

## **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

#### **TO INVESTIGATE THE FACILITIES FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS AND WHAT FURTHER FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES ARE REQUIRED**

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this Review was to investigate the facilities and activities (recreational, social and cultural) available for 13-19 year olds, including those with special education needs and those with disabilities up to the age of 25 and to evaluate whether such facilities and activities are on a paid for or free of charge basis.

The outcomes required from the Review were to evaluate and report any financial, physical or social barriers to access to facilities available for 13-19 year olds including those with special education needs and those with disabilities up to the age of 25. To produce a GAP analysis of facilities available. To produce and publish a database of available existing facilities. To make recommendations for further facilities, as appropriate

##### **CONCLUSIONS AND KEY FINDINGS**

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Committee established that: -

After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn.

The Committee acknowledges that there are many facilities and activities currently available for young people, aged 13-19 years old. A lot of activities and facilities are available but not everyone is aware of their existence. There needs to be the right level of communication channels promoting the activities and facilities that are available. It is evident that the leaflet promoting the recent Ann Frank festival worked well, as did notice boards promoting other activities.

Many of the facilities and activities provided are located on the outskirts of Northampton. Travelling across town to some events can be problematic for some young people and all day activities would be welcomed.

The Committee noted that in the Neighbourhood Partnership areas a lot of activities are available for youngsters who have been 'in trouble'. The evidence provided from the Lead Neighbourhood Partnership Co-ordinator stated that there is, however, a lack of provision aimed at giving youngsters from deprived areas the range of experience and aspirations that middle class children often take for granted. For instance, facilities/activities in respect of arts and crafts are provided less frequently and consultation with young people shows there is a demand for them but they may be deemed less likely to appeal to the more "unruly" teenager.

From the evidence received from clubs and organisations that completed the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's questionnaire, the majority of the known available activities and facilities that are offered are used by approximately 65.5% mixed gender. Around 4% is attended by just females and 5.5% attended by males only. It is often dependent upon the activity as to the gender attendance. The facilities provided through Extended Services have been added to the database of known activities, of which nine are applicable to the age bracket in relation to this Review. One organisation, Thomas' Fund – Music Therapy in Northants for Disabled Children, provides music therapy for those in Northamptonshire with life limiting illnesses or a disability that means the individual is too ill to attend school for extended periods to children aged 0-19 years. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee acknowledged that there is limited information collated regarding after school facilities and the use of school sites outside the curriculum.

From the analysis of the completed questionnaires, just over twenty five per cent of known activities are provided free of charge to young people in the age bracket investigated by this Review. Of the nine activities and facilities offered through Extended Services, eight are offered on a paid for basis, and one is free of charge although an optional donation is suggested.

Available buildings are an important feature for activities and facilities for young people, such as cafes and open spaces for training. It is evident that if the facility or activity is free and is widely publicised, young people are more likely to partake.

There is a limited number of youth clubs in Northampton. Due to staffing shortages, some Community Association buildings have closed its youth sections.

Games and activities that are planned for young people work well.

Through consultation that was undertaken by the Young Persons' Ambassador and the Youth Forum, young people indicated that they would like more facilities to be provided. More youth clubs was a popular suggestion as was further leisure facilities such as a recreation ground with a graffiti wall.

From data provided by the Youth Forum Spare Time Survey 2008, the activity/facility that was felt to be the best for spending leisure time was the town's parks. Other activities that the young people enjoyed doing were shopping, swimming, football, running, bowling. The main issues that were suggested as requiring improving were to provide activities/facilities/events for children and teenagers, more parks and better use of these and more sports facilities.

From the evidence provided, a GAP analysis of facilities/activities (recreational, social and cultural) available for 13-19 year olds, including those with special education needs and those with disabilities up to the age of 25 has been produced. A copy is attached at Appendix F. There are a lot of facilities available but young people have commented that more need to be provided free of charge or affordable to all. As detailed in paragraph 6.1.5 just over 25% of the known activities are provided free of charge. Comments made indicated that the provision of more Youth Clubs and Youth Cafes would be welcomed. The data gathered from the questionnaire '*What physical activities for this age group do you provide?*' details there are seven Youth Clubs across Northampton, plus a forum

for young people to “voice their opinions and shape sport within Northampton”. Research showed the need for facilities for LGB youth, particularly a safe meeting place. Not many activities are offered at schools after 6pm and in many locations schools are the major venue for events. It was further acknowledged that in some areas community buildings are available but there is a lack of adult supervision available for young peoples’ activities. Some Faith Communities indicated that they have available accommodation for activities for young people. To ensure that information about activities and facilities that are available is widely disseminated, there is a need for a variety of communication methods, such as a youth website, leaflets and notice boards.

