

scrutiny

focus on performance

REPORT OF: The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

REPORT TO: Policy and Review Committee

ON: 28th April 2010

TITLE: Recommendations and Draft End of Year Report of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Purpose of the Report

This report presents to the Committee the work of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommendations on the topics in its work programme.

2. Introduction

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed its work programme at the first meeting of the year following the outlining of the key issues facing the portfolio it covers by the Executive Member and Officers. The Committees proposed work programme was submitted to the Policy and Review Committee who agreed to the topics and asked that they be scoped and focused. This was completed and submitted to the August meeting of that Committee. This report sets out how the Committee have achieved the scope and focus and the results of their scrutiny.

3. Integrated Youth Provision

At the first meeting of the Committee in the municipal year the Committee agreed its work programme for consideration and approval by the Policy and Review Committee. To draw up its work programme the Committee considered the key priorities of the Executive for the coming year and the work that would be ongoing in the portfolio area. Based on these key priorities the Committee drew up its work programme and the scope and focus of the reviews it wished to carry out.

In June of 2009 the Committee agreed its work programme and at this point young people from the BWD Youth Forum on the Committee requested that a review be undertaken of the services provided to meet young people's needs outside school and in youth clubs and the youth services in particular. The Committee agreed with this request and asked the young people to carry out the review and report back to the Committee at the end of the municipal year. This report sets out the findings together with recommendations for consideration by the Committee that will positively impact on the delivery of youth services in the borough if implemented.

Did we do what we said we would do?

The Committee agreed that the scope of the review would include:

- Looking at the current and proposed youth provision in the borough focusing particularly on the development of the Knott Street project and the proposals for Blackburn ✓
- The Young Peoples Forum will carry out research into the views of young people in the borough on provision. ✓
- Visits to a number of youth clubs at the invitation of the Youth Forum. ✓
- The Committee will look at provision in comparable boroughs ✓

The Committee have asked the Youth Forum to look at, and report back on the following areas:

- What does the youth service mean to you as a young person?
- What is your view of the youth centres provided in the borough?
- Do you think we provide the right type of services for young people outside school?
- What do you think we should provide and how?
- How should we reach hard to reach groups in the borough?
- What are the biggest barriers to you accessing youth services?
- What do you think of the proposals for youth centres in the borough?
- Have you been consulted?
- Do young people want to be engaged, entertained, educated, or just be safe to enable them to be?

Scope of the Review

The Committee agreed the scope for the review which was put to the Policy and Review Committee in September for consideration. The focus of the review was the current and proposed youth provision in the borough and comparisons with what young people in the borough actually wanted. The Youth Forum was to be commissioned to conduct research on young people's views providing the Committee with an understanding of the views of young

people in the borough. The Youth Forum would seek to use both quantitative data, through the use of questionnaires, and qualitative data via focus groups.

The Committee conducted various visits to IYSS/ youth sessions in the borough guided by young people and officers. In order to gain comparable data the Committee also visited other boroughs.

Overview of the service, provision in the Borough and issues for consideration

The Committee started their work with an overview of the services provided which make up the integrated youth services. The Committee was told that the vision for the integrated youth service was:

Engaging more young people in positive activities

Empowering young people to shape the services they receive

Increasing the number of young people on the path to success

Key elements of the service included:

- Information, Advice & Guidance
- Positive activities opportunities – universal access
- Targeted Youth Support – for most vulnerable

The Committee was informed that the Government expectation was that partners transform leisure-time opportunities and support services. This would improve life chances of all young people, emphasise a more preventative system, build resilience and enable intervention sooner when problems arise. The Integrated Youth Services link with directly with the Every Child Matters agenda. The key areas in the integrated youth service provision were Youth Inclusion Projects. These were for:

1. Prevention agenda - to steer away from crime those vulnerable and at risk young people known to YOT [or partner agencies]
2. Linked to targeted communities, currently 2 sites being re-organised – Mill Hill and Whitebirk/Shadsworth areas – linked to Boards and community centres
3. Programmes commissioned from and accountable to the Youth Justice Board
4. Senior: Targeting of 50 most at risk young people [plus family & peers once projects are clearly effective]: 20 younger people on Junior YIPs

The Committee were informed of the work on the Positive Activities for Young People programme. This placed an emphasis on targeted work with the most disadvantaged young people at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour, it had a borough wide remit and included a Holiday programme which was underway and a successful element. It also involved Voluntary sector projects, project managed by CXL, providing support for Brook/Nightsafe and other projects. A number of additional positive activities programmes, which include development of weekend activities; strong links to young person led

provision and links to YOF/YCF [and Youth Bank] programmes, were also undertaken.

