

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

INFORMAL SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

25 November 2015

Report of the Management Team

1 REVIEW OF HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

To set out, for discussion, the key issues to be addressed as part of the review and suggested areas for further evaluation.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 As set out in the Scoping Report for this review, endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15 September 2015, this review focuses on the future provision of the three holiday activity programmes for young people: the summer play scheme, the Activate programme and the Y2Crew programme.
- 1.1.2 All three programmes have now been running for a number of years. Reviews of the programme have been undertaken previously which have resulted in significant changes including the introduction of charging and a reduction of the summer play scheme from 4 weeks to 3.
- 1.1.3 Budgetary information for all three schemes is set out in Annex 1 to this report. Members will be aware of the significant financial challenges now being faced by the Council. A Savings & Transformation Strategy has recently been approved by the Cabinet which identifies a number of strands to achieve the budget savings including a review of discretionary spend and fees & charges. Our holiday activity programme is one such area of discretionary spend. Two key factors now require a fundamental review of those three programmes:
- The Borough Council's current financial position and the need to identify at least £1.4M of savings over the current three year period as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy; and,
 - The emergence of a range of other providers of holiday and activity programmes in the Borough which has created a wider market place for these services.
- 1.1.4 The purpose of the first meeting of the review panel is to set out the background information for each of the three activity programmes and for the panel to agree what options for change should be considered. A second meeting of the panel will be held to look at those options in more detail and arrive at some agreed

recommendations to make to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting to be held on 26th January 2016.

1.2 Suggested Issues for Review

1.2.1 The Scoping Report identified the following issues:

- value for money and the sustainability of the schemes in their current form when weighed against the financial landscape and competing priorities;
- the overall objectives of the three programmes and the extent to which these should be regarded either as a universal service for all, one targeted to certain areas of need, or perhaps more closely linked to other Council objectives such as health improvement and community development;
- the current market place for activity programmes and how users could be signposted to schemes operated by the private and voluntary sectors as an possible alternative to direct provision;
- the potential to make greater use of information technology in the administration and marketing of the schemes; and,
- feedback from the users of each programme (both parents and young people) and the views of partner organisations to help inform the above issues and choices.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Holiday Activity Programmes

1.3.1 The aims and objectives of the three programmes have not fundamentally changed since they were originally introduced. For example, the summer play scheme's objective is to *“provide children throughout the Borough, between the ages of 4-11 years, with an opportunity to enjoy supervised play activities during the school holidays.”* Historically, the aims and objectives of our holiday programmes can be linked to various government initiatives including encouraging sport and physical activities, securing positive activities for children and underpinned by various strategies for youth, leisure and culture including the Leisure & Arts Strategy.

1.4 Overall Review of Each of the Three Programmes

(a) Activate Programme

1.4.1 The Activate programme was introduced in 2004 and sought to extend the scope of the existing play scheme to provide an activity programme for young people aged 8 to 16 years. It runs in the Easter and summer holidays and a wide range of activities are currently provided covering sports, outdoor activities, creative arts and life skills. In the summer 2015 programme, a total of 196 young people attended activities. There was positive feedback from users of the 2015 programme with 100% of parents being satisfied and 68% indicating their children would be more likely to

take part in further activities all year round, although this possibly may reflect the relative low cost of the scheme to families. A schedule of take up and costs is attached as Annex 2.

