

THE EXECUTIVE

16 JUNE 2009

REPORT OF THE FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Title: Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel – Final Report	For information / comment
<p>Summary: The Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People scrutiny report was commissioned and completed prior to the review of the Council's Constitution and new procedures relating to scrutiny panel reports being agreed by the Assembly.</p> <p>This report is, therefore, being considered under the old procedures, where final reports of scrutiny panels had to be presented to the Scrutiny Management Board (SMB), the Executive and the Assembly. This report was agreed by SMB on 22 April 2009 and is now being presented to the Executive for information and comment.</p> <p>The Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel met on 6 April 2009 to agree their final report and recommendations.</p> <p>Once the report has been agreed by the Assembly, the Council will ask the relevant officers and partners to respond to the recommendations and provide an implementation plan. A report setting out the progress of the implementation plan will be presented to the Children's Services Select Committee after six months and a year.</p> <p>A copy of the report is attached as Appendix A.</p> <p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p>Recommendation: The Executive is asked to consider the report and provide any advice or suggestions prior to finalisation and formal presentation to the Assembly.</p>	
<p>Reason: The proposed recommendations will, if adopted, assist in achieving the Community Priorities of 'Inspiring and developing successful young people creating a borough of opportunity for all'.</p>	
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial: There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposals contained in this report, however, any associated costs from implementation of the recommendations will be met from existing budgets and/or from external funding.</p>	
<p>Legal: Recommendation 8 states 'The Panel recommends that NHS Barking and Dagenham work with partners to investigate the possibility of updating the free swimming passes available to young people to include swipe card technology that automatically records user details, including age, ward and ethnicity of those accessing the service, for statistical</p>	

<p>monitoring purposes. This information should then be used to target information and publicity at groups of young people that are not accessing the free swimming offer'. This recommendation would entail the processing of personal data as defined under Data Protection Act 1998. Officers of NHS Barking and Dagenham (and the council to the extent that the council would have a role to play) should consult with their respective legal advisors to ensure any data processing is in accordance with the legislation and any relevant Codes of Practice from the Information Commissioner. There are no other comments.</p>		
<p>Risk Management: None</p>		
<p>Social Inclusion and Diversity: The Panel has been mindful of the equalities and diversity implications associated with this review. Recommendations 16 and 17 are specifically aimed at removing barriers to facilities and activities for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.</p>		
<p>Crime and Disorder: None</p>		
<p>Options Appraisal: None</p>		
<p>Contact Officer: Clair Bantin</p> <p>Lead Member: Councillor John White</p>	<p>Title: Scrutiny Manager, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham</p>	<p>Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2995 E-mail: clair.bantin@lbbd.gov.uk</p>

Consultees:

- Councillor John White, Lead Member of the Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Panel
- Andy Knight, Group Manager for Leisure Centres
- Bola Ojo, Integrated Youth Support Services
- Frances Basham, Play Projects Development Officer
- Erik Stein, Group Manager - Extended Schools
- Christine Pryor, Head Of Integrated Family Services
- Meena Kishinani, Head Children's Policy and Trust Commissioning
- Dr Justin Varney, Joint Assistant Director of Health Improvement (Children & Young People), NHS Barking and Dagenham
- Heather Wills, Head of Community Cohesion & Equalities
- Susan Leighton, Principal Librarian
- Tolis Vouyioukas, Divisional Director of Safeguarding and Rights
- Joanne Caswell, Adviser, Personal Development
- Winston Brown, Legal Partner
- Joe Chesterton, Divisional Director of Corporate Finance

- **APPENDIX A**

1. LEAD MEMBER'S FOREWORD

- 1.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on local authorities to ensure that young people have access to sufficient positive leisure-time activities in their local area. Furthermore, these activities must be sufficiently well publicized and delivered in consultation with young people themselves. The Government's Aiming High Implementation Plan, published in October 2008, set out the need for all young people to have access to the support and opportunities they need to succeed in education, to take part in activities that develop their social and emotional skills and to enjoy their leisure time.
- 1.2 The Council, working in collaboration with partners, is committed to ensuring that these duties are met. A varied and growing menu of activities is on offer to our young people through a variety of services providers. The borough is also ahead of schedule in providing extended services through schools and a new integrated Youth Services model is under development, to name some of the examples of positive work being undertaken in the borough.
- 1.3 Results from the most recent TellUs data¹ indicate that children and young people in Barking and Dagenham take part in a wide range of activities, with participation levels similar to national averages. Results showed just under half of children and young people rate activities and things to do in the local area as very or fairly good, again comparable nationally. Three quarters of our young people report visiting local parks and playgrounds, 56% visit the cinema or sports clubs and around a third either attend youth clubs, libraries, museums, youth centres or cafés to meet friends.
- 1.4 However, there is still work to be done. The proportion of our young people exercising for at least thirty minutes daily is slightly lower than the national figures, and – as in 2007 – the proportion of our young people who report feeling unsafe on public transport is much higher than the national average. The consultation commissioned by the Panel during the course of the review also revealed that young people's fears about personal safety present barriers to them travelling to youth activities². In addition, the number of young people who feel that improvements are still required to make the area a better place to live is also still higher than average.
- 1.5 I feel confident that we will rise to meet these challenges, with the help of young people themselves. A particularly positive aspect of this review for me was the level of enthusiasm and insight displayed by the young people I spoke with during the course of this review. As a Panel we met with a number of young people – both within the formal Panel setting and through site visits to Schools Councils – and heard some very helpful comments and ideas, which have been incorporated into the final report and recommendations.

