

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 JULY 2020

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),  
Councillors Cunnah, Hopkins, Melbourne, Molik, Phillips, Mia Rees  
and Singh

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative),  
Carol Cobert (Church in Wales Representative), Karen Dell'Armi  
(Parent Governor Representative) and Matthew Richards (Parent  
Governor Representative)  
Connor Clarke (Youth Council Representative)

### 16 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heather Joyce.

The Chairperson wanted to take the opportunity, on behalf of the Committee, to thank Connor Clarke, who is leaving to take up his role as Chair of the Youth Council. The Chairperson wished to thank him for his invaluable contribution to the Scrutiny Committee and wished him the very best wishes for the future.

### 17 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mia Rees declared a personal interest in Item 3 as a family member is the manager and co-ordinator of MAPPA.

### 18 : YOUTH JUSTICE INSPECTION

*Councillor Mia Rees declared a personal interest in this item as a family member is the manager and co-ordinator of MAPPA.*

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to review and assess the Youth Justice Service's response to the HMIP Inspection Report, including the Development Plan and the "All Our Futures" Strategy.

The Chairperson welcomed Cllr Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children and Families; Claire Marchant, Director of Social Services; Deborah Driffield, Assistant Director of Children's Services; and Graham Robb, Independent Chair of the Youth Justice Board.

The Chairperson also welcomed Temporary Superintendent Tim Morgan, South Wales Police; Abigail Harris, Executive Director of Planning, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board; Jane Thomas, Assistant Director, Housing and Communities; and Mike Tate, Assistant Director of Education and Lifelong Learning.

The Chairperson invited Cllr Hinchey to make a statement in which he thanked the Chairperson and Members for arranging today's meeting and he welcomed the opportunity to speak.

He stated that the agenda item is the HMIP Youth Justice Inspection, which took place in January and more importantly, to discuss, review and assess progress on how the Council, along with its statutory partners, have responded positively to those 14 recommendations. The Cabinet Member reiterated that the Youth Justice Service is a multi-agency service; its Statutory Partners, the Council (Education & Children's Services), South Wales Police, Probation Service and Health are committed to the recovery plan and are in attendance to comment and answer any questions.

He noted that Members have in their pack, the Inspection Report (A), the Councils response and Action Plan (B), and a copy of the new, ambitious 2 year strategic plan "All Our Futures" Ein Dyfodol Ni I Gyd.

The Cabinet Member has been encouraged by the involvement of staff, partners and young people who have engaged in the various workshops that have been held.

Members will also have read Colin Allars letter (CEX of the Youth Justice Services England & Wales) who has already expressed confidence in the progress being made and the strength of partnership working. The Cabinet Member quoted: *"I thought it might be helpful to acknowledge the early progress and commitment that we have seen. YJB Cymru has been involved in all planning meetings, providing challenge and support where we can. You have redesigned your local Governance structure to develop a tight grip on practice improvement and strategic partners are contributing actively to address the gaps identified. We have been particularly pleased the partnership approach involving young people, staff and strategic leaders. Your approach aligns fully with our shared focus with the Welsh Government on Child First"*.

The Cabinet Member hoped this quote confirms for Members the significant progress made in recent months. Members will not yet have received the response from HMIP Inspector Mr Mike Lane which arrived a day or so ago. The letter "formally confirms HMIP are content that the planned actions are an appropriate response to the issues raised within the report." The Cabinet Member also advised that they will be returning for a follow up progress visit on Weds 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and he would like to feedback to Committee following that.

Overall the Cabinet Member wanted to reassure Members that everything that can be done, is being done at an accelerated pace and in a very short space of time. This has now been recognised by staff, the Governing body YJB England & Wales, and the Regulator, HMIP.

The Chairperson invited Graham Robb, Independent Chairperson of the YJS Board to make a statement in which he said that at the December count there were 170 young people being supported by the Youth Justice Service in Cardiff, and aspirations for these young people need to be as high as possible. He reiterated the external validation and that the action plan had been accepted; further scrutiny would take place and the Children's Commissioner for Wales wants to help develop the work on the Young People's voice and rights. Other external checks such as benchmarking to evidence and track progress would be undertaken.

