

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

5 April 2011

REPORT FOR THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR CHILDREN

POST 16 SERVICE

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the proposal contained within the attached report '**Designing the Future**' (Appendix 1) which relates to developing a universal Post 16 Service for all children and young people in need of support, living within Bridgend County Borough. The proposal is in its early stages of development following initial discussions with some of the proposed key partners.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 Looked After Children are a key responsibility for the Council as corporate parents and connect with the theme 'Children Today Adults Tomorrow.'

- 2.2 Corporate Parenting supports the following corporate priorities:

- Children today, adults tomorrow,
- Supporting our disadvantaged communities,
- Creating learning communities;

and is connected to the following community strategy themes:

- Young Voices,
- Healthy Living,
- New Opportunities.

3. Background

- 3.1 Within Bridgend County there is a clear and agreed view that all services which work with and for children and young people do so to ensure that they will:

- thrive and make the best of their talents;
- live healthy and safe lives;
- become confident and caring individuals throughout their lives;
- know and receive their rights

- 3.2 A written proposal outlining a new model for a universal multi-disciplinary service for young people aged 16-21 has been completed and is to be presented to Senior Management in Children's Services for their consideration. The proposal, aims to seek approval for the reconfiguration of existing services and for the development of a specialist team to target services for all young people aged 16 to 21.
- 3.3 Bridgend has some excellent service provision in both the statutory and voluntary sectors for adolescents and young adults, delivering a range of innovative, creative and challenging youth provision that enables and empowers this group to achieve their potential. The proposal aims to build upon and compliment such services - not to replicate, replace or undermine areas of existing good practice.
- 3.4 However, faced with the challenges of the current economic climate and the reality of shrinking budgets, coupled with the previous unprecedented tragic events of the cluster of suicides, it is imperative to ensure that services are fit for purpose in meeting the diverse needs of this age group and that they remain best placed to continue to deliver improved outcomes. There is, therefore, an emphasis on the need for improved collaborative working across the authority and a specific recommendation on the joint commissioning of services – particularly between children and young people's services, supporting people and housing.
- 3.5 Whilst the Children and Young People's Partnership Plan provides the framework for the delivery of services to children and young people in the Borough, there is no explicit over-arching structure across the Authority that aligns and integrates service provision to meet the multiple needs of vulnerable young people in Bridgend e.g. NEETS, LAC/Care Leavers and Homeless Young People. It is hoped 'Designing the Future' can help address this issue and that formulation of a specialist integrated team for young people aged 16 - 21, can more effectively and efficiently meet their needs at a single point of contact.
- 3.6 A clear message from developing policies of the Welsh Assembly Government is that the future of effective public services in Wales must be built around integrated services to children and families to provide holistic support at every level of need.
- 3.7 'Designing the Future' builds upon the momentum of changes that are developing within the Children's Services Directorate and the wider authority, and seeks to make links with other important corporate themes and initiatives focussing on improved integrated working between teams, departments and agencies.
- 3.8 It also aims to incorporate and take on board the messages and recommendations from the recently published report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales, '**From Vision to Action**' (Nov 2010), which makes specific references to children in

need, looked after children, care leavers, children and young people with learning and physical disabilities, and young people who experience mental health and substance misuse problems.

4. Current Situation

- 4.1 Preliminary discussions have taken place with colleagues in the Children and Young People's Partnership, the youth service, the 14-19 Network and the housing department during the drafting of 'Designing the Future'. The proposal seeks to develop closer collaborative working that will aid improved partnership working between these key departments and other agencies including health, with the aim of delivering better outcomes for young people.
- 4.2 There is strong anecdotal evidence that there is often a lack of co-ordination of front line services for this group of young people which can result in fragmented working. This means that young people are often asked for the same information by different agencies in different settings. This can lead to unnecessary duplication of work, or worse still, more significant issues not being picked up at all and the diverse support needs of some of our most vulnerable young people remaining unmet.
- 4.3 Services across agencies are being increasingly challenged by young people who present as 'high risk' with multiple complex needs. This group is likely to be affected by a number of the following problems:
- Substance and alcohol misuse and the impact on a young persons mental health
 - Physical and mental health problems
 - Homelessness or accommodation difficulties
 - Problems with debt, financial exclusion, poverty
 - Lack of basic skills, low educational attainment, unemployment
 - Relationship difficulties, life and social skills deficits
- 4.4 In order to more effectively meet the diverse and complex needs that young people often present with, the proposal recommends a joint commissioning approach towards both housing support services and young people's support services, and this paper therefore links closely with recommendations made in the paper submitted to Cabinet on February 8th providing an update on the Supporting People Operational Plan 2011-12.
- 4.5 The main aims of the proposed new service model would be:
- to provide a service that can respond promptly, flexibly and effectively to the needs of vulnerable young people;
 - to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory duties as corporate parent to young people leaving care, including accommodation, support, advice and befriending;

- to provide advice, practical assistance, information and personal support to young people in a range of areas, including education, employment, training, housing, welfare rights, health, leisure and personal development;
- to ensure the Service listens to young people, treats them with respect and involves them in decision making.

4.6 In order to further develop and progress this initiative it will be necessary to undertake further consultation work, design of the new service and development of a new structure. This work will need to be project managed and undertaken within realistic timeframes.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.

If the model of a new multi-disciplinary service for young people aged 16-21 is accepted there will be a need to review the impact upon the policy framework.

6. Equality Impact Assessment.

An Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken as this project is progressed and prior to the formal decision taking.

7. Financial Implications

The proposal is not seeking new funding to deliver the new service model, rather to explore how existing services can more effectively adopt a joined up approach to service delivery, whilst at the same time improving the quality of services on offer. There is scope within the proposed model for financial savings to be made, with the possibility to share accommodation, resources and time saved in unnecessary duplication of tasks and via realigning of existing budgets across teams and services. It will, however, be necessary to undertake further work to more clearly identify the anticipated demands on the service to ensure that appropriate staffing and resources are available to deliver the services highlighted within the proposal. This should be undertaken in conjunction between the Children's and Communities Directorate's and involve Health as a key partner agency.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers this report and notes the progress that has been made with regard to the initial development of a Post 16 Service.

8.2 The Committee approves the continued development of this project to include consultation taking into account the views across a range of potential partners and services.

8.3.1 The Committee agree that a further report be submitted in six months time providing an update on progress with this initiative.

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Background documents

Appendix 1 'Designing the Future' – Bridgend Young People's Support Service