

Cabinet – 17 September 2015 – Responses to Questions not reached

9.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Sue Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Community, Culture and Resident Engagement

Question: “The MTFS tracker suggests savings regarding the Arts Centre funding are unlikely to be made and that a longer-term strategy is ‘being considered’. Could you provide more details on this, confirm whether this has anything to do with the ambitious fundraising targets set in May, and clarify if it could potentially put the future of the Arts Centre at risk?”

Written Response: The MTFS tracker refers to the MTFS target for 2015-16 for Harrow Arts Centre which is £100k. This is proving difficult to achieve so far due to long-term sickness and loss of income from some long-term bookers. However, long-term sickness has now been addressed and the team are working on additional income streams to offset this where possible.

This is not a reference to the longer term plans for the Arts Centre. An update will be brought to Cabinet in January 2016.

10.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Simon Brown, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People

Question: “During the recent wet weather, flooding was reported at Grange and Longfield Schools – delaying the start of term at the latter. Can you confirm if more is known as to the cause of the flooding at either school, beyond the apparent heavy rain – such as blocked drains, etc?”

Written Response: The causes of the flooding are explained as follows:

Grange Primary School:

The flooding was caused by the geographical condition of the existing site. The playground slopes towards the school building and the drain capacity was insufficient for the extreme volume of rain which occurred in such a short period of time. There were also a number of leaks in the roof.

The local authority submitted a bid for the school to be included

in the government's Priority School Building Programme Round 2 because of the complex conditions issues with the building and site. Unfortunately, it was not successful. At this point there are no plans to rebuild the school. Officers are working with the school to address as far as possible the drainage and roof issues.

Longfield Primary School

The flooding occurred at Longfield because the existing pumps were unable to manage with the excessive volume of water which meant that the building flooded. This impacted on a number of classrooms and other facilities on the ground floor. The pumps are now being replaced.

The commitment to open the schools as soon as possible for the beginning of term is commendable. The staff at both schools, Council officers and the contractors worked continuously from the time of the flooding, over the Bank Holiday weekend to ensure that the schools opened. Grange Primary school opened on 3 September as planned and the opening of Longfield was delayed until Monday 7 September.

11.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Simon Brown, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People

Question: "At the Special O&S earlier this month, the Leader denied rumours circulating that Children's Services is facing £8 million of in-year cuts. Are you able to confirm that this is accurate?"

Written Response: Children and Families has made savings of £619k in year which was reported to Cabinet in July 2015 as part of the 2016-17 to 2018-19 MTFS process to find early savings in 2015-16.

12.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Simon Brown, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young People

Question: "How confident are you that the Youth Justice Plan will reduce re-offending?"

Written Response: Under section 39(1) of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act it is the duty of every local authority, acting in co-operation with partner

agencies, to establish a youth offending team for their area and to ensure that it is adequately resourced to deliver the range of youth justice services.

Statutory functions

Section 39(7) of the Crime and Disorder Act

- To co-ordinate the provision of youth justice services for all those in the authority's area who need them
- To carry out such functions assigned in the Youth Justice Plan
- Take reasonable steps designed to encourage children and young people not to commit offences.

Risk to future delivery

There is some risk attached to the potential cut to the Good Practice Grant (in year) which will potentially impact on service delivery, and outcomes for young people. (and similarly to the potential cuts to Council funding)

Outcomes

- The reduction in re-offending is one of the 3 outcome indicators set by the YJB
- Harrow's re-offending rate has been variable over the last 4 years.
- Harrow's most recent re-offending rate (2012/13) of 43.17% accounts for 60 reoffenders from a cohort of 139, compared to 84 re-offenders in 2011/12
- The size of the cohort and the number of re-offenders have decreased consistently since 2009, however with a smaller cohort and lower number of FTE's the proportion of re-offenders has increased
- The alternative measure for re-offending is the frequency rate which represents the average number of re-offences per offender. In 2012/13 the average number of offences committed by re-offenders was 1.08 an increase from 2011/12 which was 1.04.

Challenges

We have identified in the Youth Justice Plan the following challenges which will also contribute to reducing re-offending

- Delivering the Troubled Families/Families First in Harrow and ensuring YOT demonstrates its effectiveness in this area
- Improve the outcomes for CLA who are being worked with by YOT particularly in terms of their re-offending and

NEET rates

- Ensuring YOT contributes to children and young people getting the best start in life through leading healthy lifestyles and improving long term health and educational outcomes
- Ensuring young people with mental health needs receive the right support
- Narrowing the gap in educational attainment and ensuring young people participate in education, employment and training
- Preventing youth offending and reducing the risk of custody.

Please note there is a time lag in data from the YJB, so the most recent data is 2012/13.