

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8TH JULY 2014

1. **Present:** Councillors Worton (Chair), Rusby, G. Carr, Saunders and C. Wraith; co-opted member Ms K. Morrith.

2. **Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr W. A. Haigh and Mr J. Winter in accordance with Regulation 7 (6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

3. **Declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest.

4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 27th May 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th May 2014 were accepted as an accurate record.

5. **Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) reconfiguration – update report**

To consider an update report of the directorate of HR, Performance and communications in respect of the reconfiguration of the IYSS.

The Chair welcomed the following witnesses to the meeting:

Cllr Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Member, People (Achieving Potential)

Cllr Emma Dures, Cabinet Support Member, People (Achieving Potential)

Tom Smith, Head of Extended Services and Support, Children, Young People and Families Directorate.

Ben Finley, Youth Justice Service Manager, Children, Young People and Families Directorate.

Julie Hammerton, Open Access Service Manager, Children, Young People and Families Directorate.

Tom Smith gave an overview of the whole service transformation of the Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS). He outlined the rationale and principles behind the changes which included the need to make significant budget savings of more than 40% and to future proof the service, protecting statutory elements of the service. The transformation represented a move away from delivering services to enabling others to deliver services, aligned to area councils. The new service comprises three elements under the IYSS 'umbrella': Open Access Services, Targeted Youth Support and Youth Justice. It was pointed out that there has been an associated reduction in attendance due to the cuts but there are other areas which are working well. For example, performance on the proportion of year 11s and 12s receiving a suitable offer of training for 2013 was 99.1%, ranking Barnsley the third best Local Authority in England. Similarly the 16-18 NEET (not in employment, education or training) rate for Barnsley was reported at 4.7%, the lowest figure since Connexions

was established in 2001, compared with an average of 7% for comparable Local Authorities. Figures for first time entrants to the Youth Justice system were also reducing.

It was confirmed however that pressure on budgets will continue as part of the Future Council programme. There will be a focus on targeted support and meeting statutory responsibilities. The area councils and ward alliances have been working on identifying gaps, commissioning and tendering. A resource has been produced for the area councils to use as a 'toolkit' with providers in their area tendering for contracts.

Members proceeded to ask questions as follows:

(i) What is the purpose of the 'toolkit'?

It was explained that the toolkit is designed to outline the fundamentals of delivering services for children and young people in order to help providers from the voluntary and community sector when putting together funding bids. Up to £2000 is available to provide capacity building; to help services to provide services which are safe and to access external funding.

(ii) If there is an anti-social behaviour incident, at what point do the Police speak to the young people involved?

This depends entirely on the individual circumstances but referrals can be made to the Police at any time. The Police are valuable partners and do a lot of open access work on the estates. This partnership work has been recognised nationally as good practice. They also link into schools through the IKIC programme. Officers are always present at PACT meetings to prevent issues escalating.

(iii) Are wider partners involved in youth services, for example, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and schools?

A partnership approach is used, involving other agencies as necessary. This includes schools and academies, the YMCA and the Police. It was reported that the relationship with academies is no different to the relationship with schools. A member commented that the work of the junior councils and junior wardens in his area was excellent and should be replicated across the Borough but that this would not be possible because of the funding needed.

A member highlighted recent problems in a local ward involving youths setting fire to OAP wheelie bins. The Service Manager was aware of the situation and staff were being deployed on a temporary basis to deal with the situation. It was acknowledged that now the service is not building based the service will be more proactive and flexible whilst being mindful that this may mean diverting resources from elsewhere. It was explained that some of the problems were alcohol fuelled and involved adults (19+), thereby limiting what the youth service could do.

(iv) What street based activities are carried out in each locality?

There are a number of activities targeted at specific groups (13-19) in many areas and a number of examples of recent activities were given. It is hoped that meaningful activity will help to bring crime down and lead to young people taking pride in their area. It was explained that Area Councils and Ward Alliances can use

their discretionary budget to help to fund projects, using volunteers and the toolkit to get projects off the ground. The IYSS has some capacity to help other people to deliver services that are safe and can help with policies, police checks etc. It is essential that support to newly established groups continues, ensuring that best use is made of limited resources.

(v) Are there good links between the IYSS and the Youth Council?

It was reported that the IYSS and the Youth Council meet monthly and have a very good relationship. The Youth Council has recently been involved in discussions around the 'Mi-Card' scheme, and links in to the Youth Parliament. The Youth Council is supported through school drop-in sessions and training. There is a high voter turnout and youth councillors do a lot of work on behalf of the Council. There is a lot more which could be done however, including possible 'shadowing' of councillors by youth councillors as they carry out their ward work. This could ultimately translate to better democratic engagement into adulthood.

(vi) What work is done with young offenders?

This very much depends on the issue but includes work done on an individual basis with young people and their families, social services, CAMHS and drug services. The issues are usually family related – for example, levels of care provided, boundaries, substance misuse, mental health problems and exposure to violence and abuse, all of which can have a negative impact on behaviour. Often young people need to help their families to manage them. Parents are supported to reflect on their own childhood and to set goals and objectives for the young person.

(vii) What if parents don't engage?

There are powers available to ensure that families whose children are involved in criminal activity will work with the service. The first stage is a voluntary parenting order. If this doesn't work, parents are invited to a meeting before being given a final warning. If this still does not work there is the power of arrest. This has not yet been used in Barnsley.

A member felt that the problem lies in the lack of respect and discipline, which begins at home. It was highlighted that the vast majority of young people are not involved in criminal activity and that the service is striving to support young people to become productive adults in partnership with families and schools, thus ensuring a consistent message.

(viii) Will it be possible to continue to provide the service with limited resources and the possibility of future budget reductions?

It was acknowledged that this is a concern and staff cover can sometimes be a problem. The service is publicised through the press, social media (figures for Facebook 'likes' increase month by month), mailshots and existing communication networks such as the Area Councils but publicity needs to be more widespread so that the public know what is available within communities.

Witnesses were thanked for their attendance and contributions and for the work they do on behalf of the young people of Barnsley.

IT WAS AGREED that:

- 1) Information regarding activities in individual localities together with figures for anti-social behaviour and NEET data will be provided for all members.
- 2) There is a need for the service to carry out a mapping exercise to re-examine how teams are configured and deployed to be more responsive and flexible, using existing networks and local information available through Area Councils etc.,
- 3) Members will be signposted to information regarding the Youth Council which is available on the Youth Council website.
- 4) A letter will be sent by the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, to the Area Council Chairs to ascertain why they declined to attend the meeting.