



Leicester
City Council

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
CABINET**

**11 December 2007
12 May 2008**

**Report of the Children, Schools and Young People Scrutiny Task Group
“A Snapshot of Service Provision by the Youth Service”**

Report of Councillor Blower, Task Group Leader

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Children, Schools and Young People (CSYP) Scrutiny Task and Finish group, a Review of Service Provision by the Youth Service. This was the Task Group's first Review. The Task group aimed to identify the current level of youth provision across the city, understand where the provision takes place and ascertain the range of opportunities available for 13-19 year olds. The Review concentrated on youth work provided directly by the Youth Service or directly funded by the authority.
- 1.2 The Review was carried out through a series of visits, with judgments made against the range of information provided by the Youth Service, including the overall aim of Youth work, and its curriculum.
- 1.3 The Task Group was formed in response to concerns expressed about the Youth Service and the quality of service offered in Youth Centres. Although the Task Group found pockets where the quality of service could be improved in general, members also identified good, and in some cases, excellent practice.
- 1.4 During this Review, members identified a number of learning points regarding the processes used in undertaking a Task Group Review, which are also included in this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Children Schools and Young People Task Group recommends that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board forward this report to Cabinet and that they endorse the following recommendations:
 - a) There is a need for a greater level of strategic planning and clear co-ordination of summer youth schemes; the Youth Service delivers against three defined areas of the city and the summer youth programme should operate across the city throughout the summer,

- ensuring that there is provision available in each area during the school holidays.
- b) The variety of opportunities should continue to be widely publicised but this publicity needs to be kept up-to-date to reflect essential changes to the programme and circulated to as wide a range of young people as possible using appropriate methods.
 - c) That the current good practice should be recognised and rolled out as models of excellence, for example the DVD project; this requires youth workers to collaborate and ensure they get the most out of facilities, through the sharing of physical resources and staff expertise amongst centres.
 - d) That the examples of Partnership working between centres and with external bodies continues, e.g. the Amaze project, in order to ensure the widest range of quality youth opportunities.
 - e) That young people are more involved in the planning and development of the programmes; this would ensure that events are better attended, are offering what is needed and that young people fully understand what they are getting from the Service.
 - f) That as part of the reprofiling of the Youth Service being undertaken by the Children and Young People's Department, consideration be given to ensuring a consistent standard of delivery across the city.
 - g) That the Children, Schools and Young People department should give serious consideration to how the Youth Service could have the capacity to generate more external funding to support and develop good practice. Is it felt that a fund raising officer position would in a year not only be self-financing but would also ensure that young people in Leicester get the most from their Youth Service via relieving youth workers of the burden of financial concerns allowing them to focus on planning and delivering good practice.

3. Contents

This report contains the following sections:

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Appendix 1: The Aims, Principles & Purposes of Youth Work in Leicester (A summary of the Youth Work Curriculum)

4. Background

- 4.1 At its meeting on July 26th 2007 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agreed that the first Review of the Children, Schools and Young People Task and Finish group be on the Youth Service. It was agreed that the Review would cover the current level of Youth Provision provided by or directly funded by the authority for 13-19 year olds. All non-executive Councillors were invited by letter to become members of the Task Group. Those expressing interest and who therefore formed the Task Group were Councillors Bajaj, Bhavsar, Chambers, Dr Chowdhury, Desai, Follett, Glover, Johnson, Marriott, Naylor, Potter, Scuplak, Manish Sood and Suleman, together with myself as Task Group Leader.

5. What was reviewed

- 5.1 The Review aimed to identify the current level of youth provision across the city, understand where the provision takes place and ascertain the range of opportunities available for 13-19 year olds. The Review concentrated on youth work provided directly by the Youth Service or directly funded by the authority.
- 5.2 As the Review progressed the Task Group decided to primarily focus on the Summer Youth Activities Programme.

6. How the Review took place

- 6.1 The group met on three occasions. The first was an informal meeting held on 26th July and was attended by the following Councillors: Aqbany, Blower, Mrs Chambers, Dr Chowdhury, Desai, Glover, Johnson, Naylor and Manish Sood; observing were Councillors Mugglestone and Dempster. Senior officers from the Youth Service and the Children and Young People's Services department were also present.
- 6.2 At this meeting the Task Group:
- Defined the terms of reference for the review
 - Determined and agreed specific areas of work – the summer visits
 - Agreed the reporting system back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
 - Agreed the timetable for the Review
- 6.3 At the meeting members also considered *The Aims, Principles and Purposes of Youth Work in Leicester*, which sets out the Youth Work Curriculum. A summary of this is attached at Appendix 1.
- 6.4 Members also discussed what it was they were looking for from visits. Having considered the Youth Work Curriculum and their original reasons of interest, they agreed the that following questions would be used during visits:

- Venue and the date & time visited,
- Number of staff on site – noting the ratio of female to male staff, the length of time staff had worked there, and the hours the session operated
- Number of Young People present – again noting the female to male ratio, the age range, breakdown of ethnicity and the range of disabilities if any.