The Sports Development Officer, Northampton Borough Council, confirmed that in his opinion, 13 – 19 year olds are not well catered for in Northampton - Sports Development feels that the majority of activities that are put on are for younger people. . Sports Development is currently working closely with youth in the Eastfield and Spencer areas and has set up two Youth Groups but attendance is low - Sports Development has permanent workers, in both Eastfield and Spencer, who run a number of projects, one of which is youth clubs. They are looking for as much input from young people on how to shape these groups. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee realised that they only want to put on activities that the young people can take part in and want to take part in. This positive work that Sports Development is carrying out, making inroads, focussing on activities and spotting the gaps, working with the Neighbourhood Partnerships was welcomed. Evidence from this Review will help to inform this piece of work.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee recognised the variety of activities and facilities currently available via the Money 4 Youth projects:

Recent Money for Youth Projects include: -

- Mobile Skate Park and Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) bus to visit Eastfield regularly.
- Skate Sessions: based on the London skate, with lessons indoors and going to see outdoor sessions, music and other fun activities.
- Iplay playground equipment for Thorplands. This hi tech facility is the first of its kind in Northamptonshire. It is suitable for eight year olds up to adults and for both mainstream and disabled youngsters (further details provided at section 4.1.58 of this report).
- Hip Hop and Street Dancing in Semilong
- Skills Session and Gener8 – include money management, cooking and healthy eating. This helps young people including carers and those with behavioural difficulties.
- Disabled teenage women’s football - Led by Northampton Town Football in the Community.
- Mixed Ability Sports Group - To try out different sports and have fun.
- Circus skills were held on various dates.

Ongoing activities and facilities: -

- Eastfield Park multi-use games area floodlighting and pond-dipping and Spencer multi-use games area floodlighting
- Blacky More multi-use games area improvements and Nintendo Wii

- Nintendo Wii and inflatable super heroes
- Steel Pan Explorers
- Community Minibus
- Mobile Skate and BMX track
- Portable stage and portable PA equipment available for community events
- Threshold Studios have recently led graffiti projects for example, Nabeel using different languages, More will be funded through Money 4 Youth projects in 2009-10
- More projects are being developed and should be publicised in coming months

It was acknowledged that Sport for Youth, run by Sports Development, gives young people a platform on sport facilities - not just on sports facilities but also for activities, funding projects and anything related to Sport in Northampton.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee welcomed the fact that Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC) is currently applying to two funding bodies for an Area Youth Club Development Worker in each of the Borough and District Council areas of the county. The success of the partnership pilot scheme with NAYC and Corby Borough Council was noted.

The Key findings from the Feasibility Study and business plan – *“Northamptonshire Teenage Partnership – Our Space – Centre for Young People”*, that was undertaken in October 2007 highlighted the need for a new and additional facility for young people as both a meeting place and a location from which to deliver key services.

The Committee noted that Central Government’s drive is to increase weekend activities for youth.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee expressed its concerns regarding recent events around the need for a skateboard park and the threatened cut to funding for music and performing arts.

As detailed in section 5.5 of this report, the Equality Impact Assessment Screening exercise identified that those young people, with multiple characteristics, outside this age bracket may feel disadvantaged.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations.

For ease of delivery, the following series of recommendations are grouped in specific areas: -

### **Northamptonshire County Council**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee recommends to

Cabinet that the following recommendations be forwarded to Northamptonshire County Council for consideration: -

The database of known available activities and facilities for older children, aged 13-19 year olds, including those with special education needs and those with disabilities up to the age of 25, be published on the Council's website.

Contact be made with Faith Communities to confirm the accommodation that they have available for activities for young people. This information be published on the database of known activities.

A youth website be set up, catering for this age group. The website should detail youth facilities and activities and be attractive and engaging to youth to encourage them to use it. The Website should include details such as league football, popular music hits, *Chat with a Councillor*, which would give young people further reason to use the site.

Research has indicated that there appears to be a lack of provision of the following facilities and it be recommended that this information be forwarded to Northamptonshire County Council requesting that it investigates this and be asked to ascertain whether resources are available for further such facilities: -

- There are a lot of activities and facilities available but research has indicated that there is a lack of provision of youth clubs and youth cafes within the borough.
- Research has indicated that there is a lack of adult supervision for young people's activities.
- There is a lack of facilities for LGB youth, in particular a safe meeting place.

It be recommended to Extended Services, Northamptonshire County Council, that there needs to be a comprehensive collection of information detailing after school activities and the use of school sites outside of the curriculum.

### **Northampton Borough Council**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee recommends to Cabinet that: -

Other effective communication methods such as leaflets and notice boards be investigated to promote Council led activities and facilities for young people.

Cabinet informs Sports Development and Neighbourhood Partnership Services, Northampton Borough Council, that it is Central Government's drive to increase weekend facilities for young people. The appropriate Officers be notified that there is a need for the Council to increase the provision of facilities for young people during weekends.

Details of the database of known available activities and facilities for older children, aged 13-19 year olds, including those with special education needs and

those with disabilities up to the age of 25 referred to in recommendation 7.1.3 when published be included on the *facebook* pages created by Sports Development.

A copy of this report be sent to Sports Development and Neighbourhood Partnership Services, Northampton Borough Council, to provide information to inform the work that it is currently undertaking.

That Cabinet notes the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's concerns regarding recent events around the need for a skateboard park and the threatened cut to funding for music and performing arts.

Monitoring of recommendations contained in this Equality Impact Assessment screening takes place after six months.

The Local Press and local radio station be asked to include a regular article '*Youth Update – What's On*'