



## SUBMISSION TO THE SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE FROM THE SURREY YOUTH CONSORTIUM

### Concerning the implications for the voluntary sector of the budget cuts to the Connexions Service

The members of the Surrey Youth Consortium (SYC) are: Eikon, Surrey Clubs for Young People, The Lifetrain Trust, Learning Space, the Matrix Trust, Guildford YMCA, Reigate and Redhill YMCA, Surrey Care Trust, Woking YMCA. The Bourne Children and Youth Initiative are in the process of joining.

#### Impact on young people

- It is appreciated that the Council finds itself in an **unprecedented financial situation**.
- **SYC services save costs** in the medium term from social support, prison etc. They help NEET<sup>1</sup> young people back into education and/or employment, or keep them in EET when family and social problems destabilise their lives. This is of course a time of rising youth unemployment.
- SYC members provide support to at least **4,000 young people each year** who are NEET or in danger of becoming NEET. They provide **specialist, intensive services, targeted on areas of deprivation**, not just in the 14 most vulnerable areas but in serious areas of deprivation in affluent areas (see Helen Bowcock's report *Hidden Surrey*).
- Intensive personal advisers are **highly trained**; once lost they will be hard to replace.
- The voluntary sector offers **value for money**: for each £1 invested we deliver at least £3 worth of benefit through contributions from trained and supervised volunteers and from fund-raising.
- Working with schools, we **already have commitments to specific young people** for the autumn term. At the very least, some transition funding would enable some planning of change.
- We request Council members to ensure that as much as possible of the cut is absorbed through **reductions in its overheads**. The SYC is concerned that a post for Interim Transition Manager has been advertised: its cost would pay for 3 Personal Advisers. The Transformation Project has a substantial team of staff. [To retain the voluntary sector service at its current level, SCC needs to find about £270,000 from other sources.]

#### Impact on the voluntary sector

- Once the tapestry of support provided by the voluntary sector is lost, **it will be difficult to rebuild**. The statutory funding provides a lynchpin for a network of integrated voluntary and community support, including support from schools. Many posts are shared between projects and agencies.
- The survival of **small locally-based voluntary organisations is threatened** because they do not have the reserves to bridge the funding gap. These are in-year cuts; for staff to be released on 1 October, organisations need to give 3 months' notice to fulfil their legal requirements for redundancy. The cuts

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<sup>1</sup> NEET = Not in education, employment or training

will threaten the continuing participation of small voluntary organisations in the Transformation Project, as they will be focusing on survival rather than innovation.

- SCC implemented a **previous cut of 11% just six months ago**. Due to successive cuts, the total budget for information, advice, guidance and support for young people is about half the level of four years ago.
- The stated strategic intention of SCC is to **increase the proportion of funding** allocated to services for young people delivered by the voluntary and community sector.

Jenny Griffiths OBE, Independent Chair