¹ TellUs 3, 2009

² New Youth Clubs and Youth Buildings Survey, 2009

- 1.6 Finally, it remains to say that, while this review has attempted to identify some of the areas where further improvements could be made, it is not a conclusive report. As the review topic encompasses so many wide-ranging issues, it was not possible to give thorough consideration to all aspects. Instead, we decided to focus on the key areas that we felt would benefit most from scrutiny input, and to highlight other issues for possible future review as necessary.
- 1.7 I am grateful to all those who contributed and I trust that the recommendations put forward will assist those responsible for delivering facilities and activities within the borough, leading to even better provision for children and young people.

Councillor John White, Lead Member of the Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Panel

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On 7 November 2007 the Scrutiny Management Board commissioned an in-depth review of activities available to children and young people in the borough and the facilities available to support these activities, and established a time-limited scrutiny panel to undertake this work. Unfortunately, the Panel's investigations were delayed due to Members' personal circumstances and work ceased.

The Panel was reformed with a new membership on 17 September 2008 and work formally recommenced on 24 September 2008. Terms of reference for the Panel can be viewed in Appendix One.

- 2.2 The review was prompted by a number of considerations, as follows:

- The topic was identified as an area of Member interest.
- The provision of 'facilities and services for young people' was identified as one of the top five community priorities in a 2008 survey of over two thousand residents, staff and partners.
- The review was intended to coincide with the development of the Council's Youth Services department, which is undergoing significant change as part of a development programme as it moves towards a more integrated model.

- 2.3 The Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Panel consisted of six Councillors and four lay members:

- Councillor John White (Lead Member)
- Councillor Donald Hemmett
- Councillor Dee Hunt
- Councillor Barry Poulton
- Councillor Warren Northover
- Councillor Philip Waker
- Ms Sharon Benson
- Mr David Cross
- Ms Maggie Mitchell
- Ms Tina Woodhouse

The Lead Services Officer for the review was Christine Pryor, Head of Integrated Family Services. The Lead Scrutiny Officer was Clair Bantin, Team Manager, Scrutiny and Civic.

- 2.4 The original Panel held two formal meetings on 15 January 2008 and 11 February 2008. The Panel then recommenced its work, holding a further seven evidence-gathering meetings from 24 September 2008 until 30 March 2009, hearing evidence from a wide range of people involved in using or delivering activities for young people. Findings from the two meetings of the original Panel were also reviewed and incorporated into the overall body of evidence.

Members also undertook a number of site visits to observe projects and clubs providing activities for young people, as well as hearing directly from young people themselves through visits to school councils. In addition, Members invited comments from members of the BAD Youth Forum and also commissioned detailed consultation through the LBBD Young People's Panel. Full details of witnesses and site visits are given in Appendix Two.

A final Panel meeting was held on 6 April 2009 to agree the report and recommendations.

3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In compiling the findings, the evidence gathered by the Panel has been grouped into key themes, and recommendations are presented with the relevant themes to provide context. For ease of reference the recommendations can also be viewed as a list in Appendix 3.

3.2 Integrated Youth Services

The Council's Youth Services department is undergoing significant change and development as it moves towards a more integrated model of service delivery. These changes are based on extensive public consultation with young people specifically and across all sections of the community.

The vision is to engage more young people by providing a range of activities in each locality, thereby creating easily accessible provision that meets young people's needs. Targeted, bespoke provision will be available for those that need it and emphasis will be placed on early intervention. All young people with learning difficulties and disabilities will have full access to universal provision for children and young people. Crucially, young people will help shape and deliver services and have a clear voice in all aspects of the Youth Service.

So far, a number of steps have already been taken to put this vision into practice. A one-off grant of £450 000 has been allocated to youth provision and a Youth Commissioning Team has been established to consider current services and future requirements. There has been an increased focus on joint working with Neighbourhood Management, Lifelong Learning and Leisure services, as well as collaboration with the new Foyer and partners to secure an information, advice and guidance centre in its reception. The number of detached youth worker roles has also been increased and recruitment is underway to fill these positions.

The key priorities for the coming year will be to get the new Integrated Youth Services Board up and running, to retender the ConneXions contract, and to work with partners to significantly increase the number of activities available for young people, especially those relating to physical fitness.

Recommendation 1: The Panel strongly supports the work being undertaken to develop LBBD Youth Services and requests that a report be brought back to the Children's Services Select Committee (or relevant Scrutiny body) in six months to update Members on progress in this area.

3.3 Youth clubs

Members heard details of the highly successful Longbridge youth club being run by PC Graham Mann in partnership with Barking Abbey School. The model for this youth club places young people firmly at the centre of service delivery, with service users taking ownership and responsibility for the way the club is run and the activities on offer. This high level of buy-in has been achieved through extensive consultation before the club was established and also because young people set the programme for the club and sit on the steering committee.

The club is not restricted to students at Barking Abbey but is instead open to all those living in the local area. Approximately one hundred young people attend the club every week, spread over two nights.

At least nine youth clubs are to be set up over the next two years, based on the Longbridge youth club model. PC Mann is working towards establishing a youth club in every ward in the borough. However, Members note challenges in delivering this goal, namely sourcing stable and sustainable funding and finding suitable venues (these issues are similar to those for the voluntary and community sector as a whole, and are discussed in further detail in Section 3.12).

