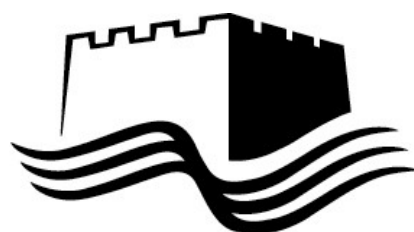


**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Youth Services**

**Scrutiny Challenge Session Report**



**TOWER HAMLETS**

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
March 2014**

## **Chair's Foreword**

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Youth Services form a key part of the services the Council delivers. They are front facing and their provision goes to the heart of what the core aims of the Council: High levels of education, support and wellbeing, offering opportunities, guidance and support, often for the most vulnerable in society.

It is therefore important that we ensure that our Youth Services are run to the highest standards, ensuring that our young people receive the greatest level of support. Significant and wide ranging budget cuts has meant that all council services have to be re-assessed, and officers and partners alike have had to make changes to the way services are delivered. Eighteen months on from the Cabinet decision to bring Youth Services in house this Challenge Session provided an opportunity to evaluate how youth services have changed and opportunity to assess lessons from bringing youth services in house.

I am pleased to present a wide ranging report into the provision of youth services in the borough. It tackles a range of issues at a time of great change for the service. On behalf of all the scrutiny panel I am also extremely grateful for the external support provided by the National Youth Agency and the New Economics Foundation, who provided meaningful insight and a national context both of which informed the Challenge Session discussions and this report.

We have reached clear findings and a broad range of recommendations which I hope will inform and guide the future provision of youth services for our young people and our communities.

## Recommendations

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**Recommendation 1:** That Youth Service managers provide further assurances that individual centres have sufficient autonomy to reflect the diversity across the borough and their local needs within a single management structure. To ensure that creativity and autonomy in different areas is encouraged whilst ensuring standards are maintained.

**Recommendation 2:** That the Youth Service reviews how success is evaluated on a regular basis (to be determined by the needs of the service). This should also take into consideration the partnerships with local residents and the role Local Community Ward Forums have to play.

- To assess against outcomes, as well as outputs
- To assess against health, education and career outcomes?
- To demonstrate how local communities and the adult population are engaged, especially in light of their ability to provide additional funding through the Local Community Ward Forums.

**Recommendation 3:** To ensure that provision reflects the needs of each area and that some LAP areas aren't over-or-under resourced. This includes future need and population growth.

**Recommendation 4:** To ensure that staff in the youth services reflect as best they can the population of local area. That this challenge is considered more widely across Community Service teams, including Community Safety.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Youth Service provision has moved from being in-house, to outsourced and brought back in-house over the last 12 years. Different models have been seen as suitable at different periods, based on previous learning, understanding from other boroughs, financial constraints and political priorities.
- 1.2 The majority of the universal elements of the Youth and Connexions Service was contracted out in 2001 after two reports found that the service was poor value for money and had poor engagement from young people. Contracts were tendered on a LAP basis and staff transferred under TUPE regulations into 5 external provider organisations.
- 1.3 This Scrutiny Challenge Session intended to take stock of the decision to move services in-house in October 2012 and critically appraise the delivery of that decision and seek to identify areas of improvement. It sought best practice from elsewhere and brought in two external experts in this field, from the National Youth Agency and the think tank the New Economics Foundation who have both done work on youth services in a time of austerity.
- 1.4 Both agencies brought significant insight into the sessions, outlining national trends where services have often been outsourced. They also emphasised the investment the council has historically made, highlighting that despite financial constraints services have been protected.
- 1.5 Nevertheless, areas of improvement were highlighted. The restructure is newly in place, so much work is still required and this was recognised by the Scrutiny Working Group and officers from Youth Services alike. This report outlines the Group's findings in relation to the three core questions, and come up with four recommendations Youth Service to take forward.
- 1.6 The session was facilitated by Adam Walther in the Corporate Strategy and Equality service on behalf of Cllr Uddin, who lead the challenge session, and Cllr Saunders and Reverend James who were members of the Scrutiny Review Group. It took place on 9 January 2014.
- 1.7 The session was attended by: Cllr Uddin, Cllr Saunders and Reverend James as scrutineers. The challenge session was supported by two experts in the field of youth service provision: Jon Boagey, Deputy Chief Executive and Operations Director - National Youth Agency; and Joe Penny – Researcher, New Economics Foundation.
- 1.8 Frances Jones, One Tower Hamlets Service Manager and Adam Walther, Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer attended on behalf of Corporate Strategy and Equality. Dinar Hussain, Head of Youth and Connexions Services and Andy Bamber, Service Head - Community Service attended on behalf of Community Services.