- 1.4.2 The role of the Borough Council is to organise, book and manage all activities. This includes hiring instructors, sourcing suitable venues and paying rent, providing an activate member of staff (casual staff we employ in Easter and Summer for this programme who are DBS checked), creating brochures and managing all bookings and payments.
- 1.4.3 The estimated net cost to the Council of the Activate Programme in 2015/16 is £30,000 comprising net direct costs of £20,000 and indirect overheads of £10,000.
- 1.4.4 One issue for the Panel to consider is whether, given the Council's current financial position and the need to make savings related to its discretionary services, the Council should now withdraw from the direct provision of the Activate programme and encourage other agencies and providers to continue to provide and develop their own activity programmes for this age group.
- 1.4.5 A key issue, should the programme be delivered by other organisations, is the affordability of these programmes to those on lower incomes. At the present time, Leisure Pass holders receive a discount on the cost of activities and the Borough Council then reimburses the various providers to offset the discount. In the summer of 2015, a total of 359 bookings were made for activities run by TMBC; of these 83 were for Leisure Pass holders (23% of bookings). In addition, 313 bookings were received by Carotty Wood (an outward bound centre in Tonbridge) of which 56 were for Leisure Pass holders (18% of bookings). For these, the Leisure Pass holder pays 50% of the cost direct to Carotty Wood and TMBC pays the remainder. The cost of this in 2015/16 totalled £790 (full year). If Members are minded to agree to withdraw from the direct delivery of this programme, an option would be to retain an element of funding to enable the discount to Leisure Pass holders to be retained for activities at Carotty Wood thus keeping the cost affordable to those who may be unable to meet the full costs.
- 1.4.6 The Borough Council could also help promote the various activity programmes for teenagers provided by other agencies.
- 1.4.7 As noted in the scoping report for this review, the programme for Easter 2016 will take place as usual given the need for forward planning to be commenced and thus any agreed changes to the programme as a result of this review will be implemented in time for the summer 2016 holiday period.

(b) Y2 Crew

- 1.4.8 Y2 Crew is a more specialist support programme run in partnership with KCC Early Help. A number of partners including the Kent Police, Youth Offending Service, the Community Safety Partnership and Kent County Council refer young people to the programme who then benefit from a range of diversionary activities,

although in recent years the scheme was opened to anyone to attend without a referral. This has had the benefit of generating additional income to offset the costs of the scheme relating to referred participants.

- 1.4.9 The estimated net cost to the Council of Y2 Crew in 2015/16 was £1,700 comprising direct costs of £1,300 and indirect overheads of £400.
- 1.4.10 The programme is run at a relatively low cost to the Borough Council due to the partnership nature of the scheme and has a number of additional benefits including positive engagement with those who may have been involved in low level crime and anti-social behaviour, building confidence of young people in need and raising aspirations.
- 1.4.11 The key issue for the Borough Council to consider is the extent to which the programme continues to be funded by other partners. Despite the benefits of the programme, should partner funding be significantly reduced in future years, then it would not be appropriate for the Borough Council, given our financial circumstances, to pick up this lost funding just to maintain the programme.

(c) Summer Play Scheme

- 1.4.12 The summer play scheme runs for a three week period currently at 12 venues across the borough, catering for children between 4 and 11 years. 5 of the 12 venues are provided directly by the Borough Council whilst the remaining 7 are provided by local partners. For these venues, the Borough Council pays the partners to provide the service and cover their staff costs and also pays for venue hire and equipment costs. Further financial and attendance information is set out at Annex 3. For 2015, there was a total of 1416 attendances of which 504 were leisure pass holders.
- 1.4.13 The estimated net cost to the Council of the summer play scheme in 2015/16 is £120,000 comprising net direct costs of £80,000 and indirect overheads of £40,000.
- 1.4.14 Approximately 55 members of staff (mainly temporary) are employed to work on the play scheme. The programme also includes Playscheme Plus for children with additional needs. Playscheme Plus offers one-to-one staff support to those children who receive that level of support at school.
- 1.4.15 Feedback from the users of the play scheme is very positive. 100% of parents that responded to a survey are satisfied with the quality of play scheme provision and 94% of parents felt that their children were safe. 99% of parents also felt their child enjoyed themselves at our play scheme setting due to the range of activities and the staff that we employed. The two main reasons for parents to book their children on to our play scheme were the proximity of local venues and value for money.

