

Youth Provision Review

Report of the Children's Services and Education
Scrutiny Sub-Committee

June 2008



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Forward

During the course of this review it became apparent that youth provision must be moved up the political agenda as it has benefits across a number of key Council objectives. There needs to be clear communication links developed with young people through an invigorated and supported Youth Council which would link through to the Executive and the Community Councils to aide in the delivery of the Government and Council agendas.

We hope that the Council takes our findings seriously and shows commitment and intent to follow these recommendations through, putting youth provision on a much higher footing that it has been up till now.

Cllr John Friary.

1 Executive Summary

The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee decided to look at quality and availability of out of school activities being provided for young people in Southwark. The Sub-Committee wanted to contribute to recent improvements in the Children's Services and Education Department to ensure that service provision was effective and meaningful. Members concentrated on the provision for 11 – 19 year olds because of the crucial challenges and life changes that affect this particular group. Members found that there was a lot of enthusiasm and appetite for out of school activities but young people, overall, felt that services did not adequately reflect the interests they wanted to explore and develop.

2 Introduction

In 2007/08 the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee looked at the level and quality of youth provision. Members visited a variety of statutory and non-statutory services and spoke to services heads, youth coordinators and the young people themselves to gain more understanding into the way services are funded and to investigate the type of activities provided.

The Sub-Committee heard from the Head of Services for Young People, youth coordinators from Cambridge House, Mint Street and Dog Kennel Hill adventure playgrounds. They also heard from the Chief Executive from Centrepoint, the Head of Service at Westminster House, the Salmon Centre and the Damilola Taylor Centre. The Sub-Committee also heard from young people themselves on what they thought of youth provision along with the sorts of pressures they had to contend with in their daily lives.

3 Youth Offer

The London Development Agency and the Department for Children, Schools and Families are providing funding which jointly amount to around £60 million for London Council's to provide services where they feel it is needed. This is a package devised to address the concerns over the high level of child poverty, helping young people to turn their lives around. The funding will run over two years and is set to provide facilities and services for young people who are likely to be victims of crime and at risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour or street gangs.

There is also funding for community initiatives which forms part of the contribution made by the government for substantial investment in 'places to go and things to do' for teenagers, announced in the 10 Year Youth strategy, 'Aiming high for young people.'

The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls said: *"This money will give young Londoners places to go and things to do - but it is about far more than getting them off the streets. Teenagers need to take part in out of school activities to help them develop the life skills they need to get a job and get on – and this is especially important for the young people who might not otherwise get these opportunities."*

Earlier this year the Government launched a Ten Year Youth strategy for young people and part of that was about giving young people a direct say in how the money is spent in their local areas”.

4 Southwark’s Young People’s Plan

Children’s services report that they have *“successfully delivered a coordinated approach to activities during holidays and have a new marketing plan to promote recreational activities”*. However, Members of the sub-committee heard from young people and youth coordinators who maintained that there was still a lack of provision during holidays, Friday evenings, after 8pm on weekdays and at weekends. It was also evident that young people were still unaware of what was on offer in the borough and did not know how to find out what was available and where to find it.

Through the Youth Offer, children’s services have undertaken an extensive review of provision and it is reported that recommendations are currently in the process of being agreed. The plan goes on to say that; *“We have made progress this year in the successful coordination of the delivery of activities for major holiday periods across the whole borough. Plans are well underway for a new marketing campaign and website for young people aged 5-19. In developing our Youth Offer, we have undertaken an extensive review of provision including benchmarking cost and gap analysis consultation with young people, resulting in recommendations for improvement which are currently being agreed”*.

The plan states that Southwark is providing:

Inclusive sport and recreational opportunities such as the Southwark Community Games, “regularly attended by 8000 young people in 2006/07, which was a 30% increase on the previous year. Held across 56 primary and three secondary schools, 38 estates and 98 venues, the games offers a range of competitive and inclusive sporting activities, and includes 900 children taking part in a multi sport coaching programme. The programme works in partnership with the YOT and provides magnet activities and education programmes.

Satisfaction surveys of children and young people show 98% of attendees find training sessions good or excellent. Capacity has been built by the recruitment of 35 local people to assist coaches with delivering sporting sessions”.

