

Ambitious Plymouth

Monday 1 July 2013

PRESENT:

Councillor Bowie, in the Chair.

Councillor Sam Leaves, Vice Chair.

Councillors Casey (substituting for Councillor Stevens), Sam Davey, Gordon, Jarvis, Jordan, Martin Leaves, Mrs Nicholson, Parker, Stark and Wright.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Stevens.

Also in attendance: John Miller – Head of Youth Services, Stuart Palmer – Assistant Director for Homes and Communities, Jayne Gorton – Scrutiny Lead Officer and Ross Johnston – Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 10am and finished at 11.30am.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

1. TO NOTE THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The panel noted the appointment of Councillor Bowie as Chair and Councillor Sam Leaves as Vice Chair for the municipal year 2013 – 2014.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the code of conduct, the following declaration of interest was made –

Name	Subject	Reason	Interest
Councillor Casey	6. Youth Services Restructure Review	Son is an apprentice through the Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service.	Personal

3. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES

The panel discussed the appointment of co-opted representatives onto the Ambitious Plymouth panel and those present commented as follows -

- (a) as well as working with the Plymouth Association of Governors the panel should work closer with schools to try and obtain increased levels of parent governor representation;
- (b) further work should be undertaken on sourcing faith representation onto

the panel, using organisations and bodies like SACRE to promote a more multi-cultured faith representation;

- (c) the appointed co-opted representatives of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel should be approached to become co-opted representatives on the Ambitious Plymouth panel;

Agreed to recommend to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board that –

- (1) the Democratic Support Officer contact the relevant organisations in an attempt to obtain nominations to fill the vacant statutory co-opted representative positions for faith representatives and parent governors to be co-opted onto the Ambitious Plymouth panel;
- (2) the Democratic Support Officer approach the Lead Officer of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) to ask for nominations from SACRE members to become co-opted representatives onto the Ambitious Plymouth panel;
- (3) Mrs Edith Bayley, Parent Governor co-opted representative on the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel, is approached to take up a position as a Parent Governor co-opted representative on the Ambitious Plymouth Panel for the next 12 months;
- (4) Alderman Pauline Purnell is approached to take up a position as a co-opted representative onto the Ambitious Plymouth Panel for the next 12 months;
- (5) the UK Youth Parliament are approached to take up two separate positions as co-opted representatives onto the Ambitious Plymouth panel for the next 12 months.

4. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

5. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The panel noted its terms of reference.

6. **YOUTH SERVICES RESTRUCTURE REVIEW**

John Miller, Head of Youth Services, and Stuart Palmer, Assistant Director for Homes and Communities, provided the panel with an update on the Youth Service Restructure. The panel were informed that –

- (a) the Youth Services restructure review had resulted in on-going activities in an effort to continue to improve the quantity and quality of opportunities for young people within the city. On-going activities included –
 - improving volunteer provision across the service,

- enabling a consistent key-worker system in all city schools,
 - establishing better links with family support services;
 - re-instating a missing persons' service within the department;
- (b) the culture of the Youth Service was changing with more of an emphasis placed on key working with young people as well as dealing with increased targeted referrals;
- (c) the number of referrals over the past 12 months had significantly increased, with increased referrals being received from schools, the Police and Children's Social Care;
- (d) increased referrals have been largely due to the increasing challenges and issues facing young people in today's society including unemployment and the impacts of welfare reforms on young people and their families;
- (e) schools identified in the review that the Youth Service needed to provide better support and information sharing to schools, which had been addressed by developing an improved and consistent key-worker system available to all schools. This would improve support and assist schools in dealing with the increased issues and the subsequent increase in referrals from schools, which equated to 44 per cent of all referrals to the Youth Service;
- (f) city-wide safeguarding issues including missing people and child sexual exploitation had resulted in the Youth Service establishing a Missing Persons' Team, this was identified as a priority following the review and the service had worked closely with Children's Social Care and the Police in establishing this new team;
- (g) the Youth Service was committed to continuing to maintain and improve the services offered, whilst also facing difficult financial challenges through a reduced budget; this would be achieved through improving community levels of support by recruiting and training committed volunteers and by continuing to review the service through providing a greater voice for young people to comment on the services provided;
- (h) first time entrants into the Youth Justice system had reduced by 20 per cent in the past year, which was very encouraging, although it was acknowledged that the service could still improve to ensure that vulnerable young people, such as young offenders, were provided with the opportunities to improve their life chances;
- (i) in general, and despite the increased challenges facing the service, the Youth Service was delivering an excellent service, had become an integrated service which provided further benefits for young people, particularly in the transfer of young people between services, and was far exceeding benchmarking targets and the required levels of youth participation.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- (j) the Youth Service was assessing its practice of dealing with missing young people when they were returned to their homes to ensure an improved service was delivered in the future;
- (k) there was a genuine interest from volunteers in working with Youth Service, which ensured the service was in an enviable position of not needing to undertake volunteer recruitment campaigns as volunteers approached the service. All volunteers undergo a six week training programme and were always supervised by qualified Youth Workers when volunteering;
- (l) the service was maintaining its targeted youth support grant to the voluntary and community sector, with 52 grants being provided to this sector over the past year;
- (m) a civil society policy was being explored which would provide an approach ensuring each community had the correct facilities in the most appropriate locations to enable increased participation and community involvement;
- (n) the service was committed to developing apprenticeships which had proved extremely successful and there was now plans to employ a further four apprentices;
- (o) the service would be seeking to make better use of social networking in developing its publicising of the services offered and would consider the use of a smartphone 'app'.

