

ASSEMBLY

25 February 2013

Title: Annual Report of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum	
Report of the Divisional Director, Targeted Support	
Open Report	For Information
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: No
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Accountable Divisional Director: Christine Pryor	
Accountable Director: Helen Jenner	
Summary: This report is a summary of the work and achievements of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum during 2012.	
Recommendation(s) The Assembly is recommended to continue to provide member support for the Forum and its associated campaigns, particularly in relation to providing young people with information about attending 6 th form in the borough and continuing to work constructively with Police to comment on policies and procedures that directly affect young people.	
Reason(s) The Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum is a borough-wide platform for young people to express their views and help shape services. Members of the Barking & Dagenham Youth Forum are democratically elected each year through schools and youth groups to represent their peers. Through their participation, young people develop youth-focussed campaigns based on topics most important to young people in Barking and Dagenham. The campaigns aim to raise awareness of the issue being tackled and to bring about change that will positively impact young people's lives. Through the fortnightly consultation sub-group, council officers and partner agencies have the opportunity to promote services, gather feedback about policies, strategies and services as well as gaining a youth perspective on how services can be improved and promoted to young people locally. In addition, a single member of the Forum sits on the Children's Services Select Committee. The Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum Young Inspectors' sub-group provides local services with the opportunity to have their services inspected by trained, experienced youth inspectors. In 2012, the Young Inspectors sub-group successfully carried out inspections of nine pharmacies - offering feedback on their condom distribution scheme	

aimed at young people and an inspection of Barking Police Station and the Police service in general. This report was fed back directly to the Borough Commander, Andy Ewing. The Young Inspectors also attended the Sydenham Centre sexual health clinic, where they inspected the young people's drop in clinic and fed back to the team leader who has compiled an action plan based on the recommendations made in the report. This is to be presented to the Integrated Reproductive and Sexual Health Board.

The Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum members have gained many skills through their participation in the forum, including communication, leadership, negotiation, presentation and social skills, essential life skills which young people can utilise in a variety of settings.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 In January 2012, 65 young people were elected to the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum. The young people were elected from all secondary schools and Trinity School, which has two representatives and a key worker who supports the young people during sessions
- 1.2 At the beginning of the forum year, all members attended two full forum sessions and debated current youth issues that the forum might tackle in 2012. As a result of this meeting two sub-groups were chosen, 'Student Voice' and 'Crime Community'.
- 1.3 The Young Inspectors became a sub group of the forum in order to sustain the programme following a £30k saving on the project made in 2011-2012. The transition from being an independent project within Integrated Youth Services to a sub-group of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum has been successful, aided by the support of two young people who progressed to Young Leader roles.
- 1.4 Additionally, a consultation sub-group was set up to allow officers, partners and external organisations to consult with forum members on one-off issues. The group meets fortnightly and has been very successful with 17 distinct consultations undertaken with young people.

2. Proposal and Issues

Sub-groups work outline

2.1 Student Voice

Work focussed on the transition from secondary school to sixth form. Some members had experience of transition, whilst others were aware that with the rise in participation age, the decision whether to stay on in sixth form was looming.

A questionnaire was developed asking current sixth formers to identify positive aspects of transition together with suggestions for those approaching transition and information that would be useful if available online. Four schools returned completed questionnaires.

Extensive research of local, regional and national websites found a dearth of information about sixth form transition. This discovery along with the questionnaire feedback was presented formally to Consortium Heads and Jane Hargreaves, Divisional Director for Education.

Consortium Heads welcomed the feedback acknowledging the lack of information, tips and advice available based on existing sixth formers' experience, now identified as a valuable resource. They agreed to include this on their websites in the near future to be reviewed by the new Forum, to be elected in 2013.

2.2 Crime and Community

The sub-group focussed on local crime issues relevant to young people as well as the community aspect. The group developed relationships with local police officers, including Inspector Mark Joyce, and was involved in a discussion regarding local tensions, one year on from the 2011 disturbances. This provided the Police with a youth perspective of the issues and a youth perception of Police. The group participated in a Stop and Search monitoring exercise. This was the first time young people had been asked for their views about Stop and Search rates and challenged Police about methods and the statistics.

The group worked in partnership with The Challenge Network creating short films on youth issues that were used during the National Citizens' Service summer programme. The project was aimed at equipping young people with skills to develop local campaigns based on youth issues.

The group developed its own short films based on three topics chosen by young people: music influence; healthy eating/obesity and stereotyping young people. Pending clearance from our Marketing and Communications Team, the films will be available on the Council's YouTube channel.

2.3 Young Inspectors

Young Inspectors became a Youth Forum sub group in February 2012 in order to continue the valuable work of the project. Some current Young Inspectors opted to continue in the group and other places were filled with newly elected members, with the mix working well. Two young people progressed to be Young Leaders and worked in partnership with Council staff to plan, deliver and evaluate sub-group sessions.

They carried out 16 inspections and were externally commissioned to undertake four inspections for London and Quadrant Housing Association in 2013, securing income of £3,300 for the Council. Inspections included Barking Police Station and police attitudes to young people, Sydenham Centre Sexual Health Service, Barking Learning Centre, the Integrated Youth Service code of conduct and behaviour policies, and nine local pharmacies involved in the condom distribution scheme. Each inspection generated a report that was submitted to the service, clearly outlining the young people's findings and their recommendations for improving the service for young people. Young Inspectors are formally part of the Council's Traded Services booklet, and further externally commissioned inspections are being sought.

