

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 JANUARY 2015

Present: Councillor Richard Cook (Chairperson), Councillors Boyle, Chaundy, Gordon, Govier, Murphy, Dianne Rees and Lynda Thorne

: Co-opted Members:

Apologies: Councillors ,

50 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Co-opted Member Mrs Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic Representative).

51 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

<i>Councillor/Co-opted Member</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Interest</i>
<i>Boyle</i>	<i>8 – Budget Proposals for Consultation</i>	<i>Personal – Ward involvement with Howardian Music Studio</i>
<i>Gordon</i>	<i>8 - Budget Proposals for Consultation</i>	<i>Personal – Riverside Play Centre budget and youth services in Grangetown and Riverside</i>
<i>Govier</i>	<i>8 - Budget Proposals for Consultation</i>	<i>Personal – Play Centre group involvement in ward</i>
<i>Murphy</i>	<i>8 - Budget Proposals for Consultation</i>	<i>Personal – Ely Play Centre – working with residents to oppose cut</i>
<i>Dianne Rees</i>	<i>3 – The Performance of Cardiff Schools and the Youth Service in 2013/14 – Draft Cabinet Report</i>	<i>Personal - member of governing body of St Mellons Primary School</i>
<i>Thorne</i>	<i>8 - Budget Proposals for Consultation</i>	<i>Personal – Involvement with Friends Of group – Grangetown Play and Grangetown Youth Service</i>

52 : CARDIFF'S SCHOOLS ANNUAL - DRAFT CABINET REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Julia Magill (Cabinet Member for Education), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education), Angela Kent (Head of Achievement and Inclusion), Hannah Woodhouse (Managing Director of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service), Marc Beli (Headteacher, Bishop of Llandaff High School), Joanne Colsey (Headteacher, Stacey Primary School), Helen Turner (Headteacher, Pencaerau Primary School) and Kevin Tansley (Headteacher, Ty Gwyn Special School).

This report provided the Committee with the opportunity to consider a draft copy of the Cabinet report "The Performance of Cardiff Schools and the Youth Service in 2013 / 14" due to be considered by Cabinet on 22 January 2015.

The Chairperson invited Councillor Magill to make a statement. Councillor Magill informed the Committee that the overall picture shows an improvement in performance, especially at Key Stage 4 (KS4) – Level 2+ (including English, or Welsh and Mathematics). The improvement throughout the key stages is taking place at a faster rate than it is at schools in the rest of Wales. This is encouraging but the performance of schools in Cardiff is still not where it should be. The report also contains information on comparisons that have been made between Cardiff and other core cities and these are not unfavourable.

The Director informed the Committee that the report is structured in the same way as last year's and that taking a planned look at different aspects of performance enables the Committee to consider them in more depth. Estyn has said that there should be a greater focus on turning data into insight and understanding. The Director advised the Committee that the key questions are as follows:

- Are learners' standards of performance improving?
- Are those improvements occurring fast enough and far enough?
- And what can be concluded about the capacity of the system to deliver further improvements?

The Director advised the Committee that it is encouraging to note that there has been a narrowing of the performance gap between those learners who receive free schools meals (FSM) and those who do not. There has also been an encouraging improvement in attainment for minority ethnic learners at Key Stage 2, and at Key Stage 4, Level 2. There continue to be areas of concern and it is important to look at the progress of all learners and not just those who are close to attainment thresholds. There has been an improvement in performance in maths. One area for improvement is school leadership; too often school leaders report that they are unable to concentrate on the key business of the school, which is teaching and learning, because they have to get involved in other things.

The Chairperson invited the headteachers to make statements and these are summarised as follows:

- It is important to have teamwork, high expectations of teachers and learners and collaborative working between agencies and with other schools.
- Learners need to know what is expected of them. Individualised learning improves performance and it is important to track children's performance.

- There is a need to analyse and share data.
- Teachers should have a vision of the level at which learners' performance should be.
- Teachers have to be accountable for the performance of the children that they teach. There is a growing understanding that failure to deliver good performance will not be acceptable.
- It is up to headteachers to make sure that performance is monitored and evaluated. Drift has to be avoided and headteachers should have difficult conversations with teachers when necessary.

The Chairperson invited questions from the Committee.

