

COMMITTEE: REGENERATION AND CITIZENSHIP SCRUTINY

DATE: 9TH JANUARY 2007

SUBJECT: RESEARCH INTO YOUTH & LEISURE IN LUTON

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SCRUTINY

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES		ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL		CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING		OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: All

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the report is to re-submit the findings on the research on youth and leisure activities available in Luton during the summer holidays for young people. Although the report was considered at the 5 October meeting, the committee requested further work to include the work carried out by voluntary organisations and the take up of the leisure activities put on by the youth service.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. **Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:**
 - i) **Note the report.**
 - ii) **Decide whether this item should be included on the committee's work programme as a monitoring item, when the outcomes of the best value review on Youth Services is released.**

BACKGROUND

2. At the 20th April 2006 the committee discussed affordable leisure activities for children under 16 years of age, with more activities being arranged during the school holidays. The committee agreed that the issue should be examined in more depth to 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 5 October 2006 meeting. The report contains the findings of extracts from the consultation survey commissioned by the Children and Young People's Strategic Board 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, from the consultation that took place by BMG who used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to ascertain young people's views aged 16-19 from diverse backgrounds. Some of the views expressed by young people as a main reason for not liking Luton were: the lack of job opportunities, Luton perceived as a town with little to do and being unsafe.
 - 3.1 Questions were asked around what young people did in their spare time and found socialising with friends/family and boyfriends a high priority, closely followed by sports and playing computer games.
 - 3.2 When questions were asked around the leisure activities within Luton the survey found: more youth clubs as 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 The survey also found the cost 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 that forced young people often to depend on parents/guardians to gain access to these facilities.
 - 3.4 When asked what improvements young people would like to see 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
- 3.5 However research found most recreation centres in Luton offered swimming facilities for mums and tots during the day, which might be ideal for mothers who choose to stay at home but unsuitable for working parents.
- 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 discussions held with young people from 'hard to reach groups' their views were more inclined to offer solutions that would address the problems and make a positive impact on the lives of young people in Luton.
- 3.8 In general there is a 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 more subsidised activities to ensure the cost does not act as a deterrent to young people from accessing services

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FROM BEING YOUNG IN LUTON

4. The BMG survey includes comments from parents conducted through the Luton's Citizen's Panel using telephone interviewing techniques that found:
- 4.1 The safety of children perceived as an important aspect in Luton; as a proportion of parents (44%) felt that more/better policing was needed. Other suggestions made 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 on how the Council could improve its Youth Service provision, 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. Included in the report is research on the views of service users consulted by the Youth Service in 2005:
- 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 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. It also includes best practice identified at Oldham Metropolitan Council, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest local authorities.

Oldham Metropolitan Council

7. Oldham Youth Service went through a review process that resulted in a complete overhaul in youth provision. The review outlined the need to extend opening times to increase the number of young people accessing the services and the youth service at Oldham Metropolitan Council is the only one in the country to receive a 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. Oldham Youth Service main aim is to provide support in 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. Outlined below are some of the achievements made by the youth service in 2004/05:

- ❖ 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

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

8. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets leisure centres offer a wide range of summer activities for young people of all ages during the summer recess. The activities on offer were both educational and adventurous to capture young people's interest and to encourage participation. Most of the activities on offer were delivered free of charge or had a minimal fee attached. Tower Hamlets also offer a junior leisure pass that is subsidised to enable young people to go swimming off peak at 60p.

Waltham Forest

9. Waltham Forest youth and community service offer a selection of summer programmes through the University for 13 to 19 year olds that range 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 are 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 the courses provided.

Luton Borough Council – Youth Service

10. This year was the first time Luton Youth Service has run summer activities during the summer break. The types of activities available are attached as an Appendix to the report. The general take up of these facilities are outlined in the table below: The level of take up for the activities seem to be high in all areas apart from Town Centre with more 13 to 19 year olds accessing the services than any other year group.

	FEMALE					MALE					TOTAL
	Under 11	11-12	13-19	20-25	Total	Under 11	11-12	13-19	20-25	Total	
North & Central	0	15	47	3	65	3	36	51	2	92	157
West & Central	6	26	85	4	121	3	23	133	12	171	292

South & East	2	9	64	0	75	5	8	63	2	78	153
Townwide	0	2	16	0	18	0	1	17	0	18	36
Total	8	52	212	7	279	11	68	264	16	359	638

11. The overall publicity of summer activities available in Luton on the council's website was pretty poor in terms of finding out what activities were on offer and compared to other local authorities across the country. However, it should be noted that some schools in Luton did offer activities separate from those offered by the youth service. These were mainly aimed towards younger children at primary school age and run by outside organisations that can work out expensive in terms of larger families.
12. 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.

