

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

15 October 2007

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer and the
Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts**

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

1 2007 SUMMER PLAYScheme

Summary

This report provides an operational review of the 2007 Summer Playscheme (SP) and brings forward a number of recommendations for next year. The 2007 SP was successful and feedback received so far from parents and children has been positive. Partnership arrangements with external agencies to operate venues on the Council's behalf continue to provide an appropriate way forward.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In 2007 the SP was operated between 9am-1pm at 14 venues across the Borough. The SP offers organised activities for the 4-11 year age range. For the first time this year, four year olds who had attended Primary School full time since April (terms 5 and 6) were able to attend the SP.

1.1.2 In 2007 six partnership schemes were operated. The Council directly operated and staffed eight venues.

1.2 Summer Playscheme Venues

1.2.1 Attached at **[Annex 1]** is a list of SP venues operated in 2007.

1.2.2 Members will be pleased to note that there were no significant problems with the SP accommodation. A new centre was registered by OFSTED at East Peckham Village Hall as the Sports Hall was closed for refurbishment works. All of the centres were operated for the full four weeks with the exception of Tonbridge Baptist Church (three weeks). This was due to Longmead Primary School being unavailable due to building works.

1.2.3 It is suggested that the Council provides the same 14 venues in 2008, with the exception of Tonbridge Baptist Church where, if possible, the scheme will transfer to the Primary School, in order to offer the full four weeks.

1.3 Registration Levels / Income

- 1.3.1 The newly re-designed brochure was distributed extensively across the Borough including all primary schools and libraries. Despite the late confirmation of the East Peckham venue, numbers of registrations remained good with 1,557 children registered in 2007 compared to 1,587 in 2006. **[Annex 2]** provides a breakdown of the places for each SP venue, including a comparison with last year. 31 four year olds attended this year's scheme.
- 1.3.2 Applications were processed efficiently, and an on-line payment system will be developed in advance of the 2008 SP, reflecting this Council's commitment to e-government.
- 1.3.3 Income this year totalled £39,484 against a target of £41,650. The reduction in income is due to the increased number (16.25%) of children registered benefiting financially from the Council's Leisure Pass scheme (£6.50 per family per week compared to the full rate of £21.00 per child per week). This illustrates the important role played by the SP in reaching all social groups within the community, and meeting the Council's objective of fair access for all.
- 1.3.4 Members may wish to be reassured that in addition to the concessionary rates on offer, the Council is responsive to individual requests based on specific needs, for example, the introduction of an incremental payment scheme upon request.

1.4 Parental Survey

- 1.4.1 Parents were asked to complete a survey at the end of the SP. The results have been analysed and will be considered in the operational arrangements for 2008. The analysis shows high levels of customer satisfaction, with 96% rating the scheme as very good/good. 97% of those responding found the charges to be about right, offering good value for money.

1.5 Transport Arrangements

- 1.5.1 Buses ran from Kings Hill to the West Malling and Leybourne centres, from Wrotham and Borough Green to Potters Mede, from Wouldham to Burham, and from Larkfield to Leybourne
- 1.5.2 The transport arrangements represent a significant cost, and an evaluation will be undertaken in advance of the 2008 SP in order to ensure it is arranged as efficiently as possible.

1.6 Partnerships

- 1.6.1 Six partnership venues were operated in 2007. The partner organisations were from both the voluntary and private sectors, and were responsible for running venues on a day-to-day basis in accordance with Council and Ofsted requirements. The partners were as follows:

Venue	Partner
Hadlow	Barnies Day Care Nursery
Tonbridge Baptist Church	Barnies Day Care Nursery
Aylesford	Poppy Pre-School
Snodland	Little-Uns Day Nursery
Stocks Green, Hildenborough	Rainbow Out of School Clubs
West Malling	Rainbow Out of School Clubs

1.6.2 It is suggested that retaining and developing partnership centres remains the way forward for the successful operation of the SP. This is due to the advantages the partners have in securing suitably qualified staff, and the association they have with the local community.

1.7 Ofsted Inspections

1.7.1 Members may recall that Ofsted apply 14 national standards for out-of-school care as a legal requirement, all of which must be complied with by the Council.