2.4 Consultation

The following one-off consultations took place, in collaborations with council officers and external partners:

- Streetbase: to improve understanding and how to use Streetbase to their advantage;
- Department for Health: health outcomes – online;
- Ofsted: inspection arrangements for maintained schools and services to protect children;
- Seetec: re-engaging 16 and 17 year olds in employment;
- House of Commons: survey re short films detailing the work of the House – online;
- LBBB Community Cohesion Strategy;
- LBBB Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: opportunity to express views by testing if recommendations meet needs of young people and capture any additional needs. Feedback used in the final report;
- Arc Theatre: workshops ‘Girls in Gangs’ and ‘Sexual Exploitation’;
- Skills Centre;
- LBBB School Catering: standards of school lunches;
- Borough Transport;
- LBBB Health and Wellbeing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment;

2.5 UK Youth Parliament

In February 2012, two members were elected to represent LBBB in the UK Youth Parliament. Known as Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament (DMYP), they attended three conventions, the Annual Sitting at Nottingham University and a national debate in the House of Commons.

2.6 Children’s Service Select Committee (CSCC)

For the first time in the Forum’s history, this year saw the Chair of the BAD Youth Forum become a co-opted member of the CSCC. This has helped to ensure that Young People’s voices are heard at the highest level. Issues raised and discussed by the Chair at the CSCC have included the Council’s budget proposals. In addition, the Chair gave a formal presentation on issues related to student voice systems in schools. This campaign resulted in £15k of funding being given to Children’s Services by Schools’ Forum to conduct development work with schools around their student voice systems to improve them.

3. Options Appraisal - N/A

4. Consultation - See section 2 above

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Martin Henwood, Deputy Chief Financial Officer

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications for future years arising from this report. It is highly probable that the work of the Youth Forum will have a positive financial

impact for the Council (and other public sector organisations) through improving the effectiveness of services, but this cannot be quantified robustly.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: (Shahnaz Patel Senior Lawyer)

6.1 No specific legal implications arise from this report.

7. Other Implications

7.1 **Risk Management** - No implications

7.2 **Contractual Issues** - No implications

7.3 **Staffing Issues** - No implications

7.4 Customer Impact

The Council supports the BAD Youth Forum to provide a key channel for consultation and engagement with young people in the borough. Services across the Borough are encouraged to bring relevant draft policies and strategies to the Forum to seek the views of young people, so that service design is informed by their feedback.

The Student Voice sub-group has created a comprehensive list of recommendations for both the Southern and North East Consortium websites in order to improve the information for students considering sixth form. The Forum would like both Consortia to seriously consider the recommendations made and include the 'tips and advice' section on both websites to ensure other young people have access to information that informs them about the experience of being a 6th former as opposed to just course information.

Through the commissioned inspection with London and Quadrant (L&Q) Housing Association, five Young Inspectors will be training ten L&Q residents to carry out inspections. As a result of this process young people will be able to assess services, have a greater influence on some of the future policies and procedures of the Housing Association and develop links with the Housing Association which will prove useful whilst a resident and a potential tenancy holder in the future.

The various inspections carried out by the Young Inspectors' group have had an impact on each of the services which have been inspected. The pharmacies have been able to identify training needs for staff, based on the young people's experience and comprehensive feedback including recommendations. The Sydenham Centre staff team are currently devising a plan to address the issues raised in the Young Inspectors' report and will be formally responding to the report young people completed as well as feeding back to the group the service changes that have been made. This feedback will also be presented to the Integrated Reproductive and Sexual Health Board meeting in the near future.

The Integrated Youth Service (IYS) policy inspection has helped to shape the policy to ensure it is young people friendly, including the language used in the policy. This

has now been distributed to service users of the IYS centres and has proved to be successful in monitoring behaviour. The Police inspection report has been submitted to the Borough Commander who has taken responsibility for ensuring the recommendations are distributed appropriately to colleagues to ensure the recommendations are considered and implemented where possible. The Borough Commander has expressed an interest in working with Young Inspectors in the future with regards to other services that impact on young people locally.

The addition of £15k in funding from Schools' Forum, given as a direct result of a campaign led by the BAD Youth Forum, will see improvements made to school councils and student voice systems across the borough's schools.

7.5 Safeguarding Children

The Young Inspectors' work in improving sexual health services for young people has impacted on young people's ability to access safe, impartial and comprehensive advice on issues relating to sexual health. In addition, the Inspectors' forthcoming inspection of L&Q Housing will focus on aspects of safety and safeguarding.

Arc Theatre's Girls in Gangs project saw the Forum gain a greater understanding and awareness of the issues around sexual exploitation and what they can do, as ambassadors for local young people, to tackle the issue. The Forum also worked closely with Skittlz (our Children in Care Council) and the Progress Project (Disabled Children's Parliament), which raised safeguarding issues faced by these groups of vulnerable young people.

7.6 Health Issues - N/A

7.7 Crime and Disorder Issues

The Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum have developed a very positive relationship with the Police and have agreed to participate in the Stop and Search Monitoring Group. The role of the young people will be to review and monitor stop and search statistics including age, gender and ethnic background of all stop and searches that take place in the borough. This process enables young people to challenge Police about any discrepancies they identify with the process. Equally young people are able to see an accurate account of the number of people stopped and the outcome of each stop and search. This will help young people to understand the process and reasons behind stop and search and continually monitor in the future if the process is justified and appropriate.

7.8 Property / Asset Issues - No implications

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices: None