3.4 Extended Schools

3.4.1 Current position and targets

Extended Services in and through schools, often called 'Extended Schools', are intended to provide access to a range of services and activities for children and young people. There is clear evidence that supporting children (and their families) at a young age has a large impact on outcomes and life chances in later life.³ Therefore, a key priority and challenge for schools is to reach the most disadvantaged families, and to ensure the early identification of children who have additional needs or are at risk of poor outcomes, within a framework of providing mainstream services for all.

³ *How well are they doing?* (Ofsted, 2008) found that the extended services are having a positive impact on children's achievement and personal development. Academic results in the first wave of full-service extended schools improved at twice the national average rate between 2005/06. The percentage of pupils achieving five plus A*-C grades at GCSE increased by just over 5 percentage points, compared to the national average of 2.5 percentage points.

Government targets indicate that every school should be offering extended services by 2010. The Mori report *Testing the Core Offer* found that nationally there is strong support for providing a range of services, with most schools expecting their services to grow over the next few years. Barking and Dagenham has already exceeded the previous target, which stated that 30% of secondary schools and 50% of primary schools should be delivering extended services by September 2008.

The extended services offer is as follows:

- A varied menu of activities, combined with childcare in primary schools
- Swift and easy access (referral) to specialist services.
- Community access to school facilities
- Parenting support

Schools are not required to provide services directly, but instead work with the local authority and other partners to commission providers and to link existing provision through school clusters and children's centres. However, a few schools still restrict the extended services they provide to their own pupils and require further encouragement to work collaboratively with neighbouring schools to create a comprehensive offer for across the local area.

3.4.2 Funding and value for money

Schools currently receive funding to support the development of extended services. This budget is managed at the school's discretion in order to provide a varied menu of activities, as guided by the needs of the school community. This funding will cease in 2010.

In addition, secondary schools receive an additional investment from the Jack Petchey Foundation, which has led to the development of comprehensive out-of-school-hours learning programmes, and two secondary schools received further funding from the Big Lottery's Extended Schools Programme. The School Sports Partnership and the National Healthy Schools Programme also contribute towards provision.

3.4.3 Take-up of activities

The number of secondary school pupils participating in out-of-school-hours learning funded by the Jack Petchey Foundation has more than doubled over the period 2005/06 - 2007/08 from 3197 to 6530, with a further increase predicted for 2008-09. Uptake of out of school hours learning is not currently measured in primary schools.

The annual PESSCL survey (Physical Education and School Sports Club Links) shows that the uptake of out-of-hours sport and high quality PE has increased from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008 across Key Stages 1 to 4. The number of pupils who have participated in one or more community sports, dance, or multi-skill clubs with links to the school has fallen slightly over the last year across Key Stages 1-3, with Key Stage 4 experiencing no change. The increase in the total number of pupils participating in high quality PE and out-of-hours sport may be linked to this slight decrease.

There is still work to be done to ensure that the most disadvantaged students are fully accessing the all activities on offer. The percentage of Special Education

Needs (SEN) students taking part is lower than the percentage of SEN students across the student population as a whole, at 13.7% compared to 21.3%. Students receiving free school meals, who make 23.7% of students across the borough, represent only 8.5% of the total number of attendees. Most notably, only 6.3% of students with English as an Additional Language who are taking part, as compared with 32.4% of the school population as a whole.

Recommendation 2: The Panel recommends that alternative funding sources be identified for supporting the delivery of extended services within schools from 2010. The Panel notes that, while applying minimal charges for some services may be unavoidable, it is important that the broad range of provision remains free or heavily subsidised, given the need for take-up from low income families.

Recommendation 3: The Panel notes the importance of ensuring that comprehensive monitoring of service user figures be carried out across the range of extended services within schools, not only to increase the quality of our data and enable non-users to be targeted, but also in preparation for possible funding bids for 2010. To this end, the Panel recommends:

- i) That the monitoring of take-up of out-of-school-hours provision be extended to all primary schools.
- ii) That details of the monitoring arrangements used by Jo Richardson Community School be made available to all schools within the borough as a model of good practice.

Recommendation 4: The Panel commends the examples of excellent joint working already taking place in many schools. However, the Panel recommends that, where appropriate, LBBD Children's Services work with schools to increase joint delivery of extended services between neighbouring schools and to ensure that out-of-school-hours services offered by any given school are open to all rather than being limited solely to pupils of that school.

3.5 Summer's Sorted and Summer Uni

The borough's second annual Summer's Sorted campaign (2008) saw the provision of over a hundred activities spread over more than seventy locations in the borough, delivered by a range of voluntary, statutory and private partners.

The aim of the 2008 campaign was to increase participation by young people aged between twelve and nineteen by involving them in a wider spread of activities borough-wide, with additional focus on more challenging activities for older teenagers. The Leisure and Arts Team also worked in collaboration with Neighbourhood Management and the Metropolitan Police to target and engage with young people on estates.

The 2008 campaign was able to deliver a number of additional summer activities, following a successful bid for funding to run a Summer Uni programme. The Summer Uni programme - now run by all thirty-two London boroughs - is open to young people between the ages of thirteen to nineteen who wish to take part in a number of educational and vocational courses. In total forty-six courses were available, ranging from arts and sports to career and study support, spread across nineteen venues in the borough.

Participation in Summer's Sorted is measured through the return of monitoring forms from providers. The forms returned so far suggest a high level of participation in 2008, but many forms have not yet been returned so final figures are not available. However, it appears that the number of participants from the age group five to eleven has risen dramatically since 2007, but that the number of participants aged twelve to nineteen has remained relatively low. It also appears that 2008 saw a slightly higher take-up of activities amongst ethnic minority groups. Due to online enrolment in the Summer Uni programme, participation could be accurately measured, with 590 young people getting involved.

