

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Councillor Bridgeman(Chairperson)
Councillors Boes, Davies, Ferguson-Thorne, Hopkins,
Melbourne, Moultrie and Simmons

Co-opted Members: Carol Cobert (Church in Wales
Representative), Bridgid Corr (Parent Governor Representative),
Celeste Lewis (Parent Governor Representative)

Emily Gao (Youth Council Representative)

28 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Saleh Ahmed and Patricia Arlotte
(Roman Catholic Church representative)

29 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

30 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings on the 17 October 2023 were approved as a correct
record of the meeting with the inclusion of Cllr Melbourne as being in attendance and
signed by the Chairperson

31 : YOUTH SERVICES

Members were advised that this item would allow them to undertake pre-decision
scrutiny on Achieving a Sustainable Youth Work Offer for Cardiff, which would be
considered by Cabinet on 23 November 2023.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Peter Bradbury (Cabinet Member for Tackling
Poverty, Equality & Public Health), Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education and
Lifelong Learning), Susanne Scarlett (Partnerships & Performance Manager,
Education & Lifelong Learning); and James Healan (Youth Service Manager,
Education & Lifelong Learning).

Councillor Bradbury was invited to make a statement. He drew Members' attention to
paragraphs 31-44 of the report which contained information on the outline proposals
for change; the vision and operating model, details on what each of the locality teams
would offer and the key principles underpinning the proposed operating model.

Members were appreciative of the considerable amount of work carried out prior to
them receiving the report and heard how it was the accumulation of an independent
review and appraisal by Education Department and work with stakeholders,
communities, members of the Authority, young people and the workforce of the youth
services.

Members were informed the intention was to strengthen the Cardiff youth service offer and to achieve a sustainable, impactful, high quality Youth Work Offer in the city, with strong locality teams at the core, to respond to the unique needs of the individual communities that they served.

The locality teams would be sited in the areas of highest deprivation, building on the existing Cardiff Youth Service offer and would work closely with wider service for young people in their areas.

It was highlighted that the focus was on the service becoming more resilient, flexible and placed on a more agile footing. The move to a locality model, service improvement and change with a clear focus on community would enable the service to more closely align with its communities and schools which was much needed in terms of the impact of COVID around attendance, work with the most vulnerable children and those at risk of disengagement. There had also been the introduction of a better governance and accountability framework and strengthened leadership. An emphasis had been given to the development of the workforce, ensuring staff were valued and had the opportunity to progress. The goal was also to be more ambitious with the curriculum and how it related to the curriculum for Wales.

Members were invited to ask questions and make comments; the discussion is summarised as follows:

- Members asked what steps were being taken to ensure there were sufficient youth workers in Cardiff. Officers responded that a considerable amount of time had been spent over the last year understanding the demands and needs of individual communities and also the other services that existed including the schools that operated in those communities. There was more work to be done, however, in scoping the exact operating model to meet the needs of individual communities.
- Members enquired as to what measures were being taken to ensure youth workers received the support and development opportunities they required to carry out their role effectively. Officers responded that youth workers were given the opportunity to progress and develop and attain the qualifications and accreditation required for the level of their role. Relationships had also been established with educational establishments and supporting fieldwork placements with Cardiff Metropolitan University. In terms of preparing the future workforce there was also a range of trainee and apprenticeship opportunities. In addition, a Youth Service Workforce Development Officer post had been advertised.
- Members asked if there was an opportunity for youth workers to train through the medium of Welsh and to obtain their qualifications in Welsh. Officers responded that this opportunity was available for any officer in Cardiff. Members supported and approved the move towards accredited and professional development opportunities across the workforce and parity of these opportunities available through the Welsh medium.