The Committee were informed that there was a duty on local authorities to secure access to positive activities and ensure that there were sufficient educational leisure time activities which were for the improvement of young peoples' well-being; and that there were sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which were for the improvement of their well-being. These were referred to in the legislation as 'positive leisure-time activities'. A range of agencies and sectors provide these activities with the aim that Positive activities can build resilience and social and emotional skills. A national indicator to monitor increasing the proportion of young people participating in positive activities had been established.

The Committee were also informed of the areas covered by the service which dealt with Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance [IAG] these areas of service included -

- Core business provided here by CXL [previously Lancashire Connexions]
- Linked to our Children's Trust and 14-19 Partnership
- Continuing focus on progression
- Universal offer - via Personal Advisers [Pas] working in schools, community settings, projects, with partners
- Meets IAG quality standards
- Specific SLAs with our schools
- Ensure impartial IAG
- Careers Education an important and statutory element
- Other agencies may offer IAG e.g. Health, Housing, VCS

IAG service – CXL Ltd

- Commissioned provision of our statutory Connexions IAG services, with lead role on delivering our NEET target – an LAA target – wider partnership context
- National/statutory requirements re delivery of a careers service, plus guidance on NEET and follow up of young people post 16
- Strong MI/reporting around PSA 14 groups and targets
- Service has led on our TYS progress, effective multi-agency arrangements, impacted upon by increased need/TYS issues
- Budget pressures for 09-10 may impact on service

Youth work service:

- Aims to engage across cohort of young people with a focus on development/youth work with vulnerable groups
- Leading on youth offer, youth participation, part of making a positive contribution [including YOF/Youth Bank etc]
- Good relationship with voluntary sector partners – potential for development

- Neighbourhood service and team links well established
- Important role around agendas including sexual health
- Inspection challenges being dealt with through action plans & review of services – management, low levels of engagement, need to progress integrated work, consistent standards

The Committee was reminded of the reasons why we provided a youth service including:

- Youth Matters – Places to go, things to Do, People to talk to
- Aiming High – Empowerment, Access & Quality; Resilience and Cohesion
- PSA 14 – Young people on the Path to Success

There were a number of other policies that required the Council to provide a service and this impinged on many areas which the Council was judged. These included participation; engagement of those not in education, employment or training (NEET), engagement on sexual health issues and strategies, reducing substance misuse, and reducing youth offending levels and entrants to the youth justice system

The Committee were also informed that there were also key strategies for the Council regarding youth engagement. These included:

- NI 110 – Participation in positive activities and statutory duty
- Young people – Voice, changing interests
- Recognising good practice – building on effectiveness
- Value for money – and young people at the heart of CAA
- Borough ambitions and Children's Plan

The Committee looked at the current developments in the provision of an integrated youth service and how we were performing as a borough. The Committee considered the issues relating to level of need, IMD/Poverty, recession and employment and how there was a need for more effective targeted youth support and a need to embed CAF processes. The change to neighbourhood structures, area teams, and demand for local provision, expectations and community perspectives, universal offer were also addressed. The Council was also working to ensure that Agencies worked together flexibly and effectively and that we could show evidence of reach and impact with shared data. The Council would be judged through inspections, action plans and the views of young people monitored against performance. The Committee were aware of the funding pressures which required continued prioritisation.

There were also many opportunities for the provision of services and challenges for to be met. These included the diversity of the communities that young people in the borough came from and the diversity in these communities themselves. Members were also aware of the new approaches including use of the Youth Opportunities funding, YCF and the Youth Bank. The Committee also looked at the developments to enable young people to

be commissioners of services. There was also to be local flexibility and close working and scope to re-focus services to meet these needs. There were also a number of developments that were planned for the future - these included PAYP resources, YOF grant, Youthzone, and Darwen. There would also be a need to develop strong partnership roles in the future with input from partners such as VCF and CXL

The Committee looked at the development framework for the service which would include:

- Re-focused services - commissions and service level agreements
- Strengthened performance management and partnership accountability framework – including extension of arrangements with CXL
- More clearly supported management providing leadership to each element
- IYSS leadership reviewed as part of reporting to Children's Trust through partnership structure
- CL&S taking lead in ensuring service delivery for YIPs, PAYP and Youth work and in reporting to Children's Trust

The Committee were made aware that a number of key developments were already in place at July '09. These included:

- Services staffed and functioning by June '09
- Clear service linkages – referral systems and access to wider programmes particularly for our most challenging young people
- TYS/CAF development at centre of all service
- Performance management support arrangements in place
- Joint management groups established
- Monitoring inspection action plan implementation
- Neighbourhoods agenda: co-location and shared teams, dedicated staff, area programmes presented to all Neighbourhood Boards

The Committee were updated on the development of the neighbourhood approach for the provision of youth services and how this would enhance service delivery and effectiveness.