Members raised concerns relating to the dissemination of the Summer's Sorted brochure and the level of publicity associated with the 2008 campaign. These issues are considered in more detail in Section 3.15.

3.6 Free swimming

3.6.1 What's on offer?

The local Primary Care Trust, NHS Barking and Dagenham, is working in partnership with the Council and Amateur Swimming Association to provide a programme of free swimming to help address issues of childhood obesity and low rates of physical activities amongst young people in Barking and Dagenham. Swimming is known to have a significant impact on obesity and it was noted during consultation that most people who didn't engage in any physical activity said that swimming was their preferred sport.

The two-year pilot was introduced as part of the Change for Children agenda and is split into four main projects, as follows:

- (i) Adults and Toddlers - free swimming aimed at assisting parental bonding and providing an early introduction to exercise.
- (ii) School-based swimming, in which school swimming is subsidised, but schools must increase other activities on offer. A 25% uptake is predicted over the next two years.
- (iii) Out of School swimming, which is now free for young people.
- (iv) Swimming Apprenticeships - young people can gain NVQ level qualifications and receive training in leisure services.

Out of School swimming was launched in July 2008 and was more popular than predicted, resulting in some initial bad publicity due to queues and waiting times. However, overall the high level of uptake is extremely positive and the scheme has attracted national interest due to its success in engaging young people.

It is hoped that it will be possible to take a similar approach with other sport activities in future, and initial consideration has been given to basketball and rugby programmes. Members are concerned that at present there is no co-ordination of sports provision for young people in the borough.

Members suggest that, although better planning would have mitigated the challenges associated with the initial launch of free swimming in the borough, the long queues also reflect the imbalance between swimming facilities and demand. Members commend the decision to open a new replacement pool in Becontree Leisure Centre by 2011 and recognise resource constraints, but are keen to see consideration given to providing additional swimming facilities in the medium to long term, possibly through the provision of an outdoor pool or lido.

3.6.2 Challenges

Members note concerns relating to child poverty and safeguarding – for example, unsupervised young children being sent to spend a day at the pool by the parents, and arriving with no money for lockers or lunch.

Concerns were also expressed that the timings of free swimming sessions were not adequately coordinated with other youth activities on offer from the community and voluntary sector, such as football clubs, meaning that young people often had to choose between activities rather than accessing both.

Members were also concerned that the healthy aspects of swimming were being undermined by young people accessing fast food outlets after the session, or en route to different activities.

Recommendation 5: The Panel recommends that the dates and timings of future free swimming sessions should be planned in consultation with providers of other activities for young people, to avoid clashing activities where possible. The Panel asks LBB Leisure Services to lead on facilitating these discussions with partners.

Recommendation 6: The Panel recommends that NHS Barking and Dagenham work with partners to plan exit routes from free swimming sessions that channel young people towards other youth activities available to them at that time and in that area. Where possible, these exit routes should also steer young people away from fast food outlets and towards healthier food options.

Recommendation 7: The Panel recommends that LBB Youth Services give consideration to providing detached youth worker support during busy free swimming sessions.

Recommendation 8: The Panel recommends that NHS Barking and Dagenham work with partners to investigate the possibility of updating the free swimming passes available to young people to include swipe card technology that automatically records user details, including age, ward and ethnicity of those accessing the service, for statistical monitoring purposes. This information should then be used to target information and publicity at groups of young people that are not accessing the free swimming offer.

Recommendation 9: The Panel recommends that LBB Leisure Services liaise with the various sports and leisure centres in the borough to co-ordinate a joined-up approach to sports provision for young people across the borough.

3.7 Play

There is significant national support for developing Play, in large part due to a recent UNICEF report noting that children's need in the United Kingdom as regards Play are not being met. New government funding means that local authorities have a unique chance to transform the quality of their play spaces and play activities over the next few years.

Significant work is being undertaken regarding Play in the borough, and a number of new project and activities aimed at children and young people aged between zero and sixteen year olds have been put in place.

It has recently been confirmed that the strategic lead officer for Play will sit within Children's Services. However, Members are concerned that Play is still not 'owned' and may get lost in the gaps, as there is no dedicated officer for this area. For example, Members feel it is unlikely that there is currently capacity within Children's Services for someone at the correct level to attend Planning meetings to act as an advocate for Play requirements and needs during Section 106 negotiations. Members are also concerned to hear that the Play Partnership does not have a formal reporting line and the Play Strategy has not yet been adopted.

Recommendation 10: The Panel recommends that consideration be given to identifying resources to appoint a permanent dedicated officer for Play, reporting to Head of Integrated Family Services (the identified strategic lead officer for Play).

Recommendation 11: The Panel recommends a reporting line for the Play Partnership be established through the Children's Trust.

Recommendation 12: The Panel recommends that the Play Strategy be rewritten to be more concise and to take into account new government guidance. Once adopted, the Strategy should be published on the Council's website in keeping with practice in other London boroughs.

3.8 Heritage

Heritage Services are in the process of developing the two main heritage sites in the borough; Valence House Museum and Eastbury Manor House.

When the development is complete in 2010 services will include extensive work with schools, as well as family learning and entertainment opportunities. A publicity campaign will be launched nearer the time to ensure that members of the public are aware of what is on offer.

Members commend the work being undertaken at the two sites, but note the need to widen the remit of Heritage Services to build links with other sites of interest within the borough, including Barking Abbey and nature-based areas.