- Members asked for clarification on the role of Youth Action Groups. Officers responded that the Youth Action Groups would be working with qualified youth workers to see what, if anything, could be done to provide support to the community which included providing support to youth workers. The Youth Action Group ensured there was a level of scrutiny and youth workers were equipped with the tools to deliver good outcomes in communities. The inclusion of Youth Action Groups and young people themselves in developing this service was welcomed by Members.
- Members asked about the lead in time for when the work began, if it could have been shortened, whether it could have been delivered more efficiently in a shorter time and also if there was anything in last year's review that got anything wrong. In response it was felt that the timescale was reasonable and that the independent reviewer had carried out the review in a thorough manner. This was seen as the start of a process that would radically change how youth work was viewed in the city. It was also believed that the report was fair, there had already been operational changes put in place and the next stage would result in valuable changes in the community.
- Members referred to the Locality model and asked whether that meant the Council was concentrating more on breadth or depth. Officers responded that the Locality model would cover and add depth and breadth where resources allowed. Members were directed to paragraph 42 of the report which highlighted the changes in the existing model of provision in terms of breadth and depth. These included street-based youth work, emotional health and well-being, inclusion, active involvement and post 16.
- Members discussed the review highlighting the fact that over 50% of the funding was external and whether the aim was to maintain and build those partnerships or access more Council funding. Officers responded that the goal was for a sustainable youth work offer and this could not be reliant on one source of funding. There was a responsibility placed on Cardiff Youth Service to ensure the flexibility of the service was extended. The service had its own revenue grant and also operating in communities had access to third sector provision as well as external funding. Part of the model included optimising resources by developing robust partnerships.
- Members asked if there was a dedicated officer responsible for seeking out partnerships. The Partnership & Performance Manager, Education & Lifelong Learning responded that it was part of their role to source partnerships. In addition, within a local youth service context, the expectation was that each senior youth officer was charged with forming partnerships and youth action groups. Members noted that there was a commitment to ensure that all of the senior youth service officers in the Council were equipped with the right skills and optimum level of partnership working to achieve the same level
- Councillors referred to a recent article in the Observer newspaper, the second annual Youth Endowment Fund report, analysing young people's experience of violence which referred to shocking and unacceptable levels of experiences of youth violence in England and Wales. It was agreed that investing in youth

services was investing to save. Members noted that the report referred to short term action over the course of the next year or so relating to the establishment of Locality Teams and referred to working on a medium-term approach with adolescents and how it would all come together. Officers were asked whether there were decisions that needed to be made over the shorter term that would have implications over the longer term and the impacts on decision making.

- Officers responded that in terms of the short-term action plan it had been agreed that there was a need to ensure that youth work was strengthened and placed on a resilient and firm footing and deployed in the areas with most impact. It was a case of looking at the budget and the resources available to the youth service, the unique selling point of youth work and aligning it with the national strategy around youth work and making the best use of resources. Some of the decisions taken had responded to issues around violence and safeguarding and work had taken place with the Home Office, Neighbourhood Policing, the Safer Communities Partnership and Youth Justice making sure services were being corralled where they were needed most. Officers noted that the short term was within the control of the youth service as it was youth work and the model needed to be put in place so that it was strong and resilient prior to looking at the broader strategy for youth work.
- Members noted that the longer strategy for youth work included community focussed schools, safe places to operate, spaces for young people to call their own and engage in activities they could access. All of this needed to be brought together with a service comprising a skilled workforce. Whilst it was recognised there were other services for young people in the city, the longer-term Council ambition was to make sure services were better integrated. A wide range of services for young people were commissioned and offered and it was felt these should be better integrated so that youth work was one part of a much bigger provision. Members were proud of the role youth work would play in the bigger network of provision and would like to see youth work at the heart of it. Youth work was seen as forming the trusted relationships with young people and being better able to direct and support other organisations to make those connections.
- Members referred to the presentation on Fairwater Campus at the October Committee meeting which had a heavy emphasis on its community brief. Members enquired whether that was seen as a model for all school sites to adopt in their communities in the future and whether youth work was seen as an integral part of a community focussed school. Officers responded that the relationship between youth work and schools needed to be strengthened. Attempts were being made to ensure that across all schools had a youth work presence. However, although it was intended to employ youth workers in all secondary schools in Cardiff in terms of youth work spaces, whilst embracing community focussed schools, alternative spaces were also being sought in leisure centres, scout halls for instance, and wherever was felt best represented the needs of young people in the community.

