

**COMMITTEE:** REGENERATION AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY

**DATE:** 5TH OCTOBER 2006

**SUBJECT:** YOUTH & LEISURE RESEARCH IN LUTON

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY

**CONTACT OFFICER:** ANGELA FRASER 546070

**IMPLICATIONS:**

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES		ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL		CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING		OTHER

**WARDS AFFECTED:** All

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**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of the report is to submit the findings of the research conducted during the summer on youth and leisure activities available in Luton for young people.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**

- i) Note the report.
- ii) Take a decision on whether to include youth & leisure as a monitoring item on the committee's work programme when the outcomes of the best value review on youth services are known.

## **BACKGROUND**

2. On the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2006 the committee discussed affordable leisure activities for children under 16 years of age, with more activities being arranged during the school holidays. It was agreed by this committee that the issue should be examined in depth and aspects of this topic would include whether a discount card for young people to access activities should be introduced. The scrutiny officer agreed to research the issue during the summer break and report back the findings to the October meeting of this committee. The findings contains extracts from the consultation survey commissioned by the Children and Young People's Strategic Board conducted in May 2005 'Being young in Luton' which the committee may find pertinent and gives an insight into the views expressed by young people on the leisure activities available in Luton.

## **REPORT**

3. The research conducted during the summer break contains some of the key findings from previous research that the council has commissioned. Outlined below are some extracts from the "Being in young in Luton" 2005 survey. The consultation that took place was carried out by BMG who used both quantative and qualitative research methods to ascertain young people's views aged 16-19 from diverse backgrounds. The views expressed by young people as a main reason for not liking Luton were: the lack of job opportunities, the town perceived to have little to do and being unsafe.
  - 3.1 The survey also asked questions around what young people did in their spare time. The views expressed found that socialising with friends/family and boyfriends a high priority, closely followed by sports and playing computer games.
  - 3.2 In relation to the leisure activities within Luton the survey found more youth clubs to be the most popular answer, followed by a swimming centre similar to Jarman Park at Hemel Hempstead. Subsidised sports and leisure facilities for young people and more specialists clubs such as: boxing, yoga and rock climbing were seen as essential activities that should be available.
  - 3.3 Views were also expressed on the price of activities perceived as a barrier along with the lack of efficient transport to reach such facilities. This was especially prevalent to children with learning difficulties who often depended on parents/guardians to gain access into such facilities.
  - 3.4 When asked what improvements young people would like to the following comments were made:

- ❖ Subsidised activities for young people
- ❖ Young mums to have a safe environment for them and their tots such as swimming clubs for mums and tots

However, the research found most of the recreation centres in Luton offer mums and tots facilities that are available during the day, which might be ideal for mothers at home but unsuitable for working mothers.

- 3.6 In general the survey highlights the need for young people to feel safe with a range of suggestions that included more things for them to do to keep them off the streets and out of trouble.
- 3.7 In the discussion groups held with young people from 'hard to reach groups' their views were more inclined to offer solutions which they felt would address the problems and make a positive impact on the lives of young people in Luton.
- 3.8 In general the survey highlights the need for more leisure activities and opportunities, particularly those that are sport related to be more widely available, such as:
  - ❖ Provide young people were more access to subsidised gym or sports facilities e.g. swimming
  - ❖ Provide more youth clubs
  - ❖ Offering subsidised activities to ensure the cost does not deter young people from accessing services

## **QUANTATIVE RESULTS FROM BEING YOUNG IN LUTON**

### **Parents Research**

4. The BMG survey also included comments of parents on the Luton's Citizen's Panel carried out using telephone interviewing which found:
  - 4.1 When asked spontaneously what one thing would make children feel safer in Luton, a proportion of parents felt that more/better policing was required (44%). Other suggestions were much more piecemeal in nature, with only more activities for youngsters being mentioned by more than 1% of parents.
  - 4.2 In terms of what stops children doing activities, the main concern among parents was safety while travelling (42%). A lack of money (33%), lack of knowing what is available (32%), lack of availability of facilities (28%), transport problems (26%) and lack of time (14%) were all considered as barriers.

- 4.3 When asked specifically about the provision of facilities, more than eight in ten parents (82%) felt that the Council should provide more facilities and activities for young people. However, there are mixed views as to whether the Council should provide more small-scale facilities (56%) or fewer large-scale facilities (39%).
- 4.4 Those who wanted more small scale facilities generally felt these types of activities would be easier to get to (52%), whilst those wanting fewer large scale facilities felt these would be of better quality (32%) and easier to maintain (13%).
- 4.5 All parents were asked if they had any other suggestions as to how the Council could improve its Youth Service, 32% made suggestions that include:
- Raising awareness of facilities available (9%)
  - Making facilities more accessible (3%)
  - More activities in youth clubs (2%)
  - More after school activities (2%)
  - More contact with youths / listen to the views of children (5%)
  - Provide safety / more security at facilities (2%)
- 4.6 When asked to spontaneously to name two things parents would like to change to improve things for children living in Luton, the top three suggestions were better educational standards (23%), more facilities/activities (23%) and more sports/leisure activities (20%).