Updates to the Committee and visits

The Committee were updated at each meeting on how progress of the review was progressing and proposals for the next steps in their review. Members also received updates on the visits attended and the findings that had been made. The Committee also undertook a number of visits that enabled Members to look at facilities, talk with youth club staff and talk with young people using the centers. The Committee visited the following youth clubs:

- Audley
- Darwen Vale
- Accrington Road
- Bangor Street

Following the first two visits, an article appeared in The Shuttle explaining the work of the Committee and seeking the comments of anyone who wished to contribute to the Committees work.

January 2010

The representatives of the Youth Forum attended the Committee meeting and gave a short presentation on their work so far and how they were to progress. The Committee was informed that a visit to Bolton Lads and Girls Club was in the process of being organized and that Members would be visiting the Knott Street youth facility and examine the way that young people had been consulted on the proposed Youth Zone to be sited in Blackburn.

March 2010

The Youth Forum delivered their report to the Committee at its meeting in March 2010. The full report of the forum is attached as an appendix to this report for consideration by the Policy and Review Committee. Set out below is the outline of the presentation made to the Committee at that meeting (in their words).

Presentation by Blackburn with Darwen Youth Forum

The Forum undertook visits to two youth groups from each neighbourhood to consult young people so that they could get a better understanding of what each area needed as well as get more feedback. They handed out questionnaires to young people from all over Blackburn with Darwen to find out why young people didn't go to youth clubs as well as feedback from different young people from different backgrounds, genders and abilities. They had wanted to hold an event so that they could get feedback from a large number of young people who didn't go to youth clubs so that they could find out why they don't go to youth clubs. They also visited looked after children so that they could get feedback as they felt that they were not consulted enough. They also thought that they were not involved due to their circumstances. Members of the Forum also visited young people with disabilities so that we could understand their point of view and make the youth provision more accessible to them. The group had wished to lead a visit to Bolton Lads and Girls Club so that they could see successful youth provision and seek to mirror this at the boroughs clubs and the Youth Zone. They were unable to do this as again, there was not enough time and they could not arrange a time when they were all available. However they do plan to make this a priority and visit the centre in the near future.

The Youth Forum had wanted to do an event in the town centre to try and get the views of young people who wouldn't usually get asked what they thought or who do not attend a youth club. This had not been possible for a number of reasons including: funding, weather and timing. The group weren't able to go to the young carers because they had so many visits planned in a very short time and unfortunately things clashed.

The Youth Forum visited two youth clubs in each of the five areas in Blackburn with Darwen and observed and talked to the young people about how they felt their youth club was and how it could improve. In all, they had a lot of feedback from the young people. The Forum also sent out questionnaires to young people in youth clubs, schools and the voluntary sector. They had a good response and took a lot of negative and positive feedback. The key findings were outlined to the Committee as follows:

- Young people who live in diverse circumstances such as children in care didn't feel comfortable in a youth club because they thought they were boring.
- We also found that they didn't know about youth clubs or even where they were or what they are. Therefore there should be more promotions being done on where youth club, neighbourhood forums and the youth zone are to give young people the opportunity to join.
- Most community centres have facilities however these are not available to the young people who go to these youth groups.
- Some facilities have been removed or broken and not replaced.
- More promotion of youth clubs – found that many young people didn't actually know about youth clubs in their areas.
- More variety of activities, residentials and things to do in youth clubs.
- More accredited projects – projects that young people can do and work on that's fun and also has something at the end to pay off. i.e. certificates or qualifications. First Aid, Food, canoeing, kayaking, dance etc.
- Better facilities that are young people friendly and that young people can use. i.e. kitchen and sport equipment.
- They thought that there are issues and barriers for young people in care and young people with disabilities, but don't know what the solutions to make services more accessible for them are. They think that this needs to be looked at in more detail
- Costs of printing were an issue.
- Feedback from schools suggested not many knew about youth clubs.
- However young people from other organisations do seem to know a lot about their local youth club.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the Youth Forum made to the Committee are set out in their report (Appendix 2) and will be presented to the Annual Review of Scrutiny in May.