A Member expressed some concern about the categorisation in performance reports of those in receipt of FSM or those from ethnic minorities, many of whom are from third-generation families that have been in Cardiff for a long time. The Committee was advised that the measurement of outcomes by ethnicity or receipt/non-receipt of FSM has to be set in the context of the child, but it is important to monitor performance of these groups to make sure that expectations are high enough.

The Committee enquired about performance management of teachers, asking if it is happening and how the local authority knows it is happening. The Committee was advised that all teachers are under performance management and can not progress to their next pay grade unless their performance is satisfactory. There are very clear specifications set out in teachers' terms of pay and conditions. The performance of a school indicates to the local authority whether there is strong performance management in the school. Performance management is linked to the standards and national priorities for teaching. Governing bodies of schools should set objectives for headteachers and inform the local authority what they are. The Committee was concerned that the local authority does not get informed of the outcome of performance assessments of teachers and may only become aware that something has been going wrong if a problem arises.

The Committee asked whether Cardiff is able to recruit the number of high-achieving teachers and headteachers that are required, and whether the improvements in performance reported to the Committee at this meeting are sustainable across the whole city. The Committee was advised that the Consortium has a role in both of these things, offering leadership development that will provide school leaders professional development by giving them the opportunity to work at a number of schools. Ten years ago most headteachers were over fifty years old. The situation is very different now and many young teachers want to become headteachers. Regarding the sustainability of improvement, part of the strategy of developing school-to-school improvement is ensuring that there is a mechanism by which improvement can be transferred from one school to another. Leadership does not necessarily have to be just about one headteacher running one school. In English schools a different approach is sometimes taken, with one headteacher, an executive head, running several schools at the same time. There are a number of programmes offered for aspiring leaders and executive headteachers. There is a need to do more to identify future leaders, and a lot more needs to be done on governance, to make sure that the governing bodies are setting a high standard. The Consortium is working with the local authority to hold regular, challenging meetings with the headteachers of those schools that are not performing well. There may be a need to

take stronger action than has been taken in the past; much has been done on teacher capability but it might also be necessary to look at the capability of headteachers.

The Committee asked if a school is given extra support if the headteacher of the school moves to another school for a time in order to improve the performance of that school. The Committee was advised that it would be expected that the deputy headteacher would be capable enough to take on the responsibilities of the head effectively, and such a situation would provide an excellent opportunity for deputy headteachers. When headteachers do temporarily leave their own school, governing bodies are understandably concerned that the performance of the school might suffer.

The Committee noted that the report states that 'Cardiff's performance relative to that of the other Welsh authorities is generally not as good as in 2010.' and asked how this statement can be squared with the improvements in performance that were being reported to the Committee at this meeting. The Committee was advised that it should be borne in mind that in 2010 the performance of schools was measured on a different basis. Previously performance results were based on the results of national tests and now they are based on teachers' assessments, something on which there is no national moderation.

The Committee pointed out that many of the actions for improvement as listed in the report were being implemented at Eastern High School and yet when Estyn inspected the school it was found not to be performing well. The Committee was advised that there is a need for an in-depth look at schools that are not making progress. The Director informed the Committee that he would welcome such a session with the Committee, and suggested that to improve the Committee's understanding of what the problems are a sub-group of the Committee could meet with the headteachers of schools that are struggling.

The Committee asked whether the state and appearance of school buildings have an impact on children's performance. The Committee was advised that this can have a significant impact. Having sufficient space is an important factor and reduces pressure in the school. But when revenue budgets are being set it has to be recognised that high quality buildings need to be well-maintained.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member, Director and other officers and witnesses for attending the meeting and for answering questions from Members.

**AGREED:** That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member highlighting the following issues:

Members found the report and data to be clear in their presentation, and the analysis at the start of the report was helpful. Members are pleased to note the many improvements in our performance this year compared to the Welsh average (particularly the Key Stage 4 level 2 Inclusive Measure). The Director also helpfully identified in paragraph nine some priorities for further improvement, which Members were pleased to note and which will become a fertile source of scrutiny for the Committee's 2015/16 work programming arrangements. It is clear, based on the questioning that followed, that leadership in its widest sense is a critical area for development.