Agreed that –

- (1) a further review of the Youth Services is provided to the Ambitious Plymouth panel at a future meeting in early 2014;
- (2) John Miller is to provide a briefing paper to all members of the Ambitious Plymouth panel covering aspects including the types of services offered across the Youth Service, the service's staff structure, budget and budget pressures, the percentages of referrals and the numbers of volunteers active within the service;
- (3) John Miller is to provide an analysis and summary of the results of the Youth Service's youth survey to all members of the Ambitious Plymouth Panel when the survey has been completed;
- (4) the Youth Service arrange regularly meetings with ward councillors to ensure that councillors know their local lead Youth Service contact and are aware of what youth services are offered in their wards.

7. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel discussed the draft work programme 2013 – 2014 and agreed to recommend to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board the following items for inclusion:

- (1) a further Youth Services Review; to review the Youth Services in early 2014 following the implementation of services and new work initiatives after the completion of the Youth Service Restructure and results of the Youth Service's Review Survey;
- (2) skills and apprenticeships review, with a particular focus on children with special educational needs; this review could develop into a co-operative review;
- (3) library and museum provision; to review the provision of and use of the city's libraries and museums, particularly with a focus on future City of Culture bids;
- (4) Early Years Development review; to review the issues involved in nursery places and the allocation of school places;
- (5) Adult Education Service Review; to review the Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service (PACLS);
- (6) City of Culture bids; to review the reasons why Plymouth was not selected as one of the final four cities in the City of Culture bid and learn for future bid submissions;
- (7) a review of service provision and support for children and young people with dyslexia;
- (8) a review of school transport provision; to review the school transport offer provided by Plymouth City Council with a focus on ensuring that there is a promotion of safer journeys to school;
- (9) Children's Social Care review; to undertake a thorough review of the Children's Social Care Service to establish the adequacy of service arrangements;
- (10) Missing Person's Team; to receive a presentation from this new service to understand the remit and work of the team and to establish whether any further scrutiny work is required, with a particular focus on the partnership arrangements between the Youth Service, Police and Social Care Services.

The panel also discussed potential ideas for cooperative reviews; these would be included on the panel's work programme and submitted to the Cooperative Scrutiny Board for approval at the appropriate time.

The following suggestions were put forward as potential cooperative reviews –

- (11) a review of the Children and Young People's Plan, prior to the Plan being updated in 2014; this review would see an holistic approach taken to reviewing the plan but the panel's main focus would be on early intervention and prevention and adoption and fostering;
- (12) Narrowing the Gap in schools; this review would encompass issues such as free school meals, the effects of welfare reforms on school children, child poverty and the ever increasing financial burden placed on parents for school proms.

8. **FUTURE DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS**

The panel received a copy of the future dates and times for Ambitious Plymouth meetings in the municipal year 2013 – 2014. It was commented that the meeting on 23 September 2013 clashed with the annual Labour Party Conference.

The panel noted the dates of its future meetings as follows –

Monday 12 August 2013
Monday 11 November 2013
Monday 3 February 2014
Monday 3 March 2014

It was agreed that, if possible, an alternative date is arranged for the meeting on 23 September 2013.

9. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.