

## **METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL**

### **YOUTH SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 27 SEPTEMBER 2005**

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#### **Report for Play Services: April – July 2005**

##### **1.0 Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines to the Committee the range of opportunities provided by the Play Service between April and July 2005. The Committee is asked to note the report.

##### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 Wirral Youth and Community service provides full-time Open Access play provision through Play & Community settings at Beechwood, Gautby Road, Charing Cross, Leasowe Adventure Playground, Livingstone Street and Woodchurch. Wirral Play Council (WPC), a voluntary play organisation is grant-aided by the Local Authority to provide a comprehensive summer programme consisting of 25 temporary summer holiday playschemes. It also manages a number of externally funded play initiatives including 'PlaySpaces' Outreach play programme, Playwork Plus, Specials Needs Project, and a Play Development & Resource centre. The annual Play Day which celebrates National Play day is organised in conjunction with the Youth and Community Service.

##### **3.0 Monitoring/Inspection**

- 3.1 The Play service uses the 'First Claim' Playwork self-assessment quality assurance framework to reflect and develop good practice. Open Access Play is inspected under the Out of School care, Early Years Directorate. New legislation means inspections will be carried out every 3 years and there will be no notification of inspections. The quality standards will be graded from outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate using a self-evaluation review aligned to the Every Child Matters five outcomes.
- The play settings inspected by OFSTED Early Years have received the following reports:
  - Good Report (highest standard) – Gautby Road, Livingstone Street, Woodchurch and Wirral Play Council Special Needs
  - Satisfactory Report – Beechwood, Leasowe, Charing Cross, Playbus

### **3.2 Play Development Plans and Monitoring**

Play section development plans completed until March 2006 and monitored quarterly via Senior Playworker meetings. Play sessions are monitored on a daily basis through recorded observations and seeking the opinions of children and young people.

### **3.3 Play Policy**

A Playwork code of practice has been produced which outlines the policies and procedures of the delivery of Open Access Play provision. This is updated annually and supports the OFSTED inspection process.

Currently, the development of the Play Policy has been progressed by the Play Policy working group and a 2<sup>nd</sup> draft has been completed. The next stage involves consulting other appropriate partners and children before it can be agreed, and ratified by the Wirral Local Authority. A logical progression would be to develop a Play Strategy for the overall Play Section in consultation with the statutory and voluntary sector.

### **3.4 Training and Qualifications**

To further their professional development, enhance the delivery of a quality play service and meet the requirements of OFSTED all Play Staff have successfully achieved nationally recognised qualifications. These include BA (Hons) Playwork, Dip. HE Playwork, Playwork NVQ level three and two, Cache level 2 Certificate in Playwork and CACHE level 1 Take Five for Play.

### **4.0 Children Consultation**

4.1 Wirral's Charter of Participation has been produced into three age-appropriate versions, one for 5-8 year olds, one for 9-12 year olds and one for your Youth. Wirral Play Council facilitated a consultation demonstration for people who work with children, in order to generate fun and active ways to consult with children. A further consultation day will take place at Birkenhead Park on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2005.

5.0 **Full-time Open Access Play provision** – See Annexe A & B for Registrations and Attendances

### **5.1 Charing Cross Play & Youth Centre**

5.1.1 Currently, undergoing internal and external improvements to the building. These include improvements to the main entrance and security of the centre, accessible toilets, replacement windows, quiet 'chill-out' area, new

access to the outside playground, improved heating and lighting in the main sports hall. The first phase to the outside play area has been completed with a new tyre swing and climbing platform funded by NRF Programme (see PlayScapes section).

### **5.1.2 Activities- practice examples**

A joint venture between play scheme and youth club, weekend residential for 24 children and young people to New Quay, West Wales.

### **5.1.3 Aims (Enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution)**

To give some children and young people, who have particular needs, the opportunity to get away for the weekend

To learn about dolphins, their environment and how we can protect them

To learn about our own environment, the value of recycling and alternative ways of generating power

### **5.1.4 Evaluation**

Good team building exercise for Playworkers and Youth workers, children and young people had the opportunity to spend time together and get to know each others.

Creative, environmental and physical play types were experienced by the children.

Learning outcomes about recycling, conservation and protecting the environment were realised.

### **5.1.5 Case Studies**

Child B, a boy aged 9 with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), whose parents have recently split up. The weekend allowed him to take his mind off things and gave the family at home a bit of space.

Child D, a boy aged 13, who is severely epileptic. Previously, parents had not trusted anyone to take him out, ensuring he took his medication, the boy enjoyed the independence and opportunity to socialise with other children.

Child E, a girl age 11, had not had the opportunity to stay away from home before and rarely saw the countryside, thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Child C, a boy aged 10 with ADHD, whose mum thought him too naughty to be trusted anywhere, but let him attend due to his like of dolphins. He proved he could behave and also enjoyed the experience.

## **5.2 Livingstone Street Play Centre**

### **5.2.1 Activities- practice examples**

Children and staff participated in the Wirral Coastal Walk raising £500.

Volunteer of the Year award – Livingstone Street has an established and thriving volunteer base. This year three female volunteers received the award to recognise commitment and efforts in supporting the work of Livingstone Street Playscheme.

A 'Kids Council' was set up by the children to inform the content and direction of the play provision. Nominated children represent the views of the Livingstone children, however, all children have the opportunity to attend if they so wish.

A joint camp with Gautby Road planned for August to Flamingo Land, Yorkshire to provide a week of activities for 45 children.

'Play For All', a project to support children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to attend the play setting at Easter, was funded by Wirral Children's Fund. An additional Playworker was appointed to work with referred children and those already attending the scheme.

Playworkers continue to provide school playground activities at local feeder schools including Priory, Our Lady's and Cathcart Street

## **5.3 Gautby Road Play Centre**

### **5.3.1 Activities- practice examples**

Volunteer of the Year award – Livingstone Street has an established and thriving volunteer base. This year three female volunteers received the award to recognise commitment and efforts in supporting the work of Livingstone Street Playscheme.

Children participated in an environmental day involving a clean-up of Bidston Rise.

Young volunteers continue to support the scheme, a young person's representative sits on the Joint Management Committee

'Play For All', a project to support children with ADHD to attend the play setting at Easter, was funded by Wirral Children's Fund. An additional Playworker was appointed to work with referred children and those already attending the scheme.

Playworkers continue to provide school playground activities at local feeder schools including Holy Cross and Vyner.

A joint camp with Livingstone Street planned for August to Flamingo Land, Yorkshire to provide a week of activities for 45 children.

Children and staff participated in the Wirral Coastal Walk.

## **5.4 Leasowe Adventure Playground**

### **5.4.1 Refurbishment Programme**

<b>Budget 2005-06:</b>	<b><i>The Big Lottery</i></b>	<b><i>£150,000</i></b>
	<b><i>C Children In Need</i></b>	<b><i>£ 48,000</i></b>
	<b><i>Leasowe Estates Tenants Association</i></b>	<b><i>£ 35,000</i></b>
	<b><i>Community Initiative Fund</i></b>	<b><i>£ 1,000</i></b>
	<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i><u>£234,000</u></i></b>

The refurbishment project will transform the outside play area into a fun yet challenging safe play area for children aged between five and fourteen years. The first phase of the work has commenced to improve the drainage. This will be followed with the installation of a variety of fixed play equipment such as a combination fort, a spacenet, and slides etc., together with landscaping of the area. A consultation exercise with the children and young people. was undertaken to include their ideas in the design of the new playground. This included fact finding missions to the 'Venture' Wrexham Adventure Playground and Macclesfield for staff and children who went to view other playgrounds and talk to users. A turf cutting event was held to celebrate the commencement of an exciting new refurbishment programme. A barbecue, disco, bouncy castle and face painting was provided for present and past members.