Members also found it helpful to see the introduction of comparisons with English core cities in the report. While the Committee acknowledges the limitations of benchmarking performance outside Wales, Members were interested to note Cardiff's performance relative to cities in the north of England, and are sure that the continued inclusion of these comparative data will be welcomed by Members. A Member questioned whether Cardiff's performance against other Welsh local authorities listed in the first line of Appendix 3 of the report had suggested deterioration compared to its 2010 level, but was satisfied to learn that different measurement methodologies accounted for this.

Given the attendance of the three head teachers at the meeting, Members were naturally most interested in taking the opportunity to question the heads in detail on the effectiveness of performance management arrangements in their schools, and the roles of the governing bodies, the Consortium and the LEA. The Cabinet Member will therefore find this to be the dominant theme of the Committee's observations below.

## **MANAGING PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS**

The insight provided by the head teachers was welcomed by Members, who hope that the presence of head teachers might become a more regular aspect of our scrutiny of schools' performance. Similarly, the Committee will welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with school governors.

It was clear from the presentations given by the three heads that for them good performance relies on a number of factors. It is clear that individual leadership from the head teacher, clear and competent direction from the governing body and a broad team approach in the teaching environment are all of paramount importance. Each of the three heads spoke of the importance of maintaining high expectations, and of challenging everyone involved in the child's educational package to push and stretch the expectations of what that child can achieve.

Members were also pleased to note from all three heads an unwillingness to tolerate mediocrity in the teaching body, and an acceptance that teachers who are failing to meet expected standards will have no future in the school. The Committee endorses this approach. Members were particularly pleased that difficult conversations had taken place within school settings to challenge traditional approaches around the number of times that a head could observe a teacher's practice, and that a flexible and productive set of arrangements had been achieved.

A Member asked if adequate training and support was provided to teachers to meet performance standards. The heads advised that the challenge provided to teachers by head was complemented by mentoring and support arrangements.

Members were reassured to hear that all three schools had robust guidance on the application of appraisal systems in place for all teaching staff that were linked to pay.. It was appreciated that individual performance targets are closely linked to national attainment standards.

Committee was also advised that governing bodies should provide overview of the impact and effectiveness of the school's performance management arrangements, and annually revise its performance management policy. In the case of one of the schools, the governing body's Pay Panel approved each of the head's threshold payments.

## **THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF HEAD TEACHERS**

Members were mindful of a comment made during the meeting that an ambitious head might not wish to take on too many roles in schools causing concern during their career, as it could limit their prospects.

Members asked Hannah Woodhouse and the heads about arrangements for the recruitment and development of head teachers. They heard Hannah set out the Consortium's three-fold role in: attracting new talent into the region by national recruitment and building the region's reputation as a good place to relocate; enabling heads to develop their skills by taking on short to medium term secondments in other schools, thus supporting mobility in the sector; and encouraging the highest-performing schools to spread good practice across the region.

The Committee heard Hannah state that School Improvement Groups were naturally identifying future leaders. She described activity underway to support middle management development in the region, and to encourage governing bodies to provide challenge to head teachers. She conceded that more could be done. Debbie also spoke of the need to be more robust in challenging mediocre performance, and also of the inherent challenge of encouraging governing bodies to willingly release a talented teacher to take on a role in improving performance elsewhere. Members are mindful that the Consortium is still at an early stage of its development, but are also aware that we need to provide challenge to the Consortium on its performance. Members are pleased to hear Hannah and colleagues describe activity, but need to find some intelligent ways of assessing outcomes from the Consortium's activity so that the Committee can provide proper and mature challenge that will help optimise its performance.

In passing, Members noted a view that the quality of many school environments across Cardiff are not acceptable, with chalk boards still being used in many schools, and upkeep of the estate a real issue.

## **COMMITTEE'S NEXT STEPS**

It was clear that the three heads attending on this occasion had worked to build levels of performance in their schools. One specific recommendation made at the meeting was to ask if the Cabinet Member can arrange with the Director to invite heads and other representatives of schools whose performance might be causing greater concern.

Members recognise that we will need to provide the kind of safe and non-judgemental environment that would be conducive to allowing heads to be candid and open in describing the challenges they face, and that our feedback needs to be carefully crafted to offer a level of challenge that is positive and stretching, rather than unhelpfully harsh or critical.