Recommendation 13: The Panel commends the work undertaken by LBBD Heritage Services in developing Valence House Museum and Eastbury Manor House, but recommends that, in addition, officers look to build further links with other sites of interest within the borough, including Barking Abbey and nature-based areas.

3.9 Arts and music activities

There is an extensive programme of arts activities available for young people in the borough through the Community Arts Service, including dance, film, theatre and much more. In addition, in 2008 the yearly Molten Festival delivered two days of free arts activities at the Dagenham Town Show.

Music-related activities for young people are available through the Community Music Service, and these two services often work closely together, delivering joint music and arts activities.

Members note that it is difficult to coordinate publicity for the various activities on offer, as the Community Arts and Community Music Services are responsible for funding organisations to deliver activities and, therefore, do not control the publicity arrangements.

3.10 Libraries

The borough has eleven libraries, five of which have been replaced since the 1990s, which compares favourably to many other London boroughs.

All libraries are free to join and there are no late fines for young people up to sixteen years old. There are a variety of materials available to users, including internet facilities, audio visual items and a wide range of books printed in a number of languages. In addition, staff provide support to use library facilities and signposting to impartial information, advice and guidance on activities available in the borough.

Library staff also work in consultation with other partners, such as schools, to enhance the service and facilities offered to young people. This includes a programme of class visits to libraries for five to eleven year olds and the provision of activities in school holidays, such as the 'summer reading challenge'. In addition there is a year round reading club.

Members note that libraries do not provide homework clubs due to staff capacity issues, but that library facilities could potentially be used as venue to support clubs run by voluntary organisations (see Section 3.12, below).

Recommendation 14: The Panel recommends that LBBB Library Services liaise with LBBB Youth Services and the Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Service to consider the potential for libraries to host homework clubs run by local voluntary organisations.

3.11 Opportunities for young people in further and adult education

There are a large variety of courses available to suit young people's requirements, ranging from apprenticeship schemes to flexi-learning programmes. Developments are also underway to extend provision through the recently opened Jack Petchey Foyer in Barking.

By 2013 it will be necessary to provide all young people with the chance to select from a choice of seventeen diploma areas, and common timetabling arrangements are being adopted across the borough in preparation for this.

As well as accessing providers within the borough, such as Barking College, many young people travel outside the borough to learn. Redbridge College and Havering College are both used by many Barking and Dagenham young people, and consequently it is necessary to maintain excellent cross-borough links.

The recent merge between the Adult College and Barking and Dagenham Training Services is expected to significantly reduce administrative costs.

3.12 Facilities and activities provided by the voluntary and community sector

3.12.1 Provision

There are a large number of voluntary services within the borough, ranging from professional, well-regulated services to those delivered on an informal, ad hoc basis. Many, although not all, of these services are affiliated to the Council for Voluntary Service, Barking and Dagenham's umbrella organisation for the third sector.

There is also a variety of provision targeted at different needs, including traditional youth clubs; crime diversion activities; cultural and religious groups; homework support clubs; arts, leisure and sport clubs; groups meeting specialist needs, such as those for young carers and disabled young people; and groups addressing specialist issues, such as sexual health.

3.12.2 Funding

Members note that the sector faces difficulties regarding funding, especially the ability to access core funding and plan long-term projects. One reason for this is because much of the funding available is targeted at supporting new, innovative projects rather than established schemes.

A second and even greater problem is that funding is allocated on a short-term basis, leading to great instability in services, anxiety about premises and overheads and the inability plan for the future. Furthermore, to secure funding, projects need to be able to demonstrate that they are results-based. However, smaller organisations often do not have the time or skills to collect and analyse data, and in any case their time is arguably better spent delivering services.

3.12.3 Accommodation

A second challenge for the sector is gaining access to suitable premises, leading to situations in which groups such as homework clubs are being run from the coordinator's living room (see Section 3.10 and Recommendation 14), or where new youth clubs cannot be set up (see Section 3.3).

Members note that the community halls in the borough are not fully utilised and could potentially be used as space to run youth activities. There are currently thirteen community halls in the borough, managed by Community Associations (consisting of twelve to twenty individuals living in the management area, who are elected annually at a public meeting). The halls are for general use for any kind of social, leisure, educational or recreational purpose, but the management committees make the final decision on which groups are granted access, based on community needs.

Members are concerned to hear that in some cases, the community associations in charge of running the halls are resistant to allowing young people to use the facilities. Members are keen to improve young people's access to the halls and, where possible, to give them an increased voice in their management. By law, young people under the age of eighteen cannot sit on the management committees; however, young people's views can be taken into account through consultation.

Members also note that the excellent facilities at The Vibe are not fully utilised and could also be used as space to run youth activities

Recommendation 15: Members note the importance of making full use of the borough's building and facilities in order to support the voluntary and community sector make more activities available to young people. To this end, the Panel recommends:

- i) That Community Hall management committees be encouraged to look favourably on applications for space to run youth projects and activities.
- ii) That, where necessary or appropriate, the LBBD Community Development Team facilitate meetings between Community Hall management committees and the young people in question to help dispel any concerns and to promote a positive image of young people.
- iii) That, as it is not legally possible for Community Hall management committees to include youth representatives, each management committee should nominate a 'Youth Champion' from amongst their membership. The Youth Champion's role would include representing the views of young people in the management area and publicising their role to young people in the area.
- iv) That LBBD Youth Services investigate making the facilities at The Vibe (when not in use) available to voluntary and community groups delivering activities for young people.

Please also note Recommendation 14, relating to use of library space to deliver homework clubs.