- Members enquired if there were links with places of worship across the whole faith. Officers responded that Youth Action Groups were at the forefront in terms of bringing people together on a locality basis and were inclusive. Faith-based membership groups and active church based groups were in place in the city. Officers welcomed any further dialogue with faith-based settings but they did exist as partners within the Youth Action Groups.
- Members referred to the plans to remain agile and resilient and asked if more detail could be provided in consideration of the long term trends over the next 5-10 years in terms of plans, how agile this plan would be and the contribution of the Performance and Governance Team. Officers responded that the Performance and Governance Team would carry out a range of functions across the service to make it more accountable and transparent, as well as case-related work to identify individuals, monitor trends, outputs and outcomes etc. It was noted, for example, that consultation had taken place during the summer of 2022 with young people living in Cardiff where it was identified that young people wanted education around exploitation. An education programme was sought out to be delivered by schools – VR Gangs. It was planned to deliver the training in the coming year as a pilot with the support of Community Safety. This was provided to Members as an example of identifying an evidential base for young people and reacting to that by delivering a programme brief that met the curriculum need.
- Members referred to the changes to existing models of practice where locality teams would be expected to deliver inclusive practice. Officers were asked how this would be carried out given that inclusivity was not homogenous with every strand being different and how it would be possible to demonstrate and measure true inclusivity, specifically in terms of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision or for those who were undiagnosed neuro divergent and steps taken to ensure they would be included in the work of the service. Officers responded that the Authority had a range of bespoke provision that met different needs. Members noted that officers had been approached by the Western Learning Federation who were keen to support the Youth Service going forwards in the longer-term strategy examining how the service could be adapted and extended to work with young people who attended specialist services in the city. Council representatives were also committed to meet with any group who felt that the provision was not being met.
- Members asked if there were programmes in place to tackle mental health and to empower young people to talk through their issues, including any work done specifically with males. Officers responded that there was an ingrained support mechanism for young people struggling with emotional, health and well-being issues. There were specific groups around emotional mental health and well-being with a Wellbeing Club in St Mellons and another in North Ely. Youth mentoring was available and primary referrals around emotional health and well-being offered on a one-to-one basis. The aim was to create a culture that was open and inclusive.

- Members also asked if there was any provision for primary aged children who struggled with their mental health. Officers responded that transitions in young peoples' lives were very important and especially around the transition from primary to secondary school. The Youth Service covered the age range from 11-25 but also had a play service. Members were informed that the Service looked at year 6 transition to youth services but the long-term view was integrating those services to ensure continuity.
- Members asked what allowances were made for the chronic under reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour. Members were informed that the street-based teams worked closely in partnership with Community Safety Team and the police to get 'harder to reach' young people involved in more structured activities where anti-social behaviour was identified.
- Members noted that the Service was in the early stages of a piece of work with the Home Office and asked for further information. Officers assured the Committee that the output from this study could be brought to a future scrutiny committee meeting.
- Members of the Committee agreed that they would wish to undertake a range of visits to youth centres and any other appropriate sites felt to be appropriate.
- Members welcomed the news that the Service was taking forward the recommendations of the review completed in 2022, and asked whether they could be provided with a "You said, we did" document arising from the review.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

32 : YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE UPDATE

Alison Jones, (Scrutiny Officer) provided Members with a summary of the Youth Justice Service Update.

Members' attention was drawn to the main information set out in Appendix A to the scrutiny cover report which highlighted progress on the future of the remand grant, the response to the National Standards self-audit of court work, Cardiff's Sustainability Action Plan to support its application to be a Child Friendly City. There were also updates from Angharad Thomas (Operational Manager, Youth Justice Service) on Youth Justice Service progress which included staffing, project updates, activity programme, summer programme, Intervention and information on performance and KPIs. Education data and inclusions were not covered in the response due to staffing issues and they would be provided at the next meeting.

Members were informed that the Independent Chair of the Board would be invited to attend the next meeting.

Members were invited to ask questions and make comments; the discussion is summarised as follows:

- In discussing the report Members felt there were some positives in the update but there were some questions that arose from the information on staffing and it felt it would be helpful to receive clarification on the impact on the service and continuity provision.
- Members also enquired how the Youth Justice Service was involved in the work to review the Youth Service.
- Members noted that on the figures given for involvement in Summer Activities there was some data on more take up but not on data on children who could benefit from the programme.
- Members noted the references in the update to giving priority to encouraging more engagement and asked for more insight into what that might involve.
- Members were keen to know and find out about the links between neuro divergent and criminal youth justice and how the service was supporting people entering the system with undiagnosed neuro diversity.

RESOLVED: That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

33 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

34 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Committee is 5 December 2023.

The meeting terminated at 6.23 pm