

# METROPOLITIAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

## YOUTH SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 10<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2006

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

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#### HEAD OF SERVICE REPORT

##### 1.0 **Executive Summary**

1.1 This report presents to the Committee an overview of the work undertaken by the Youth Service during the period August-December 2005. The Committee is asked to note this report.

##### 2.0 **Service Developments**

2.1 Eileen Sheppard, Community Liaison Officer, retired from the Service in December. Eileen had worked for the Service for over 30 years, beginning her career within play work. Eileen will be missed by her colleagues, who wish her well for her retirement.

2.2 The Youth Service inspection report was published in December. The Service received an overall grade of good. In the main findings Ofsted stated "Wirral has a good youth service and provides good value for money". Staff throughout the Youth Service worked extremely hard at all stages of the inspection process and the good report directly resulted from the contributions made by the whole of the Service.

2.3 Wirral was successful in being short listed for Beacon Status for Positive Youth Engagement (in community and democratic process). This resulted in the Beacon status assessment team visiting Wirral in November. At the November event in Wallasey Town Hall a number of presentations were made by young people, elected members and senior officers. The next stage in the Beacon process will involve Wirral giving a short presentation to the advisory panel in London later in January 2006.

##### 3.0 **Wirral Outreach Team**

3.1 The locality based outreach projects have continued to provide young people with opportunities for personal and social development. The projects have also contributed to the community safety agenda, often working with other agencies such as the Fire Service and the Police.

3.2 As part of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, Wallasey Young People's Project, Alcohol Workers from Response and Wirral Brook staff have worked together to address risk-taking behaviour in the NRF area. This initiative has made use of the expertise of the different workers to maximise the use of staffing resources and the benefit to young people.

3.3 Birkenhead Youth Action Project has been working with the "Goths" who congregate on the roundabout at Central Station and there are plans for their involvement in a media project. These young people have also been instrumental in

the environmental improvements that have been carried out on the roundabout. Successful diversionary work, in the form of sports sessions at Grange Road West Sports Centre, has been undertaken with young people who were creating a nuisance in the vicinity of Borough Road. In Rock Ferry, young people's artwork is displayed on banners along Old Chester Road.

- 3.4 Deeside Young People's Project is working with Endeavour on Prenton Dell to address the lack of facilities for young people. The youth workers have established a Members' Committee to identify not only the needs of young people but also their role and their responsibilities in the development of provision. Fender Youth Action Project, which undertakes streetwork on Beechwood and Ballentyne Estates, has enabled young people to access the facilities at the Recreation Centre to play football and to participate in groupwork. One young woman is working towards her YMCA Youth Work Foundation Certificate. Young people from the North End Young People's Project have participated in a dance project and have been ice-skating. The youth workers have worked closely with the Police to address anti social behaviour in local hot spots. Young people involved in a Mersey Travel initiative are working on a project to present young people in a positive manner.
- 3.5 Young people from Noctorum are being supported to access sports facilities at Grange Road West and at Ridgeway High School. The appointment of the Neighbourhood Youth Worker has enabled the work of the South Wirral Young People's Project to be expanded to cover New Ferry, Bebington, Bromborough and Eastham. Good working relationships have been established with the Police and the Fire Service who had a football match against the young people. As well as attending a workshop about homelessness, the young people have been bowling. Twenty young people from the Wallasey Young People's Project decorated a number of residential homes in the area, winning praise from residents and their relatives.

#### 4.0 **Birkenhead and Bebington Area Team**

- 4.1 All the Clubs in the Area Team were busy during the autumn period. The work increasingly focuses upon the delivery of work which will result in a recorded or/and accredited outcome and the team is hopeful that the targets that have been set for each unit will be achieved.
- 4.2 The end of October saw the retirement of Graham Ashdown, Principal Youth Worker, Pensby Youth Club, who has worked for Wirral Youth Service for over 21 years and worked with young people since a young volunteer himself, 45 years ago. His involvement with the Service has been considerable and his contribution will be missed.
- 4.3 Health issues feature high on the majority of unit's agendas. Bromborough Youth Club has concentrated upon teenage pregnancy prevention and sexual health with several sessions delivered by the Brook Advisory Service. This included the care of the "think it over" baby doll.
- 4.4 Charing Cross Neighbourhood Youth Centre have concentrated upon healthy eating and run a project on water safety that included visits to the coast guard stations. Transport safety continues to be the theme for members of the Alcohol Outreach Team who are continuing work in partnership with Mersey travel to meet

and educate young people whilst travelling on public transport. A DVD produced by young people will be released shortly.

- 4.5 Many young people are working as Millennium volunteers and towards the young citizen's award. These awards are extremely useful as a transitional link from being a club member to a volunteer.

