



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru  
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc  
The Children and Young People Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 11 Mai 2010  
Tuesday, 11 May 2010**

**Cynnwys**  
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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,  
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.  
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

**Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**  
**Committee members in attendance**

Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Angela Burns	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Helen Mary Jones	Plaid Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) The Party of Wales (Committee Chair)
Val Lloyd	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Sandy Mewies) Labour (substitute for Sandy Mewies)

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Alexandra Allen	Cyfarwyddwr Cymdogaethau Byw, Sustrans Liveable Neighbourhoods Director, Sustrans
Jonathan Bevan	Swyddog Prosiect Adfywio, Cartrefi Cymoedd Merthyr Regeneration Project Officer, Merthyr Valleys Homes
Eugene Dubens	Cydgysylltydd, Cymunedau yn Gyntaf Caerau Caerau Communities First Co-ordinator
Antony Metcalfe	Rheolwr Canolfan, Fairbridge Cymru Centre Manager, Fairbridge Cymru
Dave Morris	Prif Gwnstabl Cynorthwyol, Heddlu De Cymru Assistant Chief Constable for South Wales Police
Martin Peters	Cynghorydd Cymunedol, Langford, Castell-nedd Community Councillor, Langford, Neath
Lee Waters	Cyfarwyddwr Cenedlaethol, Sustrans Cymru National Director, Sustrans Cymru

**Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol**  
**National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Abigail Phillips	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Siân Thomas	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.16 a.m.*  
*The meeting began at 9.16 a.m.*

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon**  
**Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da, **Helen Mary Jones:** Good morning, gyfeillion. Croesawaf Aelodau, tystion ac everyone. I welcome Members, witnesses aelodau o'r cyhoedd i'r cyfarfod hwn o and members of the public to this meeting of the National Assembly's Children and Young People Committee.

[2] Mae croeso i bobl ddefnyddio'r People are welcome to use Welsh or English.

Gymraeg a'r Saesneg. Mae offer cyfieithu ar gael, ac mae'n bosibl hefyd defnyddio'r offer i'ch helpu i glywed yn well.

Interpretation equipment is available, and it is also possible to use the equipment to amplify the sound.

[3] Atgoffaf bawb i ddiffodd unrhyw ffonau symudol, 'mwyar duon' a theclynnau electronig eraill. Nid yw'n ddigon da i'w rhoi ar 'dawl', oherwydd bydd yn parhau'n bosibl iddynt amharu ar yr offer sain a darlledu.

I remind everyone to switch off any mobile phones, BlackBerrys and any other electronic devices. It is not enough to put them in 'silent' mode, because they will still be able to interfere with the sound and broadcasting equipment.

[4] Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân, felly os clywn y larwm yn canu, golyga hynny fod rhywbeth o'i le ac y bydd angen inni ddilyn cyfarwyddiadau'r tywyswyr ynghylch y ffordd fwyaf diogel allan o'r adeilad.

We are not expecting a fire drill, so if we hear an alarm, it means that there is something wrong and we will need to follow the ushers' instructions with regard to the safest route out of the building.

[5] Gofynnaf yn awr am unrhyw ddatganiadau o fudd o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 31. Gwelaf nad oes unrhyw ddatganiad.

I now ask for any declarations of interest under Standing Order No. 31. I see that there are no declarations.

[6] Yr ydym wedi derbyn ymddiheuriadau gan Sandy Mewies a Joyce Watson. Croesawn Val Lloyd eto; diolch yn fawr, Val, am ymuno â ni yn lle Sandy.

We have received apologies from Sandy Mewies and Joyce Watson. We welcome Val Lloyd once again; thank you, Val, for joining us instead of Sandy.

9.17 a.m.

### **Ymchwiliad i Fannau Diogel i Chwarae a Chymdeithasu: Casglu Tystiolaeth Inquiry Into Safe Places to Hang Out: Evidence Gathering**

[7] **Helen Mary Jones:** Croesawaf Antony Metcalfe o Fairbridge Cymru.

**Helen Mary Jones:** I welcome Antony Metcalfe from Fairbridge Cymru.

[8] Thank you very much for coming, Antony. We have received your written evidence, for which we are grateful. So, with your permission, we would like to move straight on to ask some questions.

[9] **Mr Metcalfe:** That is quite all right.

[10] **Helen Mary Jones:** If there is anything that you want to put on record that we have not picked up through the questioning, you will have an opportunity to do so at the end of the session.

[11] I will start with the first question. In your evidence, you state that the young people with whom you work

[12] 'represent some of the most marginalised, deprived and disadvantaged in Wales...with multiple presenting needs including substance misuse, exclusion from school, mental health issues, long-term unemployment and homelessness.'

[13] What additional barriers do these young people face in accessing leisure time and being able to spend time safely with their peers?

[14] **Mr Metcalfe:** From our perspective, there are two issues with regard to that. The first is the child poverty issue. These young people traditionally come from families in the areas of highest deprivation, so, in theory, those families have less disposable income to provide their children with the opportunities to go to play and social events, which most of us luckily take for granted. So, straight away, there is a monetary barrier to them engaging in safe places to go to play and hang out.

[15] Going to a park or to a town does not cost a lot of money. Quite a few of our young people come from Valleys areas, which are small and, in some regards, quite closed communities. For some of the young people with whom we engage, the idea of getting on a bus or train from Merthyr to Cardiff to hang out or to do something else is as big a step as our booking a plane ticket and flying to New York for the weekend, so some of the young people would not even consider it. Even if there is nothing in their local area that they want to do, they will not explore and go a little further afield. I do not know whether that may sometimes be driven by a lack of parental aspiration and a failure to push their children to do things.

9.20 a.m.

[16] Another issue is that in some of the areas where we operate, the client group that we are working with is traditionally the group of young people who you will see hanging around on the streets with their hoodies up, listening to music on their mobile phones. If you do not know them, on the surface, they can appear quite intimidating. Even though I work with them, I have been in the embarrassing situation of walking down the road and thinking ‘Oh, there is a group of young people there’, only to have one of them take their hoodie down and say, ‘Hello, Ant, what are you doing?’, and it will be one of the young people with whom I have been engaging. So, there is an automatic barrier that makes you think that they will be a threat to you, when all they want is to have somewhere where they can socialise with their friends, chat and hang out.

[17] The two main things that young people want to do, generally, are play and socialise—they want to go somewhere to hang out with their peer group and their friends. That leads to issues such as people stigmatising them as a group of young people who are hanging out in certain areas. I am not saying that they are all whiter than white; that is not the argument that I am progressing. The argument is that we sometimes need to reassess our attitudes to groups of young people and not view them as a physical threat.

[18] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is very useful. Eleanor has the next question.

[19] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr oedd yn ddiddorol darllen yr hyn yr oedd gennych i'w ddweud. Yr wyf hefyd wedi gweithio gyda phobl ifanc, fel y bu eraill yma yn gwneud. Yr ydych yn dweud nad oes mannau hamdden diogel a diddorol ar gael i bobl ifanc yn eu hardaloedd eu hunain. Beth y dylid ei wneud, a chan bwy, i ddarparu mannau mwy diogel i bobl ifanc i gymdeithasu yn yr ardaloedd lle maent yn byw? A yw'n golygu ychydig mwy na thynnu'r cwcell i lawr? Mae fy mab yn gwisgo *hoodie* hefyd.

**Eleanor Burnham:** It was interesting to read what you had to say. I have also worked with young people, as have others here. You say that there are no safe and interesting places for young people to hang out in their own areas. What should be done, and by whom, to provide safer places for young people to socialise in the areas where they live? Does that involve doing more than taking the hood down? My son wears a hoodie as well.

[20] **Mr Metcalfe:** For me, that last point is not an issue. Many of the activities for the young people with whom we engage take place in schools. There are after-school activities

there, and there are even youth clubs that are based in schools. I live in the Whitchurch area of Cardiff, and the local youth club is based in Whitchurch High School. However, the client groups with whom we engage do not want to go back to that location after the end of the school day; they want to go somewhere else and do something that is not in that sort of environment. So, there are various ways in which we could engage with them better.

[21] One problem is that, generally, parks and so on are aimed at a slightly younger client group. There are things such as swings, slides and so on for the under-sevens, and if you go there on a Saturday morning—and I am lucky as I have two small children—the park will be full of parents and children, and it is all fun, but if there is a group of teenagers in the corner, instantly there is a barrier between the different groups. So, there need to be different leisure locations for different age groups. It is not as simple as saying, ‘There’s a park there, so go and play.’ We know that there have been ideas such as having skateboard parks and so on, and so there is a way of ensuring that parents with small children can take them to a location where they can feel safe and play, while ensuring that older groups have a place to hang out as well.

[22] Another issue is that, these days, there are a lot of areas where young people feel that they are not allowed to go. I am not referring to trespassing on farmers’ fields or going for walks down by the canals and so on, but the general fear that they will always be doing something wrong if they go to these locations. I was lucky enough to hear Ray Mears speak recently—the guy who has written survival guides. At the end of the talk, someone asked him, ‘How did you get started?’ and he said that his dad was very liberal, and would say to him when he was five years old, ‘Off you go; go into the woods and play. Enjoy yourself and explore.’ He said that he used to walk out of his house at five years of age with an axe over one shoulder and a big saw over the other, going to make dens and to cut down trees. These days, if you saw a kid walking down the street with an axe and a saw, you would be on the phone dialling 999 straight away, because you would instantly think that they were going to do something bad. There is a misconception these days that children cannot be trusted to do things.

[23] Many parents feel that they cannot afford to give their children the time and the space to explore, play and to have life’s experiences, which are about trial and error, doing things, hanging out and so on. We, as parents and adults, need to give young people time and respect to let them get on with things. There are things that councils can do to ensure that there are safe places for young children to hang out with their parents and for teenagers to hang out, and to remove the stigma so that young people standing around in groups, talking and playing music on their mobile phones, are not seen as a threat to people—they are there because they want to socialise.

[24] **Eleanor Burnham:** I was in an area of Wrexham yesterday where there is a big patch of grass and a big sign that says, ‘No ball games’. What is your view on that? I think that it was a cul-de-sac of bungalows, and, forgive me—I must not appear to be stereotyping—but I think that there were older people living there. In fact, I know that there were. What do we do about that? We have our society in little boxes.

[25] **Mr Metcalfe:** We need to break down the barriers between the various generations and make everyone realise that we are all Welsh UK citizens. We all live in the same country and we all have the same ethos and outlook on life. You are right that society is being broken down into small segments, and it is very hard to bring those together these days. We need to go back to look at where our community has gone wrong. Why have we come to these conclusions? My children are three and five years of age and their grandparents are amazingly important to them. They play a huge part in their lives as learning coaches and mentors. I think that fear has crept into our society, so that everyone is afraid of everyone else. Older people are afraid of young people because of how they perceive their behaviour.

[26] **Eleanor Burnham:** Do you think that there is a role for us in trying to change attitudes in the media?

[27] **Mr Metcalfe:** Absolutely. As we have all seen with the election and everything else, the media are a powerful tool. One of the young people who we were talking to the other week said that he was walking down a high street in Cardiff with his headphones on and his music blaring away, when he saw an old lady drop her shopping. He went to help her and she screamed, 'Attacker', because her first thought was that a young person walking towards her would be a threat to her. He said, 'I just wanted to help her'. He felt embarrassed and ended up just putting his hands up and walking away. We have all seen the reports in the papers, with messages like, 'Ban the hoodies; reclaim our streets', with parties jumping on an easy bandwagon. That simply reinforces those negative stereotypes. We need to find some way to get back to the self in us all and realise that we are all citizens and that there is no reason for those barriers to be in place.

[28] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. We are going to have to be quite brief—

[29] **Mr Metcalfe:** Sorry.

[30] **Helen Mary Jones:** No, no.

[31] **Eleanor Burnham:** You have been very indulgent.

[32] **Helen Mary Jones:** I have, but do not push your luck. [*Laughter.*] We have quite a lot to get through and we have three lots of witnesses today, so we are a bit squeezed for time.

[33] **Val Lloyd:** Antony, in your evidence, you tell us that the most significant barriers to young people having safe places to hang out are costs and financial incapability. Can you give us an example of how costs are a barrier to the young people with whom you work? Are there any examples of schemes that have enabled inclusive access for all young people?

[34] **Mr Metcalfe:** Yes, certainly. There is the issue of travel and transport. For those living in a rural community, there may not be a great deal to do, or that is how they perceive it. I love running around outside, but some people want to go to town, to the cinema or they want more local amenities. If you live in a rural area without any local amenities, you have to pay to get on a train or a bus to travel to other areas. So, straight away, there is a cost. During the summer term, many young people are involved in school clubs and other clubs, which normally involve some cost to the parents. There are schemes that offer subsidised places, but the whole issue of free school meals and so on is not as defined during the holidays as it is during term time. Kids are off school for 20 weeks of the year, so there is a big gap in the levels of provision and support.

[35] There is the whole travel and transport issue and the whole means issue. For some of the young people with whom we work, there is also the peer group issue. If you do not have the latest trainers, tracksuit or mobile phone it can be—I do not want to say 'embarrassing', but if they go to hang out somewhere they are immediately identifiable as different from the rest of the group because they do not have the same equipment and therefore the same standing as other richer, young people. So, they tend to socialise in their own groups, away from the areas where activities are more expensive.

9.30 a.m.

[36] **Val Lloyd:** What about local authorities' youth club provision, of which there is quite a lot in my local area? Is cost a factor in preventing young people from accessing those?

[37] **Mr Metcalfe:** Some youth cubs charge a small entry free, which can sometimes be an issue. From our experience of talking to young people, it can sometimes be a bit of a coolness issue—they do not want to go to a youth club. Some youth clubs do really good work with 13, 14 and 15-year-olds and slightly younger ages, but when they turn into independent young people at 16, 17 or 18, they are not as keen to go to a youth club. As I said before, if the youth club is held in a school location where they have had a bad experience, it will turn them off even more.

[38] **Helen Mary Jones:** Angela, we touched on transport. Do you want to follow that up?

[39] **Angela Burns:** My question has been covered, Chair.

[40] **Helen Mary Jones:** Therefore, the next question is from me. On the participation of young people, the committee is looking at whether young people have the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect them, by having safe places to play and hang out. Do you have any evidence that local authorities are supporting young people with whom you work to be involved in that type of decision making about developing youth and leisure provision? Do you have any good or bad examples?

[41] **Mr Metcalfe:** I am probably going to be slightly cynical here, if you do not mind.

[42] **Helen Mary Jones:** Go on, feel free.

[43] **Mr Metcalfe:** We talk a lot to other organisations and we go to school locations. A lot of people say that they have a school committee and a school youth board that comments on, and feeds into, this and that activity. To be honest, in my very humble opinion, the young people who want to be involved in those sorts of committees are generally the ones who are quite driven anyway—they are the ones being pushed by their parents, and are very socially aware and confident. They might go to lots of different committees and they might be part of debating societies and so on, so they are generally quite outspoken. Given the nature of the client group that we work with, they might not want to be seen to sit on one of these panels, because they might lose their coolness with their peer group, and secondly, they might not have the confidence to do it.

[44] To give a slightly different opinion, an Assembly Member came to the centre just before Christmas, was given a tour of the centre, saw what we did and had lunch with some of our young people. Three of our young people wanted to quiz him afterwards and they grilled him for about 45 minutes on issues that affected them and their lives, such as teenage pregnancies, drink and drug misuse, unemployment issues and benefits. They were better than me at speaking about it because it came straight from their hearts and they were living it on a daily basis. At the end, the AM said that they gave him a better interview than some professional journalists, but we said that, six months before then, they would not even have looked him in the eye—they would not have wanted to physically engage with him. However, because of the programme on which we had worked with them to build their confidence and self-esteem, as well as their ability to have some self-worth again, they felt that they could contribute.

[45] I suppose that what I am trying to say is that it is very easy for people to say that they have a panel or youth board, but it is about how that panel or youth board is made up. Traditionally, it is made up of young people who come from slightly higher social backgrounds than the client group that we work with.

[46] **Helen Mary Jones:** So, at the risk of putting words in your mouth, what you are saying is that if decision makers want to engage with the kind of young people that you



support and work with, they need to think about how they do that—

[47] **Mr Metcalfe:** Much more cleverly.

[48] **Helen Mary Jones:** You are not saying that it is impossible to engage those young people in decision making, but that you have to do it in a different way.

[49] **Mr Metcalfe:** Yes. You have to speak to them in a place where they feel safe and respected, for example, rather than in a school classroom in front of the headmistress, where they might have a bad reputation. I am not saying that they do not want to engage, but that we need to be a lot cleverer about how we do it.

[50] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you; that is helpful. We have written evidence from the Sport Council for Wales that recommends that a wide range of activity programmes should be jointly planned by youth services, leisure services and the voluntary sector, and that access and transport to them should be provided. In your view, is there enough joint planning between key agencies to provide youth provision and safe places for young people to be and to spend time together in general?

[51] **Mr Metcalfe:** The simple answer is ‘no’. It is very easy for people to talk about working in partnership, but doing it on the ground is much harder. When you work for a very small charity, there are issues of time management and of who does what; it is about going to the leisure centre, engaging with different organisations and doing the paperwork, while having a normal 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. day job to do in working with your client group. I am not saying that this is not possible, but it needs to be carefully planned. These days, funding and budgets have to be in place; people have to be funded for the work that they are doing.

[52] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr ydych yn trafod bwlio yn eich tystiolaeth, ac yr ydych yn dweud bod llawer o bobl ifanc yn ofni ymosodiad, a bod llawer ohonynt yn dewis—neu’n teimlo eu bod yn gorfod dewis—osgoi gweithgareddau ac amgylcheddau chwarae; yr ydych wedi crybwyll y mater hwn. Faint o’r bobl ifanc yr ydych yn gweithio â hwy sy’n cael eu hatal rhag cymdeithasu oherwydd bwlio?

**Eleanor Burnham:** You mention bullying in your evidence, and you say that many young people are afraid of being attacked, and that many of them choose—or feel that they are forced to choose—to avoid activities or play environments; you have already mentioned this matter. How many of the young people with whom you work are prevented from socialising because of bullying?

[53] **Mr Metcalfe:** I could give you a fuller answer by going back to look at our statistics but, off the top of my head, I would say that probably 15 to 20 per cent of young people are prevented from doing so. However, bullying is only one issue, as there might be mental health issues or health issues—obesity could be involved. There are lots of different factors, but I would say that around 15 to 20 per cent of young people are put off, or are afraid for their personal safety for the wrong or right reasons; it might be a perceived threat rather than an actual physical threat. There are lots of different types of bullying—physical, mental, and racial bullying and stereotyping—so it covers quite a few different spectrums.

[54] **Eleanor Burnham:** A oes gennych enghreifftiau o weithgareddau llwyddiannus sydd wedi lleihau bwlio?

**Eleanor Burnham:** Do you have examples of successful initiatives that have reduced bullying?

[55] **Mr Metcalfe:** The client group that we work with normally comes to us with quite entrenched opinions on bullying. We do not tolerate any bullying in our centre, but it sometimes happens. It is how you deal with that bullying and make sure that the victim and the perpetrator understand the action of that bullying that is important. I have been involved

in schools before, and I know that there have been successful ways of getting both of those parties together to make them realise the hurt that the perpetrator is causing the young person who is being bullied, and realise the long-term social effects on their mental health, health, self-esteem and confidence. My limited experience in this area is that you need to bring the two parties together and make them understand that the actions of the perpetrator are harming that young person.

[56] **Val Lloyd:** I have a question on adult supervision in relation to bullying, and bringing them together. The question arises because we had video evidence from young people involved in Funky Dragon, who gave a strong message that they feel safe when they are supervised by adults, and that they welcome supervision, either by youth workers and police or other adults. Do you think that the young people with whom you work would share this view?

[57] **Mr Metcalfe:** Yes they do, but it takes a lot longer to build up that respect and trust with our client group. I am not saying that they do not want to engage with adults—they do—but it is just that their experience of engaging with adults, be it their parents, other carers, school staff and people in positions of authority, is not always very positive; it takes much longer, but a lot of them want to be appreciated and liked. Respect and trust have to work both ways; they have to respect and trust you, and you have to respect and trust them. It can take a very long time to build up this trust with the client group that we are working with; they do want it, but they will not give it openly unless they understand where you are coming from and what your experiences are. One thing that we feel works very well for us is that 20 per cent of our staff are former clients, so they have come through the process, they have volunteered for us and are now working with us. When a young person tells a former client ‘You don’t understand my life’, they can say that they were in their shoes 10 years ago, that they were on the streets or taking drugs, or that they have been to prison. This makes the young person realise straight away that, if they turn their lives around and start engaging, they have positive role models to follow.

9.40 a.m.

[58] **Angela Burns:** You have touched on the fact that some of the people with whom you work like to feel cool, and you say in your paper that they join gangs for a variety of reasons—recognition, acceptance, peer respect and so on. You also refer in your paper to the projects that you are running to try to combat gang culture. Could you expand on that? What other agencies do you know of that are trying to identify and address the issues of gang culture?

[59] **Mr Metcalfe:** We have run various projects that have been funded by different agencies—sometimes Government agencies—that have aimed to look at that whole process of being in a gang, such as the effects of knife crime and gun crime. There is one underlying social issue. I cannot remember the name of the book that refers to this, but a young person is affected by two groups of people in their lives: their peer group—the young people that they hang out and socialise with—and their parental group, which can be parents, teachers or grandparents, people in positions of authority. It is for that young person to decide which side they feel has the most authority and the most power over them. Is it their peer group or the group that has the more traditional authoritarian positions? Young people who gravitate towards their peer group will want to fit in more with that peer group than they will with their parental side. If their peer group is saying ‘There’s a window over there, let’s smash it’, they will do it, because they have more fear of their peer group than they do of their parents finding out about it. That young person will gravitate towards their peer group. If they are more afraid of what their dad will do to them when they get home, because he knows that they have been hanging around and smashed a window, then they will not do it. It is about understanding where they fit in. We try to make them understand the effects of their actions.

They could appear to be in a group of people who are giving them a lot of respect and trust and bonding, but is using them only for its own means. We would say ‘You are a foot soldier to them’, for example. It is about making them understand what is happening, especially if a young girl is getting involved with gangs and drink, drugs and gang initiation ceremonies are involved, and so on. These things do take place, which can place these young ladies in difficult situations and make them feel like they have to fit in. In addition, if you can give a young person the self-belief that their opinions and views are important, they will feel less attracted to get involved in one of those gang situations. However, lots of gangs provide very good support networks for young people. I am not saying that all gangs are bad.

[60] **Angela Burns:** I was going to ask that question; I am glad that you have touched on that.

[61] **Mr Metcalfe:** I was in a gang when I was young.

[62] **Angela Burns:** So was I.

[63] **Mr Metcalfe:** We used to go on our bikes and paint our hands red, but it did not mean that we were going to smash windows. It is just a way of socialising with your friends. However, it is the other side of gang culture that can be more intimidating, especially when drink, guns, violence and drugs are involved. It is about making the young person realise that they have the importance, self-confidence and self-esteem to make their own decisions in life and not feel that they need to become part of a bigger social group, which can sometimes put them at risk. I know that lots of other charities, and the police, are also doing good work in breaking down gang culture, which is good.

[64] **Angela Burns:** You say in your paper that the main reason that young people cite for joining a gang is boredom. Is there an age where bad gang culture really starts to nip in to a young person? Does it start at eight or 13? I wonder whether we can pinpoint the most vulnerable age group and try to make sure that there are activities available at that particular point in their lives so that they make different decisions.

[65] **Mr Metcalfe:** I am not an expert in this field. It depends on a number of areas; the community that you grow up in, the social standing of that young person and so on. Many of the young people to whom we talk say that transition from primary to secondary school is a major hurdle for them. That is when many of them drop out of education, feel stressed, want to do something else and get involved with a gang. Many of those young people are often in the same situation; they are bored and want things to do. From our experience, that transition from primary to secondary school is a big motivator.

[66] **Helen Mary Jones:** We have touched on your question, Eleanor, but I think that it is worth exploring it a bit further.

[67] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae gennyf gwestiwn am bortreadu plant a phobl ifanc yn negyddol, yn enwedig yn y cyfryngau. Yn eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig, yr ydych yn amlinellu'r modd y mae ymgyrch sydd wedi ei harwain gan y cyfryngau yn bennaf wedi ceisio rhoi enw drwg i bobl ifanc a'u portreadu i gyd fel troseddwy'r. Faint o botensial, felly, sydd gan y prosiectau sy'n pontio cenedlaethau a drafodasoch yn gynnuau i fynd i'r afael â chanfyddiadau o'r fath? Pa fentrau eraill a allai fynd i'r afael â'r

**Eleanor Burnham:** I have a question about negative stereotypes of children and young people, especially in the media. In your written evidence, you outline the how a largely media-led campaign has tried to demonise young people and to portray them all as criminals. Therefore, how much potential do the intergenerational projects that you mentioned earlier have to address such perceptions? What other initiatives could address these negative stereotypes of young people among some adults, such as the

portreadu negyddol hyn o bobl ifanc ymysg old woman whom you mentioned?  
rhai oedolion, fel yr hen ddynes a wnaethoch  
sôn amdani?

[68] **Mr Metcalfe:** We all know that the media is a powerful tool. If you do work on the ground, it does not matter how good your work in that small community is if it is not publicised or talked about positively. I am not knocking the media, but its remit is to sell papers, and so it glorifies some things and makes others sound worse than they really are. We need to find a way of getting more positive news stories into the press, and not just positive news stories about successful families and young people, but about young people from deprived areas and communities who are doing positive things. There are some great volunteering programmes out there that involve young people. We know of many young people who go out and shop for their grandparents, help out around the home and so on. They do lots of positive things, but that is not well publicised. That information is not out there. As you said, people stereotype young people negatively based on the actions of a very small proportion of the overall population.

[69] **Eleanor Burnham:** How do you think that we can change the media's view? Fewer people buy newspapers regularly, and yet the media still believes that only bad news stories sell. You must have a role in this. Do you go to the newspapers?

[70] **Mr Metcalfe:** Yes, we try to get a positive news story into the press once a quarter or once every few months about, for example, someone who has turned their life around and has gained qualifications or employment. However, that will normally go into the education section or some supplement, not on the front page, whereas if there has been a car accident or a knifing somewhere, that will be on the front page. We need to find a way of changing society's attitudes towards young people—which needs to start with top-down policies, but should also come up from community and intergenerational work—and to make people realise that we will be a much stronger community if we all come together than if we live in small, isolated pockets. I am afraid that I did not answer that question very well, but the media, whether that is the internet, radio or television, is a powerful tool and means of getting that message across.

[71] **Eleanor Burnham:** Perhaps it does not realise the destruction—

[72] **Mr Metcalfe:** Yes, the damage that it is doing.

[73] **Eleanor Burnham:** In other pages, the local papers are very good at celebrations and feature huge amounts of school photographs, and yet these young people are the people who desperately need society's support.

[74] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you very much, Antony. We have your written evidence, which is very useful, but is there anything that we have not touched on this morning that you would like to put on record or draw our attention to?

[75] **Mr Metcalfe:** I would just like to say that while the client group that we work with is, to use the terminology, a marginalised, disaffected group of young people, many of them are hugely talented and skilled, with huge personal achievements and quite a few of them have had some horrendous life experiences and life stories. I believe that no young person is born evil, but they are shaped by the lives that they lead. Therefore, we need to find a way of stopping the stereotyping of young people and to make people realise that not everyone fits the same box, everyone is different and many young people have different skills that can be applied in different ways. Finding a skill that they can hang their hat on is the most important thing.

[76] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you very much for your evidence this morning. Diolch yn fawr.

[77] Symudwn at yr hyn sydd nesaf ar yr agenda, sef tystiolaeth gan Gartrefi Cymoedd Merthyr a Sustrans. Croesawaf Jonathan Bevan o Gartrefi Cymoedd Merthyr, ac Alexandra Allen a Lee Waters o Sustrans yn gynnes i'r bwrdd. Mae gennym rai cwestiynau sydd yn bennaf i Jonathan a rhai sy'n bennaf i Alexandra a Lee, ond croeso ichi gyfrannu ar yr holl gwestiynau, oherwydd mae rhai o'r materion yr un peth.

We will move on to the next part of our agenda, which is evidence from Merthyr Valleys Homes and Sustrans. I warmly welcome Jonathan Bevan from Merthyr Valleys Homes, and Alexandra Allen and Lee Waters from Sustrans to the table. We have some questions that are mainly for Jonathan and some that are predominantly for Lee and Alexandra, but feel free to comment on all the questions, because some of the issues are the same.

9.50 a.m.

[78] There are also some general questions to you all, because the issues of transport, physical safety, road safety and so on are common to you all.

[79] I will begin with a question that is predominantly for Jonathan. You make the case in your written evidence for home zones and state that, put simply, they are safe residential streets. However, Play Wales states in its evidence that:

[80] 'Evidence suggests that the costs of traditional home zones are prohibitive and that the ideal of universal application in residential areas is unrealistic.'

[81] Is it realistic to suggest that home zones could be widely implemented? If your answer is 'yes'—as I suspect it will be—what should be done in practical terms to take that agenda forward?

[82] **Mr Bevan:** They can be expensive, and that was the experience in Britain and in other European countries during the home zone challenge. However, they do not have to be expensive. The Sustrans representatives can talk about the DIY Streets initiative, which is a development of the home zone idea. I have seen plenty of home zones that are not expensive schemes. Another thing to remember about cost in practical terms is that when new housing estates are built, the cost of building a normal road, which is not an insignificant amount, should be offset against the cost of the home zone. There is an additional cost, over and above what a normal residential street would cost, but you should not look at the cost of the home zone in isolation; it should be offset against what it would cost to build a normal street.

[83] I say in my paper that home zones are safe residential streets, and those are three powerful words to put together. I do not know whether anyone around this table knows of one safe residential street in Wales or, indeed, in Britain. That in itself means that home zones are an ideal model, and perhaps, some would say, the panacea of residential street design, but I believe that we should go for that. We should not say, 'It's too expensive so we mustn't do it'. We should look at it and ask, 'Okay, it's the model for safe residential streets, so how do we go about achieving it?' It does not always require extraordinary amounts of money; these things can sometimes be done quite modestly.

[84] An important issue is a shift in perception about these streets and about how to achieve them, rather than them being looked at purely as highways that vehicles travel up and down. So, the difficult hurdle that you must overcome with every home zone and every residential street is making them places for people, rather than for cars. That is not to say that cars should be excluded, but they should be places for people first and foremost.

[85] **Helen Mary Jones:** Lee or Alexandra, do you want to add to that?

[86] **Ms Allen:** I think that Jonathan has covered it pretty well. Our experience in the past three years has been one of trying to pilot a more cost-effective approach, and we have laid out some of our evaluation results for you. We achieved reductions in speed and an increase in a feeling of safety. The weakness in the DIY Streets approach in contrast to the full home zone approach is in getting that holistic shift from a space that is predominantly for cars to a space that is predominantly for people, where cars are invited in. If you look at the radical shift in Dutch streets, which is not so affordable or cheap to do, you will see that difference. I do not think that DIY Streets is a panacea, but, where we have introduced it, it is making a significant difference.

[87] **Helen Mary Jones:** Before I bring in Eleanor, I want to pick up on one point. I take it from what you said, Jonathan, that there needs to be a shift in the way in which planners think. We have a planning process where the application goes in, and you talk to the department responsible for highways. One thing that you might talk about with it is how easy a development is to access, for example, whether a turning from the proposed new estate onto the existing highway system is safe. You would not really be thinking about an integrated approach to how the streets in that area of new housing are to be used. Do we perhaps need to make a recommendation to the Government that there should be training in order to produce a shift in the thinking of those who deal with our planning applications?

[88] **Mr Bevan:** Training the professionals who are responsible for the design of highways is the least that needs to be done. I am not sure whether the guidance in the recent 'Manual for Streets' has been adopted in Wales. It has good stuff in it about home zones and safe residential streets—I think that I am right in saying that, although I am not involved directly in that anymore. The people who are in control of designing streets and highways have to be brought along in the discussion on home zones and safe residential streets. They are too focused on such things as whether a bin lorry can turn around at the end of a cul-de-sac and so on, and we have to move away from that.

[89] **Val Lloyd:** I would support what you are saying, what you are trying to achieve and the methodology, but, realistically, new streets and housing estates are built by private developers. There is a degree of social housing, but these estates are built predominantly by private developers. It is hard for the planners, unless they have strict regulations, to negotiate with developers, because, obviously, developers have a cost imperative.

[90] **Ms Allen:** Scotland took on board the 'Manual for Streets', most of the work on which was done by the Welsh Assembly Government and Westminster. It is a good piece of guidance. The Scottish Government took that, looked at it and revised it. However, it published it as planning policy rather than as guidance. Its version is much shorter, but its principles, which are the same principles as in the 'Manual for Streets', are now a material consideration. The extent to which people follow guidance in comparison with what they do when they are required to do something is something to look at. That goes some way towards addressing your concern in relation to private developers. A shift in perceptions could be done around what creates value in a new housing development. That is just one example.

[91] **Mr Waters:** We held an interesting round-table discussion in the Assembly about 18 months ago, with Jane Davidson in the chair. We brought together architects, highway engineers and housing associations, and we did that in partnership with Play Wales. We asked a question there about whether, in the case of new land that the Assembly Government was releasing as part of anti-recession measures to encourage the building of housing, developments could be designed in a way that encouraged play. What was interesting about the discussion was the gulf between the people who were trying to make this happen and the

highway engineers around the table. It was almost as if they were speaking a different language, and it was interesting that the Minister responsible for planning and her chief planning officer were saying, ‘We have introduced new policy on this,’ whereas the engineers were just saying, ‘That is interesting.’ They were using guidance and policy that was 15 or 20 years old. There was a real gulf between the people at the top, who were thinking, ‘If we pull levers, things will happen,’ and the people on the ground working with a very risk-averse mindset, who govern what actually happens.

[92] Following that, Jenny Randerson introduced her proposal for a legislative competence Order that called for travel plans to be part of any new development, which the Government opposed. In her response, Jane Davidson announced a programme of training for planners and engineers. She said that she would review it and, if new legislation was required before 2011—it is worth checking the Record, because I am quoting this from memory—she would consider introducing it. So, training is absolutely key.

10.00 a.m.

[93] There is a great deal of good practice out there. As Alex said, Scotland has gone one step further by putting that guidance into policy, which is far stronger because there is so much guidance out there that people on the ground just do what they know because they cannot keep on top of all the guidance that is coming out. So, if the committee were to consider following the Scottish example of putting guidance into policy, it would be a strong policy. However, it would also be useful to follow up the training of the practitioners.

[94] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is very helpful. The more specific things that we have to formally recommend to the Government, the better. If there is already a willingness to look at that, that is helpful.

[95] **Ms Allen:** Could I come in on the training point briefly? I am based in Bristol, so I have a UK-wide role, but I have been involved with the Play Shaper programme, which was funded as part of England’s play strategy. That is a cross-professional training module that has already been quite rigorously developed there. Every top-tier local authority in England is eligible to have that training. The idea is that local authorities bring together transport, highways, planners, education, children’s services, the police, the safeguarding teams and health, if they can get them all around a table. You then have around 20 or 25 strategic heads in the room and the training is very powerful. It takes them through what play is, which is poorly understood at a strategic level, why play is important to their work and, finally, what they can do for play. Again, there is a potential there to pick up that model. In fact, some of my co-facilitators are based in Swansea, so there is a lot of expertise here that is leaking across. That is something to pick up. Obviously, it has been trialled, piloted and tested and it is robust. You could look at what is working and what is not and adapt it and bring it here.

[96] **Eleanor Burnham:** On exactly that issue, I had the most negative encounter with someone who worked for highways in relation to speed. I will not mention which authority that person worked for, but it happened only recently. I have not been so depressed in a long time because of the negative ‘cannot dos’ and the costs involved. All that I was asking about was the potential to reduce speed on a country road in a particular neighbourhood so that people could walk to the village and generally be safe. We have a hell of a long way to go.

[97] **Helen Mary Jones:** We are dealing with that risk-averse culture.

[98] **Eleanor Burnham:** Absolutely, and I am pleased that Sustrans is making some headway and we must remind ourselves to ask the Minister what is happening.

[99] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, we can certainly achieve that in the recommendations.

[100] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae'r cwestiwn hwn i Mr Bevan. Yr ydych yn dweud yn eich tystiolaeth ei fod yn llawer haws ac yn fwy cost effeithiol i ystyried dull dylunio parth cartrefi ar gyfer strydoedd preswyl newydd yn hytrach nag ôl-osod mewn strydoedd presennol. A ydych yn dweud nad yw gweithredu parth cartrefi ond yn realistig mewn strydoedd preswyl newydd neu a ydych yn meddwl ei fod yn bosibl i wneud rhai newidiadau mewn strydoedd sydd eisoes yn bodoli?

**Eleanor Burnham:** This question is for Mr Bevan. You say in your evidence that it is much easier and more cost-effective to consider the home zone design approach for new residential streets rather than trying to retrofit existing streets. Are you saying that implementing home zones is only realistic in new residential streets or do you think that it is possible to make some changes in existing streets?

[101] **Mr Bevan:** No, it is possible to retrofit, but it is simpler when building new estates, as I said in the first part of my evidence. It is simpler, when you are building new estates, to lay out streets in a manner that is safe for everyone, to make safe residential streets. To retrofit, you have to undo what has been built before you can start to construct a new, safe residential street. So, that is the issue. Retrofitting and putting home zones into existing streets is a different kettle of fish to planning new estates. That is not to say that you have to undo everything in an existing street to retrofit. For example, you can build on what is already there. I think, again, that the DIY Streets initiative is a good way of showing how you do not have to rip it all out and start again; you can build on what is there. In existing residential streets, there is the advantage of having the people who already live there to work with: you can consult with them on where the children play and where the teenagers hang out. You have all that to work with, to observe and to build upon, and you can consult with those sectors of the community, whereas with a new estate, you have no community with which to consult until the people are in their homes. They are two different things.

[102] **Eleanor Burnham:** Are you working hard with developers? I have been to some new developments recently, and frankly, some of them are just as bad.

[103] **Helen Mary Jones:** Eleanor, we are only on the second question, and we have about 10 that we want to put to our colleagues in the next half an hour. So, although these are big issues, I ask Members and witnesses to be as brief, or focused, as possible.

[104] **Val Lloyd:** In evidence to the committee the Deputy Minister for Children told us that the issue of home zones has not been taken forward in Wales because significant resource is being focused on preparing guidance for setting local speed limits. Is the focus on 20 mph zones sufficient to address your concerns?

[105] **Mr Bevan:** In my experience as a community consultant working with communities all over Wales, I would say that it is not. Others might disagree, but having been on the ground in residential areas in different parts of Wales, but mainly in Communities First wards, I think that residents would say that 20 mph zones are almost worthless. I rarely see examples of 20 mph zones or lower speed restrictions that actually have physical measures that discourage high speeds and encourage obedience of the speed limit. It seems that it is believed that a sign, and maybe a hump, will often suffice to make a residential street safe. In my experience as a community consultant, the communities that I work in do not think that that is enough. Most people tell me that it is the most basic, brutal, raw kind of measure to take, and it is not enough.

[106] **Angela Burns:** I have a question for Lee. What is the difference between a home zone and your DIY Streets scheme? Or should that be a question for Alexandra?



[107] **Mr Waters:** Alex is the UK expert on this, so perhaps she would be the best person to answer.

[108] **Ms Allen:** The reason we chose to give our project a new name—and I will explain the difference in a moment—is that, to us, a home zone has quite a strict definition, with legislation attached to it. The key difference in the design and what it will look like is that with most, if not all home zones, the idea is to strip away the distinction between the carriageway, where cars are allowed, and the pavement, where people are allowed. You put in a shared surface and other features to create a blurred, shared space. The DIY Streets schemes that we have been implementing do not do that and that is a big cost saving, because it is very expensive to take up the entire surface of a street and start again. The DIY Streets scheme leaves the street as it is, so we leave the pavements, and we add features to the street. Those features are very similar to home zone features, so you do things like add greenery, plant trees, install art features, and shorten drivers' sightlines. It uses the same design principle as home zones in that respect, but the key difference is that one has a shared surface and the other does not. As I said in my opening statement, that creates another step change in how people treat the space and behave. That is the key difference. Then, on cost, it is significantly less expensive. However, the process is very similar, so we look to engage with residents, which is key to home zones, and you go through a community-led process with both. Is that helpful?

[109] **Angela Burns:** Yes, that is interesting. There are a number of photographs of different streets in the evidence, and I was not entirely clear which streets were categorised as home zones. There is one here with a kind of Wendy house on the corner, which is part of the DIY Streets scheme. The other thing that is missing from the evidence is some measure of how much safer children actually are. I have two small children, and there is no way that I would allow them to play on that street. I want to understand how safe these home zones are.

[110] I do not want to steal Val's question, but I also picked up in the evidence that the Somerset Street experiment did not show a real reduction in speed, although there was a perception of a reduction in speed. Of course, that can be quite tricky because people think that things are safer but, in fact, they are not.

10.10 a.m.

[111] **Ms Allen:** I wish to pick up on that point. I would say that it is the other way around. It is difficult when you have very low traffic volumes to pick up statistical significance. It will be the one very fast vehicle that causes the problem, but, in many streets, traffic speeds are reasonably low. In Somerset Street, speeds are around 14 to 15 miles per hour. So, that is already below the 20 mph limit that people are discussing. It is the perception of danger that prevents parents feeling comfortable with their children playing out. Although I recognise your concern about whether it is safe, a great deal of whether we feel safe comes down to the perception of how that street is used. There is a virtuous circle. If a street is known to have children playing on it a lot of the time, and we expect to see children in our streets, drivers behave accordingly, regardless of whether there is a limit or a zone. A good example is if you were to drive into a camp ground—

[112] **Angela Burns:** Sorry, but I cannot see how this ties in with the slight difference between a home zone and a DIY Street. Surely that is just more confusing.

[113] **Ms Allen:** There is no absolute; it is a continuum. With a shared surface, you are likely to get slightly lower speeds than in a DIY Street, because, instead of being tarmac, it looks more like a cobbled street.

[114] **Mr Waters:** May I try to explain? One of the principles behind home zones and DIY

Streets as opposed to normal streets is that they do not put the car at the centre of the street, but people. This is where the argument about 20 mph zones slightly misses the point. The traditional highway engineer approach is that a road is a place for a car to go through and that the job of a designer is to facilitate the car going through that space. What home zones and DIY Streets try to do, on different scales, is to ask what can be done to make the street feel more comfortable so that people feel comfortable with the idea of their children playing in the street. One of the things that can be done is to break up the line of sight. We know that when you drive down a straight road, with nothing in your way, you feel more confident to go faster. So, you need to break up the line of sight. There are potted plants sticking out, which is what the DIY Streets scheme does, or the car parking is arranged differently so that it is more confusing. By making it feel less safe for the driver, you make it safer because you force people to slow down to check where they are going and not to assume that it is their right to drive fast.

[115] **Ms Allen:** A good example is Kensington High Street in London, which had miles and miles of pedestrian guard rails and tended to allow pedestrians to cross only in certain places. There was a significant revamp of that road, and they took out all but a couple of metres of the guard rails; literally, hundreds of metres of guard rails were removed. Another thing that they did was to put the cycle parking in the central reservation. This is Kensington High Street, with lots of buses, taxis, shoppers and cyclists and they put the cycle racks in the central reservation. That project has led to an enormous reduction in the number of serious casualties and fatalities. The reason for that is that there are lots of cyclists in London and, all of a sudden, they are often crossing that road, so drivers, bus drivers and taxi drivers are used to having to deal with that.

[116] **Angela Burns:** Yes, but Alexandra, this is about safe places for children. I do not think that children would play in Kensington High Street. It might be great for cars, buses and cyclists, but we are talking about places like the ones in the photographs in your paper, where you still have quite a big road that also has parking spaces and you are trying to encourage the development of a little playground on what is a corner of a junction. We are going to produce a report to try to encourage people to enable children to go out and have safe places to play. I need to be convinced that there is evidence that that is a safe place, so that we could put in the report that people should let their children play on this kind of street and say, 'It's okay; they won't be squashed'.

[117] **Mr Bevan:** Yes, but that is exactly the point. It is the same paradox as with Kensington High Street. The traditional method of designing these streets is to try to make them as safe as possible, but the result of that is to make it dangerous for children and pedestrians. Those streets are safe; Kensington High Street and most residential streets are safe if you are in a car, and that is the central paradox: to make them safe for cars makes them unsafe for everyone else. The residents of the street that you referred to demanded that their landlord—who then engaged me as a consultant to work with them—put play in the street, because that is what they wanted. The photo does not do justice to the traffic calming impact. The street is in Aberaman, in the Valleys.

[118] **Angela Burns:** I would be very happy to go with you to that street, to see it for myself, because I need to be convinced on this.

[119] **Mr Bevan:** Okay, that is fine. The scheme was introduced about five years ago, and when I was in the street a month ago, two women came out of their houses and said that it was the best thing that had ever happened. They were so pleased that it had happened and that the money had gone there.

[120] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a very sensible suggestion, because it is quite difficult to get your head around it. I have seen that scheme at work, because I used to work in the Cynon

valley. However, it is difficult to get an impression from photos, and it might be useful to talk to some of the residents as well to ask what it was like before and after. That would help us to make firm recommendations.

[121] Val, can we come back to cost?

[122] **Val Lloyd:** My second question has been dealt with in depth. On cost, you referred to Somerset Street in Cardiff in your example. You gave us a cost of £150,000, although you noted that, without resurfacing the street, it would have been about £54,000, which is about a third of the cost. You say that that street has 50 properties and that it is 141m long, so it is quite small. Do you think that the level of funding that you quote is realistic for widespread implementation across Wales, or do you see your approach being targeted at a number of higher-risk residential streets?

[123] **Ms Allen:** You need a combination of things. Angela's questioning pointed out something quite important, which is that there has to be a feeling that it is a risky place. Residents have to be interested and engaged in working on a non-standard approach, and you need a local authority that is willing to go beyond the guidance that it has been working to for 20-odd years and try something different. The costs could come down. For example, we decided to put planters in Somerset Street. The guidance suggests that in order for a planter to be safe, it needs to be on a tarmac-kerbed build-out. In our street in Manchester, where we also have installed planters, the local authority took a different view, and instead of trying to keep the planters safe from danger in a street where traffic speeds would be very low, we put the planters directly in the street. That saves a huge amount on cost—it is probably about a quarter of the cost to put a planter directly in the street versus putting it in with bollards around it and so on. So, it depends on the approach.

[124] Your question asked whether it could be rolled out. A number of things will happen. You want to work with the willing, namely residents who are keen to use their street in a different way. So, widespread application is probably not a good way to start. However, what we have seen in a number of our DIY Streets areas is that when you have done one street, everyone says, 'Actually, I did not want that before, but now I do'. As you do more and more streets and you become more comfortable with the design techniques that we allow, you see that, while not every plant or tree should be unprotected in the carriageway, many could be. As you become more comfortable with how you can create simple, durable features that are robust and do not need a great deal of maintenance, costs will come down, too.

[125] **Mr Waters:** There is a consistent pattern here of consultants and local authorities, and this reads across to cycle paths and all sorts of other interventions, in that there is a very risk-averse mindset, which means that the engineers over-design and over-engineer. So, the costs go up unnecessarily because cycle paths must have kerb edgings, for example. For a cycle path, a local authority or a consultant will put in concrete kerb edgings along a tarmac path in the middle of nowhere. Why do you need that? It is a third of the cost of the path, but that is the way in which they have always worked. So, the broader question is: how do we achieve cultural change when our principal deliverers are from a very different culture? That is a big question.

10.20 a.m.

[126] **Helen Mary Jones:** That brings us back to training and those issues. I have a question for both sets of witnesses. Val, did you say that your next question has been answered?

[127] **Val Lloyd:** It has been fully answered.

[128] **Helen Mary Jones:** We have heard a range of evidence that traffic and road safety issues have a big impact on children and young people's ability to play and hang out safely. This morning, we have talked a lot about home zones and DIY Streets. Are there any other practical recommendations that you would like to see us making to the Welsh Government around these issues? We have heard, for example, that the 20 mph zones are okay but that they do not really deal with the problem.

[129] **Ms Allen:** I should apologise at this point because, in our evidence, we list the capital cost of building it. I am afraid that what is not included is the cost of working with the residents over a period of time. That is an additional cost. One of our recommendations is to recognise that, in this type of work—and we have just had a great example of it—some of the residents that we work with are gung-ho and really want to see their kids play outside, but their neighbours are reluctant and suspicious. You cannot ignore those people and tell them that they are wrong; you have to work with them. There is a cost associated with the process. Here is an example from my experience: we are trying to develop another DIY Streets project with Bridgend, where we have been working over the last couple of years, and there is regeneration money there, which is great. However, the money is almost all capital money, so it can only be spent on making physical changes to the environment, whereas in this kind of work, revenue costs need to be met to cover the time and staff needed to be able to work. In the end, we hope that we will be able to marry up those examples of forward thinking, such as Communities First, in which community involvement is given recognition. To summarise, in transport and highways, the importance of meaningful consultation and involvement with residents is not always recognised in the way that budgets are set. They are largely weighted towards capital when time and money is needed to work with people, to bring them along and to make for a truly innovative and resident-supported solution.

[130] **Helen Mary Jones:** Would anyone like to add anything?

[131] **Mr Bevan:** I think you have enough to consider. [*Laughter.*]

[132] **Helen Mary Jones:** The risk is that if you do not consult properly, you spend a lot of money on a capital scheme that does not work because it does not meet the needs of the community.

[133] **Eleanor Burnham:** Have you considered how you deal with disability, including disabled children—of which, hopefully, there are not too many—who may have some form of physical disability, such as being in a wheelchair, as well as others who are deaf or blind? Look at what has been done to the square in Caernarfon. Many local people are concerned by that kind of issue. I am trying to tag this point onto my official questions so that I do not get cut off because, in another committee, we have been looking at open spaces for disabled people. In particular, we have been talking about crossing the line at major train stations and the difficulties for those with disabilities. It is similar, in my humble opinion, because in the case of streets where there is no distinction between pedestrians and cars, how do people who cannot see cope if, when they know that they are near a road, there is no ridged kerb?

[134] **Helen Mary Jones:** The RNIB is fearful about mixed use.

[135] **Eleanor Burnham:** Have you taken this into consideration, and what kind of advice do you give in relation to this?

[136] **Mr Bevan:** Considering the needs of all the users of a space or street is paramount. At the moment, 99.9 per cent of streets do not take account of all users; they take account only of car users. I do not think that I need to say much more than that. There are issues around access in home zones and shared-surface streets, but I think that it is a red herring. If they are designed properly for all users, then they should be fine.

[137] **Helen Mary Jones:** I have to say that if an organisation with the reputation of the RNIB tells me that it is worried about something, I am not going to treat it as a red herring. Its concerns have, however, been more about the town centre projects, such as the one in Caernarfon. Lee, would you like to add anything?

[138] **Mr Waters:** This is a difficult and sensitive issue. First of all, there needs to be recognition that disability is a spectrum. As Jonathan said, there are vulnerable road users—it may be a child, an old person, a person in a wheelchair, or a blind person. People in that spectrum have different needs. Many of the solutions would be a huge improvement on what is currently there. They may not meet the need of every single person. The decision that needs to be made relates to the balance of needs.

[139] The blind lobby has strong concerns about shared surfaces and shared spaces. This is a really difficult nut to crack and I have spent a lot of time discussing this with organisations for blind people to find a way through. I do not think that there is an answer, because, at the moment, opinions are polarised. Guide Dogs for the Blind in particular has been campaigning robustly on this. It takes the position of refusing to compromise, which is extremely difficult to engage with. Having talked to the organisation at length about this, my view is that, if we are going to get a change of culture with regard to the way in which we design our streets and our town centre spaces, we need to move away from current practice.

[140] Guide dogs are trained to recognise the current environment and to pick up the physical cues that have been put there, such as the tactile paving, kerbs, and whatever else; they have been trained on that basis. Moving away from that causes problems for them and anxiety for the people they work with. I understand that. However, if we are going to get a shift in the way in which we design streets and places, so that they are better for vulnerable road users across the spectrum, then there needs to be a re-think on all sides about how to find new cues for blind people to navigate by. It does not mean that there should be no change, just because they are used to a certain way of moving around. It is difficult, it is sensitive, and it is not helped by certain groups saying, ‘We’re a vulnerable group; don’t you dare change because you do not understand what we feel’. That makes it difficult for those who really want to change things for the better to engage with them.

[141] **Helen Mary Jones:** Is there any evidence from places where this kind of approach to street design is better established? I was thinking of the Netherlands. Have we any examples? It is not only the question of sight, because one of the things that can happen is that when a smooth road surface is replaced with a bumpy one, which slows down cars, it can be a bit of a pain for a pram or a wheelchair, or for older people.

[142] **Ms Allen:** There are two pieces of research that I can point you towards. In November, the Department for Transport published the first phase of its research project on shared spaces. It was a thorough review of the evidence and, as I said, the stage 1 findings were published in November. These found in favour of shared-space solutions, but in the context of needing to find a local design solution that fits. I have been working with the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, which is also a Westminster body, and it will publish its research, for which it went to speak to groups in the Netherlands and Sweden among others. I do not know what the findings will be. Having chatted with it, I gather that it has found that there are not the same antagonistic, polarised views and that there has been more co-operation.

[143] From our experience of working on both DIY Streets and, earlier, on home zones, I do not think that you can take a generalised stance. The point of residential streets is that they are local, unique places and one solution will never fit all. In the home zone project in Bristol, the local access group worked with us at the design phase and through construction to

completion. The group thought that it was an excellent project, and a diverse group came along to test it out. That system works very well indeed, and it is local and robust rather than being about national organisations debating around a table.

[144] **Helen Mary Jones:** You made a good point about polarised views and the fact that you will not reach a compromise if people will not discuss issues.

[145] We are running short of time and there are a couple of questions that we will not have time to put to you, which we would like to put to you in writing, if we may. Angela, may I bring you in on question 22, because that is the appropriate one to round off this session. There is a huge range of complex issues, and it is difficult to do them justice in the short term. I appreciate that Angela and some of the others might like to see some of these projects, where they have been put in place, to get a better picture of how that works. Perhaps Angela would like to come to the last question.

10.30 a.m.

[146] **Angela Burns:** Sure. In your evidence, you raise a range of issues and you highlight a number of concerns in relation to planning, design and transport. Is there a single priority, issue or recommendation that you would like to give or make to this committee today?

[147] **Eleanor Burnham:** A Christmas pressie list. [*Laughter.*]

[148] **Mr Waters:** As you say, there are very broad issues. Would the recommendations be in relation to anything in particular?

[149] **Helen Mary Jones:** If you could choose one recommendation that you would like the committee to make to the Government, what would be the No. 1 priority, from the wide range of issues that you have highlighted for us today?

[150] **Mr Waters:** Further to the point that we made earlier, I think that making ‘Manual for Streets’ policy rather than guidance would probably have the greatest impact.

[151] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is really useful.

[152] **Mr Bevan:** I would say the same. That is the priority, really.

[153] **Helen Mary Jones:** So that it becomes something that people have to do, rather than just consider if they have time. Thank you all very much. Did you wish to add anything to that, Alexandra?

[154] **Ms Allen:** No, I would just reiterate my point about considering transport budgets and the extent to which they are very capital heavy. We should look at what is being spent and at whether the investment is wisely spent. If people are required to devote it all to physical infrastructure, perhaps communities do not want that or are not signed up to it, as it is not serving their needs.

[155] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is also a good point well made. Thank you all very much. It is a huge agenda and not an entirely straightforward one. I have certainly found the session to be very useful. Diolch yn fawr.

[156] Symudwn yn awr at yr eitem nesaf o ran casglu tystiolaeth. Hoffwn groesawu Dave Morris, Martin Peters ac Eugene Dubens at y bwrdd—*a gobeithiaf fy mod* We will now move on to the next item of our evidence gathering. I welcome Dave Morris, Martin Peters and Eugene Dubens to the table—and I hope that I have pronounced that

wedi dweud yr enw hwnnw'n gywir.

name correctly.

[157] **Mr Morris:** Bore da. Sut ydych chi? **Mr Morris:** Good morning. How are you?

[158] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da, a chroeso cynnes ichi i gyd. Diolch yn fawr am y dystiolaeth a gawsom eisoes oddi wrthych. **Helen Mary Jones:** Good morning, and a warm welcome to you all. Thank you for the evidence that we have already received from you.

[159] We will go straight to questioning. Feel free to chip in, because the three of you have slightly different perspectives and experience on this, so it would be useful to have all that. This question is predominantly one for ACPO, but if you feel that it is relevant to you, please chip in. ACPO Cymru says that hanging out is a normal part of growing up, and that the absence of suitable locations and structures often results in young people using places that are not intended for that purpose. What are the difficulties with the suitability of existing play and leisure provision that you refer to?

[160] **Mr Morris:** Starting with the current position, the leisure centres and play areas that we have are invariably local authority-controlled. The children require money to get into the leisure centres, and so many of them do not use the leisure centres but hang around outside. When people see young people in groups hanging around outside, it creates a perception of a threat. So, those are the barriers that prevent young people from using the structures that have been put in place by local authorities in these areas.

[161] Many of our parks are focused on children, with the swings, the roundabouts and so forth, but adolescents miss out, because there are not areas for them to meet. There are youth clubs open, but only for limited periods of time, and they do not really attract teenagers. We need to look across a broader age spectrum when providing places to hang out. If we asked anyone here this morning, I am sure that we would find that we had all hung out as young people. So, we need to ask young people themselves what they want by way of a safe environment where they can meet their friends without giving that perception of a threat to local residents. When we look at what exists at present, we see that we are not meeting the needs of the different age groups across that span.

[162] **Eleanor Burnham:** Dywed ACPO bod cyfrifoldeb mawr ar y sawl sy'n datblygu ac yn dylunio ardaloedd lle mae pobl ifanc yn debygol o ymgynnull i sicrhau bod ardaloedd yn hyfyw yn economaidd, bod cydlyniant cymdeithasol, a'u bod yn ddiogel. Cyfeiria at Ddeddf Trosedd ac Anhrefn 1998, sy'n gosod dyletswydd ar awdurdodau lleol, gan gynnwys adrannau cynllunio, i ystyried trosedd a diogelwch cymunedol yn y rhan fwyaf o'u penderfyniadau. Sut y gall adrannau cynllunio awdurdodau lleol fynd i'r afael â'r pryderon mawr hyn? **Eleanor Burnham:** ACPO says that there is a huge role for those who are developing and designing areas where youths are likely to congregate in ensuring that an area is economically viable, socially cohesive and safe. It goes on to refer to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which places a duty on local authorities, including planning departments, to consider crime and community safety in most of the decisions that they make. How can local authority planning departments address these grave concerns?

[163] **Mr Morris:** You are quite right that the Crime and Disorder Act places a duty on local authorities to consider crime reduction in the design of buildings and places of safety. For me, it starts a bit earlier than when we are considering the design plans coming in. It is about the use of section 106 in forcing developers to consider community safety and the safety of young people as they are developing housing estates and other related areas. We generally find that developers tend to be adult-centric. They would say that this is where they want to put a park, because of how the estate looks and they decide where the park, the school

and the shops are going to be. They do not engage with the local community and, in this case, young people to find out what they want and where they would want it. What tends to happen is that there is a lack of ownership by young people in those types of developments. As a consequence, it either does not get used or it gets vandalised or damaged, because it just does not meet their needs.

[164] **Mr Peters:** To add to that, I think that the planning authorities need a greater input into this. In the area that I represent, an Astroturf pitch was put in by the local education authority without any engagement whatsoever with young people. It was on a field that children had access to, where they played football and other games. The pitch was laid without any consultation with the local community, and then the children did not have access to it. As it had been their field, they felt that they should have access to the pitch to play football. It got to the point of the pitch being vandalised, with boards being kicked down so that they could get onto the pitch. The police were constantly being called, but the police were embarrassed because they were stopping children from playing football on a football pitch, when that is what children should be doing. There were all sorts of problems. I fought this in the planning committee, because my view was that this pitch should not have been built there in the first place because there was a degree of anti-social behaviour in that area. However, once it was decided that it was going ahead, the children should have been involved in that process.

[165] It got to the point where it was a case of either shutting the pitch and losing the investment of £250,000 or engaging with the community. We engaged with people through the local authority, the education authority and the police, and we had meetings with the children. It works well with the school using the pitch during the day and the children using it at night. They were also given access in the winter, with floodlights. It works perfectly well. Two years earlier, we were at the point of shutting it down completely, but now the local children have taken control of the pitch and they see it as theirs. Paying users use it on certain nights when they have access to it, and once they leave the children go in to use it. The local children have formed their own football team and go around playing other teams. It has been a great success. The message needs to go out that, when these things are done, you must engage with the local community to get people's views, and particularly with the local children, who will take control of these facilities and then the problem goes away. That is the message: we have to engage with the local people and especially the children when facilities are being provided.

[166] **Helen Mary Jones:** Sorry, Eleanor, but I must bring Val in here because her question follows on from that. That is a very telling example, and one that can be found repeated again and again across Wales.

10.40 a.m.

[167] **Val Lloyd:** My question is probably for Mr Peters or Mr Dubens because it is about the participation of young people in PACT—police and community together. We read that, too often, communities that are engaged in PACT do not see young people as part of the solution. In your view, what is the extent of young people's involvement in PACT work across Wales? What challenges do you face in meaningfully involving children and young people in your work, and how can those challenges be overcome?