3.13 Children and young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

There is a good range of provision in the borough specifically for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, in many cases significant challenges are presented in accessing these activities, not least due to the lack of an accessible station within the borough. During their site visit to Trinity Special School, Members heard that the provision of transport for children attending out-of-school-hours clubs significantly increases the numbers of children accessing these activities.

In addition, a number of mainstream venues and activities also present access problems, such as a lack of accessible changing rooms and ramps at swimming pools. Members strongly support attempts to develop a 'lending library' of equipment from Trinity Special School to various play schemes and other activities, in order to make them more accessible.

Members note the new performance indicator relating to parents and carers of disabled children, and agree this may act as a driver for change. However, Members remain concerned by the quality of monitoring information relating to disabled children and young people, and the lack of clear targets for improvement. This not only makes it difficult to monitor inclusion and progress, but also compromises the ability to attract additional funding.

Recommendation 16: Members strongly recommend that LBBD Safeguarding and Rights work with other LBBD Children's Services departments and schools to gather the relevant data and produce formal baselines and targets for

- i) The provision and take-up of youth activities amongst children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- ii) Improving accessibility for those with learning difficulties and disabilities to all youth services and activities in the borough.

Recommendation 17: Members recommend officers investigate the possibility of providing door-to-door bus transport for children and young people with additional needs who wish to access youth activities, or allocating council transport during off-peak times.

3.14 Safer travel for young people

Transport for London (TfL) runs a number of projects and schemes across all London boroughs to promote safety amongst young people using public transport. Young people's access to free travel is conditional on their observation of an acceptable behaviour contract whilst using this resource. TfL is also working with schools to ensure they meet the requirement to have a school travel plan in place by 2010.

TfL also provides a number of programmes that are specific to Barking and Dagenham, including:

- i) 'Now You See Me, Now You Don't' – a programme aimed at managing the transition between primary and secondary school
- ii) 'The Price' – a road safety programme aimed at Year 7 students
- iii) 'Wasted' – a drugs and driving programme aimed at Year 9 students

Members commend the interactive and thoughtful educational materials used by TfL in schools to promote the message of safer travel to young people, as well as the excellent work being done by the police on crime and disorder issues relating to transport, particularly through the Safer Transport Teams.

Members are concerned that Barking and Dagenham is one of only four London boroughs that does not currently have a Junior Safety and Citizenship Scheme. The scheme, run by TfL and the London Transport Museum, provides a free transport education service to all schools within the Greater London area to promote safety and responsible travel on and around the capital's transport system. The service,

led by trained school liaison officers, helps prepare ten and eleven-year-olds for independent travel before they move to secondary school.

Members note that TfL are eager to establish the scheme in the borough and that similar schemes are run at cost in both Hackney and Southwark because suitable venues have been made available by the local authority.

Recommendation 18: The Panel supports establishing Junior Safety and Citizenship Scheme in Barking and Dagenham and urges officers to identify a suitable building and liaise with TfL to set up the scheme.

3.15 Getting the message across – information and publicity

A key piece of feedback from the young people consulted at Panel meetings and during site visits was that they were unaware of the range of activities available to them. Although most young people knew about the activities on offer through their schools, there was much less awareness of non-school-based activities. Young people predominantly indicated that they would like to receive information through school and through new / social media and text updates.

There is a statutory duty to provide information about services for parents / carers of children and young people from birth until the age of twenty. LBBB Integrated Family Services is developing a new information service called the Family Services Directory (FMS), which will meet this duty, as well, as well as providing information directly to young people themselves.

The new Directory is being developed from the old Children's Services Directory, but will be designed in a more user-friendly format with more focused results. The Directory was launched for practitioners in March 2009, and will be opened to all users during National Family Week in May 2009.

Members support the provision of this new service and are keen to see it widely publicised through schools. However, Members note that the FMS will focus on services, and believe that there is still a need for a directory or listing of the youth activities available in the borough.

Members recognise the challenges of collating and publicising a fully comprehensive list of all activities offered through the voluntary and community sector, due to the disparate and ad hoc nature of some of the projects delivered. However, Members commend the guide produced by the Council for Voluntary Service and support the decision to make this information available online in the near future.

Recommendation 19: The Panel recommends that schools be asked to include an alert of the launch Family Services Directory in their newsletters to parents and that details of the launch should be sent to school governors, with a request for them to use and promote the new service.

Recommendation 20: The Panel recommends that a comprehensive directory of activities available to children and young people in the borough be compiled, drawing together statutory, third sector and private provision. This directory should be:

- i) Available online, easy to search and designed in an appealing format, in consultation with young people.
- ii) Widely publicised to young people and their parents, with particular focus on using schools as channels of communication.
- iii) Linked into new media and social networking sites, such as having a presence on Facebook and the ability to sign up for text updates.

The Panel asks LBBD Youth Services to take the lead on liaising with other Council departments and external partners to move this initiative forward.

3.16 Scope of the review

Members note that, due to the restructure of the Scrutiny function, this review was drawn to a close earlier than might otherwise have been desired. A significant element of the review – the opportunity to invite submissions and views from local residents – was therefore not carried out as originally intended, although extensive consultation did take place with young people.