- 1.4.16 Administration of the scheme has, however, become more time-consuming and more challenging over recent years with the regulation of Early Years provisions moving from local Social Services to Ofsted. The level of expectation and scrutiny has increased over recent years with a new Early Years Framework being introduced in 2014 and a new Ofsted inspection process commencing from September 2015. Resources will need to be maintained to ensure all the required regulations are met and the relevant policies, processes, training and staff are fully undertaken.
- 1.4.17 The summer play scheme remains popular with users with some 390 children attending the 2015/16 programme each week. However, across the Borough as a whole, this represents only 1% of all households and only around 5% of eligible children in the Borough attended. Whilst some venues had high attendance figures, some had lower attendance rates and overall attendance was 80% of available capacity within the scheme across the three weeks. Detailed figures for the 2015/16 scheme are attached as Annex 3.
- 1.4.18 Currently, the scheme is heavily subsidised by the Borough Council. At present, the average charge per child per hour is £1.14. In order to cover the full costs of the play scheme (including administration and overheads), the average charge would have to increase more than seven-fold to £8.01 per hour. However, if the same balance of discounts for Leisure Pass holders was also retained, that would further increase the costs for one week for a full-paying child to £13.65 per hour.
- 1.4.19 It is clear that the play scheme in its current form could not be made to be self-financing through a review of charges alone as, to break even, the charges required would be excessive and unaffordable, particularly when compared to programmes operated by other providers.
- 1.4.20 The summer activity programme including the play scheme is managed by the Council's Youth & Play Development Officer. This post is currently established at 3 days a week, but the post holder has been working an additional 2 days to deliver the activity programmes. The 2 additional days are only funded up to 31 May 2016. Making no changes to the play scheme and the other activities would require these 2 days to be funded and would therefore represent growth in the Council's budget.
- 1.4.21 As with the Activate programme, there are now many other providers of activity programmes for the under 12s in the Borough which also covering Easter and half-term periods as well as over the summer period. Whilst not replicating the Council's unique scheme exactly, they could provide alternative provision for current users of the play scheme across a range of ages, locations and duration. A schedule of other providers is attached at Annex 4.
- 1.4.22 As noted above, 7 of the current venues are operated by partner organisations. Parish Councils contribute to the overall costs of their local play scheme by funding the third week of the three week programme. It may be possible to

support a transition for them to run these sites independently and thus reduce costs to the Council but maintain local provision. There may also be scope for Parish Councils some of whom currently assist with the delivery of their local play scheme to be encouraged to continue to provide their local programmes without the same level of financial support from the Borough Council. As part of this review, the Borough Council will need to liaise with these Parish Councils over future delivery as well as engage with other delivery partners.

(d) Recommendations and Next Steps

1.4.23 It is therefore suggested that, subject to any initial views of the Panel on this issue, that the following further work is undertaken and reported to the next meeting of this Panel:

1. The Borough Council liaises with the relevant partner organisations (including relevant Parish Councils) involved in the delivery of the three activity programmes to explore the potential for different ways of working.
2. Some options for change are drawn up for the Panel to consider in more detail at its next meeting, for example, withdrawal of one or more of the schemes, a greater focus on targeting areas most in need in place of a universal approach, and/or reviewing the levels of fees charged and range of concessions available.

Background papers:

Nil

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On behalf of the Management Team

Annex 1 Budgetary Provisions: Holiday Activity Programmes

	Total £	Playscheme £	Activate £	Y2 Crew £	Other* £
Temporary Staff	42,020	42,020			
Salaries**	36,880	27,547	6,749	287	2,298
Total - Operational Staff Costs	78,900	69,567	6,749	287	2,298
Rent	9,750	9,750			
Hire of Transport	1,000	1,000			
Purchases - Equipment & Materials	5,200	5,200			
Printing & Stationery	3,500	3,500			
Shows & Performances	3,500	3,500			
Partnership Fees	30,500	30,500			
Telephones	150	150			
Registration & Inspection of Centres	300	300			
Activate	23,500		23,500		
Youth Development Initiatives	9,000			1,000	8,000
Total - Payments to Third Parties	86,400	53,900	23,500	1,000	8,000
Fees & Charges					
Playscheme Registration Fees	(31,150)	(31,150)			
Activate	(9,400)		(9,400)		
Contributions from Other Bodies					
Playscheme - Parish Councils	(12,050)	(12,050)			
Total - Income	(52,600)	(43,200)	(9,400)	0	0
	112,700	80,267	20,849	1,287	10,298
Central Salaries & Administration	12,950	9,673	2,370	101	807
Information Technology Expenses	8,100	6,050	1,482	63	505
Departmental Administrative Expenses	31,700	23,678	5,801	247	1,975
Total - Support Staff Costs & Overheads	52,750	39,400	9,653	411	3,286
	165,450	119,667	30,502	1,698	13,584