6.5 Members were then asked to make judgements about the following:

- The atmosphere: was it warm/inviting or cold/unwelcoming?
- The range of materials available – the posters; leaflets; work by the young people; information sheets; etc around or on display
- The current curriculum: what are the activities available? Plans for future events?
- The level of participation by young people: How are decisions made? What say do young people have in planning activities? How involved are they?

6.6 Finally members were asked to note any concerns of the youth leaders for example any restrictions on provision, capacity, etc.

6.7 The second meeting took place on 6th September and was attended by Cllrs Bhavsar, Dr Chowdhury, Desai, Glover, Johnson, Marriott Manish Sood and Potter, and myself as Task Group Leader. This meeting gave members the opportunity to meet with the two Leicester Youth MPs and their two deputies. The reports of the visits were considered and initial analysis undertaken. Senior officers from the Youth Service and the Children and Young People's Services department were also present.

6.8 The third and final meeting took place on 24th October and was attended by Cllrs Bhavsar, Marriott, Naylor, Potter, Scuplak, Manish Sood and Blower and Mr Mohammed Alauddin Al Azad, the Primary/Special Needs Parent Governor co-opted member of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. Senior officers from the Youth Service and the Children and Young People's Services department were also present.

6.9 The programme of member visits began and five visits were successfully completed, including the Amaze project. Two further visits had been planned, but were not able to be undertaken. In one case this was the result of inaccurate publicised information, the other was a voluntary sector project funded by the Youth Service. One issue that arose in planning the visits was that it appeared that more schemes ran in July than in August. This issue is addressed further in paragraph 7.2 below.

6.10 The findings of the visits are set out in section 7 of the report. Whilst undertaking them, members spoke with 12+ staff and 4 young volunteers and met 25 young people using the Summer Youth schemes. However members of the Task group request that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board bear in mind that the visits lasted for approximately one hour, and that a youth session is usually 3 to 3.5 hours long. The attendance figures are based only upon the time members attended and

do not necessarily represent the total attendance figures for the given session.

- 6.11 Cllrs Aqbany, Naylor, Russell, and Sood between them undertook the 5 visits to the Amaze project, Allexton, the Afro-Caribbean centre, Magpie Youth Club, St Matthews NC, and the Watershed Youth Centre. These premises were selected solely on the basis that they were offering activities in August when the visits occurred.

7. The findings

- 7.1 The main findings of the visits to summer schemes are set out below, the figures for staff and users show the numbers present at the time of each visit.

	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5
Staff	2	3	4	5	N./A
Users	2	7	13	17	50+

- 7.2 In summary, whilst members found pockets where the quality of service could be improved they found greater numbers of examples of good, and in some cases excellent practice (this is set out in more detail below). Members felt that there was a need to ensure that there is a consistent standard of delivery of Youth Services across the city. In addition, as indicated in paragraph 6.9, in some areas provision was not sustained throughout the whole summer. In addition, the level of co-ordination between schemes varied between different parts of the city. In terms of the broad categories used in the questionnaire, the general findings are as follows:

a) The Atmosphere:

When considering the atmosphere at the projects visited, generally members felt it good, meaning that at four of the schemes the atmosphere was recorded as being warm, and members stated they were made welcome by staff and users.

b) Range of Materials:

During each visit members were asked to note the range of material and information available at each scheme; at four of the projects members stated they felt there was a good range of generic information, i.e. health posters and posters giving details for support hotlines, on display at the venues

c) The Curriculum

Whilst at the visits members were asked to consider the Youth Work Curriculum and make judgements as to how educational and challenging the activities available at each scheme were. Generally members felt that there should be more opportunities for young people to be involved in the planning and development of the scheme programmes and that users

could be empowered to have a greater understanding about the Curriculum and its aims.

d) Participation Levels

At all of the visits, members stated that the users were engaged in the activities and were actively taking part, and where members spoke with young people, all of the users said they were enjoying the activities and learning from their participation.

Good Practice

- 7.3 From their own observations and their conversations with both youth workers and at most sites the young people, members identified some pockets of excellent examples of youth work, these included:
- The production of a professional quality music DVD, which was developed and performed entirely by young people from two different centres, who were supported by youth workers with the appropriate skills. This is a good example of how partnership working, with the centres combining their resources and the skill sets of the staff, makes the best use of resources and demonstrates positive outcomes.
 - The production of a physical maze made from barriers and tarpaulin and decorated with graffiti art, was part of the event that took place outside the Phoenix centre; the members visiting were guided round by two young people who had been engaged in a variety of the aspects of the programme. They were clearly able to explain that they had gained a breadth of new skills from participating and members felt that all of the 50+ young people who had taken part could say the same. This is a good example of an activity where young people have been involved in developing the curriculum from the idea through to completion and of the positive points of participation in youth activities.

