

London Borough of Bexley

News Release

For Immediate Release

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BEXLEY'S YOUNG PEOPLE TO HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF YOUTH SERVICES

The future of Bexley's Youth Services was discussed in detail at last night's (26 January) Cabinet Meeting.

Members were pleased to see a packed Public Gallery made up of young people who either used the service in the past or currently take part in its activities.

The decision was made to take forward the review of the service in which the borough's young people and service users will be involved.

Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr Philip Read said; "Like Councils up and down the country we have to be realistic in how and on what we spend council taxpayers money. We don't have a limitless budget for any service so we look at what we have and see if we can use it more effectively.

"That is why we commissioned an independent report into our youth services and that brought into sharp focus a number of issues including the fact that the early help service could and should be stronger, more targeted and achieve better outcomes. That will have benefits for Bexley residents by targeting more effectively such things as anti-social behaviour and crime.

"As a result of our decision last night we now have a blank canvas on which to develop the future services we deliver to help those young people most in need of support and I am delighted that our young people will be able to help us shape that.

"We will also work with partners in the voluntary sector, schools and private sector to see how they also can assist in providing services for the young people of Bexley.

The Cabinet took the decision to discontinue the grant for the Greater South East London Scouts Council, bringing the Council into line with neighbouring local authorities. The grant for Danson Youth Service will also end. As the service is run as a Trust it will continue to operate as normal and will also have the opportunity to bid to supply other youth provision in the borough should it wish to do so.

Cllr Read continued; "The money Bexley receives in grants from central government has been cut significantly and 55% of our remaining income is spent on Children and

Adult Services so we owe it to our residents to make sure we make the best decisions possible with their money. If that reduction in income means a change to services then we sometimes have to make those choices.

"I am looking forward to working with officers and our young people in the future as we shape the service to provide real value for money."

The Independent Review was carried out last year. The report found that although the young people using the service felt safe and enjoyed what it offered, there needed to be more focus on targeted services and early help for vulnerable young people.

ENDS

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