Members feel that a task and finish environment will be more appropriate to this kind of scrutiny than a formal committee meeting, and have instructed our scrutiny officer to liaise with the Director to arrange for our Committee's third Performance Deep Dive of the municipal year to take place in March. Members would like to speak with a range of teachers and governors in schools with performance challenges. As this will be a new area of scrutiny for the Committee, we remain open in terms of considering the precise dynamics of these sessions, and will ask the scrutiny officer to prepare a scope of scrutiny proposal for us to agree.

During the meeting Members shared their concerns about the performance of Eastern High School, in anticipation of the Inspection report expected soon from Estyn. The Committee noted the Cabinet Members willingness for Committee to play its part in examining and advising on areas of concern that might be raised in the report, and will appreciate advice from the Director on when and how Committee can explore the Inspectorate's findings.

### 53 : THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN CARDIFF - CABINET RESPONSE

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Julia Magill (Cabinet Member for Education) and Nick Batchelar (Director of Education).

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the December 2014 Cabinet response to the Committee's scrutiny task and finish report on the impact of poverty on educational attainment in Cardiff, which was published in May 2013.

The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that she welcomed the recommendations in its report and it is important that they are taken forward.

The Committee asked whether there is a relationship between the impact of poverty and school attainment by children in their mid-teens. The Committee was advised that there is an impact at every stage but this tends to widen as a child progresses through school, especially at KS4. The performance gap between children in poverty and other children has narrowed this year but it still stands at around 30%. The role of the local authority is to make sure that when it comes to performance at school it makes no difference where in the city a child comes from. The local authority has to challenge itself to make sure that there is not a persistent differentiation that has nothing to do with the ability of the child. The expectations of teachers have a big impact on children's performance. It is important to give children from poorer backgrounds more opportunities to develop through out-of-hours experience, such as travel. And when teaching is poor, children that come from deprived backgrounds suffer more than those from more affluent backgrounds.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the Director for attending the meeting and for answering questions from Members.

### 54 : SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL BEING ACT (WALES) 2014 - BRIEFING PAPER

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member, Early Years, Children and Families) and Tony Young (Director of Children's Services).

The purpose of this briefing report was to provide the Committee with an overview of the Act, the implementation timeline, the implications of the Act for Social Care services and the wider Council and details of the advice and support that is available to assist Councils in implementing the Act.

The Director gave a presentation on the Act.

The Director informed the Committee that in his view the Act may be long on aspiration and, at present, short on detail. It is under-pinned by a new legal framework. Two thirds of the guidance is still to be published. The Welsh Government (WG) believes that implementation of the Act will be cost-neutral but it is hard to see how this will be true. The Act will codify the existing legislation that affects social care services for adults and children. It is a huge challenge, as the onus is on local authorities to implement it and the tight timescales have not made this easy. In summary, the Director advised the Committee that while having no argument with the Act in principle he remains concerned about the realisation of it.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from the Committee.

The Committee asked whether there will be any significant impact on staffing as a result of the Act and was informed that at present there are no obvious, direct re-organisational implications.

The Committee noted that there is to be a preventative strategy and that there will be some grant money available to support implementation of the Act. The Committee asked whether there is not a case for drawing down some of the grant money so that work on the preventative strategy can begin immediately. The Committee was advised that the bulk of the grant will be focussed on adult services and that work on a preventative strategy has already started. The grant funding will be short-term. Even if the Act had not been introduced, the local authority would still have to develop a preventative strategy as it is more cost effective and can deliver better outcomes. The Act does offer some scope for the local authority to get more out of what it does with its partners, and it may change the way social work teams work by removing some the bureaucracy that currently exists.

The Committee asked how the local authority will overcome some past difficulties it has had with Health, especially regarding the apportionment of funding. The Committee was advised that agreement with Health has already been reached on a number of areas, but Health is driven by enormous cost pressures and so there is some incentive for it to pursue its own agenda.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the Director for attending the meeting and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED: That the report be noted.



The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member, Early Years, Children and Families) and Tony Young (Director of Children's Services).

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an overview of the December 2014 Cabinet response to this Committee's scrutiny task and finish report on the Child Health and Disability Team, which was published in September 2013.