Concerns of staff and users

- 7.4 Members consistently found that when they asked Youth workers whether they had any concerns they raised the shortage of/security of funding. This point was re-iterated by young people at all the venues.

Additional findings and thoughts

- 7.5 In addition to the above findings, members identified a further range of issues which they felt should be addressed. In particular, the Task Group felt that the publicity methods used for the summer youth schemes needed to be reviewed to ensure that information is kept up-to-date and also that it reaches the widest number of young people possible. Members also felt that more information could be provided for young people to take away and that more publicity around “what’s on” in the local area could be made available. In addition, more information about

what young people could engage with, what was happening at the club and how young people could get involved should be at each youth centre.

- 7.6 Generally members did not report that the young people using the schemes were aware of and understood the curriculum for the programme, this suggests that the users may not understand the learning processes they are engaging in and therefore are perhaps not fully utilising the positive experiences they have gained through participation.
- 7.7 At each of the projects staff clearly outlined their ideas and aspirations for their work with young people but stated that a lack of resources prevented them developing the best curriculum programmes.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The overall finding of the Review was that the level of quality of delivery of the Youth Service provision exceeded expectations. Whilst there were some pockets where the quality of service could be improved there were far more examples of good practice.
- 8.2 The Task Group also came to a number of more specific conclusions as follows:
- a) There is a need for a greater level of strategic planning and clear co-ordination of Summer Youth schemes. Members felt that as the youth service delivers in three defined areas of the City, the summer youth programme should operate in each area throughout the summer.
 - b) Publicity for both Summer Youth Provision and the Youth Service generally should continue to be widely available but it needs to be updated as frequently as possible to reflect changes in the programme and circulated to as wide a range of young people as possible using appropriate methods.
 - c) Where projects worked together, sharing resources and skills, the service delivery was found to be high quality and well used, demonstrating the positive benefits of partnership working.
 - d) At the majority of the visits, members felt that the scheme would benefit from a higher level of engagement with the young people in the planning of activities and the development of each project's curriculum.
 - e) As part of the reprofiling of the service being undertaken by the Children and Young People's Department, consideration should be given to ensuring a consistent standard of delivery of Youth Services across the city.
 - f) The majority of youth workers are concerned with the security/lack of funding and this is having an impact on service delivery. The Task

Group feels that possible methods to address this need to be given serious consideration.

- 8.3 These conclusions inform the recommendations set out in section 2 of the report.
- 8.4 Finally, the Task Group felt that it would want to undertake further work looking at Youth Service provision. In particular, members wish to look at term time provision to complement the initial review outlined in this report. Following that, members would wish to consider the future vision for the service, to complement and feed into the reprofiling of the service being progressed by the Children and Young People's Services Department. However, it is suggested that this further work should await the outcome of the Joint Area Review and the initial development of the Youth Offer.

9. Lessons learned for future projects

- 9.1 In addition to the substantive recommendations coming out of the Review, the Task Group has considered the process of undertaking it to identify ways in which scrutiny Review could be better undertaken.
- 9.2 The active participation and enthusiasm of members in the review was good throughout. Members continued to attend meetings and maintain the original enthusiasm for the review even after the original goals were refocused.
- 9.3 The general feedback from youth workers was that they welcomed the opportunity to meet with and talk to members. This was demonstrated in the time spent at projects by members which was often longer than planned and the open manner in which staff shared their concerns and aspirations with visiting members.
- 9.4 The visits also raised the profile of members in community settings, in particular, giving young people the opportunity to meet with members "on their own patch" was a positive experience for both parties. However these positive experiences also pointed out the need to allow longer times for Scrutiny Review visits in the future.
- 9.5 Members agreed that their initial fears of there being little good practice in youth centres had in the main been unfounded. This shows the positive outcomes resulting from personal experiences and supports the new scrutiny ideals.
- 9.6 The introduction of the new scrutiny system had as expected, a range of associated teething problems; queries concerning the logistics of how the Task group should operate took up more time than expected. Further work needs to be done to clarify Task Group processes.

