

Date: 21 November 2023

My Ref: CYP/YS_Nov23



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Councillor Peter Bradbury
Cabinet Member for Tackling Poverty, Equality & Public Health (Tackling Poverty & Supporting Young People)
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Peter,

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 NOVEMBER 2023 - ACHIEVING A SUSTAINABLE YOUTH WORK OFFER FOR CARDIFF

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to provide us with the opportunity to consider the draft report on Achieving a Sustainable Youth Work Offer for Cardiff, prior to Cabinet on the 23 November 2023. Please also pass on our thanks to Melanie Godfrey; Suzanne Scarlett; and James Healan.

The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

The committee commends the report to Cabinet and supports the recommendations contained within it. Other comments and observations are as follows:

General comments

We welcomed the opportunity to consider the proposals outlined in the Cabinet report and would offer our support to you and the service going forward. We acknowledge that the report sets out the early stages of the proposal, but we strongly support the approach, and we look forward to being involved in further developments in the future.

As a committee, we have heard (via the scrutiny of other issues including pandemic recovery in schools, YJS etc) about the critical and key role Youth Services play – not only as a service in its own right, but also in supporting other services which deal with some of the most vulnerable and marginalised young people in Cardiff.

Whilst we acknowledge and accept the very tough financial decisions that have to be made in relation to Council budgets, we would **request** assurances across all Cabinet Members that the current budget for Youth Services is sustained, and for this service to be considered as an “invest to save” Service. We cannot fail our young people and Youth Services play a key role in ensuring this doesn’t happen.

Independent Review

Members welcomed the news that the Service was taking forward the recommendations of the review completed in 2022, and we asked whether you could provide us with a “You said, we did” document arising from the review. Therefore, we **request** that this information be provided.

Partnership Working

Members noted responses from you and officers on this issue. As already stated, we have noted that many services within the Council cannot do it on their own, and we wish to further support Youth Services in being a key partner both within and outside of the Council.

During questioning, we also asked whether a dedicated officer would be in place to continue to build networks and partnerships going forward. We welcome the news that James would be coordinating this, and Senior Youth Workers would also be developing this in the locality.

Workforce Development and Support

We support and approve the move towards accredited and professional development opportunities across the workforce and parity of these opportunities available through the Welsh medium.

We also note and welcome the proposal for the development of the Performance and Governance Team within Youth Services to 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, outcomes etc. We particularly welcome the inclusion of Youth Action Groups and young people themselves in developing this service.

Strategic Thinking

Members agreed with the proposals in relation to the short-, medium- and long-term planning for the Service. We also support the move towards better integration with other services.

During this part of the Q&A, Members raised the issue of young people who are not currently engaging with mainstream education and ensuring that these particularly vulnerable young people are identified and offered support earlier to stop them from falling through the net.

Linked with this, we also asked for details of partnership working for those young people who may be “harder to reach” and noted responses in relation to working with the Youth Justice Service, Children’s Services, Hubs and communities, and with other agencies.

Inclusivity

We asked a question on ensuring that those young people with ALN or with undiagnosed neuro divergent would be included in the work of the Service and appreciated the responses regarding numerous groups already in place. We welcome the news of support from the Western Learning Federation to further explore this issue and would welcome an update on this in due course.

We also asked questions relating to mental health and emotional wellbeing, particularly how you empower young people; and work done specifically with males; and primary aged children and accepted the responses on this issue.

Home Office Study

We noted that the Service is in the early stages of a piece of work with the Home Office. You assured us that the output from this study could be brought to a future scrutiny committee meeting, and we therefore **request** that you provide us with an anticipated timeframe this could be done, and we will add to our work programme as appropriate.

Evaluation, Governance, Monitoring and the future role of scrutiny

We welcomed the news of the role the Performance and Governance Team will have in making the service more accessible, open and transparent in the future. As a scrutiny committee, we are here to support the development of the Youth Service and welcome the news that you also see us a key platform for developing and implementing change. With this in mind, we would **request** details of any further key milestones that have been identified and agreed be provided to us, so that we can programme our work accordingly. I would also like to put on record that, as well as formal committee, we are also here to work with you on a more informal footing (task & finish type work, one-to-one meetings etc).

Site Visits

Members of the Committee agreed that they would wish to undertake a range of visits to youth centres and any other appropriate sites you feel would be suitable. I have asked Alison to link with James and Suzanne to arrange such a visit.

To **recap**, we are requesting:

1. Assurances across all Cabinet Members that the current budget for Youth Services is sustained, and for this service to be considered as an “invest to save” Service.
2. Provide us with a “You said, we did” document arising from the independent review.
3. You provide us with an anticipated timescale when we can receive the output from the Home Office study.
4. Details of any further key milestones that have been identified and agreed be provided to us, so that we can programme our work accordingly.
5. Agree to carrying out a number of site visits.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN

Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members
Melanie Godfrey - Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Suzanne Scarlett - Partnerships & Performance Manager, Education & Lifelong Learning
James Healan – Principal Youth Officer, Education & Lifelong Learning
Claire Deguara – Cabinet Support Office

Heather Warren – PA to the Cabinet Member
Helen Eager - PA to the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Tim Gordon and Jeremy Rhys – Media and Comms
Gavin McArthur – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee
Cllr John Lancaster – Group Leader
Cllr Rodney Berman – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader