

YOUTH PARLIAMENT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the issues raised by young people at the Youth Parliament in October 2006 relating to Cultural Services facilities and asks Members to agree a response which will be reported to a formal feedback session in July 2007.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Youth Voice Conference and the Youth Parliament took place at Wallasey Town Hall on 9th October 2006. This was the fourth Youth Voice Conference and the first Youth Parliament. The purpose of both events was to gather the views of Wirral's young people on issues important to them.

- 2.2 The issues raised by the young people were reported to Cabinet on 24 January 2007 by the Director of Children and Young People's Service and Cabinet agreed that:

- 1) the service specific recommendations are forwarded to the relevant scrutiny committees for their comments and to identify what actions can be undertaken in response to the issues raised.
- 2) young people representatives be involved with individual scrutiny committees with a view to helping identify solutions and representative young people be sought from those who attended the Youth Parliament and
- 3) timescales for reporting back take account of the need to prepare for a full feed back session to young people on Wednesday 11 July 2007.

3.0 ISSUES RAISED AND FURTHER CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Listed below are the issues raised by the young people with a short response to each topic. Members are asked for any additional comments they wish to add or suggestions they have for further investigation by officers.

- i) *Too much lighting in some places and not enough in Arrowe Park or Victoria Park.*

Additional lighting has been provided in Central Park, Wallasey and is being installed in Mersey Park. Lighting is also part of a proposed environmental scheme for Victoria Park. It is expensive to install and maintain and is often subject to heavy vandalism.

- ii) *Cost of leisure facilities for young people and free leisure entrance for all under 16s.*

We presently offer a 40% discount on all adult prices in our leisure centres and free swimming for under 16s in the school holidays at a cost of approximately

£130,000/annum. We also provide 12 youth sports nights in various venues across the borough at a minimum charge. Additional discounts for young people would have revenue implications.

The young people also suggested discount passes and swipe cards for them and special rates for different ages on different days. A further option would be offering a larger discount to young people on low income. These topics could be explored further as part of the review of leisure facilities.

iii) *Venues for band performances.*

None are presently provided by the Council. The cost of provision can be high because of the need to properly equip, staff and soundproof and young bands are unlikely to be able to pay an economic rental. Opportunities could be explored at Pacific Road linked with the Youth Theatre or in community centres.

iv) *Lighting at football cages.*

The Authority has provided 31 MUGAs throughout Wirral which are free to access and have proved very popular. Lighting is expensive and often subject to vandalism and has been provided on 8 MUGAs which are linked to buildings where controls etc can be housed. In some locations residents have objected to the installation of lighting because it leads to additional disturbance.

v) *Play spaces with lighting and consultation at all levels.*

Wirral has 74 play spaces none of which have additional lighting. Any new play spaces are subject to extensive public consultation both with the local community and children. The recent installation of 3 skateboard parks involved consultation with a large number of young people.

vi) *Young people moved out of parks.*

In some areas large numbers of young people gather in public parks and the police do move them on if they consider them a potential threat. Young people are a significant user group of parks because of their accessibility but they are unrepresented on Friends Groups. A Play Strategy is being prepared by the Children and Young People's Department which features strongly the role parks play in play provision.

vii) *Litter in the parks and general maintenance.*

As regular users of parks young people are concerned about their general upkeep and ways should be sought to engage them in park management/voluntary activity.

3.2 As part of an additional consultation the Head of Cultural Services attended a discussion session with some of the young people who were at the Youth Parliament. The topics raised were further explored and a proposal was discussed to establish a focus group of young people solely to consider topics related to culture and leisure. This group would be assisted by the Youth Service and would enable an ongoing dialogue and consultation to be established which could then report regularly to this scrutiny committee and help inform other project and development work.

4.0 FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no staffing or financial implications arising directly from this report but any decision to increase provision for young people or reduce prices could have financial implications.

4.2 A capital provision has previously been made for the improvement of children's play area but this has not been continued.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Any youth consultation group for Culture and Leisure would try to represent as diverse a range of interests as possible.

6.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 A large number of complaints are received about unruly behaviour by young people in parks.

10.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There are none.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 Members are asked for any additional comments they might have on the topics raised by young people at the Youth Parliament which will be reported to the feedback day on 11th July 2007.

12.2 Members are asked to support the establishment of a focus group for young people which would discuss topics related to leisure and cultural provision and report to this and other appropriate committees.

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This report was prepared by Jim Lester who can be contacted on 666 4725.