### **5.4.2 Activities- practice examples**

The Link Special Education School visit the Playground once or twice weekly.

Time-zone is a club set up to work with children on Fridays or Saturday evenings. Funded through Street Crime.

C.H. Youth Challenge Programme funded trips with Moreton to deliver positive activities for young people: -

Dry Ski Centre, Stoke	- April 2005
Rock Climbing, Awesome walls	- April 2005
Canoeing, West Kirby	- May 2005
Bowling, Chester	- June 2005

Each Saturday in August 12 children get the opportunity to help present a live radio broadcast on 7 Waves Community Radio.

Planned residential canal boat trips in August, 40 children to participate this summer

## **5.5 Woodchurch**

### **5.5.1 Activities- practice examples**

Easter project funded by On track as part of the anti-social behaviour programme. Children participated in trips to Greenacres Farm, bowling in Chester and ice skating at Deeside.

The development of a Computer/Homework room for local children to have access to resources and a designated informal space outside of school.

## **5.6 Beaconsfield Play & Youth project (part-time)**

A Play and Youth Project based in Tranmere working with local children and young people who are most marginalized who otherwise would be excluded. They engaged and participate in diversary activities at the Beaconsfield and off-site at residential. This helps to reduce and prevent children and young people's involvement in crime. which promotes social inclusion and community cohesion. The scheme operates from 5.30-7.30pm every Thursday and Friday.

The project is delivered by the Beaconsfield Residents Association and volunteers who are supported by partners in Education and Cultural Services (Play, Youth and Community) and Social Services which benefits the delivery of service.

### **5.6.1 Activities- practice examples**

Canal barge trip - 3 groups of 10 children enjoyed a day out on the river in Cheshire. Overall, the children and young people have participated in three Canal boat trips, steering and negotiating locks with the support of play and youth workers. These trips were an excellent way of developing social interactions with their peers and adults. It is also important for children and young people to experience the wider world, have positive experiences, learn new skills which increases their confidence and self-esteem.

Blackpool – Over 36 children and 15 adults went on a day trip to Blackpool, enjoying activities on the fair or just simply taking in the sights.

Barnstondale Activity Centre – 11 children stayed over night at the centre participating in outdoor pursuit activities, enabling them to experience opportunities otherwise not accessible to them.

The children and young people have also been involved in a number of consultation and participation events including reviewing the young people's charter (11 children & young people), representation on the Youth Forums (2), drama role play workshops (5), inter-agency football tournament at Charing Cross for Tsunami Appeal (7), an introduction to cooking (3) and participating in a Fashion Show (2) organised by the Youth Federation.

Children and young people designed and painted a mural within the Beaconsfield Centre, with support from the playworkers. This enhanced their play environment and also the daytime adult users also benefited from the mural. Currently, the youth group are designing a Graffiti wall in the corridors of the centre depicting images relevant to them.

Recently, the project has also attracted funding from the Police fund to provide diversionary activities for children and young people 8 – 19 on alternative weekends. The scheme continues to aid the reduction of crime and youths causing annoyance.

## **6.0 Wirral Play Council Projects**

### **6.1 PlaySpaces – Outreach Play project**

***Budget 2005-06: £82,000 funded by Wirral Children's Fund.***

**6.1.1** PlaySpaces is an Outreach Play programme covering the five regeneration wards of Birkenhead, Bidston, Tranmere, Seacombe and Leasowe. PlaySpaces is about communicating with children and young people, helping to identify and respond to their needs and to facilitate play opportunities encouraging social interaction, confidence and building self-esteem.

**6.1.2** The Outreach Play team visit parks, streets, and other informal areas that children are using as their play space, encouraging the children and young people to play outdoors and be part of a safer play strategy.

This helps to alleviate parental concerns over their children's safety and some parents said they felt a lot happier knowing that Playworkers were in the park, sending their children unaccompanied when the PlaySpaces team were present.

Play sessions are promoted, delivered, and developed in consultation with the children.