1.9 The core questions of the challenge session were:

- 1 Have bringing youth services back in house achieved the aims as set out in the Cabinet report dated March 2012: “Youth Service Delivery”?
- 2 How has service provision changed and how have the impact of these changes been monitored?
- 3 How have the relationships with partners evolved since the change?

## **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 Generic youth services were brought in-house in October 2012. On 31st September 2012, 123 members of staff (51.47 full time equivalent) TUPE transferred into the Council from the five separate providers (this did not include sub-contractor staff). Staff are employed on their previous terms and conditions and, on the whole, are positive about their move to the Council. Generic Youth Service was outsourced for 10 years.

2.2 The core delivery teams, as listed below, remain unchanged in the current delivery method. However, those staff whose previous role involved management and monitoring of the external contracts will now take over the monitoring of the subcontracted delivery, whilst continuing to offer support to the delivery of each youth centre. These teams are:

- Detached and Response
- Outdoor Education
- Quality Assurance
- Targeted Support
- Central Office

## **3. Evidence considered during the Scrutiny Challenge Session**

3.1 The Scrutiny Review Group sought to focus on the impact on provision of bringing youth services in-house. Through the Challenge Session they addressed three core question in turn (see 1.9).

3.2 *Question One: Reviewing progress to date*

To enable the Review Group to assess the extent to which the transfer of Youth Services back in house had met its original aims, the Service Head for Safer Communities summarised the Cabinet report which recommended the decision to transfer Youth Services to in-house management. This report stated that:

- That the opportunity offered by an in-house system to align the service more closely to community safety, health and leisure services within the council be taken, strengthening the ties to the partnership and push for localisation.
- That the service's compliance with the national MI system is retained; and
- That the management of the service is transferred to Communities Localities and Culture. That the youth service be brought back in-house and the location of both the Youth Service and Community Languages Service be considered.

3.2 The Service Head for Safer Communities updated the group on progress in implementing the Cabinet decision taken on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012, stating that the Service had been brought under his management within Safer Communities Service in the Communities, Localities and Culture (CLC) Directorate.

3.3 He added that the opportunity offered to align the service more closely to community safety, health and leisure services had been seized resulting in a strengthening of links to a number of services, including:

- The service now sits in CLC, alongside Leisure services.
- Strong links are being developed with the Drugs and Alcohol team in Safer Communities Service
- The Smoking Cessation Service also sits in Safer Communities and links between the Youth Service and Public Health had resulted in the delivery of a number of initiatives.

#### 3.4 *Question Two: Impact of the transfer on service delivery*

In relation to the question of how service provision has changed and how has the impact of these changes been monitored, the Service Head for Safer Communities explained that the future direction of the service will focus on 4 key principles:

- Providing a consistent, well branded, quality service offer across the borough with a core level of youth centres, sessions and activities in each LAP;
- Increasing the number of frontline youth workers;
- Delivering meaningful accredited training programmes, focusing on quality outcomes with clear progression for the young person.
- Increasing the level of outreach and detached youth work to engage hard to reach young people.