1.7.2 In 2007, Ofsted inspected four of the SP venues. All four venues received a rating of good or satisfactory (Ofsted ratings are: outstanding, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory and inadequate). An action plan will be drawn up to ensure all recommendations made by Ofsted are implemented in advance of 2008. Key issues arising from the inspections include increasing equal opportunities, and equipment in the form of more books and dressing up clothes.

1.8 Visits to Centres

1.8.1 The Mayor formally visited three SP venues on 9 August 2007, judging competitions and meeting children. The Mayor made a further visit to award Blue Planet prizes to children who had entered a special competition linked to the Blue Planet performance.

1.8.2 The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts and the Chairman of the Children and Youth Advisory Board also visited a number of venues and may wish to comment at the meeting.

1.9 Playscheme Plus

1.9.1 Since 2004, the Council has offered Playscheme Plus, which is available to children with additional needs or learning disabilities who have 1:1 support at school. A total of 37 children took part in the scheme in 2007.

1.9.2 In addition to Playscheme Plus, a further 81 children took part in the SP this year through referrals from KCC's Children and Families Unit. This reflects the inclusive nature of the SP for all residents of the Borough.

1.9.3 A grant of £1,500 was received from East Malling Children's Fund Partnership so that 40 children in East Malling could attend the SP free of charge.

1.10 Staffing

1.10.1 75 staff were required to operate the 2007 SP. Whilst this level of staffing was achieved, it is important to note that it would not have been possible to recruit any more staff to operate any additional directly provided sites.

1.10.2 Each member of staff was asked to complete a survey at the end of the SP. The results will be considered in advance of next year's scheme. The following comments were received:

- 90% of staff felt levels of support were good;
- 90% felt that the quality of equipment was excellent/good;
- 92% were interested in working on the scheme in 2008.

1.10.3 Rates of pay were considered to be satisfactory by the staff, and are comparable to other childcare providers. It is, therefore, suggested that rates of pay be increased in line with the Council's pay award in 2008.

1.11 Parish Councils

1.11.1 Members will be aware that this Council funds the first three weeks of the SP in full, with the fourth week funded in partnership with local parish councils. The parish council contribution is a one-off payment to support the fourth week of the scheme, and is not based on attendance levels.

1.12 Proposed Improvements/Changes

1.12.1 The Youth & Play Development Officer has identified a number of proposed improvements/changes for the SP in 2008 as follows:

- Evaluation of the transport arrangements to improve efficiency.
- Renaming of staff job titles in line with industry standards.
- Establishing a database of staff qualifications sorted by site and updated annually as required by Ofsted.
- Additional staff uniform to be provided.
- Re-examine the content and format of the SP brochure taking into account postage costs and display space considerations.
- Advanced booking date to be given to Social Services for their referrals.
- Playscheme Plus to be restricted to residents of the borough only.
- Equipment delivery and collection to be reviewed to increase efficiency.

1.13 Legal Implications

1.13.1 The Council has powers to undertake this activity by virtue of Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972. Under the requirement of the Children Act (1999) and in accordance with the Council's Child Protection Policy all staff working on the programme were subject to an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check no older than 12 months.

1.14 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.14.1 The cost of the 2007 SP will be met from the 2007/08 Youth & Play Development revenue budget.

1.15 Risk Assessment

1.15.1 A risk assessment of the venues was undertaken prior to the start of the scheme, in liaison with the Council's Health & Safety and Insurance Officers. Each of the facilities used produced adequate insurance certificates and risk assessments.

1.16 Conclusions/Recommendations

1.16.1 The 2007 SP was a success and proved to be popular with both parents and staff.

1.16.2 The partnership venues continue to be a positive initiative, reducing the burden on the Council to recruit qualified staff.

1.16.3 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that:

- 1) the SP be operated in 2008;
- 2) an on-line payment system be developed in advance of the 2008 SP;
- 3) the 2008 SP charges be reported to the next meeting of this Board;
- 4) the Council should not directly operate more than eight SP venues, and if suitable partners can be found this number should be reduced;
- 5) recommendations made by Ofsted be developed into an Action Plan and be implemented in advance of the 2008 SP;
- 6) staff pay rates in 2008 be increased in line with the Council's annual pay award; and
- 7) subject to Member comment at the meeting the proposed improvements/changes identified by the Youth & Play Development Officer be implemented.

The Chief Leisure Officer confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendations, if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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