10. Financial, Legal and other implications

- 10.1 The report recommends that consideration be given to employing a fundraising officer, with the aim of becoming self-financing. This will be given consideration in conjunction with a planned wider review of the generation and management of external funding within the Department. Concerns are also expressed in the report that youth workers are concerned about financial security and lack of funding; this will need to be considered in budget planning, in the context of generating external funding and in the longer term planning for the service. There are no other financial implications arising directly from the report. - Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance and Efficiency, CYPS, ext. 29 7750
- 10.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Those implementing the proposals can access specific legal advice in the future (e.g. on matters such as recruitment or Partnership working etc) should they require it. (Kamal Adatia, Barrister, ext (29)7044)

11. Comments from the CSYP Department

- 11.1 The Children and Young People's Services Department welcomed the opportunity for members to observe at first hand the work of the Youth Service and to speak directly with young people. The Department is currently undertaking a detailed piece of work to reprofile the service into an integrated Youth Support Service and will incorporate the findings of the Task Group in the project.

12. CONTACT

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The Aims, Principles & Purposes of Youth Work in Leicester (A summary of the Youth Work Curriculum)

1. Youth Work's relationship with young people is a quite unique and **voluntary relationship**, based on mutual respect and equality and as such provides that supportive environment for personal growth and informed risk-taking through a process of informal education.

It needs to be understood that this means the relationship is voluntary at the point of delivery. It does not mean if no young people turn up, or if certain groups are absent, then so be it.

2. Youth work is underpinned by an open, potentiality model of young people, beginning with their present experiences, responding to their present needs and enthusiasms, and building upon this. This contrasts with problem-focused interventions based on a deficit model of young people. It is the latter that has been dominant within social policy developments in recent years.
3. If youth work is to succeed in meeting its objectives, it needs to maintain that which makes it potentially useful in the first place. It is for this reason, that the skills of good Youth Workers must remain a distinct, important and vital component of the Children & Young People's Services workforce.
4. The overall aim of Leicester City's Youth Service, as approved in the Leicester Youth Work Strategy of 2002 and set out in our Curriculum Framework document, is as follows :-

"To contribute to the personal and social development of young people enabling their inclusion, engagement, achievement and influence, within the context of a multi-racial city and society".

5. To achieve this, the Youth Service aspires to be:
 - a higher performing, young person-centred service
 - a valued and active partner
 - engaged with all Leicester's communities
 - sufficiently resourced to meet our objectives
 - a skilled, motivated and reflective workforce, representative of the communities we serve.
6. Our current Youth Work priorities are consistent with those set out in the DfES publication *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services* :-
 - Raising young people's educational standards and achievements through all of our informal learning provision
 - Improving the quality of our youth work
 - Developing the Voice and Participation of young people
 - Targeted work with priority groups

7. The following have been nationally-accepted, core principles underpinning good Youth Work for more than 20 years and are still thought to be pertinent now :-

Educative – a process enabling young people to acquire skills, develop knowledge and appreciate the values necessary to make well-informed choices and take control of their lives as they grow up; enabling them to explore their rights and responsibilities as individuals and as members of groups and communities.

Addressing inequalities – establishing equality of opportunity by challenging prejudice and the barriers to opportunity which arise from race, gender, disability, class, religion, age, sexual identity, diagnosed mental illness etc within a framework of accountability and transparency. (N.B. this list is not exhaustive).

Participative – young people are engaged in a developmental process that supports and encourages them to be full and active partners in the learning and decision-making processes of the Youth Service, as well as the many other structures that affect their lives and the communities of which they are a part.

Empowering – a ‘young person-centred approach’ that is at the heart of our work. Creating or facilitating opportunities for young people to explore and experience power and responsibility within realistic, open and clearly understood boundaries. A supportive environment of mutual trust and respect between worker and young people is vital to enabling true empowerment.

8. Similarly In 2002, it was agreed that the ultimate outcomes, of youth work, should be the development of self-confident, sensitive, articulate, socially and culturally aware, flexible, motivated and self-determining young people. It was recognised that whilst these can be acquired through home, family, school or work, they are the particular province of Youth Work.
9. We know from research with young people that they want responsible adults who they can talk to about their life and aspirations and who can support them both as individuals and in groups.
10. Young People engaged with the youth service have the opportunity, informally, to learn, develop and explore their skills, knowledge and feelings in the following (but not exclusive) areas:
 - Confidence, self esteem & expression of reasoned opinion whilst having fun with peers
 - Decision-making and planning skills
 - Political awareness
 - Skills for work and leisure
 - An awareness of their own strengths, weaknesses and abilities
 - Negotiation and social skills

- Skills to relate well to others, be effective members of groups in which they live & work
- An appreciation of their responsibility towards and a sympathetic concern for other people, especially for those who are disadvantaged
- Ability to adapt, respond to change in themselves & their social & physical environment
- Awareness of their feelings, attitudes and values of themselves and others

Source: The Youth Work Curriculum