

Report of: Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager

To: North East Area Committee
Community Scrutiny Committee
South East Area Committee

Date: 21st November 2006
23rd November 2006
4th December 2006



Item No:

Subject of Report : Holiday Play Activities – Summer 2006



Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report: To provide Committee members with information on the Oxford City Council funded summer holiday activities held in summer 2006 and to invite feedback and comments from members to inform future improvements.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Caroline Van Zyl

Scrutiny Responsibility: Community Scrutiny

Ward(s) affected: Rose Hill, Blackbird Leys, Barton and Wood Farm

Report Approved by

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Van Zyl, Portfolio Holder, Safer City

Legal: Jeremy Thomas, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Finance: Andy Collett, Group Accountant

Strategic Director: Michael Lawrence, Strategic Director, Housing, Health
Communities

Policy Framework: The Oxford Plan through making Oxford a safer City and providing more and affordable leisure activities.

Recommendation(s):

1. For members to note the report.
2. For members to provide further feedback or comments on the activities



that took place in order to inform improvements to the programme for next year.

Background

1. In 2005-6 there was a reduction in the funding available to the Youth Service for youth activities during the summer holidays. In response the City Council stepped in and financially supported a number of activities, though the Area Committees and the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership. A number of holiday activities were funded across the City and in particular a pilot programme of free holiday activities was established in Wood Farm. Anecdotal evidence from the police, street wardens and local councillors noted that the play schemes appeared to have a beneficial effect upon the local communities, in particular a reduction in anti-social behaviour and criminal damage, although this was not quantified.
2. Following a report by the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership on the benefits of providing play activities in the summer holidays Oxford City Council allocated a budget to develop play activities in the City. There have also been ongoing discussions with Officers from Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxford City Bilateral meetings on developing joint planning of play activities.
3. A report to the Executive Board on 13th March 2006 set out the basis for allocating the available funding over 2006-07.

The scope of holiday play activities for 2006-07

4. The plan included the provision of area-based multi-activity sessions, tailored to the needs of the young people in the area, in areas identified as the most deprived by the Child Poverty Index. Two separate age groups need to be catered for: 8 – 13 year olds and 14 – 19 year olds.
5. It was agreed to target those areas with the highest levels of deprivation on the 'Super Out Put Multiple Deprivation' indices:
 - Barton
 - Blackbird Leys
 - Rose Hill
 - Wood Farm

The objectives

6. Each scheme will be required to:

- Provide activities for five summer holiday weeks and one week at Easter.
- Provide separate activities for the 8-12 and 13-19 age ranges.
- Operate for at least 5 hours per day, 5 days per week.
- Customise its activities to the needs of the young people.
- Include support sessions
- Involve the local community in the delivering the service.
- Effectively publicise the activities on offer using timely and accurate material.
- Work with existing services in the area

Reactive service

7. The initial proposals included providing a reactive service to respond to operate in an areas where young people are causing concern. Unfortunately the funding made available did not stretch to providing this service in addition to ensuring all the target areas also had adequate play provision.

Management

8. The Area-based schemes build upon existing provision in the target areas but where none existed the Oxford City Council Active Communities Partnership Manager would commission and oversee them.
9. Further details of the proposals are available in the report that went to the Executive Board in March 2006.

Monitoring of the Programme

10. A report was circulated to the relevant area committees providing monitoring information on the Easter Holiday Play Activities.
11. Annex 1 provides a summary of the monitoring information for the summer 2006-7.
12. The main findings are as follows:
 - The programme was extremely successful and schemes were well attended by children and young people, however, Rose Hill experienced a reduction in attendance from the previous year. We recognise that it has been a difficult year for Rose Hill, with the area suffering increased levels of challenging behaviour. There is a multi-agency approach to addressing the causes.

- Although the original plan was to provide for 8 – 19 year olds a need was identified to also support provision for 5-8 years olds. This added to the cost of provision.
- There was a demonstrable reduction in the levels of criminal damage on the estates when measured against the previous years statistics of the same period (see annex 1).
- Benefits to children and young people included access to information about social and health issues but opportunities for these and other education and awareness activities can be further extended.

Resources

13. The City Council has allocated a budget of £90,000 in 2006-7 and £120,00 in 2007-08 and onwards.
14. The staff and administrative support was provided through the Neighbourhood Renewal and Strategy and Review Business Units from within existing resources.


Developments for the future

15. The aim will be to further develop the programme of activities, potentially to other areas of the City, costs allowing.
16. Officers welcome feedback from Area Committee Members, Scrutiny Committee and the City /County Bi-Lateral meeting. These comments will help to make improvements in the 2007-08 activity programme. This programme will be presented to Area Committees for comments prior to an Executive Board report in February 2007, setting out the programme for 2007-08 for contract compliance purposes.

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Background papers:

 Annex 1: Summer Holiday Provision 2006

b) Executive Board report 'Play Provision' March 2006