Voluntary Organisations

13. The report submitted to the committee on 5th October 2006 reported on the level of activities provided in Luton compared to some other authorities as "pretty average". The report mainly focused on the services provided by the Council and did not include the work carried out by a number of large voluntary and community organisations that undertake out of school activities at weekend and throughout the school holidays. The more well known of these, are delivered by youth organisations from the South Asian and African Caribbean community. Whilst these focus on mainly 8 there are many other smaller run voluntary youth provisions that remain anonymous unless they access local council grants.
- 13.1 The provision provided to young people covers all of the school holiday periods throughout to include: Easter, Christmas and summer break provisions. The cost associated in providing such provision range from £1.00 per week to £1.00 per day.
- 13.2 The activities provided cover a range of personal, social and educational needs and link in the with the councils accreditation and learning outcomes structure to ensure young people receive national and local recognised qualifications when undertaking the activities.

13.3 An example of the type of provision provided and the numbers accessing these facilities through the year; a snap shot based on Summer 2006 provision is provided below:-

13.3.1 Mitalee Youth association ran a 5-week summer programme charging young people a weekly cost of £1.00. Activities include: sports and social activities, training in first aid, food and hygiene and child protection, trips to Thorpe Park and Alton Towers and Team Building exercises that included a residential week at a site in Wales.

160 different young people accessed the provision of which many attended each and every day that the activities were running.

13.3.2 Mitalee also provide targeted provision to engage a large numbers of young people who are offending (referred to them by the Luton Youth Offending Team and the Youth Inclusion Programme), as well as young people identified to be at risk of offending, (referred to them by Luton Social Service, Luton Multi Agency Youth Intervention Group and the Youth Inclusion youth diversionary project staff).

13.3.3 The Bangladesh Youth League in partnership with the Bengali Women's project ran a 4-week holiday provision. This is a generic provision that enables local young people to access activities such as sports and social programmes through to education and training events. Throughout the summer they offered this service to almost 400 young people.

13.3.4 The Pakistan Kashmir Youth Forum ran a summer provision for two weeks out of the Dallow Community Centre. During that period 35 different young people attending on each of the days. They again provided a range of social, education and personal development programmes to young people in the local area.

13.3.5 The Sendyu Ryu Organisation provided specific and targeted training to 50 young people who were identified to be offenders or at risk of offending in personal safety, fitness and exercise throughout the summer. There was no cost to the young people, as they had access to a small grant provided by the service. The referrals for the training events were taken from a range of agencies working specifically with the targeted group.

13.3.6 One Nation ran a summer provision for three weeks. During that period 50 different young people attending on each of the days. They also developed a programme with young people that provides a range of social, education and personal development programmes to young people in the local area.

- 13.3.7 The St. Vincent and Grenadines Association (SVG) implemented a summer based arts project funded through the Heritage Fund that enables young people to learn about the history of carnival, to design and make carnival costumes and masques with trained artists brought into assist the young people in learning the skills required.
- 13.3.8 The Safer Luton Partnership works with a number of organisations offering their support in funding, staff and other resources to assist smaller organisations to run summer projects that provide specific pieces of work. They provided 50 places for organisation to refer young people to. These organisations are mostly art based and media focussed organisations and were used to providing services to young people who wanted to engage in specific learning opportunities.
- 13.3.9 In addition to work carried out by the Safer Luton Partnership a number of other organisations throughout the six week holiday period have engaged with over 200 young people in projects that includes sports and social activities, training, trips and residential events.
14. These summer activities only provide a snap shot to show the huge amount of work going on within the voluntary and community sectors that engage young people in out of school provision. Many of these organisations are run solely on the good will of volunteers and young people, who have previously been beneficiaries of the scheme in past years such as Mitalee is an example.
15. There is a huge amount of good practice in Luton by the examples of the work carried out by voluntary and community organisations however, this is not a full picture, as much more work by other organisation that do not receive publicity or media coverage that remains unknown to the council.
16. The Council provided 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

Conclusion

17. The report highlights there are a range of activities in place during the summer holidays for young people to access. This year was the first time the youth service put on summer provision and the level of take up was high in most areas apart from the town centre. However, further research found that voluntary and community organisations provide a range of activities similar to those offered by the youth service and found at the London Boroughs with some organisations offering activities specifically targeted at vulnerable young people.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

18. The committee is requested to note the report and agree the further information included.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

19. There are no legal implications to this report and this has been agreed with the relevant solicitor in Legal Services on 18th December 2006.

APPENDIX

20. 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