Recommendation 21: Members ask the Children’s Services Select Committee to consider taking up this work during the next municipal year by using a range of Council-based and external media to invite comments from the public on facilities and activities for young people in the borough, with a view to making further recommendations based on these comments, as appropriate.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Given the large topic area encompassed by facilities and activities for children and young people, it was not possible for the Panel to thoroughly investigate all issues that potentially could have been included in the review. Members specifically identified the following issues as worthy of further investigation:

- The provision of recreational and diversionary activities for young people to stop them becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. This issue may ultimately form part of a wider review of Youth and Crime.
- Young people’s perceptions of safety and fear of becoming a victim of crime when travelling in the borough to access youth activities. This issue may ultimately form part of a wider review of Youth and Crime.
- Perceptions of young people amongst borough residents in general and promoting a positive image.
- The extent to which young people in the borough have a room or space of their own for study. This issue may ultimately form part of a wider review of Housing Development and Affordable Housing.
- The provision and take up of childcare and parenting support. Both of these issues are key elements of the Extended Schools model, but were not addressed through this review due to the age range under consideration.

The Children's Services Select Committee or another relevant Scrutiny body may wish to undertake further scrutiny of these issues at a future stage.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Autumn Census (2008). *Data extract.*
- Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (2008-09). *Agenda papers and minutes.*
- HM Government (2003) *Every Child Matters*
- HM Government (2005). *Youth Matters. Department for Education and Skills.*
- HM Government (2006). *The Education and Inspections Act*
- HM Government (2007). *Aiming high for young people. A ten-year strategy for positive activities. Department for Children, Schools and Families.*
- HM government (2007). *The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures.*
- HM Government (2009). *TellUs 3.*
- Ipsos Mori (2008) *Testing the delivery of the core offer in and around extended schools.*
- LBBD (2008). *Community Strategy consultation*
- Ofsted (2008) *How well are they doing? The impact of children's centres and extended schools.*
- QA Research (2009). *New Youth Clubs and Youth Buildings Survey.* Consultation commissioned by the Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.

Facilities and Activities for Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

- 1) To broadly review facilities and activities in the Borough for children and young people up to the age of nineteen (excluding 0-5 services), with a view to establishing the facilities and activities that currently exist and identifying any gaps or areas for improvement.
- 2) To consider the uptake and usage data and the accessibility of facilities and activities currently available, with a view to identifying any barriers to access that may exist.
- 3) To consider the variety of facilities and activities currently provided and the associated usage costs and how this compares to other local authorities, particularly our statistical neighbours.
- 4) To review the findings of the recent survey undertaken by Youth Facilities Group, a subgroup of the B.A.D. Youth Forum. The survey asked young people aged between thirteen and nineteen to give their views on the facilities and activities on offer to them in the borough.
- 5) To consider what further support may be required to assist volunteers willing to give time and support to children and young people.
- 6) To encourage members of the public to engage with this important issue through attending public evidence-gathering sessions and providing ongoing feedback.
- 7) To consider any related equalities and diversity implications.
- 8) To report back to SMB with findings and recommendations for future policy and/or practice.

Contributors to the review

The following people submitted reports or presented evidence at formal Panel meetings:

24 September 2008	Christine Pryor, Head of Integrated Family Services
	Clair Bantin – Team Manager, Scrutiny and Civic
20 October 2008	Meena Kishinani – Head of Children's Policy & Trust Commissioning
	Frances Basham – Play Project and Development Officer
	Micheal McCormack – Community Arts Officer
	Carl Blackburn – Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Service
	Susan Leighton – Principal Librarian (Learning and Development)
20 November 2008	Deborah Thomas – Interim Group Manager, Disabled Children's Team
	Dr Justin Varney, NHS Barking and Dagenham
	Erik Stein – Group Manager for Extended Schools
	Paul Hogan – Head of Leisure and Arts
	Lee McDonough – Leisure Centre Manager
	Sarah Barker, National Graduate Trainee, Scrutiny Team
15 December 2008	Alan Lazell – Head of Skills, Learning and Enterprise
	Heather Wills – Head of Community Services, Libraries and Heritage

12 January 2009	Paul Hogan – Head of Leisure and Arts
	Bernadette Davenport – Division Support Officer, Leisure & Community Services
	Joan Gibbons – Integrated Family Services
	Christine Pryor – Head of Integrated Family Services
	Sally Allen-Clarke – Senior Youth Worker
	Seven young people from BAD Youth Forum
	PC Graham Mann
17 February 2009	Claire Lacey – Transport for London
	Carl Horsman – Transport for London
	Chris Nix – Transport for London
	Chris Hall – Transport for London
	Joan Gibbons - Integrated Family Services
30 March 2009	Clair Bantin, Team Manager, Scrutiny and Civic

The following site visits were undertaken by Members during the course of the review:

- Trinity Special School, introduction to Extended Schools activities – 13 November 2008
- Vibe Youth Centre – 17 November 2008
- Ripple Junior School, introduction to Extended Schools activities – 27 November 2008
- Barking Rugby Club – 29 November 2008
- Jo Richardson Community School, introduction to Extended Schools activities – 2 December 2008
- Dagenham and Redbridge Football Club, Kicks Project – 5 December 2008
- Barking and Dagenham CrossRoads – 6 December 2008
- Robert Clack School, meeting with School Council – 11 December 2008
- Eastbury School, meeting with School Council – 15 January 2009
- Urban question time - 19 January 2009

The Panel is very grateful to all those who contributed to this review.

List of Recommendations

The following recommendations are set out here as a list, for ease of reference.

Recommendation 1: The Panel strongly supports the work being undertaken to develop LBBB Youth Services and requests that a report be brought back to the Children's Services Select Committee (or relevant Scrutiny body) in six months to update Members on progress in this area.