The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the Cabinet has accepted all of the recommendations in the report. There are still some concerns about capacity, about the number of children that the local authority is providing services for compared with other local authorities.

The Committee noted that there is to be a re-modelling exercise and was advised that a report on that will go to Cabinet in six months time. Meetings with partners have already been held to agree a strategy for the improvement of services.

AGREED: That the Cabinet Response be noted.

#### 56 : LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN LISTENING EVENT - CABINET RESPONSE.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sue Lent (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member, Early Years, Children and Families) and Tony Young (Director of Children's Services).

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an overview of the December 2014 Cabinet response to this Committee's scrutiny task and finish report on the Listening Event with Looked After Children, which was published in March 2014.

The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the Cabinet has accepted all of the recommendations in the report.

The Chairperson thanked the Cabinet Member and the Director for attending the meeting and for answering questions from Members.

AGREED: That the Cabinet Response be noted.

#### 57 : BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTATION

The Chairperson welcomed young people and workers representing a number of youth centres and play centres in the city:

The purpose of this report was to provide Members with an overview of those sections of the Cabinet's '2015/16 Budget Proposals – for Consultation' that relate to the portfolios and service areas that fall within the remit of the Committee.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that in the budget there are proposals for significant cuts to youth centres and play centres and that this is an area that is relevant to the Committee. Each of the youth and play centres that had representatives present would be allowed five minutes for their representatives to

make statements to the Committee, and after each statement Members would be given five minutes to question the witnesses.

Statement by representatives from Studio 22 (Youth Music Studio, Howardian Centre)

Young people at the studio have started a youth-led chartered organisation to extend the work of Studio 22. They have lots of plans for the future. Last year Studio 22 avoided funding cuts by engaging with partners to run events that have taken place over the last year. As shown by the Studio 22 Annual Report (a copy of which was provided to Members), the centre had a total 2288 contacts with young people (1798 male and 490 female) during 2013/14. Attendance averages about fifty young people per week. They are demographically diverse and come from all areas of Cardiff, particularly from some of the less affluent areas of the city. Studio 22 helps young people to improve their confidence and social skills and to make friends from across the city. The aim is to run Studio 22 as a community organisation. A realistic business plan has been developed and sources of funding have been explored. Studio 22 needs another two or three years on its present site (and the building is not due to close until 2018 anyway), so that it can continue its development and secure its own funding until it is ready to move to a building of its own. If Studio 22 does not get another two or three years of funding from the Council it will cease to exist.

The Committee asked whether Studio 22 had found alternative premises, whether Studio 22 has approached any organisations for alternative funding and whether there is any more the local authority can do to help Studio 22, particularly in its efforts to find new accommodation. The Committee was advised that new premises have not yet been found; charities and Third Sector organisations have been approached and it is hoped that the Arts Council for Wales may be able to help with funding; as the Council is reviewing the buildings it has, Studio 22 has through Stepping Up workshops started exploring the possibility of using a building that the Council no longer wishes to run.

Statement by representatives from Powerhouse Youth Club

Representatives informed the Committee that Powerhouse is a place where they have made friends. They have attended regularly and have been pleased to participate in activities there. They have been on trips that they otherwise would not have been able to afford and have taken accredited courses, such as the Duke of Edinburgh awards. Powerhouse has helped them develop their social skills and their sense of their own identity and they have developed positive relationships with staff and other young people, relationships that last and are different to those they have at school. Young people there have carried out their own fund-raising activities. Staff at Powerhouse provide young people with guidance and support on personal issues. When one representative was made a senior leader it gave her a sense of achievement and she ran activities for younger Powerhouse members. The representatives want Powerhouse to still be there for other young people; what will young people do if the youth centres close?

The Committee noted the importance of youth centres to young people, their value in helping them build social skills and networks and find support, and the link between youth centres, the community and educational achievement.

### Statement by representatives from Butetown Youth Pavilion

Butetown Youth Centre provides young people with opportunities to do things that they can not do at school. It helps young people learn how to make their own decisions and makes them aware of prospects that they hadn't previously considered. It is important that young people have access to this kind of facility and opportunities. If the youth centre closes it could lead to an increase in crime, anti-social behaviour and drug abuse. Attending the youth centre can help young people with their school work. Young people at the centre have created an anti-radicalisation group to persuade others not to adopt extreme religious and cultural attitudes.