Members were advised that the follow up visit in December would involve two colleagues visiting to check the action plan delivery with a formal letter sent afterwards. With regards to the project update, the development strategy had been launched, and he advised Members that he was really confident that the Governance structure was working well and tracking the improvement plan. There was lots of

work going on such as workshops where staff and partners are working on how to talk to and engage with young people in Cardiff.

Members were advised that by the time the follow up visit takes place, the following would have been completed on the action plan; 6 out of 6 Governance Actions; 3 out of 4 Management actions; 6 out of 7 workforce actions and 3 out of 4 service improvement actions. Some improvement data will take longer to show the benefits of the work undertaken.

Abigail Harris, Executive Director of Planning, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board addressed Committee stating that the Health Board are fully on board and committed to working with the strategy going forward. She noted that the inspection report picked up on a vacant therapy post and Members were advised that an appointment had now been made.

With regards to Health care pathways, they were working to ensure that these were appropriate and there are plans for improvement changes from August. There would be a Health needs assessment and Dr Fiona Kinghorn will commission this work aimed at timely access and targeted support.

Jane Thomas explained that officers were very committed to supporting the strategy; there were clear links with Housing and Communities such as Into Work mentors and also through housing for homelessness for individuals and families.

Tim Morgan wished to express South Wales Police's commitment to the action plan and strategy as well as his own personal commitment; stating that young people are our future. He added that there is involvement from the Police and Crime Commissioner downwards; there would be investment in Governance, Resources and Training. Challenges included public protection notices between services and policing and this would be a focus for improvement.

Mike Tate added that he sits as a member of the Board and there is cross directorate working in place. There is a robust database in place which has all details such as Education Provider, learning needs etc. and they will continue to support young people across all schools. If young people are excluded from education this would be done via the Fair Access panel who also share the database.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments;

Members noted that the inspection report highlights poor collaborative working with wider children's services and other partners, a heightened risk of child criminal exploitation and risks to safeguarding and public protection. Members asked what progress has been made to date in establishing an adolescent service within children's services and in ensuring much better joint working between key partners including health and education. Officers explained they had already created an OM post for Adolescent Services, and the decision has been taken to bring in an additional OM to look specifically at Youth Justice. This would build capacity, identify those at highest risk of offending, highest risk of exploitation and be the interface between Children's Services and Criminal Justice. Lots of work was already being done such as a duty system and daily phone calls to the YJS. With regards to managing risks, every Risk Assessment completed has managers' oversight and

those identified as high risk would go to the Care Planning Forum. Members noted that the inspection report referred to staff feeling marginalised and there being silo working, and asked if the approach was now a more fully integrated one. Officers explained there would still be an adolescent strategy, but with now 2 OM posts working closely together.

Members noted that there were at least five key times where issues had been identified and not acted upon and found this very concerning. Members asked what processes are now in place to ensure this doesn't happen again. Officers explained that there were now robust reporting and governance arrangements in place; if an issue is identified then it would be escalated quickly and remedial action taken. Graham Robb added that it was also the role of the Board Members to get better at detail of practice and working more closely with staff on this.

With reference to the Youth Justice Board, Members noted that the inspection report highlighted that the Board was too large. Members asked how the Board could be made smaller and more efficient and effective. Members also asked about the make-up of the Membership. Graham Robb offered to circulate the Board Membership to Members; numbers have been reduced, there is a focus on practice and having the right seniority level to make change happen. In a year's time, there will be a collective review of the Board and its' effectiveness followed by a review of membership.

