

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 21 March 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor L Kelly
Councillor D Kershaw
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor A Lucas
Councillor P Male
Councillor K Maton
Councillor C Thomas

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and Mrs K Jones

Cabinet Members: Councillor K Maton, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Councillor P Seaman, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Employees (by Directorate):

People A Buckley, C Brettle, M McGinty, N Patterson
Place G Holmes, M Rose

Invited: R Bhayat Positive Youth Foundations
S Mason Creative Optimistic Vision

Apologies: Councillor B Kaur

Public Business

59. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

Councillor L Kelly advised the Board that she was the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police and Crime Commissioners Office had funded some of the youth projects discussed at the meeting.

60. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 14th and 28th February were approved subject to adding K Jones apologies to the meeting on 28th February, 2019.

Further to minute 46/18 'Early Help Hubs' the Board asked for the information on school readiness.

Further to Minute 54/18 'Supported Transfers and Permanent Exclusions' recommendation b) regarding examining the Children's Commissioner Paper "Keeping Kids Safe – Improving Safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation" the matter had been referred to the Coventry Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).

RESOLVED that the document be circulated that Cllr Kershaw brought to the attention of the Board regarding safeguarding young people and knife crime

61. **Coventry Youth Partnership - Update and Relationship with Council Provided Youth Support**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided an update on the development of a new Coventry Youth Partnership and information about how the Partnership was working with Council provided targeted youth support.

As part of the Connecting Communities (Phase 2) approach, the Council's Cabinet decided, on 7th March 2017, that the Council would cease its provision of Universal Youth Services, delivering £630,000 savings. Connecting Communities (Phase 2) focused on how services and support could be delivered differently in local communities with the greatest need. The guiding principle of this approach was to work with community groups and organisations to find community solutions. This innovative approach, although not without risks, ultimately focused on enabling the delivery of new activities that would have positive outcomes for young people in Coventry. The approach also focused on actively encouraging partners to work collaboratively to make the most of community assets and realise shared goals.

Engagement with partners provoked overwhelming interest from the voluntary youth sector in providing universal youth support with several groups expressing an interest in delivery of youth work to mitigate against service reductions or wishing to establish a youth infrastructure body. The purpose of the infrastructure body would be to co-ordinate future youth work activity, including training, quality, and the pattern of universal access provision, through creation and delivery of a Youth Strategy for the city, aligned to Coventry's Children and Young People Plan. Groups and Organisations who expressed an interest in establishing the infrastructure body and those interested in delivering youth activities had the opportunity to apply for transition funding. These applications were then subject to a robust selection process.

All business cases were considered by a newly established Youth Mitigation Panel, consisting of Councillors, officers, and young people. The panel then made recommendations to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services as Section 151 Officer who had delegated decision-making powers for Transition Fund awards in consultation with Cabinet Member for Children and Young people and Cabinet Member for Education.

In May 2017, the Positive Youth Foundation were awarded funding to the value of £80,000, in order for them to take on the role of the infrastructure body. Awards of transition funding for the projects delivering youth activities were then evaluated and considered using the same process, with a representative of the Infrastructure

body joining the Youth Mitigation panel to act as a special advisor. The panel approved transition funded awards to 6 projects for the set up and delivery of activities for young people. The organisations leading projects which secured funding were detailed in the briefing note.

On approval of Positive Youth Foundation's business case in April 2017, work began to create Coventry Youth Partnership and engage and bring together partners across the city to establish a partnership with a joint purpose. Many of these partners had not previously known of each other or been able to collaborate successfully. Equally there were significant challenges and complexities regarding bringing organisations together who had formerly competed for resources. This delicate work took time and energy; however, it had resulted in a highly effective partnership with a firmly established purpose and genuine outcomes of collaboration including resource sharing, referrals, co-delivery and support.

Coventry Youth Partnership now had 33 partner members ranging from small local agencies to large national organisations. Strategic relationships had also been developed with the West Midlands Police, City of Culture Trust and UK Youth.

The activities funded by the transition fund were never designed to replicate previous provision, as this was a new innovative and collaborative way of working and was being delivered on a vastly smaller budget – however, even at this early stage initial access figures were promising and showed clear positive outcomes for Coventry's youth and the establishment of Coventry Youth Partnership represented a brave approach to respond innovatively to service reduction.

There were currently 8 Family Hubs in Coventry located in areas of greatest need. Family Hubs provide a mixture of activities ranging from Health clinics to advice and information services for families. Each Family Hub had one full time equivalent professional youth worker. The role of these youth workers was to deliver targeted youth work programmes for young people and in some cases to deliver work to whole families. The Council's targeted youth offer was in the main delivered through one to one direct work programmes. Young people were assessed using the sign of safety approach as part of an early help assessment. Youth workers work collaboratively with the young person they are supporting to identify what was going well in the young person life but also areas for concern.

Each youth worker supported a caseload of young people and in many cases the youth workers also deliver group work interventions. One example of this was the youth club delivered at Mosaic Family hub in Tile Hill where a programme of weekly sessions was delivered to young people. Links had also begun to be established between the Council's targeted youth work and the universal community youth work. This had included targeted youth workers signposting individuals to activities taking place in their communities.

The Briefing note also detailed:

- Skills audit and training
- Activities and benefits to young people
- Access
- Good practice
- Future work including the youth strategy

- Funding generated (and the ability to generate funding not accessible to the Council)
- Communication

The Scrutiny Board welcomed Rashid Bhayat of the Positive Youth Foundation and Stacey Mason of Creative Optimistic Vision, a project awarded funding to deliver a new open access youth club. The Board considered a presentation which detailed:

- The history and purpose of the Positive Youth Foundation
- Listening to young people
- Activity mapping
- Safeguarding
- Training
- Funding
- Website
- Partners
- Supporting young people
- The youth survey and changes
- Opportunities
- The fundamental need to feel safe
- Supporting families as well as young people

The Scrutiny Board commended the work of the foundation and the positive partnership working as a response to the challenge of reduced resources.

The Board discussed the following with those present:

- Changes in numbers accessing services and savings
- Communication and opportunities for the future
- Partners including health, police, education, universities and businesses
- Corporate social responsibility
- Pressure to prioritise the model of a whole system approach
- Exploring extra funding
- Work load of youth workers
- Support for supporting young people
- Safeguarding
- Sustainability
- Media and youth violence
- Awards for funding
- Finances and the transition fund
- Mapping

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People commented that lobbying the government regarding funding was an option.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) **The Cabinet Member be requested to explore a way to encourage developers in the City to make a donation to the Coventry Youth Partnership**

- 2) **The Board promote a presentation by Coventry Youth Partnership to the Chamber of Commerce, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Coventry Business District (BID)**
- 3) **The Board lobby the Government to put Youth work as a priority to provide ring-fenced 'new' funding to Local Authorities to enable the work to go forward**

62. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues 2018/19**

The Board noted the work programme and the possibility of an informal briefing on the Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

63. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business

(Meeting closed at 4.00 pm)