The Committee asked how many young people use the centre and were informed that well over a hundred people use the centre. It is open Monday to Friday and during school holidays.

### Statement by representatives from Riverside Warehouse Youth Centre and The Buzz, Grangetown

Youth centres are a safe place for young people aged 11-25 years; they are from many different cultures and all socialise together. The centres offer sports and learning, such as first aid, food hygiene and health and safety (safe lifting). If the Warehouse and Buzz weren't there, young people would be on the streets more and would be easy prey for drug dealers and those promoting extremist views. There is also an anti-radicalisation group at one of these centres. In the area there is high unemployment and there are drug abuse problems. One representative informed the Committee that he is going to university and that would not have happened if it hadn't been for the youth centre.

A Member informed the Committee that there were major issues in Butetown and after consultation with young people The Buzz was created to address these. The Committee was concerned that if The Buzz closes these problems could return and again noted the educational aspects of the youth centres. It was suggested that the Committee should put more pressure on the Council to see the value of the Youth Service and the anti-radicalisation activities are particularly important to note.

### Statement by representative from Adamsdown Play Centre

The representative informed the Committee that he is seventeen years old and has attended the youth centre since he was five. It has helped him through hard situations and he helps out there now. It has a special needs session. Those who attend the centre feel safe there, take part in a lot of activities and get individual attention.

### Statement by representative from Splott Play Centre

The consultation paper was not 'young people-friendly' and it was hard to see the need for a second one. The centre has won awards. They have been told that the building is going out to tender, but the Council should wait for the result of the consultation. Splott Play Centre has worked for a year to create a business plan, as requested by the local authority. They now feel as if the building is being snatched from them. Where are the young people to go? Cardiff should be celebrating the

fact that it has had a youth service for so many years. These proposals have affected every child in Cardiff. The Stepping Up programme is too late. There is no clear direction and the centre is in the same position as it was last year. The centre needs about nine months to make the transition that is required due to the budget proposals. Other centres may need longer.

The Chairperson thanked all the witnesses for attending, for their statements and for answering questions from the Committee.

AGREED: That the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee writes to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years highlighting the following issues:

- **TRANSITIONAL PLANNING AND FUNDING:** Members are pleased to see that the Council has produced its “Stepping Up” toolkit, and strongly support the approaches based on co-production and capacity building. Some of the young people also mentioned their gratitude to the Council for its considerate help in supporting their capacity. The campaigners from Howardian and from Play Services Members spoke to had obviously put much time, thought and effort into developing sustainable business cases, and were currently contacting a range of private, voluntary and charity partners to seek their involvement, as well as exploring new approaches like Crowd Funding.

But a message the Committee heard more than once was that communities need more time to plan to learn the skills to take on facilities and provision. It was felt that the Stepping Up Toolkit could be more child and young people-friendly, and that the level of expertise needed to navigate the Stepping Up website necessitated a level of capacity that might not always be available in communities.

Howardian’s Studio 22 chairman Joshua Quigley advised that the Studio’s financial needs were modest, but that one or two years of transitional support might be necessary to deliver a sustainable solution. As the site was not due for demolition for some time, a “stay of execution” was particularly requested to make this happen.

In the case of Play Centres, parent Annaliese Shanhan said that despite engaging closely with the Council for the past 12 months, little real progress had been made in that time, and that the “Stepping Up” approach had been initiated too late to make a practical impact in the short time window now made available to develop a transition Plan. While Splott parents might be ready in between nine to 18 months to take on the running of the building, parents in other areas of Cardiff had not been as proactive – possibly as the community campaigning around the Splott Community Hub had kick started activities in the Splott area. So, for instance, it was felt that campaigners for Llanrumney Play Centre could be a year or so even further behind Splott in their readiness to take on the challenge.

As a result of these concerns, Members would like to engage the Cabinet Member in serious conversation of how much extra time can be afforded these communities, if a genuine, robust and sustainable co-production approach can be delivered.