[168] **Mr Dubens:** There seems to be a bit of an issue with young people being involved directly in the PACT process. In the area in which I work, children are not directly represented at the PACT meetings. However, we identified that that was an issue, and we have worked in other ways to engage children in decision making about the facilities in their local area. Anti-social behaviour was a standing item on the PACT agenda in Caerau, as it came up time and again. A whistle-stop analysis of the previous two years showed that, on



some occasions, all three priorities had been related to anti-social behaviour in the area. However, we noticed that tasking the policing with tackling anti-social behaviour was a very short-term solution; it had what you might call a ‘herding’ effect, so we would sort out the anti-social behaviour on the square, but the following month it would be on Caerau park, for instance, or by the football ground.

[169] In partnership with the police, Valleys to Coast Housing and the community safety department of the local authority, we started to realise that we needed to connect these policing issues with the wider regeneration of the area. Our solution was to work directly with a number of youth groups that then worked together to develop a questionnaire that was administered to about 120 local kids. A consensus came through in the responses to the questionnaire, with young people saying that they met on the street because there was a lack of other available facilities, and that they would like more youth-friendly facilities. We collated all this information, we made an application to the community safety partnership and, with the participation of the local children, we redeveloped a derelict ballpark for their use. The youth shelters should be arriving fairly soon, and this will provide a more medium or long-term solution to the problem. It certainly engages younger people in the process of decision making about their area. In that sense, it is qualitatively different from the usual way of doing things that Dave mentioned earlier.

[170] **Angela Burns:** I am going to look at the other side of the coin to Val, and ask whether you see evidence of local authorities and other bodies engaging and communicating on this issue. You talk about your experience—and it sounds as though you are a lone voice crying in the wilderness—and yet your evidence cites projects in Mid Glamorgan, north Wales and the Vale of Glamorgan. I wonder how common those are.

[171] **Mr Morris:** A number of the local authorities have youth fora that hold group meetings, and they engage with young people through the schools’ processes. The fact is that some young people in those types of environments engage very well and will talk, but the young people that those of us involved in policing come across, namely those who are meeting on the streets, do not engage with the formal youth fora. As a consequence, they do not attend PACT meetings, so we go out to engage with them.

[172] We tend to do what we call ‘street briefings’, and we go out to meet the young people on the streets. In Caerau, for example, the police community support officers actively engage with the young people to establish what their needs are. The local authorities, local councils and education boards have youth groups, fora or consultative panels to survey young people, but it is about more than that; it is about trying to talk to the young people who are on the streets in the evenings and who meet on street corners. We get a lot of our anti-social behaviour calls because of groups of young people outside the Spar shop and so on, so we try to find out why the young people are meeting there at 10 p.m., creating noise and, in the perception of the neighbours, being disorderly. As a consequence, we get a lot of calls. It is about what we can do to either move them to a better place to visit or to address the problem. It is about trying to solve the problem as opposed to just dealing with the symptom continually and attending those types of calls.

[173] **Angela Burns:** I will posit—if you think that I am wrong, argue with me—that a decision such as to eradicate the playground in the centre of a Manorbier housing estate in order to build some affordable homes, without bothering to talk to anyone there, including the children, which is what happened, and a play park was put miles away from where are all the children and their parents live, needed to be properly consulted on, including the children and adults involved and the council. It did not happen there, and I suspect that it does not happen in most of Wales. These youth fora would be great in that respect. For example, Carmarthenshire County Council runs a fantastic youth forum, but it probably only deals with big stuff. So, when it comes to building a play park in Llanboidy, Login or wherever, no-one

talks to the local people. Would that be the right comment?

[174] **Mr Morris:** I would say that you are spot-on. For me, section 106 is about making policy, and developers, when making applications for planning permission under section 106, have to consult with the local community and with young people if they are looking at youth provision, and they then have to put the results of the consultation into the planning application. They have to consult with our crime prevention officers who are in the local authorities in relation to safe areas, safe surveillance and so on—all those types of issues.

[175] **Helen Mary Jones:** I will bring in councillor Peters on this point.

[176] **Mr Peters:** On the issue that you mentioned of the local authority not engaging with the local community, that is a mistake that has been made. The planning authority does engage with the local community on planning applications, but that only includes people who live close by. It does not take into account the fact that many people use these facilities, and it should engage with them. If the planning committee puts an application in and forces it through, without proper engagement with the local community, it is seeking out problems. We had a massive problem in that a £250,000 investment was being vandalised, and it was on the verge of closing. When things such as that come into a local community, the authority should engage with the whole community, especially those who have access to the facility or who want to use it.

[177] I mentioned the point earlier about the fact that, in one location where children used to play football, they were then barred from doing that. So, you can imagine what was going through their minds. All of a sudden, people from outside who could pay to access the facility were using it, whereas they were sitting on the side and watching it. So, they broke in to use the facility. The police were being called, they were giving cautions, and the children were on the verge of being given anti-social behaviour orders. The police said, 'We have to meet these people, and we have to talk to the parents and others'. From that day on, it worked, and I do not think that the police have been called since.

[178] **Angela Burns:** I would like to ask for some research. I do not know whether you are aware, but when developers are building their housing estates and they are asked, as part of the deal, to ensure that there is sufficient provision of open spaces for children to play, they are allowed to include in that things such as the grass verge on the side of the road. So, you could have a 3 ft-wide strip of grass verge on which you could run for a mile, which could all be added up to equal an acre—I do not know whether that is correct—and that would be deemed to be sufficient provision, even though it is nonsense to expect children to play on a 3ft-wide grass verge. I wonder whether we can think about that.

[179] **Helen Mary Jones:** I think that that is striking a chord with Eugene. We will certainly look into that.

[180] **Mr Dubens:** It really is. Section 106 is fantastic, and I am glad that it is there, but the way in which it operates on the ground is often tokenistic, as your colleague just described. In order to do this in a meaningful way, and in a way that is relevant to people who live in an area, we have to work with them and say, 'Look what we can achieve by working together'. That fosters a sense of ownership, of involvement, pride, cohesion and so on, rather than saying, 'Look what we have done for you,' because often that creates a sense of alienation, which is exactly the opposite.

10.50 a.m.

[181] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you, that is helpful. I want to put a question to you all about the perceptions of some adults of children and young people. We have heard a lot of

evidence from a range of witnesses who have made significant reference to the negative stereotyping of children and young people, stating that adult fears about potential anti-social behaviour—which are often completely unfounded—are significant barriers to children and young people being able to hang out and use public space. The ACPO evidence says that we should not ignore the importance of these adult perceptions, because the fear is often genuine and undermines the adults' quality of life. In practice, what steps can be taken to balance the needs of the two age groups? You referred to how anti-social behaviour is becoming a standing item on police and community together agendas, but when you dig into that it is often the case that what is being called anti-social behaviour is just young people being in a public space, and not actually doing anything. What can we do to balance those two sets of needs?

[182] **Mr Morris:** Perception is reality in the local community and the local neighbourhood where you see a number of young people meeting together, and it develops that sense of fear. When you speak to more elderly members of the local community, they say that they move away from such groups of young people because they are fearful. It is a growing perception within our society as a result of media reporting and a minority of young people committing street crime, and these kinds of issues, and the different perceptions.

[183] In relation to how you address that, it goes back to speaking to both sets of groups and finding out from where they draw these perceptions of fear. For example, we get examples of young people playing football against the gable ends of houses, creating noise and disturbance late at night when more elderly occupants are looking to go to sleep, which creates a noisy street scenario that creates anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour can range from one extreme where we get gangs hanging outside shopping precincts, committing minor damage, minor crime, shouting, being abusive and threatening—which is criminality—right through to youths just meeting somewhere because it is lit and it is a safe area for them to meet. However, because of the fact that they are young people and that they talk loudly and shout, it creates a fear in the neighbourhood. It is about how you try to get the two groups together. I do not know if Eugene wants to mention the example in Caerau of elderly people in a flat and young people meeting outside. It is about how you can address both sides at the same time.

[184] **Mr Dubens:** That is a very interesting case in point. More generally, it is about creating a dialogue between the two groups, because they seem to be slightly polarised. For instance, everyone who attends the PACT meeting in our area is characterised as being over 40, has a similar perception of children in the area, and, to put it mildly, they demonise the young people in the area. Unfortunately, because of the timing and the structure of the PACT meeting, it did not seem to be suitable to bring along the young people to that meeting; we did not think that it would work. What we did was to engage directly with children whom we termed 'Spar kids'. They hang about by the local shop because there is a light there. When you speak to them, you find that they hang out there because there is a lack of viable alternative places for them to go. When you start to create a dialogue between the older people who attend the PACT meeting and young people, you start to see a breakdown of the stereotype that has emerged.

[185] The answer to your question is to undertake intergenerational work and create viable opportunities for people in the community to work together. An example that we used in Caerau was the teaching of information and communications technology. Young people have a lot more IT skills than older people, and we get them together for introductory courses to computers. That has started to mitigate the effect of this perception.

[186] **Helen Mary Jones:** Eleanor, I have another question, but shall we jump to your question, which is specifically about intergenerational projects?

[187] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yn deillio o'r cwestiwn diwethaf, yn ei dystiolaeth i'r pwyllgor cyfeiriodd y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Blant at bwysigrwydd prosiectau sy'n pontio'r cenedlaethau wrth fynd i'r afael â chanfyddiadau oedolion o ymddygiad gwrthgymdeithasol. Beth yw eich barn am botensial prosiectau o'r fath? Pa fentrau eraill a allai gael effaith wrth fynd i'r afael â stereoteipiau negyddol a beth ydych yn ei wneud ynglŷn â hyn?

**Eleanor Burnham:** Following on from the last question, in his evidence to the committee the Deputy Minister for Children referred to the importance of intergenerational projects in addressing adult perceptions of anti-social behaviour. What is your view on the potential role of such projects? What other initiatives might have an impact on addressing negative stereotypes and what are you doing about this?

[188] **Helen Mary Jones:** We have one good example. Are there any others that you want to add? I love the idea of someone teaching people my age how to use computers properly; it is a relief to us all.

[189] **Mr Morris:** With regard to policing, one project that we are looking at across Wales is the young dragons. These are volunteer police cadets from our basic command units. The idea behind it is that, once a week, we will bring them in and run academic programmes with them on IT and so on. More importantly, we use the cadets for voluntary work at weekends, which involves going out to the local neighbourhood, delivering leaflets and going along to community days that we run. We ran one in Rhondda on Saturday and young people and police cadets were there. The young dragons project is also about trying to co-ordinate all the youth movements that are out there. When you look across the whole of Wales, we have scouts, guides, youth centres, youth clubs, football teams; we have lots of youth groups, but they are lacking leaders. That is the big issue at the moment for us in Wales. We need volunteer leaders to work with young people in all these youth groups, and then co-ordinate them and bring them together to start to break down the barriers between the generations. You then start to look at community events. For example, last year in Pentwyn there was a lot of anti-social behaviour around the leisure centre. A lot of young people were hanging around in the car park outside the centre, and as a consequence the centre was not being used. The kids could not get into the leisure centre because they could not afford to pay for the facilities. Working with the local youth groups and the PCSOs, they ran a community centre day. They got the young people along with certain community members to form a citizens group to set the day up. It was a tremendous success. As a consequence, they now have a Pentwyn community day every year during the summer, where young people and other members of the community get together to organise the day, which is facilitated by the police and other youth leaders. It is in those types of initiatives that you start to see the barriers between generations breaking down.