Further provision includes:

- *10 adventure playgrounds across the borough, operating five days per week.*
- *A mobile sports and play unit provides a service to estates that have high numbers of social exclusions including high levels of deprivation and high numbers with refugee status.*
- *40 schemes providing out of school activities, some part funded by the council.*
- *24 inclusive holiday schemes across the borough that cater for a range of needs including cultural, and for children with learning difficulties.*
- *A range of play facilities is available in parks including 40 fixed play sites, six playgrounds dedicated to younger children.*
- *Central Venture Park in the heart of Peckham is designed with and for young people, for all ages and is supervised with a youth club attached.*
- *BMX track*
- *Inter estate football tournament.*
- *The rate of young people accessing leisure centres has increased by 20% since 2005/06*

Children and young people informed the youth service that they would like to have access to a range of arts based activities in the borough. The plan reports that the Council has responded by *“doing joint work between libraries and education to provide a number of programmes to support national, evidenced based literacy and improved learning support”*. Although the plan does not go into any more detail.

The Southwark plan states that *“activities include a summer reading challenge attended by 3000 children aged 4-12 across the borough, there are homework facilities and constructive play sessions with emphasis on vulnerable groups such as teenage mothers, children with SEN and refugees. Other projects include a photography workshop for Traveler children and vocational learning opportunities. There are a range of media and arts programmes in place including the popular STAR Academy which is an annual showcase of talent for young people living in Southwark”*. The Youth Service maintain that young people are involved in the planning and delivery of this large-scale event and that *“investment has been made*

in providing opportunities in and around schools, including extended schools provision and there are 33 school based after school clubs that provide a range of opportunities in art, dance, drama, games and sports”.

There is a Southwark Theatre and Education Partnership which according to the plan, *“works with over 6000 young people a year, offering a programme of activities for schools with high deprivation levels. Part of this partnership working includes Gospel Choir training which resulted in a performance by 800 children following 6 weeks training with an increase of 50% in take up against last year”.*

“Theatre projects with both the Playhouse and Globe are working with 20 primary schools linked to KS2 literacy curriculum including Advanced Skills Teacher support in writing modules. Schools are supported in developing modern foreign language provision and, by the end of July, 86 teachers from 36 schools will have been on courses in France and Spain. We currently have one of the highest rates in London of young people achieving Duke of Edinburgh Awards”.

Whilst all of this work seems to be travelling in the right direction and is expressed in strongly positive terms, it is difficult to ascertain if and how the work is being undertaken. It is not clear how the youth service are monitoring the effect that service provision is having on young people’s lives.

5 Young People’s Feed Back to the Youth Service

The plan includes the outcomes of consultation with young people on what activities and services they would like to see. This broadly mirrored the experiences of Members on their site visits.

The plan states that Young People wanted to see:

- *better physical environment – improvements on creating a cleaner environment with open space, more green space, no graffiti or rubbish, clean streets, better quality parks*
- *better public facilities*
- *more or better sports leisure facilities that are not too expensive - in particular improvements*

- *access to the local swimming pools, more youth clubs, a bike track, go-karting facilities, climbing wall, badminton courts, new library, cheaper cinema, free galleries, museums and sports*
- *after school hours activities*
- *schools to offer more time for physical education activities and to open up at weekends*
- *better promotion of what activities are available*
- *more trips to places such as the Houses of Parliament*
- *more arts, drama, dance and music-based projects*
- *more community and culture events.*

The Children and Young People's Plan and the Services Self Assessment documents set out the visions and plans of the department. It outlines what has been provided and what is intended but there is little in the way of evidence for the justification of spending and how satisfaction levels are and should be monitored.

The youth council was seen to be an effective way of feeding back the views of young people to the youth service but there was a lack of clarity about how this was happening in Southwark. Members wanted to know more about how the council was elected and whether the membership represented and reflected the local community make up of Southwark.

6 Introduction of the Electronic Youth Service (EYS) database.

The EYS data base records basic information about the children and young people who present to out of school provision. It is thought to be a useful tool to keep a record of who is accessing services and in addition assists with the health and safety aspect of service provision.

However, not all agencies agreed that collecting specific data on each child was a good idea. Some services felt that collecting data in this way could inhibit some young people from coming forward to engage with services and seeking help or assistance. The loss of anonymity may worry children who do not want to be

identified. Some services felt that this anonymity should be preserved until the child felt comfortable sharing more information with services.

7 Site Visits

7.1 11th January 2008: Westminster House – Voluntary Funded Service

Funding: Westminster House was initially funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal fund. A budget of £5000 was devolved to a panel of elected young people who consulted with other club members on which activities to spend the money on. The organisation still attracts funding from the Rank Foundation and the Jack Petchey Awards whereby club members and staff can nominate other young people for a quarterly award, which recognises good behaviour and achievements. There is a cash prize of £600 attached to the award and the winner decides how it should be spent at the club.