- **THE TRANSFORMATIVE NATURE OF YOUTH AND PLAY SUPPORT:**  
Traditionally regarded as “Cinderella” services, Youth and Play clearly make a significant impact on many of their service users.
  - Witness after witness spoke of how their social and leadership skills had been transformed by using these centres, and spoke of their support workers as being like family members. They spoke of the positive impact of using a centre on their educational attainment and school attendance record, their readiness for the world of work, their ability to communicate and their general positive self-image. In considering any cuts to Youth and Play, we really should be most proud of these excellent services which exemplify a Co-operative approach to social capacity in Cardiff’s communities, and recognise the many losses that will be experienced in years to come (if not immediately) should they disappear.
  - In the case of disabled children, play provision might be the only viable way for them to spend four productive hours of respite with their carer during a day, where they could receive peer support and engage in properly resourced, meaningful activities with people of their own age.
  - A parent from Splott Play Centre said that many of their users came to the Centre hungry and unfed, and although it was not in the Centre’s core purpose, it regularly provided essential quasi parental and child welfare support.
  - The Centres often provide a unique environment where people from differing cultural and religious backgrounds can mingle and become friends, sometimes in single gender groups and sometimes in mixed ones, learning the skills of tolerance, respect and diversity, both easing cohesion and tensions in communities, and supporting good educational attainment and behaviour in the classroom.
  - Similarly, the Play Service has been recognised for its engagement with the local Gypsy and Traveller young people and families, and if this were to be lost it might prove harder to support and engage this often hard to reach community.
  
- **UNWELCOME CONSEQUENCES OF REDUCTION OF PROVISION:**  
Several of the service users painted a stark picture of what outcomes would be like for young people if these facilities were not available to them.
  - Young women spoke of real and evident risks of sexual exploitation associated with socialising outdoors after dark in the absence of indoor provision. The cases of Rochdale and Rotherham are timely reminders of what can happen to a City’s reputation when the basics of youth safeguarding are missing in an inner city area.
  - Similarly, young Muslim men from Riverside talked of real examples of the risks of radicalisation apparent in Cardiff. The Riverside Warehouse has delivered numerous anti-radicalisation activities, and

was seen as a safe space and as a bulwark against radicalisation in the community. The young men said how easy it would be for malign forces to get a grip on teenagers in Riverside who did not enjoy any other support activities after school. Members were particularly concerned to hear this, given the recent publicity of events in Paris, and Cardiff's own problem in recent months with young men going off to Syria and elsewhere. They wondered whether corporate or even external PREVENT or other counter terrorism funding might be available to staunch the loss of youth provision if radicalisation could be a consequence.

- At a more general level, young people spoke of the gang culture in some neighbourhoods, with their corresponding violence and criminality. A young man who had been attending Splott Play Centre from the age of five and who was now trained as a volunteer Play Worker, clearly stated that without Splott Play Centre he would have become a gang member, and had a significantly different life experience and prospects to the ones he now enjoys. A Member reinforced this view by reminding Members that the Buzz Information Shop had actually been established precisely for the purpose of reducing anti-social behaviour that had been reported in the north Grangetown community a decade or so ago.

Finally, some specific concerns were expressed about the apparent advertisement of tender arrangements for the site of Splott Play Centre, which may have given an impression that planning assumptions had already been made about the future of that building. These may have been a misunderstanding, but exemplify the level of anxiety in communities about their future provision.

Taking all of these points on board, at the Committee's Way Forward discussion, the general consensus was that – while recognising the clear requirement for the Council to reduce service provision to meet reduced budgetary capacity – the proposed cuts to these preventative and capacity building services are a short-sighted step that will lead to larger costs in the near future to remediate the impacts raised in the evidence above.

They will also reduce the quality of life of young people in many of Cardiff's most deprived communities, and reduce the Council's capacity to effectively work in partnership with communities in carefully planning and nurturing sustainably co-produced services – outcomes which all seem at odds with the Administration's stated vision and priorities.

Members are sure that views very similar to those presented to the Committee will have been shared with the Cabinet Member over the past few weeks, and while the proposals the Cabinet Member has recently circulated to the Committee have not been significantly updated from those sent out for consultation in November, Members feel that the Cabinet Member will have made certain assumptions and calculations since then about changes to the proposals to mitigate the kinds of impacts raised as risks by the young people during the consultation period.

The meeting terminated at 6.30pm