

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL
WEDNESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2013**

Councillors: Brabazon, Bull, Engert and Newton (Chair)

Co-optees: Ms Y Denny (Church of England representative) and Mr E Reid (Parent Governor representative)

CYPS96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Christophides.

CYPS97. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

CYPS98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CYPS99. DEPUTATIONS/ PETITIONS/ PRESENTATIONS/ QUESTIONS

None.

CYPS100. YOUTH OFFER

Councillor Joe Goldberg, the Cabinet Member responsible for youth issues, reported on development plans for the youth offer. The Cabinet had agreed a clear vision of what the Council would like the offer to be but it was not expected that this would be achieved immediately. Both the National Youth Agency and "Hunch; A Vision for Youth in Post Austerity Britain" provided visions of the way forward for youth services. Nationally, services provided for young people were currently in a poor state and getting worse. Some local authorities were considering ceasing to provide any such services but he pledged that this would never happen in Haringey. However, the budget reductions had provided the opportunity to look at what the service did and to develop a holistic vision for the future.

Previously youth services had been run in a top down way. Youth centres aspired to provide a universal service although in reality this was not really the case. The borough's youth centres did not necessarily attract large numbers of young people. A decision had now been taken to move away from this type of provision and to move towards a more targeted approach. It was nevertheless necessary to have a range of activities available to attract the young people to the service. It was also necessary to have outreach staff to identify and engage with the young people that the service was targeting. The offer also aimed to ensure that young people were equipped properly for employment as well as working with young offenders to try and get them back on track. Keeping young people out of custody was particularly important as this could have a major adverse affect on their life chances.

Another important priority was giving young people a voice. It was important not to view this as merely another activity. The aim was instead to provide a voice for young people and for them to take a central role in determining

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suitable provision and activities for them. Young people were best placed to determine what they wanted. Youth democracy was also good for the long term health of democracy.

The Acting Director of Children's Services stated that she wished to shape and develop an offer that was meaningful to young people. It was important that activities were relevant to young people and adults were not the experts in determining this. Young people were therefore being empowered and involved in commissioning of services. These were aimed at providing a range of opportunities, including leisure, work and skills. There was still some way to go before the vision was fulfilled. However, there needed to be clarity regarding what was on offer.

Panel Members commented that young people also had many of the same concerns as other people such as community safety and clean streets and not all young people liked youth clubs.

In answer to a question, the Cabinet Member stated that he wished to enhance the status of the Youth Council but it was up to them to decide how they wished to develop their role. At the moment, there was not much of a relationship between school councils and the Youth Council although they had similar roles. He nevertheless wanted the young people to define their agenda and develop their own solutions.

Young people and staff present at the meeting raised the following issues:

- The Youth Parliament in Enfield was considered to be a model that Haringey should aspire toward. Elections were held each year and the Parliament really made a difference. Any young person was able to join in with the forums organised by the Parliament. Meetings were also flexible and could involve larger groups of young people from different areas. Youth leaders played a useful role in generating ideas but it was up to the young people whether they pursued them or not.
- The Youth Council ought not to be considered as merely another after school club. It should appeal to a wide range of young people. Enfield Youth Parliament had been instrumental in reducing the level of disruption at Edmonton Green at the end of the school day.
- Unity Radio was trying to involve young people from across the borough. It was a radio station and also provided opportunities for young people to DJ. There were lots of very talented people in the area. The radio station did not have very much money but tried to do the best that it could with what was available. They needed more help from the Council. Some of the young people that they had worked with had suffered bad experiences and they had helped them to move on. Bruce Grove Youth Centre was now a lovely place although it did not have much in the way of facilities. Working with the radio station helped to develop life skills and a love of music. External sources of funding were currently being sought.
- A young person who had been in care reported that Bruce Grove Youth Centre was a very positive and friendly place. Her social worker had

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referred her in the first instance. Attending the Youth Centre had helped her to develop her social skills.