4. Attainment and Achievement

The Committee had agreed to look at the attainment of children in the borough as a topic for the year and in particular the programmes that were in place to deliver improvements in key areas of underperformance in certain groups. They started by receiving a presentation on pupil performance in 2008/2009 covering the following stages:

- Foundation Stage – the percentage of children achieving a good level at the end of Reception year had increased to 55 and was higher than the national and statistical neighbour's average. The gap between the local average and the bottom 20% had also reduced to below the national and statistical neighbour's average (33%). Members were advised there were now better opportunities in which children could learn and that the Authority was also better at managing transition into reception classes and school.
- KS1 – performance of 7 year olds on 'new statistical neighbours KS1 Reading L2+ progress since 2001' had improved from last year, with a sharp increase in the Writing L2 progress and a decrease in Maths L2 progress. The link between deprivation and attainment was recognised however it was added that this should not limit aspirations.
- KS2 – Performance of 11 year olds in English and Maths level 4+ had decreased from just under 75% last year to 70% this year and performance on 'English L5+ - BwD vs. National and SN averages since 2001' had decreased from 25% to 22% this year. Inconsistencies in marking English work were referred to – something which was consistent nationally.
- GCSE – Performance on '5 or more GCSE grades A*-C progress since 2001' continued to increase to 75% this year and remained higher than the national and statistical neighbours average. Where performance was measured on '5 or more GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths progress since 2001' performance decreased from last year and was now on a par with statistical neighbours (44%).
- Value Added and Contextual Value Added - measuring the degree of progress made.
- Vulnerable Groups – Vulnerable groups consisted of children in our care, Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Free School Meals (FSM) and additional local groups were Pakistani heritage boys and white/UK boys eligible for free school meals. Members were advised that it would be a major issue if the pattern of Pakistani boys' attainment persisted over time. The Committee looked at the indicators that measured the gap between these groups and their peers.

Members were advised that attainment at the highest levels of KS2, particularly English was a principal area for development. On the cause for low attainment in Pakistani heritage boys it was stated that the community tended to live in disadvantaged areas in the borough, more so than nationally. Members discussed various possible causes for the low attainment of this group. On whether the gap between Pakistani heritage boys and the remainder of children was closing Members were advised that it wasn't reducing at GCSE level where the rate of improvement was slower than average, but white working class attainment was showing improvement.

The fragility in performance of the 5A*-C inc. English and Maths measure was highlighted and Members were advised that the challenge for secondary schools was to get alignment right.

Did we do what we said we would do?

- Gather other “family size” authority statistics and attainment figures benchmarked against other groups ✓
- specifically the 5 nearest neighbour comparitors to benchmark against. This would include Rochdale if they were not in the 5. ✓

Recommendations

1. That a strategy to improve the levels of attainment at the higher levels of key stage 2, particularly in English be reported to the Committee for consideration.
2. That the Executive Member be requested to report to this Committee on the specific strategies to raise the performance in Pakistani Heritage Boys at GCSE levels where improvement rates were slower than average.
3. That the Executive Member be requested to carry out a comparative study on the methods being adopted to raise attainment in white working class boys and Pakistani heritage boys to assess how they are making a difference and to look at common themes in the levels of performance.
4. That the Executive Member be requested to report to the Committee on the strategies used to raise performance in girls and how any of the elements of these strategies can be adopted to make a difference in improving attainment of other underperforming groups.

5. Poverty

The Committee identified poverty as a key issue for the Children's Services portfolio at the first meeting of the year. The Committee were informed that the government had placed a number of requirements on Councils to ensure that they were taking steps to tackle Child Poverty, and strategies had to be submitted to the government to enable progress to be monitored.

The Committee were made aware of the government's requirements for information and Members considered the research that had been used to establish the government's position. Members considered the way the Council

addressed the key strategies that affected the issue of children's poverty and looked at how the matrix had been drawn up to ensure that poverty was a key consideration when addressing policy change or realignment of services to meet need. The Committee also looked at the levels of deprivation in the borough and comparisons with other boroughs in the audit commission's family groupings.

The Committee understood that the issues facing children and young people could not be separated from the issues facing society in general and that strategies to deal with poverty had an effect on poverty in children. Members were made aware of the employment strategy agreed by the Council and its partners and how this was aiming to assist with all issues relating to the causes of poverty facing people. The Committee were also made aware of the way in which Children's services contributed to this strategy and how the services provided by the department were a key contributor to the delivery of an effective strategy.

