



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

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

**Dydd Mawrth, 15 Mehefin 2010
Tuesday, 15 June 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)
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Naomi Alleyne	Cyfarwyddwr Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director for Equalities and Social Justice, Welsh Local Government Association
Simon Brownsill	Comisiynydd Maes, De a Gorllewin Cymru, Cyngor Sgowtiaid Cymru Field Commissioner for South and West Wales, Welsh Scout Council
Tanis Cunnick	Pennaeth, Is-adran Strategaeth Gwaith Ieuenctid, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Youth Work Strategy Branch, Welsh Assembly Government
Jill Gloster	Prif Gomisiynydd, Cyngor Sgowtiaid Cymru Chief Commissioner for Wales, Welsh Scout Council
Les Jones	Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-Bont ar Ogwr Bridgend County Borough Council
Huw Lewis	Aelod Cynulliad (Llafur), Dirprwy Weinidog dros Blant Assembly Member (Labour), Deputy Minister for Children
Dr Chris Llewelyn	Cyfarwyddwr Dysgu Gydol Oes, Hamdden a Gwybodaeth, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director for Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information, Welsh Local Government Association
Martin Swain	Swyddog Arweiniol ar Weithio mewn Partneriaeth ym maes Plant a Theuluoedd, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Lead for Children and Families Partnership Working, Welsh Assembly Government

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 8.59 a.m.
The meeting began at 8.59 a.m.*

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Helen Mary Jones:** Bore da. Croesawaf bawb i'r cyfarfod hwn o'r Pwyllgor Plant a Phobl Ifanc. Mae croeso i bawb ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg, ac mae offer cyfieithu ar gael. Mae'r cyfieithiad ar y pryd i'w glywed ar sianel 1, ac mae'r sain wedi'i chwyddo ar sianel 0, os ydych yn cael trafferth clywed.

Helen Mary Jones: Good morning. I welcome everyone to this meeting of the Children and Young People Committee. You are welcome to use Welsh or English, and translation equipment is available. The interpretation is available on channel 1, and the amplified audio is on channel 0, if you are hard of hearing.

[2] Gofynnaf i bawb—Aelodau, tystion, swyddogion, ac unrhyw un sydd yn oriel y cyhoedd—ddiffodd unrhyw ffonau symudol, 'mwyar duon', a theclynnau electronig eraill. Nid yw'n ddigon da i'w tawelu, gan y gallant amharu ar yr offer cyfieithu a'r offer sain. Nid ydym yn disgwyl ymarfer tân y bore yma, felly os clywn y larwm tân, mae'n golygu bod problem a dylai pawb ddilyn y tywyswyr allan.

I ask everyone—Members, witnesses, officials, and anyone in the public gallery—to switch off any mobile phones, BlackBerrys, and other electronic devices. It is not sufficient to silence them, as they can interfere with the interpretation and broadcasting equipment. We are not expecting a fire drill today, so if it sounds, it means that there is a problem and everyone should follow the ushers out.

[3] Gofynnaf i Aelodau ddatgan unrhyw fuddiant o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 31. Gwelaf nad oes. Ni chafwyd ymddiheuriadau ac felly nid oes eilyddion.

I ask Members to declare any interests under Standing Order No. 31. I see that there are none. No apologies have been received and so there are no substitutions.

9.00 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Fannau Diogel i Chwarae a Chymdeithasu—Casglu Tystiolaeth Inquiry into Safe Places to Hang Out—Evidence Gathering

[4] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yr wyf yn croesawu Jill Gloster a Simon Brownsill o'r sgowtiaid. Diolch i Jill am fod yn barod i ddod yn ôl. Yr oedd wedi trefnu i roi tystiolaeth yn gynt yn y broses, ond yr oedd gennym broblemau a bu raid aildrefnu. Croeso cynnes a diolch ichi am fod yn barod i fod gyda ni heddiw.

Helen Mary Jones: I welcome Jill Gloster and Simon Brownsill from the scouts. I thank Jill for being ready to come back. She had arranged to give evidence earlier in the process, but we had problems and we had to rearrange. A warm welcome to you and thank you for your willingness to be with us today.

[5] I am grateful to you, Jill, for rearranging the visit. We had problems with your previously arranged evidence session, so we are glad to see you here today. Thank you very much for the evidence that we have received. If you are content, we will go straight into questions. The first question comes from me. Scouts Wales provides a wide range of activities for children and young people, and you say that scouting is open to all. Can you tell us about the charging policies of Scouts Wales and of local scouting groups? What costs do families have to pay for children and young people to participate?

[6] **Ms Gloster:** There is a cost from headquarters called a membership fee, which at the moment stands at £19.50. That covers all sorts of things from our UK headquarters, such as insurance and services for dealing with the media, trustee facilities and legal facilities. Wales charges a small fee to help to maintain some of the office staff, but certainly not all of them. The headquarters employs two field commissioners. Simon Brownsill is field commissioner for south and mid Wales, and we have one in the north as well. We also top up their salaries, because they do safeguarding work in Wales. So, they are the first stop if a leader or child has a major problem. We generally defer to our paid staff, as they have the knowledge and the training through headquarters. Our membership fee also covers governance and travel facilities for meetings, and that sort of thing. All the groups, districts and areas charge a small fee, which is partly to do with travel, meeting places, equipment and the facilities that they can provide for young people.

[7] **Helen Mary Jones:** We have heard evidence that cost is one of the barriers that prevents some children and young people from getting involved with the scouting movement. Are there any local or national mechanisms in place to support children and young people whose families might find it difficult to find that amount? It does not sound like a large sum of money, but if you have two or three children in the family participating, it could be quite a lot. Is there any help for families on lower incomes? For example, is there a way of paying the annual fee in small instalments, or those sorts of arrangements?

[8] **Ms Gloster:** Yes. Some leaders require the money on a weekly basis, some do it per term and some do it yearly, so it depends on the group. Headquarters has a benevolent fund, so if there are real problems, people can apply to the benevolent fund at headquarters. Quite a lot of the groups do enough fundraising to cover the fees, certainly of their leaders so that that cost is not passed on. Some of the leaders pay their own costs. All groups have a completely different mix of where the money comes from, but where there is a major problem in an area, the fundraising is probably highlighted more than it is anywhere else. However, where there are great problems, there is a benevolent fund. In addition, if there are two or three children in a family, such as twins or even triplets, they often charge one fee for all of them.

[9] **Sandy Mewies:** Good morning. Thank you very much for your paper, which was to the point and addressed the issues that we were asking about. In it, you talk about the barriers that affect young people with disabilities. You cite the lack of suitable volunteers and support workers to empower those children, and the access to funding for specialist facilities such as wheelchairs and so on. Perhaps you have talked about some of these issues already. How much of a problem is it and what can be done to address it?

[10] On the same issue of exclusion, the website of the Scout Association provides information on minority communities and says that scouting is open to all. How effectively does that work in Wales? Does Scouts Wales provide inclusive opportunities for children and young people from the black and minority ethnic groups living in Wales?

[11] **Ms Gloster:** I will take the first part first. Wheelchair access is often a problem. Many of the headquarters are very old, as you would imagine, and trying to put in extra facilities to accommodate wheelchair access is often a difficulty. There was a pilot building project at our headquarters recently, which involved money being designated to help building projects to put wheelchair access and greater facilities into some headquarters. Nine projects have been carried out throughout the UK, but, unfortunately, none of those was in Wales. That was to see how people worked with that money, and what facilities they could provide. Scouts Wales does not provide money for that, because we do not have that sort of money in our coffers. There are various places that you can go to to get money, but you would have to apply for planning permission and so on, and the volunteers would just think that it was too much. If a child wanted to go who needed those facilities, that would put the pressure on, and they would probably work a lot harder to do it. However, again, getting the money from

whatever source they can takes time. Issues such as that and the fact that altering the buildings requires planning permission mean that there is a lot of frustration. We have to be careful because it is not just the provision of wheelchair access that is expensive; we also have to think about Braille facilities and hearing facilities. I know that quite a lot of the groups do games and so on with the children to make them understand what it would be like to have a disability, for example by using a blindfold to get them to understand that, if they cannot see, they will have to rely on their mates. That helps people to understand what it all means. However, providing facilities is a lot more difficult. If scout groups are in new accommodation, for example when they use new community facilities and so on, the facilities are already in place, but the issue is with the conversion of the buildings that we already have.

[12] On the issue of being open to all—and Simon can probably say more about this than I can—we now have our first Muslim group in Cardiff, which is going from strength to strength. It wobbled a bit with its first structure, but now there is a very good gentleman there as a group scout leader, who is really making it work well. Last weekend, the Muslim Scout Fellowship came from headquarters to run a Muslim Olympics event. Although I do not really like designating things specifically, as I would far prefer to see people mixing and everyone taking part, there were Muslim groups there from Northampton, Birmingham and other places in England, all of whom came to Cardiff to take part, which I think is brilliant. There are one or two people in places such as Swansea who are thinking about setting up different groups. There are the odd one or two Indians who run restaurants locally and so on whose children have joined the scouts, but they join the existing group; they do not necessarily think that they need to have their own group, which is what we prefer—it is the integration that matters. When a lot of people say to me, ‘They should not have their own group’, I say, ‘Think about it—in the past, we had Catholic groups, Methodist groups, Baptist groups and so on’. It will come, but we have to work on it. We have to be open and flexible, and we have to show everyone that we want to be inclusive. As long as they happen to go to district or area events, mix with young people, and understand that everyone is friendly, it will come. To me, that is what it is all about, but it takes time.

9.10 a.m.

[13] **Mr Brownsill:** Our experience in Swansea at the moment is that there are mixed groups, and various ethnic communities are represented, but they are still underrepresented, so the intention is to open a Muslim scout group in the middle of the city. Hopefully, the word will spread, and more people from those communities will come along. However, Jill talked earlier about the Muslim Scout Fellowship, which is a national body representing Muslim scouting and it is a sad reflection on society today that when one of the people who is now a leader in the Muslim Scout Fellowship first went along to a scout group, he spent several weeks not doing anything to help the group—not just because he was a Muslim, but also, perhaps, because he was not a scout person to start with. As he was perceived as an outsider, he spent a long time trying to get involved with the local scout group. This was not in Wales, I hasten to add; it was in England. By engaging with the community and by bringing the community not only into scouting but into other activities as well, you will get a genuinely mixed membership. However, it will take time. You cannot wave a magic wand and make it happen tomorrow.

[14] **Ms Gloster:** One of the things that I hope will help the situation is the fact that we now have development officers, partly funded by Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government. Their job is to develop scouting in all communities. We have had some development officers who have worked very hard on this and succeeded; we have had some who have been less successful; and there are others where the community—such as in Snowdonia and Anglesey—does not warrant that extra push. We are making an effort, but it will take time.

[15] **Helen Mary Jones:** Another area on which we have taken quite a lot of evidence is the extent to which leisure facilities for children and young people in a particular area are planned strategically and thought through. Obviously, there is a role for the children and young people's partnerships here in Wales. To what extent does Scouts Wales—or local groups—undertake joint work with local authorities at a strategic and project level to participate in the kind of planning to deliver for children and young people? We have heard, for example, that it is quite difficult for voluntary organisations to participate in strategic planning, particularly at a local level. To what extent would that apply to local scouting movements?

[16] **Ms Gloster:** As far as I am aware, guiding or scouting is not incorporated into strategic planning for what happens to young people locally. However, I cannot say that it does not happen. We have community centres that are partly owned, or operate under part-trustee arrangements, with the scouts. For example, there is one in Colwyn Heights. It is a brand new community centre that is used by the community as a whole, and the scouts are one of the trustees. It works extremely well, and it is hoped that others will be built. There are a couple in the pipeline and, as well as the work that will obviously have to be done with the planning authorities, work will be done with the community to ask, 'Who wants to come in with us to make a facility that is going to be useful for the community and children in general?'

[17] **Helen Mary Jones:** Something else that we have heard evidence about is the possibility for school facilities to be used more out of hours for young people's leisure activities. We have heard from a range of witnesses on the potential for schools to provide children and young people with safe places in which to play and spend leisure time, if the grounds and buildings are opened outside hours. Do you have any experience, as a scouting movement, of using school grounds and facilities for scouting activities?

[18] **Ms Gloster:** I can talk about the examples that I know of. Some examples have been successful; some not, partly because it is more than the caretaker's job is worth to open up and when we go in, there is a certain fee, which, all of a sudden, escalates very quickly and then the group says, 'We just cannot afford this; we will have to either close or go somewhere else.' Quite often, the group closes. I do not know about your experiences, Simon.

[19] **Mr Brownsill:** Certainly, a number of scout groups meet at schools. Part of our development project is to try to build links with local schools, where we are either opening new scout groups or expanding existing provision. The biggest problem, which Jill has already alluded to, is the cost of using a school and heating it properly and so on. In general, a school has to be heated in its entirety and you do not have zoned heating, except in more modern facilities. So, the cost of using the school has to be passed on, and it tends to be prohibitive. The other issue is whether the headteacher is willing to support scouting; some headteachers are not that keen on scouting, because, if they have scouting, they have to have guiding and this, that and the other. It does not pay them to do it, and so they just feel that they cannot afford to do it.

[20] **Ms Gloster:** However, equally, if we cannot use the building it would be useful to be able to use the grounds, because often their grounds are nearer. It would be useful if we were able to use the grounds for the scouts to get their sports badges or for meeting to do a nature project. If the school has an environmental area, it would be very helpful to be able to take the cubs and beavers there to do something for their nature badges.

[21] **Helen Mary Jones:** Joyce has a supplementary question on this.

[22] **Joyce Watson:** I have seen evidence of schools being used for this in a community school in Carmarthen East. In Wales, we have built what we call community schools, which

are designed specifically to be accessed by the community. Have you, as a movement, attempted to target those schools in order to request their use—whether outside or inside?

[23] **Mr Brownsill:** My colleagues and I attended a session on community schools the other day in Llandrindod. It was the first time that we had ever heard of them, I guess. We are bringing it to the attention of local scouting, but, again, because scouting is run voluntarily—there are three full-time paid staff for Wales, which means we are spread a little thin, shall we say—it is down to the local volunteers to go out and find community schools. If they do not have the time or the knowledge to do it, they miss a trick. I am really not too sure as to how we can address that.

[24] **Eleanor Burnham:** Bore da. Yr oedd hynny'n diddorol iawn. Yr wyf wedi ymwneud â sgowtiaid ychydig; mae hynny wedi'i gofrestru. Yr ydych yn dweud bod cost trafndiaeth cyhoeddus a diffyg trafndiaeth cyhoeddus mewn rhai ardaloedd gwledig yn gallu rhwystro plant a phobl ifanc rhag gymryd rhan yn eich grwpiau sgowtiaid. Pa mor arwyddocaol yw'r broblem? A ydych yn ymwybodol o unrhyw gynlluniau sydd wedi goresgyn y problemau hyn yn llwyddiannus?

Eleanor Burnham: Good morning. That was very interesting. I have some experience of the scouts; that is registered. You say that the cost of public transport and the lack of public transport in some rural areas are barriers to children and young people taking part in your scout groups. How significant an issue is this? Are you aware of any schemes that have successfully overcome these problems?

[25] **Ms Gloster:** No. [*Laughter.*]

[26] **Eleanor Burnham:** Oh, so it is a real issue.

[27] Mae stereoteipiau negyddol o blant a phobl ifanc—yr ydym i gyd yn gwybod tipyn am hynny, ac yr wyf yn siŵr eich bod yn gwybod mwy na neb—sydd gan rai oedolion weithiau yn rhwystro gweithgareddau Sgowtiaid Cymru. Hynny yw, mae ymddygiad pobl ifanc weithiau yn cael ei weld mewn ffordd hollol negyddol.

Negative stereotypes of children and young people—we all know a great deal about this, and I am sure that you know more than anyone—held by some adults act as a barrier to the activities of Scouts Wales. That is, young people's behaviour is sometimes seen in completely negative terms.

[28] **Ms Gloster:** I think that that happens in all sorts of areas. It does not matter whether it is the scouts, guides, karate clubs or whatever; if there is a child or a couple of children having problems, the parents will be less enthusiastic about sending their children along. That is if I understand you correctly.

[29] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am referring also to the fact that we live in rather difficult times, with a lot of stereotyping going on, particularly negative stereotyping. This is just one area and it is possibly fuelled by negative media portrayals. Many older people consider all youngsters to be badly behaved and so on.

[30] **Ms Gloster:** Yes, and that has been going on for years and years, has it not?

[31] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes, probably since man started chronicling these things—or since woman started chronicling these things.

[32] **Ms Gloster:** I wonder whether, over the years, everyone has just forgotten where they came from. Everyone seems to worry when they see a group of young people, when, in fact, if you walk up and say 'Hello' and smile, they are fine. Most young people are fine.

There will always be one or two exceptions. It does not matter where it is or what you are doing, whether it is a football club or whatever, one or two cause a problem and everyone else says, 'Oh—this isn't for us' or 'This is going to be a problem'. I do not know how to get around that.

9.20 a.m.

[33] We train all our leaders in coping with challenging behaviour. We have Criminal Records Bureau checks and—

[34] **Helen Mary Jones:** Possibly no longer.

[35] **Ms Gloster:** That is right. Simon told me about what was on the news this morning, but I had not listened to the radio this morning. That could be an issue, because everyone needs to perceive that everyone is doing their best to ensure that children are protected. So, there will be quite a lot of discussion about that. We need to know more about it; I should not really comment until I know more.

[36] CRB checks are vital, because everyone needs to know that we are doing as much as we can to protect ourselves and the children. One of the modules in our training is on challenging behaviour—what to do with children when they are challenging everything that you do in a meeting or when they are challenging your or other children's behaviour. That is a vital part of our training.

[37] **Helen Mary Jones:** Just to explain to any Members or witnesses who have not heard the news, there has been an announcement this morning that the UK Government is considering reviewing the requirements around checks and registering for people working as volunteers with children and young people. We do not yet know exactly what shape that will take. We have received evidence in the past from other groups that the requirements to register are becoming too onerous, so we will need to take a look at that as we work towards our report.

[38] **Eleanor Burnham:** We could perhaps take a look at the time that it takes to register.

[39] **Helen Mary Jones:** Yes, and the level of contact with children and young people that will be required before someone must submit themselves to a check. We will perhaps take a look at that when we get some more details from the UK Government.

[40] **Ms Gloster:** With regard to CRB checks, the scouting movement is just starting to do that online, so we are hoping that that will take a lot less time. The applications then go to where they are supposed to go straight away, which avoids papers getting lost in the post and so on. The pilot schemes on that have been encouraging.

[41] **Eleanor Burnham:** It must be costly to get all the equipment needed to do that.

[42] **Ms Gloster:** It is done at the national headquarters, so everything goes through there.

[43] **Sandy Mewies:** I want to return to Eleanor's question about the cost of transport and the lack of transport in some areas, which is an issue that I am particularly interested in. You said that you are not aware of any schemes that could overcome that issue. Your answer was a stark 'no', but if access to public transport was improved in rural—as well as in urban areas, because public transport can be a problem there too—would more young people be able to take part in activities such as scouting? Do you know of any examples of where a local group has contacted the local community transport scheme to see whether it could use community transport to travel from place to place?

[44] **Ms Gloster:** I will take the last bit first. No, I am not aware of any contacts with the local community transport scheme. I do not know how far or wide that extends. I know of one of two groups that are struggling to keep going because of usage. As far as I am aware, this mostly affects rural communities. Parents are relied on to do the run, which is fine, because they tend to take them and then go to do some shopping, before collecting them. However, people without the use of a car cannot do that. It does not matter whether it is to do with the scouts, guides, karate, football, rugby or whatever, if children and young people do not have the ability to get from A to B, then they cannot go, which is sad. Some schools run after-school clubs and football and rugby and so on after school, which means that school buses must be re-jigged, but, sometimes, they cannot be re-jigged and therefore those children cannot take part in the after-school clubs.

[45] **Sandy Mewies:** So, are you saying that improving public and community transport would give young people greater access to myriad activities, including scouting?

[46] **Ms Gloster:** Yes.

[47] **Joyce Watson:** I have read your paper with interest. I used to lead a beaver group many years ago. I had a life before I came here. So, I know about the activities and challenges and so on, as well as the inclusiveness. We have had evidence from Play Wales, which informed us that health and safety was routinely used as an excuse and as a threat that deprives children and young people, in its opinion, of opportunities to play and hang out. You say that risk aversion is a barrier that affects the work of Scouts Wales. In what ways and to what extent do health and safety issues restrict the range of activities that Scouts Wales can offer children and young people?

[48] **Ms Gloster:** It varies according to the leaders. We have leaders who will get every bit of paper that they possibly can so that they can take the young people into the hills or canoeing or whatever and you get the other sort of leader who will not go outside of four walls. For example, there is one cub pack in south Wales, which is very good, but it never goes outside because the leaders are paranoid that something might happen. It is full, so the kids obviously enjoy attending, but that is not what the scouts are about. We are about going out and about and we should be doing things. That is extremely sad and whatever we say to them, they respond negatively. There are so many things going on in their heads, which is one of the biggest problems today. There are people who will not take that extra step to get more people in, for example, or accept that, with all the training that they have done and everything that they can do, and with the scouts' legal department behind them, if anything happened, they would not be taken to court and their home would not be taken from them and so on. So much goes on in court and in the papers, saying, 'It's your fault', and the lack of people taking responsibility for things themselves, whether they be parents or whoever. If something happens, the parents will say, 'It's your fault', and that is very frightening.

[49] We are very lucky because we have a lot of teachers involved with the scouts who are able to take these things on board and we have a lot of people who are very self-contained and can take these things on board and know what to do. We have ratios of how many adults there are to children and on where they should go and what they should do and so on. It is all very well laid out. Some people will say, 'This is right' and others will say, 'This is too structured by far', but in today's litigious society, you have to do as much as you can to ensure that people understand that we do care and that we are doing your best. We do not want anything to happen, but if someone trips over their own feet, sorry, but that is not our fault.

[50] **Eleanor Burnham:** Do you mind if I ask a quick supplementary question? Is it not important and incumbent on you to have another person to help lead that group and to take those children outside because they could fall over at any point? I remember my daughter

when she was first at school, falling over and hitting her head because she was swinging on a chair inside.

[51] **Ms Gloster:** There are people in the scouts who anyone can ask to help with canoeing and to take the children outside. I did that when I was a cub leader. I do not have the certificates to do all of that, so I went to the next group and said, 'You've got the mountain certificates and the canoeing certificates, can I join your pack to do this, that and the other?'. However, it is incumbent on the leaders to have the self-confidence to go to ask and to then take the children out.

[52] **Helen Mary Jones:** It would be right to say that within certain requirements of rules and structures, scouting is quite a decentralised movement and, in respect of the activities that are prioritised, a lot depends on what the children taking part want and what the adults in that particular group feel is appropriate. So, I imagine that you could not go into that group and say, 'You cannot be a scout group unless you take the children out', and you would not want to do that.

[53] **Ms Gloster:** No, you would not want to do that because they are providing a very good service. They just need to take another step, which is one of the difficult steps to take.

9.30 a.m.

[54] **Joyce Watson:** We have looked at the scout leaders, but I now want to look at it from the other side, because, equally, there are parents who will not allow their children to take any risks for any reason. So, regarding parents or guardians, whichever they might be, do you have evidence of parents or guardians restricting what their children can do because they are risk averse?

[55] **Ms Gloster:** I cannot say that I have a huge amount of evidence, because if they are that risk averse, they will not come to us in the first place. I came across a lovely scenario a few weeks ago when I went to a centenary service in mid Wales. Dad was that group's leader and he did this, that and the other thing in the scouts, and his little son was a cub who was hanging on to his leg. I cannot remember what his dad said, but the son went, 'Yes, but you wrap me up in cotton wool all day, and then you expect me to go out and do all these things'. I thought that that was very interesting because I think that an awful lot of parents do that. They say, 'Don't do this, that or the other thing; sit down,' and then, all of a sudden, they say, 'Go and do that' and the children do not know what to do. There is now a great divide related to how well children are protected, because they are not allowed outside the door, the back gate or whatever it is, and then they are told, 'You need to go and learn to stand on your own two feet; go off and do something else'. I thought that that was a nice little scenario.

[56] **Mr Brownsill:** I cannot think of any situations that we have had in which parents have said that their child is not going to do something because they think that it is unsafe. The only time that I have ever had a parent question an activity was when we were target shooting and that was all done inside and under very safe conditions. It was more to do with the concept of shooting, rather than the activity itself. I do not think that they thought that anyone would be shot or anything like that; it was just that they were questioning whether it was an appropriate thing to be doing. The answer is precisely what Jill said, in that if you are that risk averse, you are not likely to send your child to a scout group, because you will be thinking, 'My God, we can't possibly do that—they might go outside and get stung by a bee or something like that'. The underlying cause of that is all the media hype these days about putting children at risk. I suspect that, as a society, we have never been safer. I have seen some evidence in Carmarthenshire where a 50-plus forum did some work around asking people how safe they felt around young people and how safe they felt in society as a whole. Everyone thought that they were quite unsafe, but when you look at the numbers, you see that

the statistics say that Carmarthenshire is one of the safest places in the country to live, yet people are still scared. It is not scary if you look at the figures on the chance of something happening to you or to your children.

[57] **Helen Mary Jones:** I have a final, brief question to ask. In your evidence paper to us, you refer to issues restricting the number of volunteers. We have touched on some of them such as this being a litigious society and people being afraid of getting into trouble from that point of view. You also highlight issues such as the lack of spare time. What steps do you take as a scouting movement to try to overcome some of those issues around recruiting volunteers? Are there any lessons from your experience that might help other groups that face some of the same issues?

[58] **Ms Gloster:** We are trying hard, at the moment, to inculcate flexibility into people's thinking, so you do not have to be there every Tuesday night from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. or whatever it is. If you are in a shift system, it does not matter: you can go once a month, once a fortnight, and occasional helpers can go when they can. Scouting can be run by a team of people; the people in that team have to talk to one another, which is quite something, and timeline what they are doing. If they cannot go all the time, that does not matter, but they should give what they can; even if it is only for six months, that will be valued and taken on board, and thanks will be given, because every hour that someone can give to help with young people is invaluable.

[59] **Helen Mary Jones:** Do you want to add anything to that?

[60] **Mr Brownsill:** Yes, one of the things that struck me on flexible volunteering is that, traditionally, Scout troops meet once a week, on a Tuesday night or whenever, but I have seen examples around the country of scout groups meeting once a month. They are called the Saturday scout troop. All you have to do is give up one Saturday a month. The actual time that you give up for that Saturday is the same as doing it once a week; you just do it in one big lump instead. It also allows you to do a lot more adventurous scouting because if you are there for a whole day, there are a lot more things that you can do than if you are there for an hour and a half or two hours on a weekday evening. That is certainly something that interests me. By doing that, you open up lots of other opportunities for people as well—thinking outside the box, if you like, by having regular meetings at different sorts of times.

[61] **Helen Mary Jones:** That point about flexibility for volunteers was very interesting. Thank you both very much indeed; we appreciate you making time to be with us today and your written evidence which, as other Members have said, was concise and to the point and extremely useful. Thank you very much.

<p>[62] Croesawaf at y bwrdd gynrychiolwyr o Gymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru. Croesawn Dr Chris Llewelyn a Naomi Alleyne, o'r gymdeithas ei hun. Mae'r ddau yn dystion cyson gerbron ein pwyllgor. Yr ydym hefyd yn croesawu Les Jones o Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr. Croeso cynnes i chi a diolch am eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig.</p>	<p>I welcome to the table representatives from the Welsh Local Government Association. We welcome Dr Chris Llewelyn and Naomi Alleyne from the association itself. They are regular witnesses before this committee. We also welcome Les Jones from Bridgend County Borough Council. A warm welcome to you and thank you for your written evidence.</p>
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[63] We have received your written evidence and, if you are content, we will go straight to questions. I remind Members and witnesses that we are on a fairly tight timescale because we have the Deputy Minister coming in at 10.15 a.m.. We have many questions and we would like to get through them in a short timeframe.

[64] I shall begin with a question about the role of local authorities in relation to the issues before us today. In oral evidence to the committee, the Big Lottery Fund stated that, in its experience, the play agenda was not addressed at a high enough level in local authorities. It also stated that Big Lottery Fund applicants were saying that play is not necessarily seen as being a key or core part of the business of local authorities. Is this an accurate reflection of the current situation? If not, what more needs to be done to change the perceptions of how local authorities are playing their role in respect of planning and making provision for safe places to play and for young people to spend time together?

[65] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will start off and maybe Les would like to give a more operational perspective. I can understand the criticisms that are being made, but I think that the position is changing. As the children and young people's planning process is becoming embedded and as the full implications of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 are being understood and being felt, authorities are increasingly adopting a more corporate approach to play and the play needs of children and young people. The position is evolving significantly and we are also aware that training opportunities are being provided increasingly for local authority members, to inform them of the role that they need to play. Therefore, although I can understand where the criticism is coming from, I think that it is a bit harsh and I think that the position is improving.

[66] **Helen Mary Jones:** Les, do you want to add anything to that?

[67] **Mr Jones:** Yes. I think the picture is changing quite rapidly, but one of the problems that we have found is that it has been difficult to engage directly with the Big Lottery Fund as a children and young people partnership or a local authority. We have been required, or it has been requested that we always communicate with the Big Lottery through our local lead body, which has been the local voluntary sector organisations, supported by Play Wales. We have found it frustrating as partnerships to have that lack of direct contact with the Big Lottery Fund.

9.40 a.m.

[68] **Helen Mary Jones:** Who is requiring you to do that; is it the lottery or the Assembly Government?

[69] **Mr Jones:** In my experience, it is the lottery that wishes to communicate through the local lead body. Sometimes, that has given us some difficulties, because a lot of the processes that we have been going through have been about forming new groups and voluntary-sector networks across more than one local authority area. It has involved a lot of getting together, talking and negotiation about who will lead on what, and about how we will take the plans forward. I have to say that we have come through it extremely well, and at the end of the process we are going to have a much stronger play network in our children and young people's partnerships, and much better collaboration between local adjoining partnerships as well. However, it has been a difficult process, and it has not been helped by the distance that has been kept between the strategic leads in the local authorities, the children and young people's partnerships and the Big Lottery Fund.

[70] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you, that is helpful.

[71] **Sandy Mewies:** Thank you for your paper, which was extremely interesting. This question is going to focus on the role of the children and young people's partnerships, and core aim 4 in particular. Previously, the Welsh Local Government Association has said that

[72] 'children and young people's partnerships have the responsibility for the planning process, and are the lead vehicle for planning services for children and young people within

the territorial confines of an authority’.

[73] However, during the course of the inquiry, we have heard some criticism of joint working at local authority level, and have heard references to the limited role of children and young people’s partnerships. Are they effective in delivering strategic joint working between agencies in respect of play? Does the partnerships’ strategic role have a high-enough profile in respect of play? I appreciate that that is quite a convoluted question.

[74] **Mr Jones:** It varies across Wales, but generally speaking, it would be true to say that—following on from the previous question—play has been getting a higher profile more recently than it has in the past, but it is still something of a poor relation across Wales. Sporting activities, for instance, have generally been much better supported than play activities through the partnership process. That is changing, not least because of the potential duty on play sufficiency that is coming through the proposed Measure and so on, so I think that legislative changes have made a difference to the way in which we, as partnerships, have to give due regard to play. The growth of the foundation phase has also had an effect; that is bringing lessons with it for all of us in partnerships.

[75] I have lost my train of thought regarding the second part of the question. As for whether we are effective in developing play—

[76] **Sandy Mewies:** It was about the partnerships’ strategic role; do they have a high enough profile in respect of play?

[77] **Mr Jones:** There is still a lot of discussion about what it is that we are seeking to deliver with play, and how it relates to the other activities in core aim 4. I will give you a concrete example from Bridgend, where we have been running summer play schemes for many years; we have been running play schemes for disabled children separately and, alongside mainstream play schemes, we have been running Welsh-medium play schemes and so on, and these have been a holiday play scheme experience. This year, we have been developing a different approach, which has been to offer a range of activities, informally provided for, with some supervision and assistance in organisation; these run alongside sporting activities, adventurous activities, traditional play and so on. The prospect for this approach, although we are yet to run the activities, is that we are bringing a lot of different specialisms and experience into the delivery of play in its broadest sense for this summer. We are hopeful that what that will mean is that we can offer more to more children and young people as a result. What we are still not altogether clear on is whether that approach will be acceptable within the concept, for instance, of play sufficiency. Will play be defined as a particular, restricted set of activities, or will it have that wider scope that we see as being important. I hope that that makes some sense.

[78] **Sandy Mewies:** With your indulgence, Chair, I will ask a supplementary question. Chris, you might be able to comment on this as well. Given the economic times that we live in, and the fact that you have both talked about the difficulties that there have been with raising the profile of play as an important, discrete activity, will these activities be an easy hit in the future? Could the high profile that these activities have had be affected?

[79] **Dr Llewelyn:** Should I come in first? I think that there are potential problems. Just after you raised the question I looked at the partnership support unit’s review of the children and young people’s plans, and we have shared that information with you. Core aim 4 refers to the detail contained in the plans, and I think that it highlights some of the issues that you mentioned. However, the review also mentions the barriers, the cost of admission to leisure centres, the cost of transport and so on. You are right to be concerned about the impact of cuts in revenue funding in future years on play opportunities. Thinking of leisure centres alone, a lot of authorities are looking at how they can continue to meet the existing service provision

levels given that they are faced with cuts in revenue funding. While attention will inevitably focus on statutory services, the discretionary areas will inevitably suffer unless very innovative and radical approaches to delivery can be developed quickly. I know that some authorities are looking at putting leisure centres into trusts, because there are some opportunities open to authorities from pursuing that route, although there are some disadvantages as well. Authorities are conscious of the concerns that you highlight, and are working together, as well as working with the Assembly Government—the Minister for Heritage is particularly concerned with culture and leisure provision, including libraries, and how they will deal with the pressures on revenue funding in the next three or four years.

[80] **Helen Mary Jones:** I remind Members that we have another nine questions that we would like to get through with these witnesses, so I will be a bit strict with supplementary questions. Eleanor, you are next.

[81] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae rhai tystion wedi awgrymu bod diffyg perchnogaeth a chydweithio ar draws ystod adrannau llywodraeth lleol o ran manau diogel i chwarae a chymdeithasu, gan gyfeirio yn benodol at adrannau cynllunio a thrafnidiaeth. A ydych yn hyderus bod dealltwriaeth ar draws adrannau awdurdodau lleol o'r angen i gydweithio i sicrhau manau diogel i chwarae a chymdeithasu ynddynt? Hefyd, yr oeddech yn sôn am ganolfannau hamdden—mae'n drist bod y rhan fwyaf ohonynt wedi cael eu hadeiladu ar yr un amser, felly mae'r broblem wedi bodoli ers tipyn, gan fod llawer yn dod i ddiwedd eu hoes ar yr un pryd.

Eleanor Burnham: Some witnesses have suggested that there is a lack of ownership and joint working across the range of local government departments in respect of safe places to play and hang out, with specific reference to planning and traffic departments. Are you confident that there is understanding across local authority departments of the need to work together to secure safe places to play and hang out? Also, you mentioned leisure centres—it is sad that most of them were built at the same time, so the problem has existed for a while, and many are coming to the end of their lives at the same time.

[82] **Dr Llewelyn:** Y gwirionedd yw bod ymwybyddiaeth o fewn llywodraeth leol a gwahanol rannau o'r sector cyhoeddus o'r angen i weithio ar y cyd wedi tyfu dros y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Yr wyf yn credu bod y pwysau ariannol a'r problemau cyllidol y byddwn yn eu hwynebu yn y blynyddoedd i ddod wedi ffocysu meddyliau awdurdodau lleol ac, yn sgîl hynny, adrannau o fewn awdurdodau. Felly, mae mwy o weithio ar y cyd yn digwydd—mwy yn bendant nag y mae'r cyhoedd yn ei ystyried. Wrth edrych tua'r dyfodol, mae adrannau yn gweld bod yn rhaid iddynt weithio ar y cyd i allu darparu gwasanaethau sy'n dod yn agos at yr hyn y maent yn gallu ei ddarparu ar hyn o bryd.

Dr Llewelyn: The truth is that awareness within local government and different parts of the public sector of the imperative to work together has grown over recent years. I believe that the financial pressures and funding problems that we will face in the years to come have focused the thoughts of local authorities and, consequently, departments within authorities. Therefore, more joint working is taking place—certainly more than the public believes. Looking to the future, however, departments regard it as essential to work together to be able to provide services that are close to what they are able to provide currently.

9.50 a.m.

[83] Yr oeddech yn sôn am gyflwr canolfannau hamdden a'r gwariant arnynt. Un o'r pethau yr ydym yn eu trafod drwy raglen ysgolion yr unfed ganrif ar hugain yw sut y gallwn glymu'r buddsoddiad cyfalaf

You talked about the state of and expenditure on leisure centres. One of the things we are discussing through the twenty-first century schools programme is how we can tie in the capital investment that is being made across

sy'n digwydd ar draws y sector cyhoeddus, sef canolfannau hamdden, pethau sy'n ymwneud â diwylliant, ac ysgolion, i gael y budd gorau ohono. Ateb hirdymor yw hwnnw, ac mae nifer o'r problemau y mae awdurdodau yn eu hwynebu yn rhai byrdymor sy'n ymwneud â chyllid refeniw yn hytrach na chyfalaf. Fel yr oeddwn yn sôn yn gynharach, mae'r awdurdodau, adrannau yn yr awdurdodau, Llywodraeth y Cynulliad a'r sector gwirfoddol yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd i drafod sut yn union y gallant gadw at lefel gyfredol y ddarpariaeth wrth wynebu'r her fawr o doriadau i arian cyhoeddus.

the public sector, namely in leisure centres, things relating to culture, and schools, so that it yields the greatest benefit. That is a long-term solution, and many of the problems that authorities face are short-term ones related to revenue rather than capital. As I mentioned earlier, the authorities, departments within authorities, the Assembly Government and the voluntary sector are working together to discuss exactly how they can keep the current level of provision in the face of the major challenge posed by cuts to public funding.

[84] **Helen Mary Jones:** The committee has heard evidence from a range of agencies, including Sustrans, Merthyr Valleys Homes and Barnardo's, in respect of the benefits of products such as home zones and DIY Streets. Do local authorities welcome these approaches to street design as an attempt to keep children and young people safe and to give them opportunities to play? If so, what challenges do local authorities face in taking forward a wider implementation of such approaches that aim for shared use of street space?

[85] **Dr Llewelyn:** I will comment initially, and maybe Les can come in with some operational detail. On the overall approach, I think that authorities welcome it. There is evidence that it has worked elsewhere, and I am sure that, as a committee, you have looked at where this type of approach has been effective. We have seen evidence of work in the Netherlands, where there is this emerging hierarchy in street use. As ever, the truth is that there are some problems because of conflicting priorities and trying to fulfil different expectations and agendas, but it is something that authorities welcome, and they are taking it very seriously.

[86] **Helen Mary Jones:** Les, do you have anything to add to that?

[87] **Mr Jones:** I would just link it back to previous responses, because the emphasis on planning, traffic and so on has also come through the health, social care and wellbeing needs analysis rather than through the audit through the children and young people's partnerships. Handing over that responsibility to the children and young people's partnerships to deliver has meant that we have had much more involvement with highways and planning than we perhaps had when the partnerships were first set up and were first operating. What approaches such as DIY Streets brings to this is that the children and young people's partnerships, the health, social care and wellbeing partnerships, and the planning and highways people are looking for solutions. We do not have obvious solutions, so everyone is very receptive to new ideas at the moment, to look at something different that would work and, most importantly, challenge something that, for the partnerships, is a key element in this, namely differentiating between children playing in the street and antisocial behaviour, in recognition of the fact that children have a place in our local communities.

[88] That relates to safety in particular, because children told us in the consultations that we held in Bridgend, for instance—we passed that evidence to this committee—that they feel safest when other people are around, when they are seen and observed by their communities. So, you are bringing together several agendas into this one approach, which is to be welcomed. I hope that we will develop it in the new plans.

[89] **Joyce Watson:** Moving on, you have already mentioned road safety. What major challenges do local authority traffic departments face in ensuring that road safety contributes

to children and young people's having safe places in which to play and hang out? We could talk about speed bumps or other speeding restrictions, but we also need to look at parking and joy riding. So, could you give us your views on traffic measures only? Otherwise, we will step over the issue. Naomi might want to say something from the social justice side as well.

[90] **Mr Jones:** That is a difficult question. It is about the solutions in local streets. I have often used the example of Bridgend, and particularly the more disadvantaged areas. I live in one of the south Wales Valleys. You can drive through areas in the Valleys at 9 p.m. and see two, three and four-year-olds playing on the streets. That is undoubtedly the link with the increased road traffic accident figures for those areas. However, if you drive through other areas, there are no children to be seen after 6 p.m.. Those children who live a more open existence, on the streets, are also streetwise and traffic wise, and they know what the situation is like in their local communities.

[91] Part of our job is about skilling children and young people to use their local open spaces safely and successfully, because life is not without risk. Road traffic is a difficult issue. Generally, if there is a road traffic accident involving a child, someone is to blame somewhere, whether it is a question of speed, visibility, or a lack of awareness on the part of the child. That knocks on to all sorts of other situations relating to risk and danger, and being able to deal with that and be safe with it. The Crucial Crew programme, for instance, is good at giving those skills to young people, and I would like to see more of those. I think that we are losing some of the old road safety measures that we used to have, around cycling proficiency, and so on; we just do not have that now.

[92] **Helen Mary Jones:** Do you wish to add anything to that, Naomi or Chris?

[93] **Ms Alleyne:** To support what Les said, it is a concern that a large number of road traffic accidents are happening in deprived areas. The issue is being picked up through health, social care and needs assessments, but we need to consider what action we are taking in the much broader sense, linking into some of the local programmes, such as parenting programmes and Flying Start, to address some of those issues. So, as Les was saying, it is about building in personal safety issues and learning how to cross roads safely, and so on. There needs to be more focused work, through the programmes that already exist in those deprived areas.

[94] As I am sure some people will have mentioned, there needs to be a balance between traffic-calming measures in deprived areas and some of the concerns that the emergency services have about getting to an accident. It is about striking that balance. The restricted speed limits around schools have proven to be successful in helping to slow traffic down, particularly as it approaches schools. However, you are right, Joyce, that there is an issue about parking outside schools, particularly at dropping off and picking up time. So, there are other issues to address as well.

[95] **Helen Mary Jones:** Mae gan Eleanor gwestiwn penodol am gytundebau adran 106. **Helen Mary Jones:** Eleanor has a specific question on section 106 agreements.

[96] **Eleanor Burnham:** Cytunaf â'r pwynt am rianta. Yr oeddwn yn yr Orsedd y diwrnod o'r blaen, pan welais ferch yn rhuthro allan i'r ffordd o'r tu cefn i gar, ac ni ddywedodd ei thad ddim byd wrthi. **Eleanor Burnham:** I agree with the point on parenting. I was in Rossett the other day, and I saw a girl running out into the road from behind a car, and her father did not say a word to her.

[97] **Helen Mary Jones:** A wnewch chi ofyn eich cwestiwn, Eleanor? **Helen Mary Jones:** Can you ask your question, Eleanor?

[98] **Eleanor Burnham:** Gallaf, wrth gwrs. Yn eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig ychwanegol i'r pwyllgor, o ran a yw cytundebau adran 106 yn darparu mannau diogel i chwarae a chymdeithasu ynddynt, cyfeiriwch at yr ardoll seilwaith cymunedol, a dywedwch y bydd cytundebau adran 106 yn gynyddol gyfyngedig o ran eu cyrhaeddiad fel y byddant yn cwmpasu tai fforddiadwy yn unig erbyn 2014.

Eleanor Burnham: Yes, of course. In your additional written evidence to the committee in respect of whether section 106 agreements provide safe areas in which to play and hang out, you refer to the community infrastructure levy and say that section 106 agreements will be increasingly limited in scope, with the result that they can cover only affordable housing by 2014.

10.00 a.m.

[99] A allwch chi ehangu ar oblygiadau hyn o ran darparu mannau chwarae a mannau agored, yn arbennig pe bai awdurdod lleol yn penderfynu peidio ag edrych ar gyflwyno ardoll seilwaith cymunedol?

Can you please expand on the implications of this for the provision of play areas and open spaces, particularly if a local authority decides not to pursue the introduction of the community infrastructure levy?

[100] **Dr Llewelyn:** Maddeuwch i mi, ond nid cynllunydd ydwyf, ac mae'r iaith ychydig yn dechnegol, felly trof at y Saesneg.

Dr Llewelyn: Forgive me, but I am not a planner, and the language is quite technical, so I will turn to English.

[101] I am not a planner, so I will have to rely on information that I have received from colleagues on this. It seems to me that the whole planning process is a bit like the British constitution, in that it is derived from a range of different pieces of legislation, advice and documents, just as constitutional Bills range from the Magna Carta to the Acts of Union and even the Government of Wales Acts. This, to me, seems to be a similar process, with the same level of complexity.

[102] As you mentioned, section 106 agreements will increasingly apply to social housing, and authorities will not be able to achieve the kind of planning gains from them that they have in the past. The intention is that the community infrastructure levy compensates for those changes. The impression currently is that, because the consultation process on the community infrastructure levy is so lengthy and drawn out, the advantages will not necessarily be derived in the short term. Given that it is voluntary, there is also the possibility that not all authorities will take advantage of the opportunity. So, the gains of section 106 agreements may have been lost without the advantages of the CILs being available.

[103] **Ms Alleyne:** As it is new, another issue will be the line that developers take, how the planning inspectorate responds, and any steer given by the Assembly Government. A colleague of ours sent us a recent appeal from the developers, on the basis of applying the CIL tests, which would previously have been a planning gain under section 106, and that appeal was successful. So, the detail is getting much tighter, but it is still an evolving agenda, particularly around the planning inspectorate's role.

[104] **Dr Llewelyn:** Another thing to bear in mind is the context. As we have already mentioned this morning, the economic climate and the recession are having an impact on revenue funding. Similarly, in this instance, because the numbers of planning applications are falling, and have fallen considerably, the opportunities of the past will not arise in the short and medium term.

[105] **Joyce Watson:** My question is specific. We talk about section 106 agreements, but they are not the panacea for all ills. They never were and never will be. You all know that I

used to be a councillor elsewhere before I came to the Assembly, so I know that there was an agreement in respect of building X amount of houses—and I cannot remember the number, but it may be 25. This is not just about social housing, but also about large, private estates, as children and young people living there also need play areas and safe places in which to hang out. I do not expect an answer now, because I am springing this on you, but, as an association, what evidence do you have that local authorities, using their own intuition, build a provision into their planning system that if they build X amount of houses—and I want to know the exact number—they must provide a safe area to play within a given development? That information would be useful for us, because if we hang everything on the section 106 agreements, there is always another way to catch people or to provide facilities, depending on which side you are on. However, you are right to say that money is limited.

[106] **Ms Alleyne:** Given the specific nature of the question, it would be better for us to follow it up shortly in writing. Some really good work is being undertaken by local planning authorities to address those issues.

[107] **Helen Mary Jones:** That would be very helpful. Joyce, could you move to question 17?

[108] **Joyce Watson:** We have had examples of local authorities building provision without consulting those for whom they are providing—in this case, children and young people. In these examples, children and young people did not use the provision made on their behalf because they were not consulted about it and they did not want it. The example of a skate park in a south Wales authority was cited by the Association of Chief Police Officers and the young people from Funky Dragon as being a waste of money. We also heard from a community councillor in Neath that £0.25 million was spent on an Astroturf pitch that was laid without consultation with the local community, and local children and young people did not actually have any access to it. Well, they are not going to use it in that case, are they? So, what needs to be done to prevent that reported lack of consultation?

[109] **Helen Mary Jones:** Les, you might want to make a start on this.

[110] **Mr Jones:** I recognise what you are saying, and I could probably give you examples from my authority area. However, I am glad to say that the non-consultation example that I could give predates the children and young people's partnerships. All the children and young people's partnerships—and I can speak on behalf of all my colleagues—take participation very seriously as being a core part of their work. It is often difficult to extend that beyond those organisations to those sections of organisations that do not work directly with children and young people, but it is starting to happen.

[111] There are two areas that are developing very rapidly and formally, and we need to be sure that the children and young people's partnerships have a voice. I will use Bridgend, where we have a prominent role in these, as an example. The first area is citizen engagement. We have a citizen engagement strategy and a communications strategy with citizens, and a practitioner's group is being set up to advise on when and how participation should take place for all proposals. That is one development that is reflected nationally.

[112] The second area is commissioning and commissioning strategies. There are a few children and young people's partnerships or local authorities that have a children and young people's commissioning strategy for services for children and young people, but Bridgend is one of them. We are developing a toolkit to go with that, which includes clear guidance on how, when, and where that participation should take place, as well as other aspects. That is being used as the basis for a commissioning strategy for the local authority as a whole and for all the partnerships in the Bridgend area, with participation being extended beyond children and young people. Those formal processes are required so that, when reports go to cabinet or

the council, clear questions are asked. Have you consulted? Who have you consulted? What were the responses? Similarly, when we are commissioning, before commissioning documents are signed off, there is a clear audit trail for the participation aspect.

[113] **Joyce Watson:** I am going to move on to the next question about the role of schools, because time will defeat us otherwise. Perhaps Chris and Naomi can answer this one. Several witnesses to our inquiry have highlighted the potentially important role that schools can play in providing safe places to play or hang out at weekends and outside normal school hours. In which ways are you aware of local authorities maximising those opportunities so that the facilities on the grounds are available to children and young people in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays, in community-focused schools and in LEA-maintained schools in general?

[114] **Helen Mary Jones:** I ask you to be fairly brief in your response, because we have several questions that we want to ask, but there is one more that I really want to squeeze in before we see the Minister. So, please provide a brief-ish response to what is a huge question about the role that schools do or could play.

[115] **Dr Llewelyn:** I am happy to answer, but I suspect that Les might be in better position to respond, given his experience in Bridgend.

[116] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is fine.

10.10 a.m.

[117] **Mr Jones:** I will be very brief. There are two aspects to the schools question, and the first is: do children want to play in their schools? The consultations that were carried out recently in connection with the evidence to this committee suggested that schools generally did not come high on their list of preferences, but schools are not accessible to them out of school time. I know of schools in Bridgend, for example in Bettws, where open access play areas are available to young people 24/7. They also have a police office on the premises. It is very much a community school and a combination of that multi-use with the police and so on has meant that there has not been an increase in vandalism, which they might have expected to go alongside opening up their school grounds. So, it is not just about making the school grounds available, but also about the other things that you put alongside it as part of a community schools package.

[118] **Helen Mary Jones:** Chris, you wanted to add a brief comment.

[119] **Dr Llewelyn:** The community focused schools approach has great potential, but I do not think that we deal with it as effectively as we could. We need school-focused communities because there are so many benefits to the communities from the learning process and from having communities focus on the schools. The tendency is to see them just in the context of physical provision and that having sport facilities or a range of other facilities in the school resolves the problem, but it is a much more complex issue than that.

[120] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. We will jump on to question 20 about costs, Angela, if that is all right with you.

[121] **Angela Burns:** I wanted to ask a question on children from low-income households. We were interested to know your charging policies for council-run schemes. This partly comes about from evidence that we have heard and also because of Barnardo's comment that even £1 a day can be too much. To put that into perspective for anyone who is listening and who thinks that a £1 a day is not very much; if it is £2 a day and you have three children, then it is £6 a day; if they want to go out twice a week, then suddenly, it becomes £12, which is a

lot for a low-income household. So, this is not just about that one sentence: £1 a day can be too much. I am keen to know how you are supporting people in that position.

[122] **Dr Llewelyn:** We have discussed this on several occasions with authorities. They deal with this matter with some sensitivity. It depends on the circumstances because, on the one hand, it would seem obvious that, in low-income situations, free provision would be the immediate resolution to some of the problems, but the feedback that we get is that, in some instances, some kind of fee is useful in order to secure commitment and to ensure that whatever provision is available is not taken advantage of. However, there is a high degree of sensitivity around these issues so that if the fee is viewed as a barrier or if the circumstances stop participation, then the fee would be removed. Nevertheless, the feedback that we get is that it is quite a complicated issue and that the immediate circumstances need to be taken into account, and that some sensitivity needs to be shown by the providers about those circumstances.

[123] **Angela Burns:** Who takes that view in the local authority? Who makes that decision or that judgment call?

[124] **Dr Llewelyn:** Les might come back on this, but my understanding is that it is taken at a very local level.

[125] **Angela Burns:** When you say 'local level', do you mean the person who is administering that particular provision?

[126] **Ms Alleyne:** The youth worker who generally knows the family's circumstances can make those decisions.

[127] **Mr Jones:** There are some very good schemes that are authority-wide. Quoting an example from Bridgend, which I know is valuable more generally, there is a 'Bridge Card' for access to leisure facilities and that is available to families for free or at a subsidised level, depending on their household income and reliance on benefits. We have also linked that, during summer periods, to free or subsidised transport. Another key element is not just the cost of getting into the centre, but the cost of getting to leisure facilities. That scheme has been very successful, but it does cost.

[128] **Helen Mary Jones:** It might be useful for us to see, if you have them, details on paper of that support, because I know that Members would like to explore that further. It has come up as a major barrier to participation in the evidence of several witnesses, so if there is something somewhere that is working well, we might well want to recommend that to others. However, I now have to draw the session to a close.

[129] Diolch yn fawr i'r tri ohonoch am eich papur ac am eich parodrwydd i fod gyda ni. Mae un neu ddau gwestiwn nad ydym wedi eu cyffwrdd. Edrychaf arnynt gyda staff i weld os yw'n werth gofyn iddynt eu hanfon i chi yn ysgrifenedig. Efallai na fydd, ond edrychwn ar hynny, ac yr wyf yn gwybod y byddwch yn barod i ateb yn ysgrifenedig os oes angen.

I thank all three of you for your paper and for your willingness to join us. There are one or two questions that we have not touched upon. I will look at them with staff to see whether it would be worth while putting them to you in writing. Perhaps it will not be, but we will check that, and I know that you will be willing to respond in writing if that is necessary.

[130] Croesawaf Huw Lewis, y Dirprwy Weinidog dros Blant i'r cyfarfod. Gyda'r Dirprwy Weinidog mae Martin Swain a Tanis Cunnick.

I welcome Huw Lewis, the Deputy Minister for Children to the meeting. Accompanying the Deputy Minister are Martin Swain and Tanis Cunnick.

[131] I always have trouble pronouncing your surname. How do I say it properly?

[132] **Ms Cunnick:** With a hard 'c'.

[133] **Helen Mary Jones:** Croeso cynnes i'r tri ohonoch. Diolch hefyd i'r Dirprwy Weinidog am ei bapur, sydd wedi bod yn ddefnyddiol iawn. **Helen Mary Jones:** A warm welcome to all three of you. I also thank the Deputy Minister for his paper, which has been very useful.

[134] I very much appreciate you making yourself available to us for a second time, Deputy Minister. Members will remember that the Deputy Minister came at the beginning of the inquiry and scoped out some of the things that were going on at a national level for us. He was prepared to come back before we complete the inquiry to respond to some of the issues that have been raised, and we are grateful for that. We are grateful to you for bringing your senior officials with you, who I am sure will be helpful.

[135] I will start the questioning with a question on the role of local authorities. The committee has heard evidence from several witnesses suggesting that there is a perceived lack of joint working both strategically and practically in delivering safe places in which children and young people can play and spend leisure time. They have referred to that both in the role of local authorities in co-ordinating a range of providers and also in the role of different departments in local authorities, including some of the less obvious suspects, such as planning and transport. What additional drivers can the Deputy Minister use to ensure that Welsh Government play and youth strategies are delivered in real terms at a local level? I am sure that we would all agree that that co-ordinating role is very important.

[136] **The Deputy Minister for Children (Huw Lewis):** It is. It is disappointing to hear such comments coming back, but it is important to listen to them. One of the new developments that will lead to new drivers to ensure that we get some kind of coherent delivery on the ground will be the Proposed Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure and the standards, regulations and guidance that will hedge about best practice when the implications of the proposed Measure will roll out. Where we continue not to see adequate provision, it is the job of the Assembly Government to ask searching questions about what is happening on the ground. The final backstop is the option, where necessary, of attaching specific terms and conditions to any funding for play to ensure that we have proper working in this regard.

[137] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is helpful.

[138] **Eleanor Burnham:** Byddaf yn siarad yn Gymraeg. Mae'r dystiolaeth a glywsom yn awgrymu nad yw'r holl dystion yn ymwybodol o'r swyddogaeth strategol arweiniol y bwriedir i bartneriaethau plant a phobl ifanc ei chymryd o ran chwarae a hamdden. Dywed eich tystiolaeth **Eleanor Burnham:** I will speak in Welsh. The evidence that we have heard suggests that not all the witnesses are aware of the lead strategic role that it is intended that children and young people's partnerships play in play and leisure. In your evidence, you say that

[139] 'Mae'r canllawiau cyfredol ar gynllunio a phartneriaeth yn cael eu hadolygu er mwyn ystyried dyletswyddau newydd ar awdurdodau lleol a phartneriaid'. 'Current planning and partnership guidance is being reviewed to take into account new duties on local authorities and partners'.

[140] Sut y bydd y canllawiau hyn yn egluro swyddogaeth partneriaethau plant a How will this new guidance clarify the role of the children and young people's

phobl ifanc neu yn ei hailategu os oes angen? partnerships or restate it if necessary?

[141] **Huw Lewis:** This is also something that needs to be addressed. An element of this is the partnerships' role in ensuring that there is proper partnership working with other organisations and their communities. There will be updated guidance to the CYP partnerships, which we hope will make clear their delivery role in relation to play. That guidance will be issued this year.

10.20 a.m.

[142] Therefore, that guidance is in the making, and the committee's findings will be central to ensuring that it is robust on this issue. Therefore, there is valuable input from the committee on this point.

[143] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Joyce has the next questions.

[144] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning, Deputy Minister. The committee has received written evidence from the Big Lottery Fund, which states that you have agreed to establish a national steering group to bring the Big Lottery together with other agencies to ensure the sustainability of lottery-funded play projects, with the first meeting due to take place on 10 June 2010. Can you tell us more about the role and remit that you expect that group to take?

[145] **Huw Lewis:** We all have great hopes for the Lottery's work over the next few years. My officials met with representatives of the Big Lottery Fund last week to discuss the development of a national steering group for the children's play programme, and the way in which we move forward with that. I have agreed with the fund that it is vital that we consider the long-term sustainability of the projects that are funded by this programme. Decisions are being made at present on round two of the programme. I do not want to prejudice any of those decisions, because it is a delicate road to tread, and these things are the responsibility of the Big Lottery Fund, and decisions are taken independently of Ministers. However, I am content that the co-working is going ahead well, and that that national steering group will be a sensible way of taking things forward.

[146] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you, Deputy Minister. When representatives from the Big Lottery spoke to us, they were concerned that the group should have clear terms of reference—I am sure that you would agree with that. It is too early to know exactly what those are, but, if it is appropriate, the committee would be grateful to see a copy of those terms of reference once they are clearly set.

[147] **Huw Lewis:** Of course.

[148] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is great, thank you. Joyce Watson has the next question too.

[149] **Joyce Watson:** We have heard evidence about the lack of community engagement in planning decisions, where local authorities have built play and leisure provisions without consulting with children and young people and which was later perceived to be a waste of money. A community councillor in Neath told us that £250,000 was spent on an Astroturf pitch that was laid without any consultation with the local community, and resulted in local children and young people not having access to it—so, surprise, surprise, they could not use it. Therefore, how can the Welsh Government utilise the new duty, which you have talked about, on local authorities, under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, to facilitate the participation of children, and will that address this apparent lack of consultation?

[150] **Huw Lewis:** I am not directly aware of the Neath example, but, in general, this is bad governance, given our guidance; it would be bad governance even if this guidance did not

exist. The committee is receiving clear input about people's continuing concerns around consultation with children and young people. The lesson that I would take from this is that our guidance needs to be reinforced and strengthened further, to hammer home the point that this is central to everything that we want to do to develop the play agenda. Young people are central to this, and they must be consulted. Again, and as I mentioned in response to your question, Chair, if bad practice was to continue, it would be necessary to tie funding decisions to good practice.

[151] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. I believe that you will take Sandy's question, Joyce; she has had to pop out for a minute.

[152] **Joyce Watson:** I wish to move on to road safety issues. Several witnesses have outlined the impact of traffic and road safety on children and young people's ability to play safely and hang out. One witness told us that, on the ground in residential areas, he believes that residents would say that a 20 mph zone is almost worthless in addressing road safety issues. How do you respond to such views?

[153] **Huw Lewis:** I am not sure which witness voiced those concerns, but I would dispute them. This is not directly my ministerial bag, you understand, but the statistics show that 20 mph zones in particular are having an effect. As of now, I understand that there are 481 schemes across Wales, two thirds of which were funded by the Assembly Government. What they have led to is an average annual reduction of 38 per cent in personal injury collisions and a 42 per cent reduction in the number of those killed or seriously injured. It has also been shown statistically that they reduce speeds and so on. There is a critical element of enforcement here, and the witness who addressed this might have been concerned that 20 mph zones were perhaps not being enforced rigorously. That is a matter for the police, and dialogue would be needed with the police force concerned. However, across Wales we have seen lives saved and injuries reduced as a result of 20 mph zones. The feedback that we have been getting as WAG, that is, on people's concerns about 20 mph zones, is about the aggravation caused by the setting up of the zone rather than its existence or smooth running afterwards, or its efficacy after it has been set up.

[154] **Joyce Watson:** Indicators 15 and 16 of the Welsh Government child poverty milestones and targets calculate child pedestrian injuries in the most deprived electoral wards in Wales. The most recent data monitoring progress were published by the Welsh Government in April this year, and showed little or no change. What do you think could be done by the Welsh Government to improve road safety—we have just touched on this—for children in the most deprived areas?

[155] **Helen Mary Jones:** We appreciate, Deputy Minister, that we are asking you a range of questions that are not actually in your bag. That is what happens when Ministers have cross-portfolio responsibilities. If we are raising matters that you want to take back to Cabinet colleagues, we would be more than happy to receive written answers if you feel that there are some specifics on which it is not helpful to go into detail today. I am not suggesting that this question is one of those, but if there are such questions, we understand that with such a broad remit you may need to go back and seek further information from officials who are not here today.

[156] **Huw Lewis:** I will possibly do so, although I do not regard that question as unfair to me and my portfolio. The milestones and indicators are part of our child poverty self-assessment, and I wrote the original milestones and targets documents. So, it is for me. It is disappointing that even though we are seeing reductions on average across Wales, as I mentioned for instance in relation to the effectiveness of 20 mph zones, when it comes to the most deprived communities and the least well-off children, as is so often the case, the average does not apply and we have not seen a downwards shift. There has been no deterioration in

the figures, but we have not seen a downward shift, which we would have liked to have seen. There is joint working to be done here within the agenda of play and beyond it, with, primarily, children and young people's partnerships, to address this particular issue. I will need to work on this jointly with other Cabinet colleagues. There is clearly a role here for Communities First groups to take a look at traffic safety and for us to assist them in tackling those concerns. We need to encourage children and young people's partnerships to look at this specifically.

10.30 a.m.

[157] It remains the biggest risk to life and limb for the most deprived children and young people in Wales. The statistics are quite stark. A child living in a deprived area is many times more likely to be the victim of a road traffic accident than are children on average. We are talking about dozens of lives here. I take very strongly from the work that you have done the message that this is an area of concern. I will take it up with my Cabinet colleagues and look to develop joint working with partnerships to ensure that we address this issue on the ground.

[158] **Helen Mary Jones:** Angela, I believe that you have a brief supplementary to this.

[159] **Angela Burns:** Indeed. We all have our own views as to why this statistic is as it is, but I wonder whether the Deputy Minister might be able to postulate any views of his own as to why it is so much worse in these particular areas.

[160] **Huw Lewis:** There is no robust research that I am aware of that explains to us why this should be so. Perhaps it is time that that kind of research was commissioned. However, we all have a subjective idea of communities, or parts of communities, where children tend to play on the streets because other facilities are not necessarily available to them. They tend to play unsupervised on those streets, and perhaps there is an issue with how traffic behaves in some of those areas, which contributes to the mix. I am not aware of robust research that has been done anywhere to explain why these figures are as they are. However, for the first time, through the milestones and targets, we have a handle on how we are doing on this issue. We are not doing badly, but we are not doing well. We are standing still, and we need to do some work. I will undertake to do some work across Government to try to address this issue.

[161] **Eleanor Burnham:** Mae llawer o dystion wedi dweud wrth y pwyllgor mai diffyg trafndiaeth—ac, yn benodol, diffyg a chostau trafndiaeth cyhoeddus—yw'r prif rwystr o ran mynediad at fannau diogel i blant a phobl ifanc i chwarae a chymdeithasu, yn arbennig mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Yn eich tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig, yr ydych yn dweud nad yw cyflwyno cynllun teithio rhatach i bobl ifanc, sef pobl 16 a 17 oed, yn fforddiadwy yn yr hinsawdd ariannol bresennol. A allwch chi amlinellu beth arall y mae eich Llywodraeth yn ei wneud i fynd i'r afael â'r trafferthion y mae plant a phobl ifanc yn eu hwynebu o ran trafndiaeth, yn enwedig y rhai sy'n byw yng nghefn gwlad?

Eleanor Burnham: Many witness have told the committee that a lack of transport—and, specifically, the lack of and cost of public transport—is the main barrier to children and young people accessing safe places in which to play and hang out, particularly in rural areas. In your written evidence you say that rolling out a concessionary fare scheme for young people, that is, 16 and 17-year-olds, is not affordable in the current financial climate. Can you outline what else your Government is doing to address the transport difficulties faced by children and young people, particularly those who live in rural areas?

[162] **Huw Lewis:** There are matters here that are primarily for the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economy and Transport. However, this is an issue that impacts upon children and young people in particular and those in deprived or rural areas most particularly.

We are all well aware, and have been aware for many years, of the almost intractable problem of access to affordable public transport for many sections of society, although in this instance we are, of course, focusing on the young. The Assembly Government has its local transport services grant, which is enhanced—by 4 per cent, I believe—for those areas that come under the ‘sparsely populated areas’ heading.

[163] There is a structural problem in how Wales organises its public transport system. My personal view is that while we continue with the current regulatory setup, particularly in relation to buses, we will never be able to do anything other than ameliorate this problem. There are wonderful examples out there, which I would encourage. I will investigate those further, and take a look at how best practice can be rolled out in relation to community transport and in relation to looking at solutions to problems that enthusiastic individuals and groups have found. Above and beyond that, for everyone involved in Welsh politics, there is the overarching problem of what we do about affordable public transport, particularly road transport, in the future. It is a big question and responding to that here today goes somewhat beyond my pay grade. I will do everything that I can to ameliorate the problems. The Assembly Government has put extra investment in, particularly for sparsely populated areas, but it continues to be an issue. I do not come to you today with a smart answer.

[164] **Eleanor Burnham:** You know that I have questioned the efficacy of the free swimming initiative. It is wonderful but if kids cannot access it because of lack of transport, it is, sadly, unavailable to them. That is part and parcel of what we are discussing today.

[165] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, and it is not only swimming. The issues range from travel to work to childcare and access to training. This is a long-standing, deeply entrenched problem that, as Welsh politicians, we must tackle at some point if we are to get to grips with some of the problems that rural communities, in particular, have faced for a long time.

[166] **Angela Burns:** I have two questions for you. The first spins a little out of Eleanor’s question; it is about mobile youth provision. In your evidence of the 29 January 2010, you talked about the enormous investment that has gone into youth provision in rural areas—£5.5 million in revenue funding and £9 million in capital funding. You said that you would take a long hard look at this to see how efficient it is before you made any decisions. Are there any findings that you can share with us as to the effectiveness of this method of delivering youth provision?

[167] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, things have moved along. When we last discussed this, my understanding was that only 11 local authorities had any kind of information system about what was going on in this regard. Now, 21 of the 22 local authorities have a picture of what is going on. Officials have been working with local authorities and voluntary youth organisations to try to capture that information. That will feed into the national youth service audit. For the first time, we shall have robust information that will allow us to measure what kind of outcomes and impact have been made by that kind of investment. Therefore, things are moving ahead, and that pretty much comprehensive picture will be available soon.

[168] **Angela Burns:** How are you going to measure the effectiveness of mobile youth provision?

[169] **Huw Lewis:** That is a searching question, and I will pass it on to my officials. *[Laughter.]*

[170] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is why you bring your officials with you.

[171] **Ms Cunnick:** We have two different ways of measuring the value of youth work in Wales. First, we collate information through the audit, which gives us quantitative

information. One problem that we had was that we did not have any information or intelligence at all on the voluntary sector. Now, we liaise with the voluntary youth organisations to input all their information into the local authority's management information system. So, we will have information for all 22 local authorities. That is the quantitative information, which measures, for example, attendance, engagement figures, progression routes, accreditation, and the number of youth workers and their qualifications. It is a significant piece of work. All 22 local authorities currently input into that audit and the Deputy Minister now has that information to be able to make informed decisions in the future.

[172] Secondly, we measure qualitative processes. We have qualitative processes on a local basis. An example of that is this booklet, 'Youth Work showcase', which was published about 18 months ago. It highlighted the quality of youth work delivery and the outcomes for young people through project work. It gives a good flavour of what is achieved through the youth service. It focuses on the projects rather than on young people and the benefits to young people. We have a marketing budget this year and we have commissioned an organisation to consult young people about the benefits for them. We are going to produce a CD, which will be available in about six months' time. That will give you a flavour of exactly what the capital grant, and the revenue grant specifically, have achieved. I apologise that I do not have it with me today, but we are working on it and it will be available in six months' time.

10.40 a.m.

[173] **Angela Burns:** I wanted to make an observation, if I may. Monkton, in Pembrokeshire—Joyce will also know this area—is an area of great deprivation, and has a large Gypsy and Traveller community. The clerk and I went to visit the Gypsy and Traveller community and they said that their children did not feel enabled by their parents to go anywhere for youth provision, because it was just too far. Even a mile down the road, which is nothing to us, is too far for them. In Pembroke there is a very good scheme, the Tanyard Youth Project, but it is very difficult to get children from Monkton to go to it. Only a few months ago, the county council decided to support a couple of hours of youth work in the centre of Monkton. I was there last night and it was absolutely packed. There had not been any youth provision in that community previously whatsoever. It does strike me that, while we go around building our fabulous leisure centres and so on, there are many places where you simply have to take a ball and a stick and have a couple of willing adults to go to those children to engage with them. It made such a huge difference.

[174] **Helen Mary Jones:** Before the Deputy Minister responds to that, I think that you wanted to add something, Joyce.

[175] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, I would like to, and I do know the area very well. We need to be asking the Deputy Minister whether roles and responsibilities are sometimes ours and whether they are sometimes those of the local authority. The part of this that we may have missed is the spend by local authorities on youth provision. You will find that Pembrokeshire County Council spends the lowest amount in Wales. That is a drum that I have been banging for many years. You are right to identify that, where investment is made, young people and children will access those services. I know that the Deputy Minister has been there, because I was with him, so he knows what we are talking about. However, we need to look at the whole picture. We are looking at our picture, but there are other key players.

[176] **Angela Burns:** I am not saying that this is the Deputy Minister's responsibility; I was just trying to elucidate on Tanis's comments on empirical evidence. For two-and-a-half years I have been holding surgeries in Monkton, and people have been saying to me that they wanted youth provision there. Finally, it was there, and it was overwhelmed. There were masses of children; it was not the case that just 10 turned up. I thought that that was such an interesting result, because what the local community wanted had finally been delivered.

[177] **Helen Mary Jones:** I want to ask a specific question on the back of that, if I may. You have the quantitative information, and more qualitative information will be available. Presumably, that will enable the Deputy Minister to identify gaps in provision. Although one suspects that some of those gaps will still fetch up in some of the most deprived communities, despite Communities First and everything that has been done in recent years to try to address that, what steps can be taken with local authorities, using that information, to ensure that those gaps are plugged?

[178] **Huw Lewis:** By that point, we should have all the information and tools that we need and all the guidance that we could ever want to try to make sure that those gaps are addressed. There are responsibilities in the Measure for local authorities in particular to address those gaps. On the question of sufficiency audits and ensuring that these issues are addressed, all these conversations are held within the context of financial constraints, but there is a chink of light in the form of the activity of the lottery in financial terms. As Angela said, it is not necessarily about huge amounts of capital investment, for instance; it is about recognising a need and working in partnership to address it.

[179] Through my work on the child poverty strategy, incidentally—and we will soon be announcing pioneer areas as part of rolling out that strategy, which, in essence, is intended to be integrated and comprehensive—I will be taking a particular look at this and all forms of outreach work, and how they impact upon children and young people, particularly in more sparsely populated areas. I would anticipate that one of our pioneer areas would be a rural area, although we do not have the definitive list as yet. I will announce it when I have it. As part of the co-working, one of the drivers that we will demand with regard to the child poverty strategy and how it fits together is a seamless integrated approach to the provision of this and other services. I have a particular interest in how outreach into communities will work.

[180] As with so many things, somewhere in Wales, at some point in time, someone has cracked the problem. The difficulty has always been explaining to everyone else how that was done. I am hoping that, first, through the good management and the guidance that we already have with regard to play in particular, we can move forward to some kind of coherence. Also, within that, the child poverty strategy will offer us quite an exciting platform for ensuring that all these things fit together properly.

[181] **Helen Mary Jones:** Eleanor, I know that you are keen to come in, but I would like to move on a bit and come back to this if we have time. Is that okay?

[182] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes. It is only a brief question.

[183] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you. I will call Angela to ask her next question.

[184] **Angela Burns:** Talking about outreach, my next question is on the subject of bullying. We have had an awful lot of evidence from witnesses about this. I just want to clarify what bullying is considered to be because there is the bullying that is recognised as out and out bullying, but there is also intimidation-type bullying that has perhaps not quite turned into proper bullying where, for example, some young children want to play on the swings, but there is a bunch of older kids already there. Obviously, the Government has many strategies for supporting and developing anti-bullying strategies in the school environment. Do you feel that Government has a role to play in trying to control or minimise bullying or support anti-bullying strategies outside the school environment? If so, what sort of steps can Government take?

[185] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, I do accept that. This is an element of your work on this subject

that will provoke change in what WAG does in future. We have good guidance on tackling bullying in schools. As a result of the work that you have undertaken, I need to go away, with colleagues, to think about how that can be translated into a non-school setting. It is clearly something that has come through fairly strongly in the evidence that you have gathered. I believe that it was Barnardo's that raised the issue.

[186] It is not something that we can set to one side, and I will now ask officials to start working on whether the in-school guidance, which we are quite proud of, is directly translatable to a non-school setting and, if not, what further work we might need to do in order to make it fit.

[187] **Helen Mary Jones:** Angela, if you would like to come back on that briefly, I will then bring Eleanor back in.

[188] **Angela Burns:** Do you think that, while you are doing that, you might consider whether bullying outside school would be lessened slightly if there was better—I do not want to say 'division' because we are trying to get everyone to act together—recognition that a seven-year-old cannot really play in the same space as a 14-year-old, who, in turn, cannot hang out in the same space as an 18-year-old?

[189] **Huw Lewis:** That is already implicit in the guidance that is already out there on play. As a result of the Measure, we are revisiting that guidance. The regulations that will flow from the Measure will be vital in this regard. In the documentation, there are several specific mentions of age-appropriate environments and equipment and so on, but perhaps there is not in the context of bullying. So, we will take this away and have another look at it.

[190] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am very conscious, as I am sure you are, that there are difficulties in rural areas, in my region of North Wales, as in other regions. Many authorities are now having to amalgamate and, dare I say, close schools—predominantly primary schools. Bearing in mind what you just said about rurality, will you be looking hard at how those communities, as much as any others, are going to need your attention with regard to what you said earlier?

10.50 a.m.

[191] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, of course. We are engaged with an all-Wales strategy that must fit with the needs of communities, whatever the challenges they face. It has been interesting to see the findings that you have uncovered as you have worked through this agenda, and this issue pops up consistently—it has emerged time and again. First and foremost, I hope that we will take a comprehensive, integrated approach to the child poverty agenda, but this is something that must be built into the general guidance and regulations that will be developed as a result of the Measure as well. I know that the Big Lottery Fund, as it moves forward with its work on short and medium-term investment in the play agenda, has this at the forefront of its programme as well. So, that is clear—40,000 Frenchmen cannot be wrong—and I have watched that come up consistently in your emerging findings.

[192] **Helen Mary Jones:** I have two questions that I would like to ask you. The first, which you know has been a concern, particularly for local authorities, relates to the question of what constitutes efficiency in the context of the proposed Measure. Could you say a bit more about how that concept is being developed through the guidance? My worry is that, as financial times get harder, this will not necessarily be at the top of everyone's agenda. However, getting a clear definition of what is sufficient and what is not will be crucial in driving this forward in some authorities that are, perhaps, less keen than others.

[193] **Huw Lewis:** Thus far, on our explanation of what we mean by 'sufficiency', we have

talked about having regard for quality and quantity. We recognise that there needs to be an ongoing dialogue, particularly as we develop further guidance and move towards regulations and so on, as to what actually constitutes sufficiency, particularly in the context of communities that have particular needs, for instance rural communities, which have been mentioned several times today.

[194] We can do things with the regulations, such as set out what matters need to be taken into account that would lead to sufficiency. We will have to develop that throughout this year and 2011, to roll out a more explicit explanation of what is required regarding the sufficiency that will be demanded of local authorities in the main.

[195] This conversation is still going on; the door has not been closed. There is no paragraph that I can point to that the Assembly has endorsed that says, 'That is sufficiency'. To some extent, there will need to be the application of common sense regarding local circumstance, within the envelope of some pretty robust guidance that is clear about the expectations that are laid down on what we want delivered for children and young people.

[196] **Helen Mary Jones:** So, we are getting there.

[197] **Huw Lewis:** Yes, we are getting there. I think that if I was a local government officer and I was agonising over what sufficiency meant, when the regulations arrived on my desk that described what I must take into account to meet the sufficiency criteria, then I would begin to relax a little and get on with delivering. That would be my hope anyway.

[198] **Helen Mary Jones:** I now turn to my final question. In your evidence to us in January, you referred to the role of intergenerational projects in addressing older people's fears of children and young people and the restrictions that that places on children and young people's freedom. The evidence from the Centre for Intergenerational Practice told us that one weakness in intergenerational work in Wales, as compared with England, is that it is largely being led by the older persons sector, so it has been about old people's views and concerns, and not so much about children's views and concerns. They said that if it is to be effective in Wales, it has to be done more across departments, so that it involves children and young people, so that they become part of the process of coming together and working collaboratively. What more can our Government do to ensure a cross-departmental approach to intergenerational work?

[199] **Huw Lewis:** This is another aspect of your work that is very interesting. I would not necessarily have anticipated that that would emerge from the work that you have done, but it is interesting and needs to be addressed.

[200] I think that we, by which I mean WAG, need to look at this issue of what our guidance will say about good intergenerational working. I will need to take it away and discuss it with other Ministers, and, crucially, I will need to talk it through with the commissioner for older people and the children's commissioner. I must say that it would not necessarily have occurred to me when we set out on this piece of work that this would emerge as a strong finding.

[201] I suppose that what I am saying this morning is, 'Point taken'. I will now go away and talk to Cabinet colleagues and, crucially, both commissioners. I would not necessarily have seen that criticism about its being led by the older generation as a problem. It has never been raised with me before. That does not mean to say that it is not real, however, so we need to dig a little deeper and do some work.

[202] **Helen Mary Jones:** That is very helpful. It is perhaps one thing that you will be able to come back to, Deputy Minister, in your formal response to our report.

[203] **Huw Lewis:** I will.

[204] **Helen Mary Jones:** Thank you very much for finding so much time to contribute. I know that it is not usual to have Ministers in at this stage of a committee inquiry, but we really felt that we needed to bring you in, and we are very grateful that you made the time to come.

[205] **Huw Lewis:** It was my pleasure.

[206] **Helen Mary Jones:** Our thanks go to Martin and Tanis as well.

10.57 a.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[207] **Helen Mary Jones:** Members will remember that we agreed to a very brief private session, because we have to come to a conclusion of some sort about what to do in the number of sessions that we have left. If Members can spare us five minutes, that would be brilliant. I move that

the committee agrees to go into private session under Standing Order No. 10.37.

[208] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.57 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.57 a.m.*