[190] **Helen Mary Jones:** I want to come back briefly to some of the measures that have been put in place to try to deal with some of these issues. We have heard evidence about some of the measures that are put in place to address some of the perceived problems that we were talking about; things like anti-social behaviour orders, which are too often seen as a badge of honour by some young people, mosquito devices, which target all young people regardless of their behaviour, and also make it difficult to go to a shop if you have a small child, because they cannot stand the noise either. It has been put to us that some of these measures are inappropriate and disproportionate and that they can be counter-productive. How would you react to that?

[191] **Mr Peters:** We cannot put all young people into the bracket of being problems, because most of them are not. Many of these people do not have role models at home, and we need to accept that. We need to intervene early and put things on in the local community. For example, in our community the smaller children—although smaller children grow up—have the Valentine's Day disco, a fun day in the summer and a Halloween party at which they all

have a gift. At Christmas time, we try to mix the children with the older people, so we have an older people's dinner, plus the children's disco earlier, and hopefully they will intermingle. As the children get older, you have to look at other facilities for them. I represent a semi-rural area, so we have bought a woodland at a cost of £5,000 from a local landowner, where we provided campsites with a proper built barbecue for them. That worked for a while, but then older people in their late 20s came and caused a bit of vandalism and did some drinking. The police had to intervene and sort that out. Children of about 15 or 16 years of age like a little drink—we know that because we see the cans about the place—but as long as you control that, you will get a good response. It works. When we come to the time of day when it is a bit cold for the rest of us, they are starting to put their tents up and camp. As long as you speak to them in the morning before they go and say, 'Listen now, chaps, take the mess and the litter away with you, or you won't be allowed back here', it does work. You can intervene at an early stage and bring them through that stage of life. Hopefully, after that, when they are in their late teens, they will go forward. That is the way to do it; you have to intervene, which saves you a lot of time and money.

11.00 a.m.

[192] Older people also have to realise that as well. When I was growing up, you used to speak with older people and they would tell you, if you were going fishing, 'There's a trout down by there, boy. Go down by there now'. That is what we have to do. That is something that has gone from our communities, where younger people used to learn from older people. We have to return to that, and we can do it if we get their confidence and do not stereotype them all as rowdy drinkers and so on. In the ward that I represent, some of the anti-social behaviour is caused by people in their 50s who have all-night parties.

[193] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a very good point. Do either of you want to add to that?

[194] **Mr Dubens:** Yes, I would like that opportunity. Another initiative that we started last year and that we have taken forward this year that is extremely successful, and a good example of an intergenerational-type event, is the street rugby league that we have developed. Once a week, on a Monday evening at 5 p.m., all the kids who might not have anything else to do meet up with some of the local youth workers, the neighbourhood policing team and representatives of the Wales Rugby League and, basically, they have a game of street rugby. It is a wonderful initiative, because you need nothing more than a couple of jumpers for the touchline. So, it gets back to that old thing of producing rather than consuming our leisure time. It creates an informal atmosphere and breaks down the barriers between police and young people, because they are now friends who are playing rugby together. It also brings in adults in the area whom we are attempting to upskill and involve. This is an example of where you can capitalise on the resources available to ensure that there are role models for these young people, and not assume that they have them at home. As a point of fact, in the community that I work in, many young people do not have adequate male adult role models.

[195] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is a very good point. We are out of time, but there are a couple more questions, so, if Members and witnesses are happy, I would like us to run on for another five minutes because the item that we are to discuss in private will not take us long. Val, you have a question about stranger danger.

[196] **Val Lloyd:** We have talked about perceptions, but my question is about the perception of stranger danger. How much of a barrier is that to young people and children playing outside? If it is a barrier, what should be done and who is best placed to address those concerns?

[197] **Mr Morris:** There is a perception of stranger danger, but I have a couple of figures from south Wales and north Wales. In 2008-09, we had 28 reports of kidnapping, of which

only five related to young people. Of that five, only one referred to a stranger. In the South Wales Police area, in 2009-10, we had 17 reports of kidnapping, only two of which referred to young people and, in both cases, no further action was taken because there were issues with the young people reporting things. In the North Wales Police area, we have not had any reported kidnappings of young people in the last two years. So, there is a perception issue around stranger danger. Having said that, the issue needs to be raised. In the schools programme across Wales, we teach young people to be aware if they are accosted by adults or when they are out in parks and so on. As a consequence, we see an increase in the number of reports made by young people about incidents in which strangers have approached them, and spoken to them and those sorts of things. So, awareness has been raised, which is a good thing.

[198] When we look at the trends, we tend to see these kinds of approaches taking place in open park areas when children are coming home from school and so on. There is something there about the importance of parents being very much aware of what their children are doing, how they are coming home from school and who is with them at any one time. In the parks and open spaces, it is about natural surveillance—for instance, bushes should not be planted or grown around parks. Young people have told us that they want a number of entrances and exits, because they do not like to go to a park where there is only one entrance or exit. That is mainly because of issues of bullying, for example, kids do not want to go into a park if older kids are standing around the entrance. They want to see exits and entrances and they also want proper lighting. So, it is prevention and awareness raising that will start to deal with these perceptions. However, there is a perception around stranger danger.

[199] **Helen Mary Jones:** Those figures are striking and there is probably a responsibility on us all to try to get those out there. If you contrasted that with the number of children who are harmed in their own homes by family members, that would be quite a contrast.

[200] You mentioned bullying, which is timely because we have a couple of brief questions on that issue.

[201] **Angela Burns:** We have received a lot of evidence about bullying—empirical evidence given here and also evidence when we have gone out to speak to children in schools. I have a very silly question to ask now, because I am sure that your answer will be ‘yes’; however, I must ask it. Do the police get involved an awful lot in bullying incidents?

[202] **Mr Morris:** The answer is ‘yes’. There are strong bullying policies within schools and we also have school liaison officers who work closely with schools in relation to bullying and to ensure that we tackle those types of issues. Another issue for us in schools is around differentiating between bullying and racist or homophobic bullying. Schools need to pick up on the differences in bullying, when children are being targeted by other children because of the colour of their skin, their ethnicity or their gender, so it is not just bullying in that sense. One thing that we try to do with schools around their bullying policies is to try to differentiate types of bullying.

[203] Another issue for us is bullying outside the school. We tend to find that bullying that started inside the school then starts to happen outside, which becomes more dangerous, particularly for the victims, especially as it cannot be dealt with in a closed environment like the school. So, it is about how we pick up those issues and join them together. In Swansea, for example, the education, youth and lifelong learning services are working with the police to try to identify people who are bullying others inside and outside school and looking at what can be done about that. That is about joining up the different silo services to identify the bullies and the victims.

[204] **Angela Burns:** May I ask another quick question?

[205] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, because I think that your question, Eleanor, on out-of-school bullying has been dealt with.

[206] **Angela Burns:** This is probably another silly question, but can you define bullying? I will just explain what I mean. It is obviously bullying when a schoolchild is being picked on constantly by someone else. However, you talked about the park that only has one entrance. Is it also bullying when a gang of 17, 18 or 19-year-olds are lolling around that entrance and smaller children feel scared? Would you say that they are being bullied or are they just scared because there are bigger kids around? What I am trying to get to is whether or not we need segregation in play spaces for different age groups.

[207] **Mr Morris:** In that type of example, to me, that is about intimidation and being scared of the older children. We consider bullying to be almost on the verge of assault and violence, causing physical harm to individuals. There will be a bullying policy in the school, but when incidents get reported to us outside school, they are then classified as common assault, threatening or abusive behaviour, or actual bodily harm because that behaviour is in that type of range.

[208] **Helen Mary Jones:** I will call Eleanor first and then I will bring Councillor Peters in, because I know that you want to say something.

[209] **Eleanor Burnham:** You made an interesting comment. I love bushes and gardens and you made an interesting point about bushes, and people lurking in them. It could be a fairly minor change, but of major importance. Should there perhaps be more focus on developing safer places, so that if there are bushes, you could cut them down, and put something else there?

11.10 a.m.

[210] **Mr Morris:** That is right. It is about the crime prevention officers engaging with the local authority, looking at those areas and asking whether we need to get rid of the bushes and put more surveillance in place.

[211] **Helen Mary Jones:** Councillor Peters, did you want to come in on the intimidation issue?

[212] **Mr Peters:** On bullying, I do not notice bullying outside schools, although it obviously happens inside schools. What you have are different age groups and the younger children are playing in the parks and then, probably later in the evening, the older children, the teenagers come along. I do not think that it is bullying. I do not think that the two groups mix. I think that with the rowdy and boisterous behaviour that follows, the younger ones will go from the park. However, I do not think that it is bullying as such.

[213] **Helen Mary Jones:** So, they feel intimidated, but the older kids are not deliberately intimidating them; there is a difference.

[214] **Mr Peters:** Yes. They are not deliberately intimidating them. I do not think that that is the case; I have not come across that. The message that goes out is that all these people need to be treated properly. If you treat people decently, they usually act decently. You always get the exception to the rule, but in general, if you ask them what they want, and try to provide that— within limits, of course—we would end up with a far better society for that.

[215] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you, and thank you all for your evidence. It has been really useful, and it is always great to have some practical examples, which will help us in

making our recommendations.

[216] Diolch yn fawr iawn i'r tri ohonoch. Thank you very much to the three of you.

11.12 a.m.

### **Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion**

[217] **Helen Mary Jones:** Cynigiau ein bod yn symud i sesiwn breifat yn fyr i drafod ein hymateb i'r dystiolaeth a gawsom ar y Mesur Arfaethedig Ynghylch Hawliau Plant a Phobl Ifanc. Cynigiau fod **Helen Mary Jones:** I now propose that we briefly move into private session to discuss our response to the evidence that we have had on the Proposed Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure. I move that

*y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog Rhif 10.37.* *the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 10.37.*

[218] Gwelaf fod y pwyllgor yn gytûn. I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11.12 p.m.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 11.12 p.m.*