#### 5.0 **Wallasey and Deeside Area Team**

- 5.1 The Wallasey/Deeside Area Team have offered a varied and enjoyable service to young people.

- 5.2 There are now a core group of regular young people attending Allendale Youth Club. Most recently young people produced a Young Persons Charter for the unit and are currently planning their New Year programme.

- 5.3 Belvidere Youth Centre has an extremely active members committee, which this year, has concentrated on raising money to develop a "chill out" room.

- 5.4 Members at Fender Youth Club have been developing their skills using drama to explore a range of issues. Young people from Leasowe Youth Club took part in the "big thank you" and provided a wartime meal and entertainment to a group of senior citizens from the Leasowe estate.

- 5.5 Young people from Moreton Youth Club took part in a pilot for Health Promoting Youth Settings and have achieved their Bronze award as a unit. Seacombe Youth Club has enjoyed a visit to Sahir House in Liverpool for World AIDS Day.

- 5.6 The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Open Centre has moved to a new venue, where they continue to provide an open access to the award to young people across the whole of the Borough. In addition to its Duke of Edinburgh's Award work St Mary's Youth Club also offers the opportunity for young people to run its special needs night. Over 20 young people provide a range of activities, planned and delivered by them with the support of the staff.

#### 6.0 **Young People's Participation**

Over the past few months participation work has involved the following:

- 6.1 **Youth evaluators** - a number of youth forum members have undergone training with the Youth Federation. This training enables them to accompany youth service managers on monitoring visits to youth units. The Youth Evaluators have the necessary skills to assess the youth work being carried out with reference to Every Child Matters outcomes, Ofsted criteria and national performance indicators.
- 6.2 **Interviewers** - Young people have successfully completed a training course which enables them to assist with interviewing staff in the Youth Service. They have already completed one set of interviews for the Youth Federation and successfully appointed a member of staff.
- 6.3 **Youth Forums** - the numbers of young people involved in Area Youth Forums has increased this year and young people have had some success with regards

involvement in the skateboard campaign, lights and play area for Beechwood, and all four Forums had a question and answer session with Steve Maddox. Young people from each Area Youth Forum have been recruited for Connect-uz, the Connexions Service advisory group.

- 6.4 **Members committees** - A member's committee pack is being developed, the first section of which has been sent to all units in Wirral, and this has already resulted in an increase in the number of units now setting up members committees.
- 6.5 **Youth Conference** - this year's youth conference was on the theme of participation. A joint committee of young people and workers planned the day and the young people on the committee facilitated the whole event. Young people were also involved in delivering workshops and providing entertainment. The highlight of the day is a 'hot seating' session with officers and other VIPs.
- 6.6 **UKYP** – In October Wirral held its annual UKYP elections. 60 candidates stood for election and between them received over 4000 electronic votes. The successful MYP's and 4 deputies came from 5 different schools in Wirral.
- 6.7 **PWN-NW** (Participation Workers Network-North West) – This forum has been set up initially as a meeting for UKYP workers. Currently Wirral have a representative on the steering group and are involved in developing a glossary of terms in readiness for the new children's services.

#### 7.0 **Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts**

- 7.1 A full programme of dance, drama, music, new media, peer education, training and technical theatre continues to attract over 200 young people through in-house and outreach projects.

Highlights from the autumn include:

- 7.2 **'Peer Led' Dance Sessions in Schools** - Young dancers aged 16-19 have been trained to co-facilitate dance sessions in over ten primary and secondary schools. Following the success of this work a further 10 schools have commissioned similar schemes of work from January.
- 7.3 **Half-term Training Residential** – Fifteen young people took part in four days of arts training activities at a camping barn in Lancashire. The group planned and fundraised for the residential and participants were enabled to explore the themes of Every Child Matters through dance, music and physical theatre.
- 7.4 **The BTEC in Peer Education** - Run by WYT is progressing well and twenty young people have now completed their first module and are building up their portfolios of practice and evidence.
- 7.5 **Peer Education Theatre Company** – The Company has been commissioned by Wirral Brook to devise and perform a drama piece about the health risks related to drugs and alcohol. The piece is being used as a stimulus in training for professionals and for preventative work with groups of young people. The company of young people aged 16-19 have also delivered a number of presentations at Primary Care Trust conferences.

7.6 **Railway Safety Video** - In partnership with the Alcohol Outreach Team, the 13-15 drama group have been working on an interactive DVD package to be used by outreach workers. The DVD is due to be launched in February 2006.

7.7 The New Year promises to be an extremely exciting time as WYT has applied for a £25,000 grant from Young Roots Heritage Lottery Fund. This grant is to fund a project called 'Living With History' which will be delivered in partnership with Urban Strawberry Lunch and will involve over 50 young people from across Wirral in devising an original production based on real life stories of the Blitz. The multi-media performances will take place over four days in May in the 'Bombed Out' Church in Liverpool. This will be a large scale and high profile project, young people have been integral in preparing the bid and are extremely excited about the forthcoming piece.

