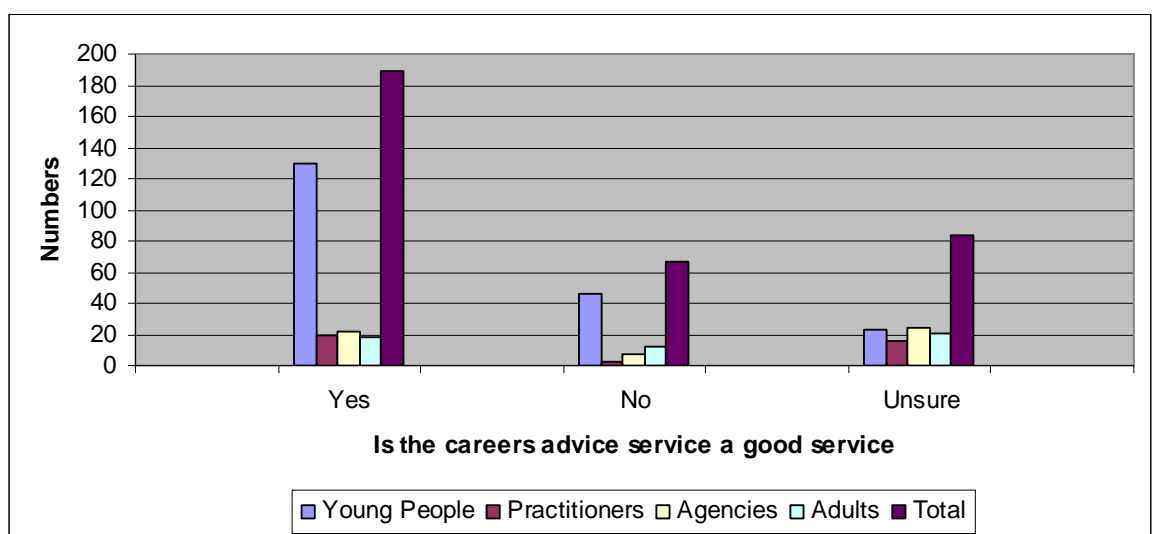
5.4. Question 5 asked for comments on how LCP's could make decisions regarding funding. See Appendix 13 for responses. Whilst there is a range, the clear lead was for the involvement of young people. Needs assessment should take place, with some suggesting voting, visiting, and merit be included in the decision

making process. Young peoples involvement should be a key feature in any subsequent decision making process.

- 5.5. Question 6 asked respondents to consider the role of a Community Development Facilitator within the core team. Initial discussions with schools and voluntary sector representatives suggested this role may not be supported. However, the chart below shows a positive response to the role. Those who were unsure, asked for clarity regarding the role, and a range of requests that it did not duplicate other providers of perceived similar roles. There were a small minority of voluntary sector agencies who requested they be enabled to deliver the role, developing the responsibilities they presently hold.

