

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

YOUTH SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE Date 14December 2006

SOUTH WIRRAL YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECT AND THE DIG IT PROJECT.

Executive Summary.

1.0 This report gives details of the Dig It Project, a community based partnership initiative in which the South Wirral Young People's Project has engaged young people in a market garden project. The Committee is asked to note the report.

Background.

2.0 In response to community concerns about anti social behaviour and complaints from young people about the lack of things to do, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and South Wirral Young People's Project, a member of the Wirral Outreach Team, with the support of the ward members, worked together to find a solution. Some derelict land at Bromborough Community Fire Station was made available for the creation of a market garden whereby young people working along side the Fire Service and other agencies would have the opportunity to learn new skills and make a positive contribution to their community.

The Dig It Project.

3.0 Since the Dig It Project launch on 1st April 2006, youth workers from SWYPP have worked with young people from Eastham, Bromborough, Bebington and New Ferry, drawn from street groups and from youth clubs, on the market garden project.

3.1 To date, considerable progress has been made. The young people have levelled the ground, moving more than 80 tons of top soil which had been donated by Wirral Borough Council. Two flower borders have been dug out and planted, the fence painted and work started on developing the pond as a feature. Polytunnels have been bought and will be erected shortly. Whilst researching the possibility of a creating a sensory garden on the site, the young people were invited to visit the Lyndale School sensory garden. The school have since given support to those young people working on this aspect of the Dig It Project.

3.2 A single storey building on the site was made available to the community and has proved to be a valuable asset. Not only is it a storage facility for the gardening equipment, much of which has been provided by the Police from confiscated goods, but it is also a venue for group work activities. Work on the market garden is planned and reviewed there, and recently, young people participated in alcohol and drug misuse awareness workshops. It is

anticipated that the kitchen and dining area will be used by the young people to cook and eat the produce they have grown.

3.3 They have benefited through their involvement in the project by having the opportunity to try new activities, develop new skills and gain accreditation through the Millennium Volunteer scheme. Young people not in education, employment and training have had from the support of a youth worker, funded by Connexions and attached to the Community Safety Team.

3.4 The Dig It Project relies on partnership work and community support to achieve its aims. The Area Forum has given financial support to the Dig It Project and donations have been received from local businesses.

3.5 By the young people working with Fire Service staff, this project is helping to bridge the generation gap, providing young people with positive role models and enabling them to make a positive contribution to their community.

3.6 Wirral Youth Service has been recognised as a key partner when the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service was given a Beacon Award for its early intervention work with children and young people at risk. At a more local level, this partnership work contributed to Bromborough being named as Community Fire Station of the Year for the second year running. The young people have shared in these successes.

Financial and staffing Implications.

4.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Equal Opportunity Implications.

5.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Human Rights Implications.

6.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Community Safety Implications.

7.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Planning Implications.

8.0 There are none arising directly from this report.

Local Member Support.

9.0 This report covers Bromborough, Clatterbridge and Eastham wards.

Recommendations.

10.0 Members are asked to note the report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