Members were assured that there would be follow-up inspection and external review undertaken into this Service. Members noted that there is a 5 month timeframe before this happens and a lot of work to do before then. Members asked what will have been done by then and whether there would be independent external monitoring going forward. Graham Robb considered that HMIP will come back next year to seek assurances of progress. This was a 2 year development strategy, then it is important to plan now for a further 2 year review process. Serious progress should be made, but it will take longer than 2 years to get to outstanding. There would need to be an annual cycle of development planning, bi-annual review with internal and external overview and an eye on aspirations for young people via self-evaluation, Silver Bullet and Health Pathways.

Members discussed the possibility of a member of the Committee sitting on the Board as an observer. The Cabinet Member explained he had come off the operational board to allow members there to undertake the work. He noted that CYP has a role in review and regular updates could be provided as well as a key contact being established.

Members noted that Inspections prior to this one highlighted a number of issues around the Board itself, particularly in relation to a lack of operational expertise, a lack of understanding around its roles and responsibilities and a weak line of governance to ensure that anything drilled down from the Board was put into practice. Member asked what improvements and assurances can be given to ensure that this does not happen again. The Cabinet Member explained that there were a number of improvements and assurances such as: Signs of Safety had been adopted and works well with restorative and preventative work; the development of the ARC in Neville street; Western Bay Inspection which had informed the development of the All Our Futures document; however, Inspection Standards, scores and

methodologies are, he considered, demoralising for staff. There would also be self-evaluation tests and the annual Silver Bullet independent audit. Graham Robb added that there would be commitment to an annual training plan, practice input on specific issues, pairing up with staff members and that every Board member would be an advocate of YJS.

Members referred to the education and child protection status of caseload (p 23 in our packs), and were alarmed and disappointed by:

- 19% caseload with child in need plan
- 21.4% caseload aged 16 or under in a PRU or alternative education
- 17% aged 17+ NEET

Members stated that this, along with the 5.35% aged 16 & under not in PRU/alternative education paints an alarming picture of 'lost CYP' who are being failed by our education system. The safeguarding implications of this are grave as are their diminished life chances. It suggests our education system is not serving some of our most vulnerable learners. E.g. in only 6 out of 17 cases staff sufficiently identified risks to a child's safety & wellbeing.

Members therefore asked: Have we identified who these CYP are? Especially the 5.35% aged 16 or under who aren't receiving any kind of educational provision? What measures were put in place to support them and their families? Why did that support not work? Do we have examples across the city of where interventions have worked to share good practice?

Is the LA confident that our PRUs are fit for purpose? If not, what is being done to address the issues? Officers noted that knowledge of young people needed to be improved and considered it had been through links with the Fair Access Panel and Hard to Place Panel who can share information and escalation from the Fair Access Panel. Measures to support included links with partners such as Ed Psych and ALN to identify needs and support needed. The PRU has been through scrutiny and further scrutiny by Estyn, work continues with the PRU and is being strengthened; it links to schools and management Board and identification of pupils is key. The Cabinet Member added that he would like to bring Cardiff Family Advice and support back to scrutiny and talk about early intervention and advice services.

Members suggested an update to Committee after the follow-up inspection.

Members sought clarification on staffing and caseloads and asked if these were manageable. Officers noted that at the time of the inspection there had been concern over caseloads and posts that were not covered. Officers were confident now that through either agency or recruitment the staffing levels are appropriate. There are still some issues with long term sickness that have to be addressed. A restructure was needed at management level and extra resource had been brought in to deal with the pressures in the meantime.

Members asked what involvement the Board has with young people who are engaged with the service. Officers explained that they are surveying young people as part of the development strategy. Graham Robb added that this is a theme throughout the strategy and workshops were being run to improve the Board's thinking; Board members need to understand the lives of young people via. e.g. case studies; training sessions; briefing sessions on lived experiences. It was important to remember Child First Offender Second as the driving principle. The Cabinet Member referenced organisations such as NYAS and Action for Children but considered

engagement could be started in schools at the right age when intervention can really work.

