

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### **SELECT COMMITTEE - PROVISION OF ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

MINUTES of A meeting of the Select Committee - Provision of Activities for Young People held at Wantsum Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 23 June 2010.

PRESENT: Mr A R Chell (Chairman), Mr I S Chittenden, Mr G A Horne MBE, Mr M J Northey and Mrs E M Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P M Hill, OBE, Cabinet Member for Communities

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Baker (Head of Kent Youth Service), Mr A Moreman (Assistant Head Of Kent Youth Service ( Policy & Standards)) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

**1. Select Committee Provision of Activities for Young People - Progress Monitoring Report**  
*(Item. 1)*

(1) The Select Committee for the Provision of Activities for Young People was reconvened to consider the progress made on its recommendations one year on, in line with the County Council's Constitution.

(2) The Chairman asked Members and Officers to introduce themselves. He then asked Mr Baker to introduce the report.

(3) Mr Baker tabled copies of the report which rated the progress of the recommendations in red, amber or green. Mr Baker advised that none of the 17 recommendations were red since the news of Kent TV being replaced by Digital Kent by John McGhie, 10 of the recommendations were green and the rest were amber as they were ongoing pieces of work. The recommendations were in order of priority.

(4) The Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:

#### **Recommendation 2**

(5) The Chairman felt that this was a significant outcome. He advised Members that there was a Select Committee for Extended Services carrying out a review at present and awaited its outcomes. He concluded that it was important that the Youth Service continued to build on its good relationship with schools.

(6) In response to a question, Mr Hill advised that the Extended Schools sector was under pressure regarding funding. He was keen to keep the scheme going even if that meant reducing the scale of their activity as it was important work. Members of the Committee expressed their concerns as some had given funding

through their Member grant to local activity groups. The Chairman said that the Extended Services Select Committee was positive about the future of the service. Mr Hill assured Members that the service would be there although the structure may change. There were many suggestions as to how this may look in the future including school-based Community Youth Tutors contributing to the Extended Schools agenda.

(7) Mr Chittenden asked for data on how many schools were offering extended services already.

(8) Mr Baker advised that the Government set targets for delivering the 'core offer' and believed the target for Kent was 90%. There had been discussion on what the definition of a 'core offer' was within extended schools. It could be as little as sign posting to other activity in the local area. He suggested that Marisa White may have more knowledge of this.

(9) Mr Baker advised that he was actively looking to create more Youth Tutor posts although there were budget constraints and the ramification could be political.

(10) The Chairman advised that through the Extended Schools Select Committee it had been identified that a lot of activities were being carried out by groups of schools. He asked whether consideration could be given to those schools contributing to a Youth Tutor post. Mr Baker suggested that this could be something to be considered by the new Local Children's Trust Boards.

(11) Mr Baker advised Members of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) Review - an extended piece of work to review the 12 Advisory Groups, a strategic oversight of service tied in with the 12 Local Children's Trust Boards with Shaun Cater, Extended Services Lead Manager.

### **Recommendation 3**

(12) Mr Baker reminded Members of their meeting with David Hall, Head of Transport & Development who had been speaking with train providers who had been negative about participating in joining rail travel with the Freedom Pass. Mr Baker said that this was still the case even though efforts had been made to do this on various terms it seemed that they had a closed door approach. It was hoped that they would have seen the green vision in getting young people to use public transport. The Chairman said that there had been concerns about vandalism on trains and policing the process with the rail infrastructure monitoring where youngster got on and off the trains, although it was felt that there was no difference to any other commuter. Mr Baker was positive that there would be other opportunities in the future for re negotiating.

(13) Mr Baker advised that there had been a lot of support for the Leisure Pass although in the current economic situation a further £3.25 m would mean fighting to offer the basic service. The Youth Service and Reward Team were currently examining whether the contract with Asperity to provide staff discounts could also source activity discounts aimed at young people with local providers by using the existing Freedom Pass. Mr Hill expressed his frustrations with facilities being closed to children and young people in the evenings. Mr Baker gave the example of Sevenoaks District Council overcoming this issue by allowing a detached Youth

Worker to work in the Leisure Centre to encourage young people to take part in activities, beyond that there had been quite a negative response.

(14) Mr Hill agreed to write to the local District and Borough Councils to highlight the need for a solution. It was also suggested that in future when contracts were being drawn up they include the words “not to preclude young people”.

(15) Mr Baker highlighted paragraph 2.14 advising that the Youth County Council was still actively pursuing their campaign for an extension of the Freedom Pass up to the age of 18.

(16) Mr Horne requested clear evidence, facts and figures, on the Freedom Pass to support arguments why it should not be cut. The Chairman advised that this information could be sought from Mr David Hall, Head of Transport & Development.

#### **Recommendation 4**

(17) Mr Baker advised that there were 2 aspects of this recommendation. Following discussions with the Environment Highways and Waste Directorate a directory of available vehicles for Young Peoples Services and Social Services vehicles was currently being finalised.

(18) Mr Baker explained the difficulties that had to be overcome with the PCV test that drivers had to pass to drive a minibus. The course was very expensive (at least £800 per person). There were also problems in recruiting volunteers. To overcome the issue of the PVC licence, more 9 seater or less vehicles were being used as the additional license was not necessary. Mr Horne suggested that thought be given to utilising bus services that were running with very few passengers.