Members also drew on the experience they had from the previous year in visiting schools and in particular those from the more deprived/less prosperous areas of the borough. Part of the information that Members had found was that poverty affected pupils in many ways including attainment, attendance, and aspirations. The Committee discussed the cycle of poverty and the ways in which this could be broken with the careful interventions and targeted support such as through Children's Centres and the Sure Start programme. Members were aware that there was no quick fix to the problems and the government's targets were for the elimination of poverty by 2020. This had been a target set in 2000 and we were now half way to this date. Members also examined the work of the Child Poverty Action Group and Save the Children who had put together specific aids for viewing where we were up to in tackling the issue.

What have we done?

- We have seen how the Council and Children's Services views poverty at the moment.
- We have looked at the means it has put in place to ensure that it is highlighted as an issue which needs addressing.
- We have seen how this is being addressed as a regional issue and discussed with Government Office North West (GONW).
- We have seen the government's targets and the responsibilities that they have placed on Local Authorities.
- We have looked at how these were drawn up
- We have seen the long term aims for eliminating poverty by 2020 and measured how we are progressing along this road.
- We have seen the extent of the issue in the borough.
- We have looked at the work of the Child Poverty Action Group and their campaigns
- We understand that child poverty is not an issue that can be dealt with by dealing with children's issues on their own.

- The issues that affect child poverty are a corporate issue and as such should be dealt with corporately, building on the foundations and work done in Children's Services.
- We have looked at the work of Save the Children and the way they want the government to address the issue.
- We want to compare what we are doing with other authorities who are showing good practice.
- We welcome the school uniforms initiative.

Recommendations

1. That the work of the department and Partners in laying the foundation that can now be built upon be noted.
2. That the issue of tackling child poverty be recognised as a corporate issue and not one that can be dealt with in isolation. This Committee therefore requests that the Policy and Review Committee recommend to the Executive Board that the corporate issues of tackling poverty and poverty implications be addressed in every report that is submitted to Members for consideration.
3. That a sub group be set up to monitor this and ensure that this requirement is being met.
4. That a time line be drawn up to show how this authority will progress towards the target of eliminating child poverty by 2020 and the action plan to develop an underpinning action plan with clear key deliverables and clear partnership leads be submitted to this Committee for consideration.
5. That an all Members briefing session be held to outline the work done already and the road to 2020.
6. That the work carried out so far on child poverty be benchmarked with recognised good practice to ensure that we are making good progress.
7. That the work of the Children's Trust on the issue of poverty be reported to this Committee at regular intervals.
8. That the Committee would support any moves that would reduce the cost of school uniforms to families.

6. Visits by the Committee

During the year the Committee has undertaken a number of visits to help them in their understanding of the issues that the authority faces in its delivery of services. These visits have included:

- The Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

- Darwen Vale Youth Club
- Audley Youth Club
- Bangor Street Youth Club
- Accrington Road Youth Club
- Knott Street Youth Centre

The Committee have also had two articles published in The Shuttle and sought the public's views on the Youth Services.

The Committee have also had a number of meetings outside the formal Committee setting to discuss issues of concern. These meetings have included issues relating to the future of the Youth Forum, poverty issues and agenda setting briefings.

7. Severe Adverse weather

The Committee received a detailed report on the way the portfolio had coped with the recent severe adverse weather. The Committee looked in detail at the level of school closures that had taken place and the implications that schools had to take into consideration prior to closing. The Committee were made aware of government guidance on the issue and the overriding understanding that schools should do everything in their powers to remain open. Members were aware of the way schools had to make decisions based on local conditions and issues of location etc and there were further issues to consider than the conditions when the school opened in the morning, a school was also required to ensure that conditions would be safe to get home.

Recommendations

The Committee recommended the following to the Policy and Review Committee:

1. That the outcome of the review of how schools dealt with the adverse weather be submitted to this Committee for consideration and review.
2. That the feedback from Head teachers be outlined for this Committee in order that they can gauge opinion from those who make the decisions on school closures and that any issues raised can be progressed and reviewed through the Scrutiny function.
3. That the way schools are considered within the boroughs emergency planning function for severe weather be reviewed and reported to this Committee to enable a clear picture to be gained as to responsibilities and duties of the schools/the Council given the high impact a school closure can have on a community.