Annex 2: Summary of Activate, Summer 2015

Number of activities run by TMBC	30
Total capacity	440
Total attendances	359 (82% capacity, ranging from 33% where 4 children were booked onto an activity for up to 12, up to 100% capacity).
Number of Leisure Pass attendances	83
Total income to TMBC	£6099
Number of activities run by Carrotty Wood	35 (excluding their holiday club, for which statistics are not available)
Total capacity	405
Total attendances	313 (78% capacity, ranging from 25% up to 100%)
Number of Leisure Pass attendances	56
Total income to TMBC	£0
Total income to Carrotty Wood requires TMBC staff involvement)	£4965, of which £425 was paid by TMBC to subsidise Leisure Pass holders (administration for LP holders)
Costs of direct staffing for Activate activities	£8222
Venue hire costs	£1429
DBS checks	£39
Print of brochures, forms etc	£4000
Total income to TMBC is therefore	£6099
Costs payable by TMBC	£14,115 plus Administration costs including staff directly involved in the scheme; other costs associated with the back-office functioning (IT, telephones, postage, support staff etc).

Annex 3: Summary of Play Scheme, 2015

Venue	Provider	Total capacity over period	Total attendances *		Leisure Pass attendances	Income before discounts, £	Venue hire, £	TMBC staff			Payment to provider
			Number	% capacity				Centre & Deputy manager	Play workers **	Costs modelled	
Borough Green	TMBC	120	99	83%	62	2280	938	2	3	2,747	n/a
Leybourne	TMBC	144	106	74%	45	2986	750	2	4	4,103	
Walderslade	TMBC	96	71	74%	9	2539	530	2	2	2,601	
Hillview	TMBC	96	83	86%	22	2676	1,000	2	2	2,256	
Woodlands Tonbridge	TMBC	216	163	75%	52	5031	975	2	7	5,405	
Aylesford	Poppy pre-school	72	77	107%	42	1932	0	Not applicable – staffing provided by external provider.			3,200
East Malling	Kent Creches	96	90	94%	68	1776	1250				7,275
Hadlow	Barnies	96	54	56%	32	1290	800				5,000
Snodland	Rainbows	144	140	97%	63	3854	525				21,055
West Malling	Rainbows	120	116	97%	46	3351	540				
Hildenborough	Rainbows	144	99	69%	33	3020	825				
Tonbridge Baptist Church	Rainbows	72	39	54%	30	756	1150				
DISCOUNTS (excludes Leisure Pass discounts)						- 5,479					
Total		1416	1137	80%	504	26,012	9,283			17,109	36,530

* The maximum capacity is based on a ratio of 1 member of staff to 8 children, excluding Play Scheme Plus attendees (who receive 1:1 support). It is therefore possible to have a greater than 100% attendance by having Play Scheme Plus attendees.

** Excludes Play Scheme Plus staff, who are employed on a per-week basis (other staff are for the entire 3 weeks).

Total number of children attending Play Scheme 2015: 639

Total number of Leisure Pass children: 231

Other costs include: New play equipment (c £3,500 this year); DBS checks for directly employed staff £900; Ofsted fees £650; Marketing £4,000; Administration costs including temporary staff and staff directly involved in the scheme; other costs associated with the back-office functioning (IT, telephones, postage, support staff etc).