The organisation has also been supported by BBC Children in Need, The Girdlers Company, Help a London Child, Joseph Levy Foundation, Joint Security Initiative Fund, Lloyds TSB, Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Nunhead and Peckham Rye Community Fund, The Ray Plummer Charitable Trust, Southwark Children's Fund, Wates Foundation, The Rank Foundation The Tallow Chandlers Company, Westminster School and a number of individual donors.

Service: The generic youth club offers young people the opportunity to develop a social structure and learn to observe clear boundaries. They learn skills such as punctuality and interaction with their local community.

On site: Between 25 – 50 young people have attended each evening club session. On site activities include: pool, table tennis, art, needle work, crafts, video making, cookery, creative writing, dance, trampolining, circuit training,

unihoc, benchball, snooker, library sessions, computer work, music, drama, photography, Duke of Edinburgh work, football, and indoor rowing.

Off site: Activities include visits to the theatre, participation in the London Youth's Kwik Cricket Festival, a Marines taster day, London Youth Athletics Day, London Youth indoor rowing at the Regatta Centre. 10 Young people represented Southwark in the London Youth Games at Crystal Palace, coming 8th overall. There has also been an exchange programme to Dublin and Penzance. There are regular visits to ice-skating, bowling, science museum, quasar and cinema trips. They also provide activities related to the LEAP project and also have an anti-gang initiative.

7.2 16th January 2008: White Grounds Skate Park – Statutory Funded Service

Funding: With funding from Southwark Council the scheme was commissioned on behalf of the funders of the Pool of London Partnership.

It is hoped that the park can continue to grow and funding can be found for extra facilities on the site, such as toilets. There is still quite a bit of space for possible development and it was thought that there is room for indoor workshops and other creative project work to be incorporated into the area.

Service: Initiated by young people on the Southwark Youth Council, development of the park involved the local community and investment partners to regenerate run down railway arches into a facility for young people to learn how to skate board.

The park is free to use and there is expert tuition and training on site.

One of the aims of the project was to tackle anti-social behaviour by providing a diversionary activity. The facility was initially designed for 11 – 16 year olds to enable a constructive pastime and includes beginners sessions as well as open sessions for older children.

The facility is managed by youth workers from Southwark Council's Play Service department, and opens Thursdays and Fridays 4-7pm and Saturdays and Sundays 12-7pm

7.3 16th January: Mint Street Adventure Playground – Voluntary Funded Service

Funding: The adventure playground is free of charge and it is run by Southwark play service. The facility has had to cut some of its work due to a loss in funding.

Service: It provides opportunities for children and young people to play and learn in safety. There is an adventure playgrounds and a junior playroom, all of which are supervised by experienced and trained staff. The service is open to younger people of school age.

It was reported that there was some resistance to crossing boundaries within the borough to access services but the underlying reason for this was not understood. It was thought possible that young people were not prepared to travel any distance.

One of the most significant issues to come out of the visit was the lack of engagement with the local businesses and housing developments around the site. Money had been promised to the service but after a series of plan alterations with the Southwark Planning department the provision for the money had got lost and local businesses had not been obliged to comply with section 106.

7.4 24th January 2008: Dog Kennel Hill – Statutory Funded Service using a Voluntary Service Facility

Funding: This service has been running for 4 years with Council direct funding for 3 qualified adults in a voluntary service building. The outdoor activities include adventure structures, swings, sand pit, team games area for football, basketball and rounder's. The project is maintained on £60K funding per annum which covers salaries and bills.

Service: The indoor activities include arts and crafts, music, music and IT technology, a wide range of workshops, pool, table tennis, computer games, board games.

There are two aspects to the Dog Kennel Hill Adventure Playground. The first is an open access scheme registered to provide supervised play opportunities for 36 children aged five to eight years. Children over eight years also use the facility in their own tailored sessions.

The adventure playground operates during term time providing after school activities Monday to Friday, 3.30pm to 7.00pm. During school holidays, Monday to Friday it operates between, 11.00am to 5.00pm and on Saturdays from 11.00am to 4.00pm.

The premises comprise of the main hall, arts room, toilet and washing facilities, kitchen, office and outdoors play area.

The playground employs around three members of staff with the appropriate qualifications.

The second part of the service is open to older children. 11 – 19 year olds and use the same facilities as the 5 – 8 year old age group with: the facility opening term times and evenings with help from volunteers.

The facility promoted cross boundary movement by forging links with the Aylesbury Youth Club nearby. There is also possible work with a nearby

approved school, working with young offenders/excluded pupils to re-establish their self – esteem and respect for their community.

