

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

20 SEPTEMBER 2011

REPORT FOR THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR CHILDREN

POST 16 SERVICE

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee regarding progress on the '**Designing the Future**' project (Appendix 1) which relates to developing a universal integrated Post 16 Service for all children and young people in need of support, living within Bridgend County Borough.

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 following community strategy and corporate plan:

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

2.2 Development of an integrated service for young people aged 16-25 also links with the Authority's improvement objectives for 2011-13 which are:

- to build safe and inclusive communities supported by an effective physical infrastructure;
- to develop and support sustainable and affordable housing solutions for those who are homeless or in need;
- to implement better integrated health and social care services to support independence, choice, empowerment, dignity and respect;
- to work in collaboration with partners to combat poverty and provide children with the best start in life;
- to help all children and young people to achieve higher standards of attainment by accessing high-quality learning opportunities;
- to improve physical and emotional well-being by promoting active lifestyles, participation and learning;
- to support our disadvantaged communities by promoting economic growth, physical renewal and sustainability;
- to manage and promote the natural and historical environment;
- to improve the way we work to ensure effective and efficient use of our financial, technological, physical and human assets.

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 proposal, 'Designing the Future', outlining a new model for a universal multi-disciplinary service for young people aged 16-25 was presented to Cabinet on April 5th 2011. The proposal sought approval for the continued development of a new Post 16 Service which includes reconfiguration of existing services and the development of a specialist team to target services for all young people aged 16 to 25 living within Bridgend County Borough.
- 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 an increasingly complex environment for young people and the current economic climate with its reality of shrinking budgets, it is imperative to ensure that services are fit for purpose in meeting the diverse needs of this age group and that services 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 older young people in Bridgend e.g. NEETS, LAC/Care Leavers and Homeless Young People. It is hoped that 'Designing the Future' can help address this issue and that formulation of a specialist integrated team for young people aged 16 - 25 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 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 change that is happening within the Children's Services Directorate and the wider authority under the '**Transforming Bridgend**' agenda. It 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 A project group has now been convened comprising representatives from the Youth Service, Housing and Homelessness, Safeguarding and Family Support Services, Community Mental Health Team, BAVO, Health (Substance Misuse) Children and Young People's Partnership and the Youth Offending Service.
- 4.2 Terms of Reference for the Project Group have been established and a Project Initiation Document outlining the scope and intent of this initiative has been produced. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. It has been agreed that this Project will fall under the governance arrangements of the Supporting Vulnerable Children 2 Project Board and will submit update reports via this channel.
- 4.3 The Project Group is starting to compile relevant data, to assess the likely demand that will be placed upon the integrated service and to begin to identify the level of resourcing and staffing that will be required. Work has also commenced looking at the service structure and specification.
- 4.4 A young person's focus group is being established to ensure young people's views are being taken on board and listened to as this project develops. An initial consultation was undertaken with a small group of young people in December 2010 to ascertain their views as to the suggested integrated model which received positive feedback.
- 4.5 The main aims of the proposed new service model will 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.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

This report has no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment.

An Equality Impact Assessment has concluded that this proposal will not have an impact on how the Authority complies with its duties, with regard to people who are protected due to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual and sexual orientation. It is considered that this proposal will have a positive impact on the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, the advancement of equal opportunity, the fostering of good relations, the protection and promotion of human rights.

7. Financial Implications

The proposal is not seeking new funding to deliver the new service model, rather to explore how existing resources can be more effectively utilised through a joined up approach to service delivery, whilst at the same time improving the quality of services on offer. There may be scope within the proposed model for financial savings to be made, e.g. through the possibility of sharing 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 will require a cross-agency approach.

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 views across a range of potential partners and services.

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Background documents

None