3.5 The Service Head for Safer Communities noted that the model of service provision had changed since it was brought in-house, emphasising that the restructure process was ongoing and services

would continue to change as they are bedded in. Since Youth Services were brought in-house, they have:

- Increased the number of sites from which activity is delivered by 14 premises.
- The number of sessions delivered has increased by 41 per week.
- The number of front line delivery staff will increase by 19 full time equivalents (post restructure).

3.6 The Service Head for Safer Communities explained that a review of existing and potential delivery locations within the borough has been undertaken. A minimum of 4 premises within each LAP have been identified as youth centres. The table below sets out the distribution of delivery sites and session across the borough:

LAP	Contracted Provision		In-house Provision	
	Premises	Sessions	Premises	Sessions
1	4	23	7	24
2	6	13	7	22
3	4	21	5	31
4	5	13	5	15
5	1	06	3	12
6	4	13	6	15
7	4	16	7	20
8	2	07	4	14
	<b>30</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>153</b>

3.7 The Service Head for Safer Communities then outlined a number of areas of improvement in the provision of Youth Services since they were transferred back to the local authority. Since the transfer the **focus has been to create a single identity**, where young people feel safe and secure to travel to any part of the borough to take part in activities. The Group heard that that this wasn't the case under the outsourced model where five different services used their own branding within the borough. This was further complicated by the 19 sub-contractors mainly used by contractors to deliver services. There were concerns that this did not help to create a cohesive community.

3.8 Under the **contracted out model, the locations of youth centres and the number of sessions provided to young people were not evenly distributed across the borough**. There was only one youth centre in LAP 5 and only two in LAP 8; compared to 7 centres in LAP 1. The service has remained unchanged in the transition period but future delivery plans involve moving to a consistent service offer across the borough.

3.9 Outreach work was never contracted out. Contracts were based on the delivery of designated sessions from designated premises. All

outreach and detached work was completed by the small group of central staff in the Detached and Response team. This was not effective in addressing the needs of an area and the central team had no support from the local contracted service. **By bring service in-house this has been addressed by enabling youth workers to be involved in outreach work based on local needs.**

- 3.10 Each contractor produced their **own communication and publicity** to young people, displaying their own logos and branding. An integrated youth service brand is not known or identified within the borough, leading residents to believe that youth provision is not a success of the Council but a local provision funded by each contractor. This is a key area that was addressed as part of the in-house delivery method.
- 3.11 With so many contractors and subcontractors delivering the service there was a lack of engagement between teams. The full youth service never met in its entirety and staff did not have a full understanding of the service as a whole and the linkage and opportunities for cross-team development. This made it difficult to ensure that all staff were working towards common goals. **The move to an in-house centrally managed service has resulted in a greater degree of consistency, quality and co-ordination of provision.**
- 3.12 Each provider, whilst delivering the contracted service, had their own staffing structures, which included delivery staff, management and administration. These **inherited structures contained a high proportion of management posts**. This has been addressed and the Service has reduced the number of managers with more resources devolved towards frontline delivery.
- 3.13 The Service as a whole engages with 54.8% of the current cohort within the borough. This represents 10,383 young people. Of these, only 33% (6,460 young people) were engaged by contracted provision. The remaining 22% (3,923 young people) were engaged by project activity funded through Positive about Young People (PAYP) scheme, which is provided in-house. This equates to a contracted unit cost of £445 per young person and a PAYP unit cost of £331 per young person. Therefore, the short term provision delivered through in-house PAYP proved **better value for money** than the mainstream contracted provision.
- 3.14 **Staffing:** The Service Head Safer Communities went on to outline how the change has affected staffing. On 1st October 2012, 123 members of staff (51.5 full time equivalent) TUPE transferred into the Council from the five separate providers (this did not include sub-contractor staff). The staff are employed on their previous terms and conditions and, according to the Head of Youth and Connexions Service, are broadly positive about their move to the Council.
- 3.15 Following the transfer of the Service a further review of staffing structures was necessary in order to move towards the future delivery model. The review included harmonisation of job descriptions,



salaries and terms and conditions of TUPE transferred staff; a further streamlining of middle management; an increase in frontline delivery staff and; a review of job descriptions to reflect the changes to the delivery model for the service.