Members considered they had to be critical as the inspection scored 0/36; it was noted that CYP had consistently asked for outcomes, the inspection report noted no strategic analysis of KPI's and it considered there to be an absolute failure at management level. Members considered, for this not to happen again, it was important to know why this was allowed to happen and who was supposed to be monitoring it. The Cabinet Member understood the points made but noted that there were some positives in the report too and the score methodology did not work in Cardiff's favour. In the past 6 months lots of work has been done, the Cabinet Member is the first senior politician on the Board and he stated he is fully engaged and there are now the right people to put things right and support them in doing so. He considered it important to praise the work that is going on and look to the future. Officers added that they have not taken the report lightly; over the past 2/3 years the OM's have monitored the service, which needs a lot of specialist knowledge. Going forward, they have been very clear in adverts and job specifications that senior management experience in the YJS, Inspection Regime and Improvement programmes was needed.

Members reiterated the seriousness of the report noting that every failed measure had the potential to cause harm to young people; there needed to be a focus on supporting young people and having their safety and wellbeing in the spotlight. Members considered that it should be a priority that Committee scrutinises that the strategy actually delivers and that SMT and the Cabinet Member should support a Task and Finish Group to ensure that every next step taken improves the service. The Cabinet Member acknowledged this and added that it will take a long time to fix. He wanted to recognise the work of officers in the last 6 months. He also made reference to the CIW inspector who had confirmed consistently that child protection procedures had been carried out correctly and children were not at risk. Claire Marchant added that the Inspection was a joint inspection between HMIP (as lead inspector), Estyn and CIW. A number of conversations had taken place to unpick what was meant in the report around safeguarding and there had been assurances that procedures had been followed and the safeguarding risks were around the significant improvement work needed between Children's Services and YJS and it was important to focus the practice improvement activity in the right direction.

Members discussed issues with young people in Riverside and the fact that there are many services such as needle exchange, wet houses, and emergency accommodation etc. all in one area and near to children's play areas and parks. Members wished to understand if impact assessments had been undertaken prior to these decisions being made and how this fitted with the Child Friendly City approach. The discussion focussed on risk mitigation and the reintroduction of youth services in the area. Officers confirmed that impact assessments had been undertaken and mitigations put in place as required. Officers confirmed the hotel being used to house homeless people during the pandemic would shortly cease to be used for this and that there were ongoing discussions with Health regarding potentially moving the needle exchange. Child Friendly City was also discussed around engaging young people via social media and restarting youth services and expanding this over the summer, including over the summer. Members noted this but considered it was more about the decision making around multi-agencies putting risky behaviours in front of

young people on a daily basis and them then potentially being drawn into these risky behaviours due to the concentration of services in one area.

Members referred to performance measures and reporting progress and noted that the action plan had no timescales regarding outcomes and was very process driven. Member asked how Committee could be confident that performance improvement is happening in reality, and which assurances would be brought to committee to report on a more regular basis. Officers stated the assurances in the presentation were a proposal and were happy that they would all exist. Outcomes for young people were not available as yet. They were hoping to develop the aspirations of young people but they are not yet at that point. Officers considered it would be useful if a small group of young people could attend a future committee to share experiences and aspirations and what could be done differently. Graham Robb added there was also good practice to draw upon. He also stated that some indicators were not helpful and Cardiff needed more intelligent data than those given nationally, making reference to the Education Indicator. Members agreed that a personal testimony would be valuable proof but alongside that they would want to see objectives and measures of performance too. Officers were confident that they will have detailed information going forward.

Members asked if the results of the Staff Board Partner Survey could be shared with Committee.

Members noted that staff need support and welcomed the full induction for new staff. Members asked if existing staff would have a catch up induction. Officers stated that they would but there would also be coaching and mentoring going forward adding it had been a difficult time for staff and it was important not to destabilise them.

Members asked what structures were in place to performance manage the senior leadership and what was the rationale behind bringing in an additional OM post. Officers explained that the additional OM would have specialist knowledge and would add capacity. OM's were performance managed by Deborah Driffield, who would look at milestones, conduct 1:1's, have daily meetings and would be monitored across all routes. The OM's would performance manage the frontline managers.