### **Luton Youth Service Best Value Review**

### **WADYA RECKON – Youth Service Consultation 2005**

5. The research also includes views of service users consultation carried out by the Youth Service in 2005. The service consulted service users of the following projects:
- Bangladesh Youth League
  - Bengali Women's project
  - Community Support School
  - Farley Youth Club
  - Halyard Youth Centre
  - Hockwell Ring Youth Club
  - Lea Manor Evening Club
  - Lea Manor Lunch Club
  - Lewsey Youth Club
  - Luton Youth Drama Workshop
  - Milaap
  - Saints Youth Club

- Starlight Youth Centre
- Sundon Park Evening Youth Club
- Sundon Park Lunch Club

5.1 Below are the results from the “WADYA reckon” consultation that took place:

- Holiday provisions were laid on last year for the first year
- The youth service are currently developing a leaflet to make young people aware of the facilities available in their area and taking on board their experiences from last year
- Most activities in Youth Clubs are free of charge, a small charge is applicable if a day trip is being run
- Best Practice visits to Oldham and Tower Hamlets
- Planning to purchase and modify a double decker bus (Jan 07). Young people will be consulted in relation to style, contents and layout of mobile unit
- Do support Voluntary Youth organisations EG: Crescent Summer Scheme – group run by the Centre for Community Development (central government funding). Mitalee is a voluntary youth organisation – run a summer scheme that is grant funded.

### **Best Practice**

6. The report not only takes into account consultation commissioned by the Children’s and Young People’s Strategic Board and the “Wadya Reckon” consultation by the Youth Service in 2005 but also includes best practice at Oldham Metropolitan Council and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets local authorities. For example, Oldham Youth Service went through a review process that resulted in a complete overhaul in youth provision. This outlined the need to extend opening times to increase the number of young people accessing the services. The youth service at Oldham Metropolitan Council is the only youth service in the country to receive the prestigious national Investors in Excellence Award a recognisable accolade acknowledged across Europe that symbolises the range and quality of youth work the youth service provides and delivers. The main aim of Oldham Youth Service is to provide support to a range of social and educational opportunities that will encourage young people to learn throughout their lives to make positive choices to achieve their potential as individual members of their communities and society. The programme works by providing opportunities for young people aged 13 to 23 years of age to try new things, to learn to solve problems, to take responsibility for themselves, to socialise by meeting new friends, to become involved in decision making and to support and care for one another. In 2004/05 some of the achievements listed by the youth service were:

- ❖ The increased work with Asian Young Women across the borough

- ❖ The development of a parks and open space strategy
- ❖ The accolade of gaining the Investors in Excellence Award
- ❖ The setting up of Youth Advisory Groups attached to area committee that established participation of young people

These are just a few of the achievements made by Oldham youth service in 2004/05.

### **London Borough of Tower Hamlets**

7. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets leisure centres offered a wide range summer activities for young people of all ages during the summer recess. The activities on offer were both educational and adventurous to keep the young people's interest and to encourage participation. Most of the activities on offer were free of charge or had a minimal fee attached. A junior leisure pass for children is available to young people for subsidised swimming off peak for 60p.

### **Waltham Forest**

8. Waltham Forest youth and community service offered a selection of summer university projects for 13 to 19 year olds. These ranged from academic, sports, IT/Multi Media, Performing and Visual Arts as well as music courses. The young people who attended and completed the courses received a certificate of achievement of accreditation – level 1 or 2 accredited to either AQA or OCN standards. The courses were delivered on a weekly basis from 10am to 4pm from a selection of venues within Waltham Forest.

However, it is unclear from their website whether a charge is made for take up on such courses.

### **Conclusion**

9. The level of activities offered by Luton compared to what is on offer at other local authorities are pretty average. However, some authorities did offer more extensive activities/courses in partnership e.g. Waltham Forest.
- 9.1 Previously mentioned this year was the first time Luton had run summer activities during the summer break. The type of activities that were available is attached as an appendix to this report. However, the general take up level is unknown. The committee might include this as a future task to be reported back at later date; to ascertain whether the provisions available were a success or whether further work is needed in terms of encouraging more participation of attendance at various venues.

- 9.2 Publicity on the council's website during the summer activities was pretty poor in terms of finding out what activities were on offer when compared to other local authorities across the country. However, it should be noted that some school premises in Luton also offered activities, delivered separately from the activities offered by the youth service. These types of activities were mainly for younger children falling within the primary age group category and run by outside organisations and therefore can work out expensive in terms of larger families.
- 9.3 Alongside the summer programme offered by the youth service, Stockwood Park Athletic Centre delivered a summer programme that consisted of: an athletics camp costing £25 per week from 10.30am to 2.30pm for young people aged 8 to 13 years, American sports camp was also on offer that included basketball, baseball and American flag football. It was offered at a special introductory price of £5 per day for three days again aimed at young people aged 8 to 13 years.
- 9.4 The Council does provide activities for children with disabilities through the Access 2 Sports programme that is delivered in partnership with Active Luton and the Children's Fund and supported by social services and Bedfordshire Disability Resource Centre. The project is aimed to breakdown barriers faced by young people with disabilities to access sport and physical activity opportunities. The activities on offer for young people with disabilities were:
- ❖ Swimming for beginners
  - ❖ Ability count football – delivered in association with Luton Town Club in the community and Luton schools sports partnership that provides out of hours holiday football for children
  - ❖ Multi sports is also offered and is an opportunity for disabled children to try different types of sports and to develop their social skills

### **PROPOSAL/OPTION**

10. The committee is requested to either note the report or decide to delay until the outcomes of the best value review on youth service provision is known.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. There are no legal implications to this report and this has been agreed with the relevant solicitor in Legal Services on 25 September 2006.

## **APPENDIX**

12. Luton Youth Service – Summer Holiday Activities 2006

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

'Being Young in Luton' – survey commissioned by Children & Young Peoples'  
Strategic Board in May 2005

Luton Youth Service 'Wadya Reckon' consultation survey 2005

Oldham Youth Service Annual Report 2004/05