- 3.16 A total of eight managers were TUPE transferred and through restructuring are only 2 managers for East and West were kept hence significant reduction in management cost. The Service will be recruiting additional 12 Youth Worker in Charge (14 hours each) and 27 Youth Workers (14 hours each).
- 3.17 **Quality Targets:** Under the contracted out model, contractor's performance was based upon the 4 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). These performance indicators have limited value when used as the sole measurement for the service performance. The Service have therefore included a fifth indicator (for number of 'Certified Outcomes' achieved) in the KPI suite.
- 3.18 'Certified Outcomes' are defined as a course or one off programme of training where the young person obtains a certificate in a specific area of work, for example arts, sports, ICT, food hygiene, mentoring or personal development. The course or training usually involves less than ten teaching hours.
- 3.19 The definition of an 'Accredited Outcome' has been strengthened and defined as 'a course endorsed by a governing body that leads to recognised accreditation, for which the young person can obtain one or more of the following:
- Credit points
  - Progression rights and entitlement
  - Leads to a nationally recognised work and career development path, such as apprenticeship, internship or volunteering for 6 months or more with a recognised body/institution (for a minimum of 30 hours per week).
  - Job opportunity within the field of the course they undertake
  - ASDAN or Duke of Edinburgh Award or Arts Award'.
- 3.21 Annual targets will also be set for enrolment onto Duke of Edinburgh award schemes. In the previous delivery method, a target was set of 14 Bronze awards per LAP. There were no targets for progression onto Silver or Gold awards, meaning that contractors were not encouraged to support young people beyond the bronze level.
- 3.22 In the future delivery method the Outdoor Activity Team will be responsible for the delivery of Duke of Edinburgh awards and will have specific targets for encouraging the progression of young people onto higher levels. The table below shows the targets for 2013/14:

DoE Awards	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Bronze</b>	0	0	14	43	4	26*
<b>Silver</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1*
<b>Gold</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

- 3.23 The dropout rate for the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) award in the borough is 90%. This is extremely high considering the additional revenue offered to contractors in 2008 with one of the specific aims of the funding to increase DoE attainment and embed the award within the service offer. In 2010/11 147 young people started DoE Bronze awards yet only 14 of these were completed; against a borough wide target of 112.
- 3.24 Given that a total of £224,000 additional funding was allocated to the achievement of DoE Bronze awards, the unit cost for the actual achievement of one award in 2010/11 was £16,000, which is exceptionally high. The above chart demonstrate a total of 61 Bronze achieved by contractors against a target of 448. Where in 13/14 our in-house provision already achieved 26 bronze and 1 silver awards.
- 3.25 **Joined up, borough wide approach:** Within the previous delivery model the Detached and Response team were separated from local youth workers. This meant that they are able to respond to reports of anti-social behaviour involving young people, but do not have the resource to identify areas where young people congregate in order to engage prior to any negative perceptions from residents. In the new delivery model the focus of this team will alter from direct delivery of detached and outreach work, to the borough wide co-ordination of engagement.
- 3.26 The team will be the specialists in detached and outreach work and will utilise local youth workers, where possible, to strengthen the level of response by taking local staff with them on each call out. This approach will develop the outreach skills of all staff whilst creating greater linkage between service teams and creating resource within the central team to undertake proactive work within the borough. An example of this approach was the way youth workers were deployed during English Defence League demonstration in the borough in September 2013. Sixty youth workers were deployed and worked as one service to safeguard young people and the community as a whole.
- 3.27 *Question 3: Working in partnership*

The final section of the Challenge Session focused on examining how partnerships between Youth Services and other services and organisations had developed since the transfer of the service in house.