Member asked how quickly could the service area report to scrutiny on baseline for outcomes to enable them to gauge progress on the key action points. Officers said they were ready to report on KPI's, the health of the service and the interface between Children's Service and YJS at any time. Outcomes will take longer as it is qualitative and you need a method of capturing the differences that have been made, the distance travelled, but this should be ready by December at the latest. Graham Robb added that the board would be ready to feedback in October on where we are now and where progress can be made. Graham Robb offered to meet with the Chair to discuss further the idea of a committee member sitting as an observer on the Board.

Members asked about the locality focus of youth work noting that some areas of the City are not covered in a local way, and asked if there have been any thoughts on gaps in localities in terms of youth service provision. Officers explained that through the restart programme and services starting back up, they will have the opportunity to provide additional provision in areas that need it, they can respond to need by putting appropriate interventions in place, as has happened recently in Radyr. This will be

developed over the summer until there is comprehensive provision when it is safe to do provide it.

AGREED – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

## 19 : EDUCATION RESTART

The Chairperson advised that this item enabled Members to review and assess plans for the restart of Education from September 2020.

Joining Mike Tate, the Chairperson welcomed Cllr Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills and Neil Hardee, Head of Services to Schools, Education and Lifelong Learning.

Members were provided with a presentation after which the Chairperson invited questions and comments;

Members wanted to pay tribute to officers, head teachers and staff for all the work on reopening schools by 29 June.

Members asked if the education service anticipates any particular problems for any school in opening full time for all pupils by the 14<sup>th</sup> September at the latest and asked if there are any challenges what are these likely to be and what plans are in place to address these. Officers explained it will be a big change from 30% capacity social distancing to full capacity so mitigating factors were important such as the ways the schools are set out, using outside space, groupings of pupils etc. Schools will be supported by Council Officers and Health and Safety; Risk assessments will be signed off; PPE will be available and masks where appropriate such as special schools and where closer contact is needed; physical spacing of desks, open doors/windows etc. Also the need to know how to report and TTP.

Members asked if there are any schools/ the LA in Cardiff considering reduced school days, and the impact this may have, including issues such as school transport, students being disadvantaged etc. Officers explained that in some local authorities schools are finishing before lunch. Cardiff is suggesting staggered start and finish times, breaks and lunches with siblings being allowed to start and leave at the same times to help parents.

Members asked if any lessons had been learned from the 30% catch up check in sessions. Officers explained that confidence was key, schools needed to be confident and parents need to be confident. Schools will have a key contact in the council and individual health and safety officers.

Members referred to catch up funding and asked how and when the council will know what to use it for and whether it can be used to help and support teachers for distance learning. Officers explained that there is £28 million available spread across 2.5k schools. Discussion will be had with schools on how it is spent, the money will go directly to schools and they can choose how to spend on for example, wellbeing, catch up etc. Distance learning is now blended learning; tech has been provided where needed. There will be a need to have consistency with blended learning,

working with the challenge advisors and schools, looking at best practice. There will be a need to monitor KPI's and change the pedagogy in schools so that they do not slip.

Members asked if there was confidence that teachers are sufficiently trained in spotting symptoms of Covid. Officers explained there would be ongoing training for staff online; there would be isolation rooms and cleaning regimes. It was also added that parents/carers have a responsibility to not send any child with symptoms.

Members noted that wellbeing is a priority and part of that is keeping up with peers in the classroom. Members asked how we could ensure that those who have not engaged with the education service since March are supported in this. Officers explained that they will know who hasn't engaged and additional support will be provided to get them to the right place before they start learning again. There will also be online counselling training for teachers.

Members considered that funding needed to get into the schools as fast as possible and asked of school would be able to go over budget in the hope that the funding will come in. Officers explained that schools have had additional spending but also some savings such as support staff. The local authority would look at the school's position, work with finance officers, look at spending plans and commitments etc. and would be as flexible as possible within the constraints of the Council.