The facility enjoys a good relationship with the Safer Neighborhood teams and local Tenants and Residents Association.

7.5 5th February: The Salmon Youth Centre – Voluntary Funded Service

Funding: Takes some statutory funding and bids for national funding. Other funds are provided from the Youth Opportunity Fund, Mayor Fund and the Youth Council. There is also 3 year lottery funding including money from the 5 million awarded by Sport England.

Service: At the time of the visit, they had still not managed to move into the newly built premises. There had been problems with building contractors and this had meant that the work over ran in both time and budget. Southwark Council had assisted them in getting back on track by providing extra funding to address shortfalls due to the delays. It was acknowledged that without this funding the project unquestionably would not have been finished. Members spoke briefly to some of the young people there who conveyed to Members how enthusiastic they were to get in to the new facilities. Members then got the opportunity to look at the new building which will house a variety of activities for young people.

The facility included a state of the art sports hall with a sprung wooden floor and under floor heating, a versatile theatre area, space for lighting, props and sound systems, dance studios, mediation/reflection room, showers, a television room, music room, viewing gallery and a variety rooms and areas for meetings and socialisation.

They also have on site bedrooms for youth workers to sleep over adding to the safety of the property and ensuring continuity. The young people who benefit from the facility are encouraged to work 1 or 2 nights per week to help 'put back' into the centre and help create the community ethos.

Different nights of the week will cater to different needs groups such as ethnic, age or interest groups and single sex groups. The environment has also been set up for greater accessibility for disability groups.

The Salmon centre has been actively working with other clubs in the area to assist with breaking down barriers. For instance there have been 'swaps' where children have come from other clubs and visa-versa. They also offer trips abroad and have recently organised travel to places such as South Africa and France.

The Salmon Centre is also pioneering work to encourage young people to start their own businesses and they will be able to grow this part of the facility as soon as the building work is complete in what is called 'phase 2' of the service development.

The centre is overseen and directed by up to twenty unpaid Trustees. They are responsible for ensuring that the centre keeps to its Christian objectives and that the centre is using all donations in an accountable and transparent way. They also appoint senior staff and debate and set their organisational policies.

There is also a Salmon Centre forum which is an evening set aside for all people who are connected with the work of the centre are encouraged to take part in discussions and see and hear about the work of the centre through presentations and performances by the young people, staff and trustees.

7.6 12th February 2008: Cambridge House – Voluntary Funded Service

Funding: Takes some statutory funding and bids for national funding.

Service: Cambridge House offer varying one off projects to young people who express a specific interest in joining the facility. The young people who attend these sessions are very enthusiastic about the projects they work on Cambridge House seem to do well at engaging and educating young people. There was some youth work on Friday evenings but at weekends, holiday

periods and later in the evening, youth provision was still needed and currently lacking.

Cambridge House tries to alter their provision according to term times. Evening workshops may close during half term but the resources are channeled into providing trips away and daytime other activities.

The Centre works with local street wardens and other community groups and has strong links with other agencies providing youth services.

7.7 14th March 2008: Damilola Taylor Centre – Statutory Funded Service

Funding: The provision is Southwark funded. The total budgeted spend in the financial year of 2007 – 08 is £178,000 and it is expected that £20,000 of that will be raised from external bookings. The net cost is approximately £158,000.

Service: There is an office, a gym, a sports hall and changing facilities. Upstairs; a multipurpose room, a gallery area with a cafe and a room used by the Connexions workers. Outside there is a five a side, football pitch.

There are also Connexions sessions held on Tuesdays between 6 – 9pm, although it is not advertised on the programme of activities.

Outside youth groups also use the facilities and contribute to the overall funding of the centre.

The managers of the centre informed Members that the centre had changed its emphasis over the last few years. It now focuses on sports provision, ending the drop in groups.

It was not made clear to Members whether the service was targeted or universal provision.

The charges are modest with a session in the gym costing 30p for example. This charge is not for raising revenue but to help ensure that those taking part in the activities really want to be there.

All young people who use the centre have to be members. They sign in and out before and after each session and this information is recorded onto a data base. The computer system is slow and crashes frequently.

The centre has around 400 members with around 100 using the facility each week. 70% are young men and 30% young women. There are girl only sessions on Thursday evenings which are part of the Positive Activities for Young People programme.

8 Conclusion

Young people said they wanted to be challenged and take part in activities that were going to help them to develop skills which would benefit them in the adult world. They were less likely to engage in activities which seemed wholly diversionary and nothing more. The challenge for Southwark is to ensure that youth provision is pushed higher up the agenda, providing a greater range of services based on more diverse needs. The Sub-Committee felt that more work needed to be done around the planning of activities and investigate whether current activities truly reflected the array of young people's requirements and desires.