Councillor Ron O'Keeffe
Chair, Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Background Documents: Agenda for Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings 2009/10, Minutes of meeting 2009/10, Reports to Policy and Review Committee 2009/10

Recommendations

Attainment

1. That a strategy to improve the levels of attainment at the higher levels of key stage 2, particularly in English be reported to the Committee for consideration.
2. That the Executive Member be requested to report to this Committee on the specific strategies to raise the performance in Pakistani Heritage Boys at GCSE levels where improvement rates were slower than average.
3. That the Executive Member be requested to carry out a comparative study on the methods being adopted to raise attainment in white working class boys and Pakistani heritage boys to assess how they are making a difference and to look at common themes in the levels of performance.
4. That the Executive Member be requested to report to the Committee on the strategies used to raise performance in girls and how any of the elements of these strategies can be adopted to make a difference in improving attainment of other underperforming groups.

Youth Service

5. The recommendations of Youth Forum made to the Committee are set out in their report and will be presented to the Annual Review of Scrutiny in May.

Poverty

6. That the work of the department and Partners in laying the foundation that can now be build upon be noted.
7. That the issue of tackling child poverty be recognised as a corporate issue and not one that can be dealt with in isolation. This Committee therefore requests that the Policy and Review Committee recommend to the Executive Board that the corporate issues of talking poverty and poverty implications be addressed in every report that is submitted to Members for consideration.
8. That a sub group be set up to monitor this and ensure that this requirement is being met.
9. That a time line be drawn up to show how this authority will progress towards the target of eliminating child poverty by 2020

and the action plan to develop an underpinning action plan with clear key deliverables and clear partnership leads be submitted to this Committee for consideration.

10. That an all Members briefing session be held to outline the work done already and the road to 2020.
11. That the work carried out so far on child poverty be benchmarked with recognised good practice to ensure that we are making good progress.
12. That the work of the Children's Trust on the issue of poverty be reported to this Committee at regular intervals.
13. That the Committee would support any moves that would reduce the cost of school uniforms to families.

Severe weather

The Committee recommended the following to the Policy and Review Committee.

14. That the outcome of the review of how schools dealt with the adverse weather be submitted to this Committee for consideration and review.
15. That the feedback from Head teachers be outlined for this Committee in order that they can gauge opinion from those who make the decisions on school closures and that any issues raised can be progressed and reviewed through the scrutiny function.
16. That the way schools are considered within the boroughs emergency planning function for severe weather be reviewed and reported to this Committee to enable a clear picture to be gained as to responsibilities and duties of the schools/the Council given the high impact a schools closure can have on a community.



Youth Service Provision in Blackburn with Darwen

BwD Youth Forum Scrutiny Project Report

April 2010

We are the BwD Youth Forum, who meet regularly once a week on a Monday. Our main aim is to give young people around Blackburn with Darwen a voice on issues that affect them. We felt the provision for young people in youth clubs could be improved. Consequently, we agreed with the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee that we would carry out a number of tasks to enable us to get a more researched view on the youth provision available in Blackburn with Darwen.

We originally planned to do this by:

- Visiting two youth groups from each neighbourhood to consult young people so that we could get a better understanding of what each area needs as well as get more feedback.
- Handing out questionnaires to young people from all over Blackburn with Darwen to find out why young people don't go to youth clubs as well as getting feedback from different young people from different backgrounds, genders and abilities
- We wanted to do an event so that we can get feedback from a large amount of young people who don't go to youth clubs so that we can find out why they don't go to youth clubs
- Visiting looked after children so that we can get feedback because we felt that they are not consulted enough.
- Visiting young people with disabilities so that we can understand their point of view and make the youth provision more accessible to them.
- Visit Bolton Lads and Girls club so that we could see a successful youth provision and mirror this at our own clubs and the youth zone.

When we originally planned to go to Bolton Lads and Girls group it was around the time when the weather was really snowy and icy. This meant that not only did we have to cancel the visit to Bolton Lads and Girls club but that other things we had arranged to do had to be cancelled and arranged for another time also. This impacted the amount of time we had left to carry out our project and we felt it was more important to visit local youth clubs and focused our time on them instead of Bolton Lads and Girls club.

We really wanted to do a big event in the town centre to try to attract as many young people as possible and get their views and also to showcase some of the positive work that young people have done in Blackburn with Darwen however our main obstacle was funding. Although we originally felt we could have done it cheaply when we started to plan it we realised that it would be too expensive. In addition to this, the weather was not improving and we decided that not many people would attend an outdoor event in freezing cold weather anyway so maybe it was an unrealistic aim.

The questionnaire that we put together was sent out to all the extended schools coordinators that work in High schools, but the response we got from schools was very limited. We thought the questionnaire would be a positive part of the project but on reflection it needs a lot of planning and a lot of time to organise. Much of the feedback from the questionnaires we got back from schools seemed to indicate that many young people do not really know about

youth clubs. In contrast to this however questionnaires we got back from other organisations do seem to know about youth clubs.