Members asked what assurances can be given on the identification of and support for CYP previously not on radar who have become vulnerable during the pandemic; How will we keep identifying them as more and more families' situations worsen - be that financial, emotional or health related. Officers explained that they have asked schools to identify vulnerable learners, a vulnerable learners panel will meet on a daily basis. Pupils who have disengaged are more difficult to identify, there was a need to look at non-attendance first in September, then make a connection through education welfare support and youth services. With regard to change in family circumstances, officers explained that over 1000 more free school meals have come into the system and it is anticipated this will grow when furlough ends, which adds vulnerability into the system as well.

Members asked if the LA would be discussing uniform with schools and the guidance on washing it after every day. Officers explained that there are uniform grants available to those that need it. With regards to having to wear full uniform, each school would look at this within the Welsh Government guidance.

Members asked how many pupils returned to school in June and for those who did not, what engagement has been made with them and how the LA engages with pupils with high risk people in the household. Officers explained that 69% of pupils who were able to return did; by 14<sup>th</sup> September full attendance is hoped for as shielding will have ended. There won't be fines, but this time will allow for identifying those who are disengaged and make plans to re-engage with families.

Members asked how confident the authority was that the appropriate consultations have taken place prior to school returning in September. Officers explained that they meet with trade unions, head teachers and governors regularly and are building on the guidance provided for the restart in June. It was important to note that the

guidance would not be a one size fits all and the authority would work with individual schools.

Members referred to blended learning and asked if schools have been audited on this and whether there are standards and benchmarking. Officers stated that it was important to reengage with challenge advisors on how they can look at the audit of provision. Staff now have the technology needed and further training could be provided via the consortium. There will be wider guidance at a National level provided too. There are also elements for parents and carers to have training in this area too.

Members referred to exam results and staff having to recommend grades. Members asked what measures were in place to deal with any challenges and also to help pupils move on to college/university etc. Officers clarified that the results cannot be challenged, only the information share and whether it was correct. With regards to higher education, it was important to ensure pupils are aware of all their options. Officers will be in schools to advise on results day.

Members referred to school transport and the use of PPE and asked if guidance will be provided to pupils through schools. Officers explained that it was very different guidance to public transport; PPE, masks and sanitisers will be provided, pupils will need to sit forward facing and guidance will be issues to pupils and parents. For ALN transport in taxi or minibus, there would be chaperones with PPE; this was an important mitigating factor across all settings.

Members asked about payments being made for pupils with free school meals and the risk that some pupils will come to school with no food. Officers agreed this was a challenge and there was no perfect answer. Most of the school catering service have been furloughed and no catering provision was available in catch up. It was difficult to know the physical restrictions in kitchens, H&S restrictions etc. Primary schools had an advantage in that they can dine in areas used for learning. There would be two weeks before the 14<sup>th</sup> September to work through issues and there was the potential to stagger hours. If a pupil turns up with no food, schools could have a supply of frozen meals to be able to react appropriately.

With regards to Summer Provision and the Welsh Government having cancelled SHEP; whilst the additional £1m for summer provision is welcomed, Members asked how what is being proposed compares to SHEP, and can this be delivered every summer. Officers explained that SHEP was really needed this year more than any, but decisions had been made early on to rescind funding. The local authority has had to react quickly across the directorate and this has been hampered by the fact that staff are exhausted as many have worked in hubs; however it had been surprising how many staff have come forward to help with the summer provision. It was noted that physical activity was also offered. Currently only 330 out of 1000 were attending, parents are still anxious. Officers considered it was not as good as SHEP but it is something and they hoped that attendance would rise.

**AGREED** – That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations discussed during the Way Forward.

20 : WAY FORWARD

Members discussed the information received and identified a number of issues which the Chairman agreed would be included in the letters that would be sent, on behalf of the Committee, to the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers.

21 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

22 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020, at 10.00am via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting terminated at 8.55 pm