

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 January 2016

Report of the Review Panel

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 REVIEW OF HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW PANEL

To consider the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel regarding the Activate, Y2Crew and Summer Playscheme programmes and to agree recommendations to the Cabinet.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 An informal scrutiny panel was established to undertake a review of the Council's three Holiday Activity Programmes: Activate; Y2Crew and the Summer Playscheme. Two meetings of the Panel have been held and the reports made to each of these meetings are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. These two reports provide full details of each scheme, the key issues that have been the subject of this review, and the options for change which have been evaluated.

1.1.2 As Members will be aware, the Council's current financial position requires savings of £1.4M to be made by April 2018. However, further additional savings will now be needed following the local government financial settlement for 2016/17. This could require a further £700,000 of savings to be identified. Against this challenging background, the review of the holiday activity programmes has focused on:

- Whether these programmes should continue to be provided and funded by the Council;
- The scope for encouraging other providers, including Parish Councils, to take on these activities independently;
- What continuing support, if any, should be provided to enable families on lower incomes to access the programmes via the Council's Leisure Pass Scheme.

1.1.3 As set out in the Panel reports, detailed financial information has been presented to enable various options for change to be evaluated. Every effort has been made to present as accurate figures and costings as possible. However, it has been necessary to give estimated costs in some circumstances and so the figures quoted in the panel reports, particularly in relation to potential savings, should be treated as a broad estimate for Members to consider rather than precise figures. For example, there may be scope to identify further savings related to central and other indirect costs related to these programmes once the proposed changes are implemented.

1.2 Recommendations of the Panel

(a) Activate Programme

1.2.1 The Panel agreed that the Borough Council should, from the Summer 2016, withdraw from the direct provision of this programme and instead help market and promote the wide range of schemes already being provided by other parties. The Panel was concerned, however, that support for those unable to afford the full costs of these programmes should be retained and that a provisional sum of £3,000 be set aside to cover such costs. As set in the Panel report of the 5th January 2016, this change would generate annual savings of approximately £15,000.

(b) Y2Crew Programme

1.2.2 The Panel concluded that, given the focus of this programme on the provision of diversionary activities for young people with more challenging behaviours and the low cost of the scheme to the Council (£1700 pa) including overheads), the programme should be retained. However, as its delivery is dependent upon continued funding from other partners, should that funding be reduced, the Council would need to review its own support.

(c) The Summer Playscheme

1.2.3 A number of options for change were considered by the Panel regarding the future delivery of the Summer Playscheme. Details of the options considered are set out in Appendix 2. In summary, the Panel agreed that, of the three main options presented, Option B was to be preferred. This is for the Borough Council to withdraw from the direct provision of the scheme and seek to encourage other providers, some of whom already deliver schemes in Tonbridge and Malling but who receive funding from the Council for this, to undertake this role independently.

1.2.4 The Panel heard that positive, early discussions with these providers had taken place which suggested a keenness of their part to explore this option in more detail. A further verbal update on progress will be made at the meeting. In addition, all relevant Parish Councils have been consulted regarding this review. Two formal responses have been received to date both of which record support

for the retention of their local Playschemes, to continue to fund the third week of the scheme, but also a willingness to work with alternative providers if required.

- 1.2.5 As with the Activate Programme, the Panel were concerned to ensure on-going financial support for Leisure Pass holders was provided but also wished the level of subsidy which currently is offered to be reviewed. On that basis, it was agreed that the concession currently applying to the Activate programme (50% reduction per child per week) should now be adopted for the Summer Playscheme. As set out in Appendix 2, our estimated annual cost of this subsidy, assuming current levels of attendance by leisure pass holders is maintained, would be approximately £18,000 pa. Given the Council's current financial position, the Panel agreed that leisure pass support should be limited to the current 12 Playscheme centres only and that this level of support should be subject to a further review in the future. For example, this could then to take account of changes to the benefits system and the planned introduction of Universal Credit potentially to focus future support more on those families with the lowest incomes.
- 1.2.6 An option to extend the current Summer Playscheme to all-day provision was evaluated but rejected on cost grounds. Similarly, a further option to retain direct provision of the three Playschemes for Trench, Snodland and East Malling was also not favoured. However, it was agreed that these three centres should be provided in 2016 by the Borough Council if discussions with other providers are not able to deliver these.
- 1.2.7 Overall, therefore, the preferred option to move to indirect provision of the Summer Playscheme but with on-going support for leisure pass holders (at the reduced rate) would generate annual savings of approximately £47,000.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 There will be on-going Council responsibilities relating to health and safety and safeguarding if the Playscheme programme is delivered by external providers but which are endorsed by the Borough Council. Our estimated future staff costs take account of these responsibilities.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 As set out in this report

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 As set out in this report.

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.6.1 As the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are now making a formal decision on these issues, an equalities impact assessment (EQIA) has been prepared to

assist Members with giving due regard to their responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010)

- 1.6.2 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 1.6.3 The Equality Impact Assessment relates to the Summer Playscheme only. This is because users of Activate and Y2Crew should be able to continue to take part in schemes provided by other parties. Children with mental and physical disabilities are supported by 'Playscheme Plus' which provides them with 1-2-1 support during their time at the Playscheme. In 2015, there were a total of 24 Playscheme Plus attendances by 11 children. A move to indirect provision may place such children at a disadvantage when compared with children who do not require 1-2-1 support, who may be able to participate in activities with other providers. The full EQIA is attached as Appendix 3.
- 1.6.4 The EQIA sets out four options to address this issue. Abandoning the Playscheme Plus programme would have a detrimental impact on current and future users and is not recommended. Therefore, to meet the future costs of Playscheme Plus, it is recommended that, based on the number of users in 2015, we provide for a maximum of 10 children at a cost of c£6,000 pa plus overheads. We would work with external providers of the scheme to encourage them to continue to provide Playscheme Plus as part of their customer offer (although this ultimately would be their decision) and also explore opportunities to share the costs of this which might then reduce the Council's own financial contribution.

1.7 Recommendations

- 1.7.1 That the following recommendations of the Holiday Activity Programme Scrutiny Panel **BE ENDORSED** and **BE COMMENDED** to the Cabinet:
- (1) Withdraw from the direct provision of the Activate Programme but set aside a sum of £3,000 to provide support for leisure pass holders at the current rate to access programmes provided by other agencies;
 - (2) Retain the Borough Council's financial support for the Y2Crew programme subject to other partners providing continued financial contributions;
 - (3) Withdraw from the direct provision of the Summer Playscheme from Summer 2016 and seek the support of external providers to take over these schemes but subject to the following:

- a) Leisure Pass concessions for Playscheme attendance initially be amended to provide a 50% reduction per child per week;
- b) A sum of £18,000 be set aside to provide continued support for Leisure Pass holders to access schemes at the current 12 sites;
- c) a future review of the level of support given to leisure pass holders be undertaken in the light of the Council's financial position;
- d) retention of directly provided Playschemes in the priority communities of Trench, East Malling and Snodland for 2016 if other providers are unable to deliver these for that year.

(4) That the consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty be noted and that, to mitigate any impacts on children with disabilities who require 1-2-1 support, financial provision be made as set out at para 1.6.4 in the report. A review of the equality impact assessment will need to be completed and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within one year.

Background papers:

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Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

On behalf of the Management Team