Results from questionnaires

22 British Asian males answered the questionnaire

42 British White Males answered the questionnaire

7 British Asian Females answered the questionnaire

40 British White Females answered the questionnaire

15 Other/Unknown answered the questionnaire

Are you aware of your local youth club?

	Yes	No
British Asian Males	19/22	3/22
British White Males	39/42	3/42
British Asian Females	5/7	2/7
British White Females	34/40	6/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	4/19

Have you used your local youth club?

	Yes	No
British Asian Males	18/22	4/22
British White Males	36/42	6/42
British Asian Females	4/7	3/7
British White Females	30/40	10/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	4/19

Do you feel youth clubs provide the right kind of activities, facilities and support for young people?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	14/22	3/22	5/22
British White Males	32/42	5/42	5/42
British Asian Females	3/7	2/7	2/7
British White Females	23/40	5/40	12/40
Other / Unknown	15/19	2/19	2/19

Do you think your youth workers ask you about what should be done?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	13/22	4/22	5/22
British White Males	35/42	3/42	4/42
British Asian Females	4/7	0/7	3/7
British White Females	25/40	1/40	8/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	0/19	4/19

Do you enjoy visiting your youth club?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	18/22	2/22	2/22
British White Males	35/42	1/42	5/42
British Asian Females	3/7	1/7	3/7
British White Females	27/40	4/40	9/40
Other/Unknown	15/19	0/19	4/19

Are you aware of the plans for the new youth zone?

	Yes	No
British Asian Males	7/22	15/22
British White Males	16/42	26/42
British Asian Females	1/7	6/7
British White Females	13/40	27/40
Other/Unknown	9/19	10/19

Do you feel this would benefit young people from Blackburn with Darwen?

	Yes	No	Don't Know
British Asian Males	11/22	3/22	8/22
British White Males	16/42	2/42	24/22
British Asian Females	1/7	0/7	6/7
British White Females	13/40	3/40	24/40
Other/Unknown	9/19	0/19	10/19

How can we make youth clubs better?

British Asian Males said;

- Pool tables
- Better and bigger facilities
- Mixed communities
- Youth Groups open longer and more often
- Disco's on a Friday night
- A variety of activities
- Different opening times for different age groups for example under 16's over 16's.

British White Males said;

- Anger sports (i.e. boxing)
- Computers
- Working equipment
- T.V
- Snooker Tables
- Different opening times for different age groups for example under 16's over 16's

British Asian Females said;

- Better facilities
- Play board games
- Sports
- Educational activities

British White Females said;

- Trips and Residentials
- No boys
- Advice
- Music
- Better facilities

Other/Unknown said;

- More/better/working equipment
- Sports
- Music

As a young person what do you want from a youth club?

British Asian Males said;

- To chill
- More sex info
- Music
- Fun
- Residentials
- Trips
- Outdoor activities
- Talent competitions
- To Socialise

British White Males said;

- Community Cohesion
- Open more
- Trips and residentials
- Tournaments

British Asian Females said;

- Better activities
- Playing board games

British White Females said;

- To socialise
- More stuff
- Sweets

Other/Unknown said;

- Sports
- Games

- Trips and Residentials
- A place to chill
- Activities

What do you think stops young people visiting youth clubs?

British Asian Males said;

- Drugs
- Stigma
- Bad Workers
- Parents
- Transport
- Bullying
- Lack of awareness of what's available
- Lack of community cohesion
- Independence

British White Males said;

- Lack of awareness/advertising/promotion
- Fighting
- They would prefer to go places where they can drink
- Religion
- Bullying
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of transport
- Lack of community cohesion

British Asian Females said;

- Transport
- Parents
- Commitments
- Other young people

British White Females said;

- Bullying
- Embarrassment
- Its Boring
- Not Fun
- Not allowed to drink
- No confidence
- No awareness/advertisement/promotion

Other/Unknown said;

- Racism
- Bullying
- Facilities
- Rules

- Not allowed to drink

We found that there are a variety of issues with provision available to young people. We discovered many young people don't really know about youth clubs or what the role of youth clubs are. When we asked people who don't visit youth clubs why they don't they indicated it was boring and that they don't know what goes on there. We found that most community centres have a lot of facilities, but these aren't always available to or accessible for young people who go to these youth groups. We also found that some youth groups had a lot of equipment but it was not usable because it had been broken and not fixed or replaced e.g. Pool balls missing, broken table top footballs, snapped pool cues/ no tips, broken table tennis tables etc. We noticed that many community centres don't have much lockable storage spaces for youth groups to lock equipment away and to keep things safe.