#### **Recommendation 6**

(19) The Chairman applauded the exceptional work being carried out by Young People through the arts around the County. He asked that ‘Kent’s Got Talent’ and ‘Team Fusion’ be included to the progress statement.

#### **Recommendation 7**

(20) Members were pleased to see that this recommendation was complete but felt that the importance of promoting a positive message about young people was a corporate issue and therefore steps should be made to make this a policy for all Directorates to adopt. It was agreed that Mr Gough, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support Services and Performance Management be asked to champion this.

#### **Recommendation 8**

(21) The Members were pleased to note that this recommendation was completed.

(22) Concerns were noted regarding the negative comments made by an adult at a meeting chaired by a young person witnessed by a Member of this Committee and the fact that this adult was in a position to train young people.

(23) Mr Baker advised that the Community Grants had been successful, details of which he could share outside the meeting. Members said that the grants were a good way of getting money to heart of local projects.

### **Recommendation 12**

(24) Mr Moreman expressed his frustrations with the significant delays in completing the kent.gov.uk site – Togogo website. Staff were now populating the data base, which would be completed by the end of 2010. Mrs Tweed agreed to speak with Mr Hill and Mrs Hohler.

(25) Mr Baker explained that Togogo would be a database that his team would control information that was received would be vetted before it was entered onto the database and was not interactive.

### **Recommendation 13**

(26) The Members were pleased to note that this recommendation was completed.

(27) Mr Moreman advised that the Youth Service had revised the policy on Facebook access in Youth Centres with safeguards and training. Members of the County Council had received training guidance on how to present themselves on Facebook. The Chairman advised that he would be keen to know if Mr Tim Davies Practical Participation.

(28) Members of the Committee suggested that a protocol for Members using Facebook should be within the County Council's Constitution.

### **Recommendation 15**

(29) Members were pleased to note that this recommendation was completed.

(30) Mr Baker advised that the magazine 'So!' ceased trading in May 2010 due to lack of funds, which was strongly dependent on finding advertising to cover its costs.

### **Recommendation 16**

(31) Members were pleased to note that this recommendation was completed.

### **Recommendation 1**

(32) Mr Baker advised Members that the Library Service had been a key player in supporting the HOUSE project across each of the 13 locations.

(33) In response to reading that the library mobile vehicles had become singled staffed, Mr Horne suggested that this was an opportunity to engage young people aged 16 and above to act as volunteers to talk to other young people. The HOUSE Project could be used to get all sorts of volunteers. Mr Moreman said that this might tie in with the outgoing Government's formalised volunteering for 16 year olds.

### **Recommendation 5**

(34) Mr Moreman explained that the Youth Service was undertaking a pilot examination of two centres using Mosaic to examine its usefulness in supporting Community Needs Analysis processes. Step 2 of the process to extracting postcodes and mapping where the Youth Club Members originate from would be carried out in the next weeks.

### **Recommendation 9**

(35) Members were pleased to note that this recommendation was completed.

(36) Mr Northey suggested that there should be lobbying to lessen the bureaucracy in intergenerational work. Mr Moreman advised that this would be part of the review of the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

### **Recommendation 10**

(37) Members were pleased to note that this recommendation was completed.

(38) Members felt that this would be ongoing with Activity Weeks inviting groups of young people into County Hall so many times a year ie October for Local Democracy Week, the last weeks in July when school was due to close for the Summer recess and the County Show in July. Mr Horne said that he would be happy to assist and gave the example of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council inviting 6<sup>th</sup> form students to the council to make decisions on planning issues with the aid of the officers as a councillor would. The Chairman felt that tremendous progress had been made.

### **Recommendation 11**

(39) Mr Baker reported that the progress was now amber as the former manager of Kent TV had now set up Digital Kent and it was envisaged that the opportunities for a youth channel might now be met. Discussions had commenced.

### **Recommendation 14**

(40) Mr Moreman advised on the implementation of an SMS texting service linked back to the Freedom Pass and Togogo and the need to have a clear offer for young people to be able to promote.

### **Recommendation 17**

(41) Members were pleased to note that this recommendation was completed.

(42) Mr Baker explained that the DCSF led Open Weekend there had been an increase in the range of activity for young people but this was without consultation and it was not good. There had been a few requests for some activities on

Saturdays and some for Monday to Thursday. HOUSE had been successful and very positive. The present challenge was the follow-on project called 'HOUSE on the Move'; Funded by the PCT, a converted double-decker bus had been provided for alcohol hotspots; it started in Maidstone and travelled to the coastal towns. The bus had unfortunately broken down and while it was being repaired a small bus was being used to maintain a service for young people. It was hope that the double-decker bus would be ready for the summer holidays.

(43) Mr Baker advised that Connexions Kent and Medway Ltd had been awarded a new three year contract for delivering careers information, advice and guidance. It had been resilient to when and where it delivered its services. It had been outsourced in April 2009. He felt that Connexions had a strong focus on the reduction of NEETs, and had demonstrated strong performance in this area. Members requested that the background to the funding and the outsourcing of Connexions be sought from Mrs Joanna Wainwright, Director Commissioning and Partnership.

(44) The Chairman and Members thank the Youth Service's Team for all their hard work.

(45) RESOLVED that the comments and the responses to Members questions and the report be noted.