Annex 4 – Alternative Activity Programme Providers

Provider / details	Location	Times	Price	Any other details
<p>Tmactive Holiday Club 5-12 yr olds Range of sporting activities, plus swimming and soft play sessions. New holiday club – includes half terms.</p>	<p>Angel Centre – Tonbridge Tonbridge Pool Larkfield Leisure Centre</p>	<p>Various options – Full days, half days and two hour drop ins Runs for all school holidays excluding Christmas.</p>	<p>£25.80 per day £18.50 for Leisure Pass holders</p>	<p>Early drop off (8:30) and late collection offered (5pm - £2.50 or 6pm - £3.50)</p>
<p>Mrs B's 4-11 yr olds – activities include art, craft, cooking, outside games, messy play, wii, play station, themed activities. Also covers half terms.</p>	<p>West Malling</p>	<p>7:30am – 6:30pm or various options available 9-3, or mornings /afternoons only. Lunch provided. Runs throughout all school holidays.</p>	<p>£28 per full day (advance booking) or £33 on the day.</p>	<p>In addition to the holiday clubs, also runs day care (pre-school age), breakfast and after school clubs (currently expanding this service to include Offham). Will accept childcare vouchers.</p>
<p>Steps to School Age 4-11 daily activities, arts, crafts, games, cooking, camp building etc</p>	<p>Borough Green</p>	<p>8am – 6pm Runs throughout all school holidays.</p>	<p>Full day £27.05 Half day £14.86 Includes evening meal, drinks and snacks.</p>	<p>All year round, all holidays. Also operates breakfast and after school clubs.</p>
<p>Recre8 4-11 yr olds – range of sporting activities – archery, climbing, swimming, scuba diving, dance, football, fencing,</p>	<p>Tonbridge school</p>	<p>10 – 12:30 and 1:30-4 Early (8:30) and late (5:30) clubs available (for additional £5 per child per week). Runs throughout the Easter holidays and for</p>	<p>Approx. £105+ per week, per child (but depends on the courses booked).</p>	<p>In addition to the holiday clubs, year round after school clubs also available.</p>

Provider / details	Location	Times	Price	Any other details
badminton etc. also pottery, craft, cake decorating, drama, photography, movie maker, detectives, wildlife etc etc		3 weeks of the summer holidays		
Barracudas (4 ½ - 16 yrs) 80+ activities including sports, crafts and creative arts.	Tonbridge Grammar School	8.30 – 5.30 standard day (early drop off 8am and late collection 6pm (£3 extra for each). Runs during summer holiday for 4 weeks.	Approx. £139 per week for 2015 (advance booking – prices increase as places are filled)	summer holidays only – runs additional camps in Sevenoaks (Easter and Summer)
Parish church St Peter and St Paul. Tonbridge Baptist Church St Stephens Church 4-11 year olds, activities, crafts, games, drama and bible teaching	Tonbridge	9.45 – 12 approx Runs for 1 week of the summer holidays	Approx. £5 per week / a donation	
Clocktower Childcare – arts, crafts, sporting activities. 2- 11 years	Snodland	Offer half days and full days. Runs for all school holidays excluding Christmas.	£3.60 per hour. Approx £189 per child, per week for 5 full days.	Also offer breakfast and late club.
Superstars Holiday Club – includes arts, crafts, sports, adventure walks, minibeast, circus skills, drumming, judo, safety classes etc	Maidstone Leisure Centre	27 July – 3 Sept. 8:30 – 5:30 Runs for all school holidays excluding Christmas	Full day - £20.95 Half day £12.95 Early booking £16.95	
YMCA ages 5-11	Maidstone	Runs throughout all school	Full day £14.50	

Provider / details	Location	Times	Price	Any other details
		holidays	Half day - £9.50 Breakfast club (8am-9am) £2.50 Movie club (4pm – 6pm) £5	
Stage Summer School (4-13 yrs)	Hillview School	27 July – 31 July 3 Aug – 7 Aug	£70 per week	Two weeks of musical theatre, singing, dancing etc
Summer School	Wrotham School	Runs for 1 week of the summer holidays.		Offers academic activities and sports to boost confidence for 5 days
Dawn to Dusk (4-11 yrs) Arts, baking, sports, themed activities etc.	Larkfield	7am – 7pm Runs throughout all school holidays	Approx. £15 half day, £30 full day	
Busy Bees (Holiday Club)	Kings Hill (Discovery School)			Also does the after school club
Premier Sport – runs holiday clubs 4-11 yrs (includes half terms).	Wrotham (St Georges Primary)	9am – 3.30pm Runs throughout all school holidays	£15 per day Or £10 half day for 4 year olds. 15% sibling discount.	Sports activities – variety across the week – dodgeball, football, basketball, hockey, tennis, rounders, fencing, archery and daily coaches' challenge. Will accept childcare vouchers.