

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE
20 JUNE 2023

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY

1. From Councillor Graeme Casey to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How will the Youth Support Programme look to ensure that the services at Anerley Town Hall for the new Streetwise location are equivalent to the previous services, providing young people with what they need?

Reply:

The programme previously delivered is mainly replicated at the new Streetwise location. There should be no long-term reduction of services to young people. We are now working hard to try and ensure that we can move as much of our music hub to the new building, as we are aware that this is a popular aspect of the offer to young people.

We will also be asking our young people within the co-production work what they would like to see within the new venue.

The service will be working over the next few months in collaboration with young people to ensure that the new hub will be delivering what young people now want to see within the hub. This is a great opportunity to expand the services, we do not aim to reduce them. An example of this, is that we are currently in discussions with a local Boxing Club to join Streetwise.

Our aim is to increase provision within the hub and 'move with the times' in ensuring that the hub is what our young people would like to see, rather than what we have always delivered over many decades.

Supplementary Question:

There was no supplementary question.

2. From Councillor Graeme Casey to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

The first I was made aware of this plan was when the issue was first raised with me, can the Portfolio Holder commit to publishing or announcing plans like this to this chamber in future?

Reply:

I will be mentioning it in my Portfolio Holder Update later this evening. This is the first CEF PDS since the decision was made.

It was an operational decision, made by officers with no input from me. When I was informed of the decision, I contacted both the Penge & Cator and Crystal Palace Councillors, whose wards are mostly affected. I didn't inform your good self as there are

currently zero young people living in Bromley Town ward attending the hub. Since I informed the relevant ward councillors, they have all had conversations and productive meetings with the Assistant Director overseeing the process and they are all content with the decision.

Supplementary Question:

Can the Portfolio Holder commit to publishing or announcing plans like this to the committee in future?

Reply:

A lot of operational decisions happen on a day-to-day basis within the Children, Education and Families Portfolio. I tend to inform the relevant ward councillors only when needed, however if there are any issues or topics you are particularly interested in, please email me a list and I will be happy to keep you updated.

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20 JUNE 2023**

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Kyle Sewell to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

As we come up to the summer holidays, it is important that children from low-income families are provided with free healthy/nutritious meals during this period. Does the council share my opinion that this should be the case, and if so, what are their plans for this summer?

Reply:

We take the widest possible interpretation of the Government guidance around Household Support Fund, including vulnerable families. Our HAF programme is open to all families and can be accessed by those who are not eligible through the payment of a small fee. The universal offer from our Family Centres is also available to all families and we will continue to prioritise support for those families that need it.

2. From Councillor Graeme Casey to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

Could the Portfolio Holder please let this committee know when the decision to move the Streetwise Youth Hub was made, how much consultation took place with local youth workers and why the decision was not scrutinised by this committee?

Reply:

Because the concerns relating to the venue were in relation to the safety of the building and consequently the safety of young people using the venue, the decision needed to be made quickly. The venue had flooding to the basement and had an infestation of rats. Both of which posed a health and safety concern to young people and also to staff based in the building. We had a viable and local alternative. This decision allowed provision to continue, and without any significant break in provision.

The nature of the concerns are such that the decision had to be an operational one. The Assistant Director has been in correspondence with some Councillors who made an approach regarding these matters, to discuss the decision and the subsequent provision of Youth work in the area.

3. From Councillor Graeme Casey to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm what steps have been taken to promote the new venue, the date of the reopening and if the centre will be open and operational during the critical school summer holiday period?

Reply:

We will be undertaking a new launch of the Streetwise Youth Hub to promote the new venue with our young people shortly, as we understand that change can be difficult, and

we need to hear from our young people to improve our services. This conversation has already commenced with some of our young people who are known to our outreach and Youth Justice Service, and they have given clear ideas on what they would like to see going forward.

Once the consultation has concluded with all young people who attend the Streetwise Youth Hub, Bromley Youth Council, Living in Care Council, and Youth think (Youth Justice Service) then we will launch our new programme in late summer.

The hub is open and operating the same hours as before. It will be open as usual during the summer holiday period.

4. From Councillor Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

What is the estimated cost of repairs to the Streetwise building and how does this compare to the rate of renting Anerley Town Hall?

Reply:

The previous venue was not a property owned by the Local Authority, the rental contract required us to upkeep the maintenance of the property and was a full repairing lease. This was not cost effective due to the significant works needed to bring the building up to health and safety standards and Disability Discrimination Act compliancy.

The rental costs for both venues are similar, however the use of Anerley Town Hall allows any maintenance costs to come via the Council wide building refurbishment programme.

5. From Councillor Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How do the quality of facilities at Anerley Town Hall compare with that of Streetwise?

Reply:

The quality of facilities within Anerley Town Hall are of a high standard. The town hall recently undertook a refurbishment and has ensured that the fabric of the building is of a good standard. The activities within the venues are not universally 'like for like', however most of the items from the previous venue will be moving to Anerley Town Hall. When Streetwise Youth Hub is in session most of the items are accessible. There will of course be times when this will not be possible, such as the gym, however since COVID-19 the gym has been closed and it is my understanding that this has not been fully reopened. The service is also currently exploring the possibility of transferring some aspects of the music studios too.