- 3.28 The Service has developed partnerships with a number of voluntary sector organisations as well as Registered Social Landlords (RSL) and continues to deliver activities in partnership with them. The Service has expanded activities in negotiation with the voluntary sector in identified LAP areas and secured premises in partnership with number of RSL providers in the borough. Based on assets analysis and gaps in provision, the following organisations have been contracted to deliver youth work (2 sessions/week) and at the same time enable central youth services to operate additional 2 sessions/week through deploying own staff from the council:

LAP1	St Hilda's East Community Centre
LAP1	Shadow Youth Alliance
LAP2	Our Base
Lap2	Atlee Community Centre
LAP2	Osmani Centre
LAP3	Society Links
LAP4	The Rooted Forum
LAP5	Malmsbury Community Project
LAP6	East London Tabernacle

Borough wide	Step Forward (to work specifically with lesbian, gay and bisexual young people)
Borough wide	APASENTH (to work with young people with disabilities)
Borough wide	Tower Project (to work with young people with disabilities)

- 3.29 Partnerships have also been developed with key statutory services including Social Care, Tower Hamlets Police, Community Safety and delivering activities in co-ordinated way through central management.

#### **4. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 There were four key findings which led to the following four recommendations

- 4.2 **Finding 1:** Bringing service provision and management in-house clearly provides greater clarity of oversight and consistency in the level of provision across the borough, as the report outlines. However, there is a risk that this reduces the autonomy and innovation of individual youth centres.

**Recommendation 1:** Youth Service managers put in place measures to ensure that individual centres have the autonomy to respond to and

meet diverse needs of young people in different neighbourhoods within the single Service management structure.

- 4.3 **Finding 2:** Measuring the quality of youth services provision is a challenge, because of the range of needs and potential outcomes for young people. It is nonetheless important that the Youth Service measures the success of their provision in a holistic manner and keeps this under review .

**Recommendation 2:** The Youth Service reviews how the performance of services is evaluated and involves local residents and Local Community Ward Forums in this with particular focus on the following points:

- To assess against outcomes, as well as outputs
- To assess against health, education and career outcomes
- To demonstrate how local communities and the adult population are engaged, especially in light of their ability to provide additional funding through the Local Community Ward Forums.

- 4.4 **Finding 3:** That supply of youth service provision does not always appear to meet the demand, with some areas receiving greater resources in the borough than others, relative to need. The Scrutiny Working Group highlighted the need that resources should reflect need, and projected population growth should take this into consideration.

**Recommendation 3:** To ensure that provision reflects the needs of each area and that some LAP areas aren't over-or-under resourced. This includes future need and population growth.

- 4.5 **Finding 4:** The Scrutiny Working Group felt that the staff and management of the Youth Service did not always reflect the populations they were serving. The Youth Service has put on record the need to increased participation by girls and young women and some ethnic groups.

**Recommendation 4:** To ensure that staff in the youth services reflect as best they can the population of local area. That this challenge is considered more widely across Community Service teams, including Community Safety.

## 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Youth Service provision has moved from being in-house, to outsourced and brought back in over the last 12 years. Different models have been seen as suitable at different periods, based on previous learning, understanding from other boroughs, financial constraints and political priorities.
- 5.2 The Scrutiny Challenge Session intended to take stock of the decision to move services in-house and critically appraise the delivery of that change and seek areas of improvement. It sought best practice from

elsewhere and brought in two external experts in this field, from the National Youth Agency and the think tank the New Economics Foundation who have done work on youth services in a time of austerity.

- 6.3 Both brought significant insight into the sessions, outlining both how Tower Hamlets is broadly bucking national trends by bringing services in-house, but being supportive of the reasons for doing so. They also emphasised the significant support the council and the community have historically given and continue to invest in youth service provision, highlighting that despite financial constraints, investment remains strong here, where it has significantly fallen elsewhere.
- 6.4 Nevertheless, areas of improvement were highlighted. The restructure is newly in place, so much work is still required and this has been recognised by the Review Group and officers alike. The Scrutiny Challenge Session addressed the three core questions in its original scope and developed four recommendations for the Youth Service to take forward.