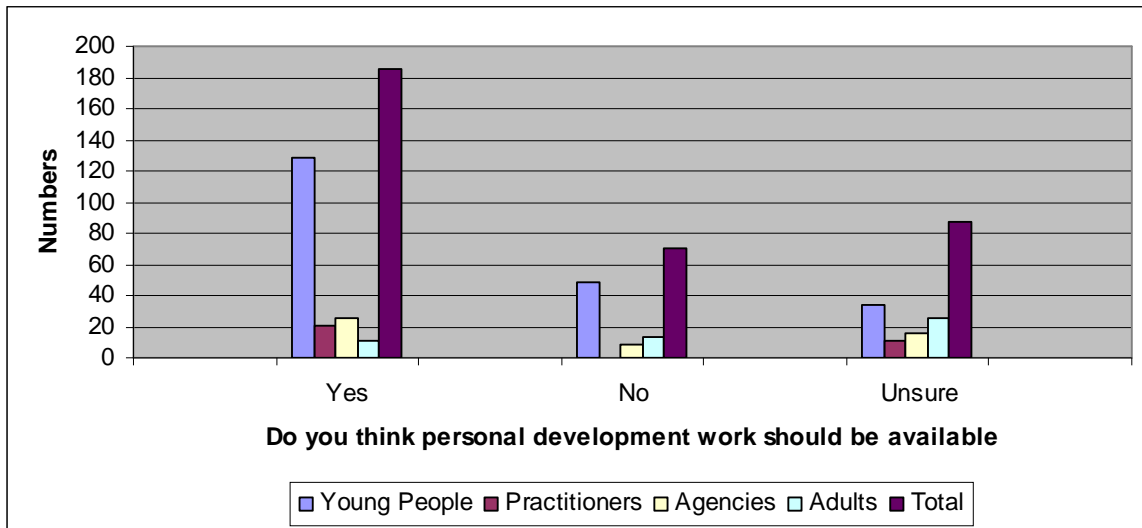


- 5.6. Questions 7 directly asked respondents their views of careers advice service presently delivered by Connexions team members, whether respondents thought it was a good service and whether schools or colleges should buy the service.



Whilst this clearly demonstrates the service is felt to be good, the majority of respondents felt it should continue to be a free service, 15 of 17 responses from schools concerned that the cost was too high to be affordable.

- 5.7. Question 8 directly asked respondents their views of personal development work. There was a very mixed response to this. A noticeable proportion believing that this should be provided via Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) or other direct provision within schools. An equal proportion considered the provision of objective personal development work for young people of equal or greater importance than careers guidance. A minority considered this the remit of parents, who should be left to undertake this responsibility without state intervention.



A clear message that however the service is provided, respondents felt the work to be important.

- 5.8. Questions 9 and 10 asked respondents for their ideas on how the necessary savings could be made, and for any other comments about how the best services for young people in Hampshire can be secured. An exploration of responses is made at 5.15

Key findings – responses to the specific schools consultation questions

- 5.9. Establishments were asked whether the banding enabled them to make an informed choice. Whilst 13 of 16 replied positively to this, they all required more information or detail.
- 5.10. Establishments were asked whether they would welcome a clear branding of the careers guidance service. 11 of 15 responses to this question felt this necessary, as it enabled recognition, clarity and credibility. One thought that continuing the Connexions brand would be helpful, two that a brand name linked with Hampshire County Council offered a sense of continuity.
- 5.11. All education responses wished an involvement in the selection of careers guidance workers in their establishment, and to be involved in a Quality Assurance Framework that they saw linked with service level agreements.
- 5.12. Question 6, was complicated by changes to the date on which government decreed responsibility for the delivery of careers guidance would switch from local

authorities to schools. However, of the 13 responses to the supplementary questions, 8 felt the bronze service to be provided by Hampshire would be preferable to paying for additional services, although 5 were happy to receive an enhanced service, if schools forum agreed funding. (Appendix 12)

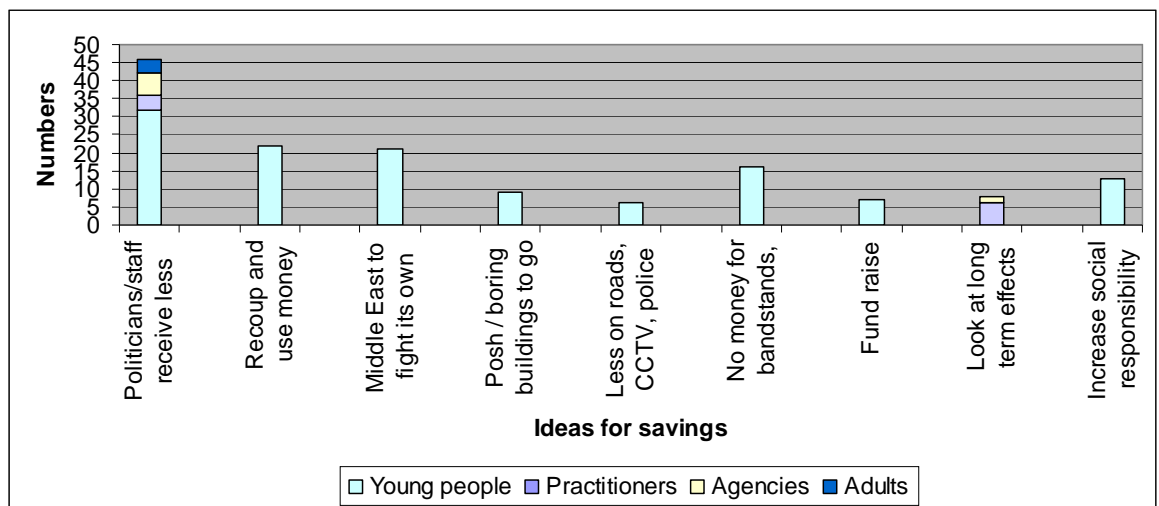
- 5.13. 50% of responses to question 7 felt they may purchase additional services. A total of 4 days personal development work, and 5 days careers guidance work, per week was indicated
- 5.14. Additional questions asked in June 2012 indicate that only 5 establishments would purchase additional services during the period September 2011 to September 2012, the total of which would be 5 days per week personal development work. However, 10 would purchase from Hampshire from September 2012, totalling 18 days per week careers guidance work, and 10 days per week personal development, the number of respondents suggesting these are detailed in Appendix 12.