**6.1.3** Children's comments include:

"I love coming to PlaySpaces coz' I meet all my mates here"

"It's not like school because you let us play out in the rain"

“I’m only allowed to come down to the park when PlaySpaces are here”

#### 6.1.4 Number Registered

Male	Female	Total
279	160	439

**6.1.5** During this period PlaySpaces have worked in partnership with other groups/organizations. These include Pressure Point Support, Gautby Road, Sure Start Ferries, Birkenhead environmental action group (BEANBAG) (Environmental project), Wirral Multi agency parenting forum: (Child Concern model Training), Wirral Social Services, Beechwood Community Association, Play board Northern Ireland and Wakefield Play Association (PlaySpaces as a good practice model) and Portland primary School (to enhance school playground activities).

#### 6.1.6 Good practice

PlaySpaces has been working with Portland primary school with dinnertime and after school sessions, working closely with the teaching and mid-day staff to find solutions to aggressive behaviour in the playground.

Targeting a large group of year 5/6 boys who wanted to nothing else but play football, has led to more structure games and has help to resolve conflict with other children in the playground, ensuring all children have the opportunity to play.

We provided goals (which gave the game a defined playing area), a member of staff to supervise the football and other members of staff to provide additional activities. We liased with the children and the head of school and they found funding to have a small, low level, football cage built on the playground. The football matches where now contained in this area and less conflicts arose. The next task was to try to stop conflicts during the football matches themselves. A weekly lunchtime football tournament enabled boys and girls to participate, trophies were awarded for sporting behaviour.

Recently, PlaySpaces has received awarded a grant of £2000 from Awards For All to purchase percussion instruments for music workshops and circus skills equipment.

PlaySpaces profiled in the national publication ‘Children Now’ May 05 edition.



## **6.2 Playwork Plus**

***Budget 2005-06: £58,610 funded by Wirral Children's & On-Track.***

Wirral Play Council initiative focusing on three projects within On-Track area: Livingstone Street, Gautby Road and Charing Cross Adventure Playground

Universal approach to working with children at risk, using playwork as a conduit for preventative work which enables children to access freely chosen play opportunities and interact with peers

## **6.3 School Playground sessions**

The programme also facilitates school playground sessions in Vyner, Portland, Cathcart Street, Priory, Holy Cross, Christchurch and Our Lady's. Playworkers work closely with local feeder schools to facilitate school playground sessions in order to enhance the children's social play experiences and promote positive attitudes towards each other. This has benefited the whole school environment with Head teachers reporting fewer playground incidents and pupils displaying a more positive approach to school life.

Playwork Plus in partnership with other On-Track agencies have collectively helped to reduce the risk factors in family, school, friends and peer domain. This was reported from the National evaluation of the Communities that care programme. Therefore, there has been improvement in the protective factors for children and young people.

This is the final year of funding for Playwork Plus due to the merger of Children's Fund and On-Track, and a move to more specific programmes which target and refer children at risk of children.

## **6.4 PlayScapes**

***Budget 2005-06: £94,723 funded by NRF Programme***

The PlayScapes project was developed in 2004 to compliment Wirral Play Council's Outreach Play Project, 'PlaySpaces' funded by Wirral Children's Fund, began consulting with children and young people, aged 5-13, on small environmental improvements to their play areas which would enhance their freely chosen outdoor play opportunities.

PlaySpaces provides support from Playworkers to enable to children safely play in parks and their chosen play places, which satisfies their parents fears of letting their children play independently beyond the immediate boundary of the home. This encourages participation and consultation to an increasing number of children and young people in those areas.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund provided a grant for work undertaken within the five local NRF wards; Birkenhead, Bidston, Leasowe, Tranmere and Seacombe. Within those areas, seven play spaces were selected for physical improvements, ranging from replacement lighting to new fixed play equipment

Physical Improvements were made to play areas at Gautby Road, Livingstone Street, Beechwood, lighting at Leasowe Adventure Playground, Charing Cross, Wirral Play Council Special Needs and kick about area in Victoria park to increase participation and safety for children.