Recommendation 2: The Panel recommends that alternative funding sources be identified for supporting the delivery of extended services within schools from 2010. The Panel notes that, while applying minimal charges for some services may be unavoidable, it is important that the broad range of provision remains free or heavily subsidised, given the need for take-up from low income families.

Recommendation 3: The Panel notes the importance of ensuring that comprehensive monitoring of service user figures be carried out across the range of extended services within schools, not only to increase the quality of our data and enable non-users to be targeted, but also in preparation for possible funding bids for 2010. To this end, the Panel recommends:

- i) That the monitoring of take-up of out-of-school-hours provision be extended to all primary schools.
- ii) That details of the monitoring arrangements used by Jo Richardson Community School be made available to all schools within the borough as a model of good practice.

Recommendation 4: The Panel commends the examples of excellent joint working already taking place in many schools. However, the Panel recommends that, where appropriate, LBBB Children's Services work with schools to increase joint delivery of extended services between neighbouring schools and to ensure that out-of-school-hours services offered by any given school are open to all rather than being limited solely to pupils of that school.

Recommendation 5: The Panel recommends that the dates and timings of future free swimming sessions should be planned in consultation with providers of other activities for young people, to avoid clashing activities where possible. The Panel asks LBBB Leisure Services to lead on facilitating these discussions with partners.

Recommendation 6: The Panel recommends that NHS Barking and Dagenham work with partners to plan exit routes from free swimming sessions that channel young people towards other youth activities available to them at that time and in that area. Where possible, these exit routes should also steer young people away from fast food outlets and towards healthier food options.

Recommendation 7: The Panel recommends that LBBB Youth Services give consideration to providing detached youth worker support during busy free swimming sessions.

Recommendation 8: The Panel recommends that NHS Barking and Dagenham work with partners to investigate the possibility of updating the free swimming passes available to young people to include swipe card technology that automatically records user details, including age, ward and ethnicity of those accessing the service, for statistical monitoring purposes. This information should then be used to target information and publicity at groups of young people that are not accessing the free swimming offer.

Recommendation 9: The Panel recommends that LBBB Leisure Services liaise with the various sports and leisure centres in the borough to co-ordinate a joined-up approach to sports provision for young people across the borough.

Recommendation 10: The Panel recommends that consideration be given to identifying resources to appoint a permanent dedicated officer for Play, reporting to Head of Integrated Family Services (the identified strategic lead officer for Play).

Recommendation 11: The Panel recommends a reporting line for the Play Partnership be established through the Children's Trust.

Recommendation 12: The Panel recommends that the Play Strategy be rewritten to be more concise and to take into account new government guidance. Once adopted, the Strategy should be published on the Council's website in keeping with practice in other London boroughs.

Recommendation 13: The Panel commends the work undertaken by LBBB Heritage Services in developing Valence House Museum and Eastbury Manor House, but recommends that, in addition, officers look to build further links with other sites of interest within the borough, including Barking Abbey and nature-based areas.

Recommendation 14: The Panel recommends that LBBB Library Services liaise with LBBB Youth Services and the Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Service to consider the potential for libraries to host homework clubs run by local voluntary organisations.

Recommendation 15: Members note the importance of making full use of the borough's building and facilities in order to support the voluntary and community sector make more activities available to young people. To this end, the Panel recommends:

- i) That Community Hall management committees be encouraged to look favourably on applications for space to run youth projects and activities.
- ii) That, where necessary or appropriate, the LBBB Community Development Team facilitate meetings between Community Hall management committees and the young people in question to help dispel any concerns and to promote a positive image of young people.
- iii) That, as it is not legally possible for Community Hall management committees to include youth representatives, each management committee should nominate a 'Youth Champion' from amongst their membership. The Youth Champion's role would include representing the views of young people in the management area and publicising their role to young people in the area.

- iv) That LBBD Youth Services investigate making the facilities at The Vibe (when not in use) available to voluntary and community groups delivering activities for young people.

Please also note Recommendation 14, relating to use of library space to deliver homework clubs.

Recommendation 16: Members strongly recommend that LBBD Safeguarding and Rights work with other LBBD Children's Services departments and schools to gather the relevant data and produce formal baselines and targets for

- i) The provision and take-up of youth activities amongst children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- ii) Improving accessibility for those with learning difficulties and disabilities to all youth services and activities in the borough.

Recommendation 17: Members recommend officers investigate the possibility of providing door-to-door bus transport for children and young people with additional needs who wish to access youth activities, or allocating council transport during off-peak times.

Recommendation 18: The Panel supports establishing Junior Safety and Citizenship Scheme in Barking and Dagenham and urges officers to identify a suitable building and liaise with TfL to set up the scheme.

Recommendation 19: The Panel recommends that schools be asked to include an alert of the launch Family Services Directory in their newsletters to parents and that details of the launch should be sent to school governors, with a request for them to use and promote the new service.

Recommendation 20: The Panel recommends that a comprehensive directory of activities available to children and young people in the borough be compiled, drawing together statutory, third sector and private provision. This directory should be:

- i) Available online, easy to search and designed in an appealing format, in consultation with young people.
- ii) Widely publicised to young people and their parents, with particular focus on using schools as channels of communication.
- iii) Linked into new media and social networking sites, such as having a presence on Facebook and the ability to sign up for text updates.

The Panel asks LBBD Youth Services to take the lead on liaising with other Council departments and external partners to move this initiative forward.

Recommendation 21: Members ask the Children's Services Select Committee to consider taking up this work during the next municipal year by using a range of Council-based and external media to invite comments from the public on facilities and activities for young people in the borough, with a view to making further recommendations based on these comments, as appropriate.