- Wood Green Skills Hub was based in premises that had previously been a youth club. It provided a range of activities which were jointly provided by the Council, the London Boxing Academy and the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation. They currently had over 1,000 young people registered. The centre was very family orientated. There was concern regarding its future once the lease for the whole of the site was taken over by Fusion. The Centre was not just concerned with sport but with a range of activities.
- Effective careers advice was not taking place in many schools. The Skills Hub was now providing a targeted service for young people in order to provide appropriate guidance and support.
- A young person reported that she attended the Skills Hub three times per week. She attended even if she was not well enough to do sport and her brother attended as well. A parent reported that a youth worker had been very supportive of her daughter and her involvement had made a huge difference. The level of support went well beyond the call of duty and showed real dedication.
- The Edge of Care Team was multi-disciplinary and supported young people with complex needs and lives. A young person commented that the one-to-one work had been very helpful. Sometimes young people could lose trust in adults. It was very useful to have someone who they could talk to though.
- The manager of Youth Centres reported that Bruce Grove would be open for four nights per week from January. Six new members of staff had been taken on. The Centre was hoping to sustain the number of days in which it was open and to encourage more young people to attend. Some of the work that was undertaken was targeted whilst other work was more general in nature. It was intended to increase the amount of outreach work in the local community. The Muswell Hill Centre was currently running for one night per week but the intention was to increase this to three. Consideration was also being given to reorganising the Homework Club and developing one-to-one support for young people. However, it would not be possible to revert to offering activities on five days per week. The Youth Offer was not just focussed on providing activities but also had an important role in providing opportunities and skills development for young people.
- Members of Haringey Youth Council described the work that they undertook. This including running an anti-bullying event in Bruce Grove and holding a question time event with Councillors. Members had also visited Berlin as part of a link-up with the British Youth Council. They have been instrumental in obtaining the views of young people on a range of issues such as votes at 16, unemployment and the school curriculum.
- Mind in Haringey were working with young people to help them develop the necessary attributes to get them into work. In particular, this focussed on encouraging them to recognise and emphasise their qualities as well as

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developing skills. They were also working with people leaving care to help them build emotional resilience.

- Aspire was a group for young people in care that was also run by them. The purpose of the group was to make sure that those who made decisions affecting the lives of young people in care heard their views. They undertook a range of activities including working with local Councillors. They had also managed to secure free admission to local gym facilities.
- Members of the Panel suggested that the feasibility of offering free access to Council owned gyms for all young people within the borough of between the ages of 16 and 19 be investigated. Obesity cost the NHS substantial amounts of money so it would not be unreasonable to suggest that health commissioners subsidised the cost of free leisure passes.
- The need for high-quality and impartial careers advice was highlighted. This particularly impacted on young people in Year 12 and work was being undertaken with schools to address this issue. The Interim Director of C&YPS agreed to take up this issue further and work with Head Teachers and the Schools Forum to develop an action plan.
- Concern was also expressed at the quality of work experience that was available to young people in the borough. It was noted that very few young people followed up their work experience placement by choosing the area in which they had worked as a future career.
- The summer programme had been very successful, with over 1000 young people attending activities. There had been a reduction in youth crime of almost 10% during the summer.
- An engagement programme was being developed with the Roma gypsy and Traveller communities. These were particularly hard to reach and consideration was being given to effective ways in which they could be involved. The communities in question faced particular challenges including low educational achievement and life expectancy.
- Panel Members were of the view that full details of all the work that was being undertaken with young people should be included on the Youth Space website.

The Panel thanked the young people who attended the meeting for their contribution.

AGREED:

1. That the Panel recommend that the feasibility of providing free gym access to young people residing within the borough who are between the ages of 16 and 19 be investigated and that NHS commissioners be approached regarding the possibility of them contributing towards the cost of this in view of the potential health benefits; and

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2. That the Children and Young People's Service be recommended to develop, in consultation with Head Teachers and the Schools Forum, an action plan for improving the quality of careers guidance for young people and that this be referred to the Panel in due course.

CYPS101. MINUTES

AGREED:

That approval of the minutes of the meeting of 12 November be deferred until the next meeting.

**Clr Martin Newton
Chair**