## **6.5 Wirral Play Council Special Needs**

***Budget 2005-06: £46,000 funded by Wirral Social Services.***

***Staffing: Co-Ordinator, Part-time Playworkers x 12***

Wirral Play Council Special Needs is a charitable organisation formed in 1975 to provide after school activities and holiday respite for children with special needs. They provide care for all disabilities including children with Severe Learning Disabilities and Autism.

All staff are fully trained and we have a welfare officer in attendance. The group is Ofsted inspected and funded by Local Authority Social Services and by the group raising and finding its own funds. The building is specially adapted to cater for all the children's needs. Areas include large play area, art room, library, quiet room and sensory room. All play areas are fully staffed with supervision ratios at 1/3 to 1/1. Currently, there are 125 children registered on the scheme referred by Social services. They operate after- school on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday(am) for children 5-14 years and Monday and Thursday there is a youth night for young people 14 –18 years.

## **6.6 Summer Holiday Programme and Play Day 2005**

To celebrate National Play day, our annual children's participation event at Royden park was attended by over 500 children from across Wirral. This year's theme was 'Fit for Play', and children were able to enjoy and participate in activities including drum circle workshops, circus skills, dance, face painting, haystack den-building, various sport activities and opportunities to express their performing arts skills in the talent show.

## **6.7 Play For All**

This Wirral Play Council developed a project aiming is to provide a localised service for children with ADHD. Enabling children to access age appropriate play opportunities designed to promote optimal social and emotional development so as to reduce challenging/anti social behaviour in an inclusive play environment. Here, they can engage with peers, in

informal Open Access play settings, exercise free choice supported by qualified playworkers. Funded by the Wirral Children's Fund, taking place at Livingstone Street, Gautby Road, Leasowe Adventure Playground, Charing Cross and Wirral Play Council Special Needs schemes.

The project works in partnership with Child & Family Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Social Services, and other On-Track partners. The last programme ran at Easter, however, the concept of the work is still delivered by current Playworkers, and in particular, the Playwork Plus programme.

## **7.0 Financial and Staffing Implication**

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **8.0 Equal Opportunities Implication**

8.1 The Play Scheme promotes Equal Opportunities

## **9.0 Human Rights Implication**

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **10.0 Community Safety Implication**

10.1 The Play Section provides children with the opportunity to take part in positive activities and this is an important strand of community safety.

## **11.0 Planning Implications**

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **12.0 Local Member Support Implications**

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **13.0 Background Papers**

13.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **14.0 Recommendations**

14.1 The Committee notes this report.

**Howard Cooper**  
**Director of Education and Cultural Services**

### Annexe A - New Registrations April – July 2005

<b>Name of Centre</b>	<b>Male U 8's</b>	<b>Male 8 +</b>	<b>Female U 8's</b>	<b>Female 8+</b>	<b>Total</b>
Charing Cross Play and Youth Centre	15	29	11	21	76
Livingstone Street Play Centre	26	19	12	17	74
Gautby Road Play Centre	30	43	23	29	125
Leasowe Adventure Playground	0	21	6	21	48
Woodchurch	18	16	19	12	65
Beechwood	22	48	22	28	120
Beaconsfield	N/a	12	N/a	14	26

### Annexe B - Attendance April – July 2005

<b>Name of Centre</b>	<b>Male U 8's</b>	<b>Male 8 +</b>	<b>Female U 8's</b>	<b>Female 8+</b>	<b>Total</b>
Charing Cross Play and Youth Centre	1037	1062	479	629	3207
Livingstone Street Play Centre	584	715	705	1217	3221
Gautby Road Play Centre	1454	3049	1523	2243	8269
Leasowe Adventure Playground	185	1250	156	527	2118
Woodchurch	161	1072	134	550	1917
Beechwood	473	1504	686	659	3322
Beaconsfield	N/a	388	N/a	351	739