We recommend youth groups should be promoted and advertised much more as many young people are not aware of what goes on. We feel it would be a good idea to promote what is going on at schools, other youth groups and to parents also. Furthermore we could take advantage of social networking groups for example sending out messages to young people telling them what is going on in their areas.

We also feel that there should be a larger variety of activities, residential and things to do in youth clubs. We felt that young people seemed to do the same things every week and even though some young people like this, others felt it could be a bit repetitive and something new would be fun. This does not mean simply to change the activities but also to enable other young people to try things they have never tried before, for example go karting. In addition to this we thought it would be a good idea if young people could get accredited for the different activities they engage in, for example certificates and qualifications so that they are gaining something from their participation too.

A major concern was the facilities available to young people. Many young people indicated that they do not have enough access to what is available in community centres. For example in some community centres young people are not allowed to use the kitchen. Further to this it was often the case that other groups can hire out parts of the building at the time young people use it. For example when young people are allowed to have a youth group someone else may have booked out the sports hall and so young people are restricted to use the youth room only.

We think that there are issues and barriers for young people who are in the care of local authority and young people who have disabilities. We noticed that many young people in care do not visit youth groups and that young people with disabilities visited youth groups that are specifically for young people with disabilities. We feel this issue needs to be looked at and addressed by professionals who can explore why this is the case however we do feel it would be good for these professionals to work in partnership with young people when the young people concerned are further consulted and young people should be fully involved in the whole of this process. We feel

that there are underlying issues that we perhaps don't understand or have any knowledge on. For example when we asked young people in care why they don't go to youth groups they indicated because they are boring. This may be the case however they indicated that they had never been to youth groups before to find out that they are boring which seemed confusing to us.

Recommendations.

From the findings set out above we put forward the following recommendations for consideration.

- That ways of ensuring that all Young people who live in different circumstances such as children in care feel comfortable in a youth clubs be reported back to the Committee.
- That publicity be given to youth clubs to make sure that young people knew where they were and what they are. Neighbourhood forums and the youth zone should also be promoted where young people have the opportunity to join.
- That facilities at community centres be made available to these youth groups where they are not currently available.
- That facilities at clubs be reviewed and repaired or replaced where necessary.
- That more variety of activities, residentials and things to do in youth clubs be considered.
- That more accredited projects be introduced – projects that young people can do and work on that's fun and also has something at the end to pay off. i.e. certificates or qualifications. First Aid, Food, canoeing, kayaking, dance etc.
- That better facilities that are young people friendly and that young people can use. i.e. kitchen and sport equipment be made available.
- That barriers and issues for young people in care and young people with disabilities be looked at. The forum don't know what the solutions are to make services more accessible for them are but we think that this needs to be looked at in more detail
- That funding be available to help the forum carry out work like this in the future.

TIMELINE 2009-10

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15th June 09

Meeting with Peter Morgan

17th June 09

Meeting

- Work of the Executive including major priorities and risks
- Consideration of the work programme

30th June 09

Presentation on CT+ - children's services issues

29th July 09 – meeting

Meeting

- Work of the Executive
- Overview of IYSS presentation off Bill Lovat

30th July 09

Meeting with Chair and Vice Chair to scope work programme topics.

12th August 09

Chair and Vice Chair meeting with Youth Forum

4th September 09

Visit to:

- Darwen Vale Community Leisure Centre
- Audley Community Centre

24th September 09

Visit to:

- Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

7th October 09

Meeting

- Work of the Executive
- Child Poverty – outline of the work of the department on Child Poverty, the requirements of the Authority and the extent of the issue within the borough.
- Progress on IYSS

12th Oct

Visit to:

- Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

4th Nov 09

Visit to:

- Accrington Rd Community Centre
- Bangor Street Community Centre

25th Nov 09

Meeting

- Attainment results
- Youth Forum presentation on IYSS
- Progress on the work programme - update for the Committee on progress and to seek Members engagement and involvement in the next steps.

27th Jan 10

Meeting

- Work of the Executive
- Response to recommendations
- Severe weather

17th Feb10

- Special meeting regarding the Youth Forum.

17th March 10

- Work of the Executive
- Poverty
- Report back on issues to do with Youth Forum
- Youth Forum report on IYSS

School Organisation Panel meetings - 27th May 2009, 1st December 2009, and 30th March 2010.