## 8.0 **Outdoor Education/Duke of Edinburgh's Award**

8.1 Following a busy and successful expedition season, many young people are now continuing with their Duke of Edinburgh's Awards in a variety of exciting and interesting settings. This year there has been a marked increase in the number of parents who are willing to form support groups within their own communities. Supported by the Award Officer these groups are then able to assist with the delivery of the Award with small groups of young people in their locality.

8.2 New units, including schools, youth organisations and training establishments, continue to sign up to the Award in order to give their clientele the opportunity to achieve Awards at all three levels. Several outside agencies have also been successfully encouraged to become Access Organisations for the Award, for example, The Lady Lever Art Gallery and Wirral Disability Swimming Group.

8.3 In November over 180 young people were presented with their Awards by the Mayor of Wirral at a fun filled ceremony at Wallasey Town Hall Ballroom.

8.4 In 2006 the Award will celebrate its 50 year anniversary. Several events are planned which it is hoped will involve Award participants and staff, past and present.

## 9.0 **Special Needs/International Work**

### 9.1 **Special Needs**

Planning has taken place for a number of residential workshops for young people on disability awareness to take place in early 2006. Plans are also well advanced for a series of disability equality workshops for staff members.

### 9.2 **International Work**

The major piece of International Work in the second part of the year was the reciprocal youth exchange with Hong Kong/China. The incoming group visited Wirral in late July and the Wirral group (15 young people) visited Hong Kong in late September. Plans are already in hand to repeat this project in 2006 together with a multi-national visit to Wirral in July by young people from Czech Republic/Azores/Italy plus a young person conference in the Czech Republic in June.

### 9.3 **Ivy Farm**

Ivy Farm is a bunkhouse situated in Arrowe Country Park, currently managed by the Youth Service. It is available to all youth groups on a self catering basis and has been well utilised with over 70% of available weekends being booked. The Centre has, over the past 12 months, undergone much re-decoration. It is well booked into 2006.

### 9.4 **Senior Member Training**

Recruitment has been taking place for the next Senior Member Training Course due to start in January 2006. The course will run for 12 weeks and includes a weekend residential and an activities weekend. There are 12 places on the course and successful members receive a certificate.

## 10.0 **Response**

10.1 The service offers a wide and varied service to vulnerable young people who often present to Response in crisis. During the period July to December there have been 1,783 repeat visits and a further 3,500 (under 19yrs) contacts out of the building including Street Work, One to One Support, Educational Workshops and events including community Police Pods, Wirral Show 'don't bottle it' alcohol campaign and the Road Safety MEGA drive event.

### 10.2 **Housing**

During recent months the difficult situation for young homeless people on Wirral has become more challenging, as Hostels across Merseyside are regularly full. In November 2005 Response saw a 66% increase from the previous year in young people presenting at Response for housing assistance. In stark contrast to this, during the same period, the agency was only able to get three young people accommodated in temporary accommodation, compared to 29 the previous year.

### 10.3 **Drugs & Alcohol**

The team have provided support, advice and information on substance and alcohol misuse to many young people across the borough. This work includes working with young people to educate them on the dangers, risks, health impact, consequences and effects. Young people have responded well and it is hoped that messages given on the dangers of drug taking and binge drinking will have an impact. Links with the Police have been positive and transferring intelligence has proved successful in protecting children from sexual exploitation.

### 10.4 **Counselling**

Referrals to the counselling service have remained steady. There have been 163 new clients during this period of which 85% are 13 – 19yrs. The total counselling sessions that young people have attended are 729. Issues presented are varied but include, relationship breakdown, problems both at home and at school, sexuality, coping alone in accommodation, abuse, coping with a disability, feeling isolated and abandoned and coping with being in care. For the past few weeks, counsellors have been offering 3 sessions of anger management to young people. These sessions are proving popular and the main referrers for this pilot have been Forum Housing Association.

11.0 **Financial and Staffing Implications**

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

12.0 **Equal Opportunities Implications**

12.1 The service actively promotes equality and diversity in its delivery.

13.0 **Human Rights Implications**

13.1 The work on participation and youth engagement supports Human Rights.

14.0 **Community Safety Implications**

14.1 The Service seeks to engage young people in positive activities and away from risk taking behaviour.

15.0 **Planning Implications**

15.1 There are none.

16.0 **Local Member Support Implications**

16.1 This report affects all wards.

17.0 **Recommendation**

17.1 The Committee notes the report.

**HOWARD COOPER  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CULTURAL SERVICES**