Alternative proposals

- 5.15. Question 9 asks
 - *“Do you have any other comments or ideas about how we could make the necessary savings?”*

The majority of ideas came from young people. The one receiving greatest support being that politicians and staff receive less pay.

The majority of other ideas, are not within the control of the Childrens Services Department or the County Council. (Appendix 14)



- 5.16. Question 10 asks
 - *“We would also welcome any other comments you may have about how we could secure the best services for young people in Hampshire.”*

The only clear response to this question was that youth clubs should be maintained. However, there are a range of other suggestions that can seen at Appendix 15

6. Responses to consultation: Additional information

- 6.1 In addition to formal meetings, and written feedback to the consultation officers, staff and local groups have viewed the proposals, and have provided feedback in a range of informal settings, including Youth Club steering groups, Youth action groups, one to one meetings, Youth Club forums. (Appendix 16)
- 6.2 From the beginning written responses to the proposals have expressed concern at the loss of open access facilities, and whether the range that presently enables the participation of vulnerable young people could be commissioned. Local discussions with LCP's and the voluntary sector has led to guidance within the commissioning process that will offer local, open access projects to work with the most vulnerable young people
- 6.3 Young people and communities have verbally expressed to youth advocates their concern that buildings would close and communities would be unable to provide services to their young people.
- 6.4 Meetings with staff members, councillors, county and local voluntary sector, LCP's have explored the need to build capacity, identify gaps in provision, develop youth provision and work with volunteers and voluntary sector providers to meet identified need. A recognition of the requirement to co-ordinate services and ensure no duplication has led to a greater understanding of the Community Development Facilitator and later debate has welcomed this role
- 6.5 Formal, informal, written and verbal responses from schools indicate their concern as to the pricing structure for careers guidance. Some acknowledge that moving from a free to a bought service was always going to be difficult, however lack of clarity as to their budgets make decisions difficult for establishments at this stage.
- 6.6 Domestic Violence coordinators identified that the list of groups of vulnerable young people did not include those young people who are subject to domestic abuse. This group has been readily identified by respondents to the questionnaires (Appendix 5, 9, and 11).
- 6.7 A response was received from UNISON that proposed no cuts be made to the Youth Support Service.
- 6.8 A petition was received that was coordinated by Gordon Lewis entitled 'Don't Disconnect Connexions' and received 643 signatories, of which some made comments about the need to retain the Connexions service as it currently stands.

7. Conclusion

This report summarises the consultation responses to the proposals regarding the future delivery of a Targeted Youth Support Service. Overall, the data suggests disagreement with the proposals. Comments reflect a general view that there should be no change to the present service, with some suggestion that it should be expanded

Finally, partner agencies and some schools and voluntary organisations have expressed support for the proposals with a recognition that efficiencies need to be made. There has been an overall consensus of agreement regarding the value of youth and connexions work in supporting young people in Hampshire.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services takes note of the consultation responses and considers the implications when determining the future provision Targeted Youth Support Services in Hampshire