There is a great deal of focus on funding sports activities to the detriment of other activities. Young people told Members that they were very interested in art, drama, music and dance but these services are underprovided. Activities such as table tennis and football seemed to have a limited appeal and more imaginative planning needs to happen if youth provision is to flourish and inspire the young people of Southwark.

Young people said that they sought activities which lead them to gain a greater sense of achievement and accomplishment.

Building on the mapping exercise that was undertaken during the 'Whatever' project work, the overall picture of what is on offer must be available in an accessible format. The map should take into consideration the many small and diverse theatre groups in the area which may be willing to join up with Southwark to develop art and drama projects. It could provide young people with the opportunity to meet individuals from other community groups, exposing them to a differing range of life experiences and opinions and go some way to addressing the apparent short fall in the statutory provision of music and drama activities.

Obtaining funding information was problematic. Information was not available electronically and was not clear and comparative. It was not possible to see where funding streams originated and were channeled. It was acknowledged by officers that this information was not easy to untangle. There needs to be greater transparency around the cost of service delivery with more detail around how the Council monitors the outcome of spending.

A number of voluntary groups informed Members that they couldn't find enough information and help regarding the sort of funding that might be available to them. Southwark youth service needs to form stronger bonds with its voluntary groups, to ensure that services are optimising their chances of receiving adequate resources and support wherever possible, to enable them to continue their valuable role as services providers within the community. This would enhance partnership working; maximising the resources and talent which already exists in the borough.

9 Recommendations

1 School Involvement

Southwark needs to do more to encourage schools to actively promote other related services in their borough. After a recent scrutiny review into extended schools, extended school coordinators have been recruited. This is work that could comfortably sit within their remit; adding to stronger service engagement and programme planning as outlined in Scrutiny's extended school review 2007.

1.1 The sub-committee recommends that the extended school coordinators look at ways of forging strong partnership links between all schools and out of school service provision, ensuring active participation in the improvement of communication pathways.

2 Arts Services and Activities

Young people reported that they have problems finding drama and arts activities. It was felt that these types of activities were an important part of young people's development, helping them to explore their creativity, as well as fostering more entrepreneurial ways of thinking. The girls that Members spoke to said they would especially welcome activities such as these and felt that their needs were not being addressed.

Young people – female and male across all ethnic groups voiced their desire for more arts facilities, vocational information, training and assistance with academic work.

It was clear that young people wanted to gain a sense of achievement from the activities they undertook.

2.2 The sub-committee recommends that a plan is developed which will set out more imaginative and diverse activities to appeal to a wider audience. These activities will include academic, vocational, arts, drama and music training and projects which helps to develop their skills and abilities which is an essential part of any successful programme.

3 Weekend and Evening Provision

There is very little service provision taking place at weekends and after 8pm on week days. It is recommended that Southwark look at the possibility of providing activities when and where young people need them most.

3.3 The sub-committee recommends that Southwark provides more activities, including the making of facilities available, at the times when young people are out of school; weekends, evenings and school holidays.

4 Equality and Diversity

Services tended to be established with particular attention on boys with problem behaviour because there is greater availability of funding for this group. Provision has mainly focused on sports activities, which tends to appeal more to boys and young men.

4.1 The sub-committee recommends that the shortfall in provision for girls be addressed and Southwark must investigate ways of providing for girls and young women in the spirit of equality and inclusiveness. No young people should be left aside in favour of provision aimed mainly at boys and individuals with challenging behaviour.

5 Continuity of Provision

It seemed to be difficult to plan a cost effective service, taking into consideration aspects such as administrative support because of the current short term funding arrangements. Voluntary services reported that this has meant that there is a lack of continuity affecting the level of service and this has impacted on the commitment of staff.

Many youth workers are working only a few hours per week. It was felt that this has added to the fragmentation and lack of continuity in the delivery of services.

5.1 The sub-committee recommends that more consideration needs to be given to how there can be more effective coordination of staff providing greater continuity of purpose across the service and its delivery.

6 Publicity

The sub-committee felt that there was not adequate promotion of the facilities that were available. Ideas put forward for development focused on:

- Standard flyers
- new media
- mobile phones (sms texting and picture texting)
- websites and email alerts

Word of mouth seemed to be the most popular way in which young people heard about a service. It was discussed that perhaps market research could be done to find better ways of engaging with young people.

It was also thought that there significant improvement of information is needed on relevant and appropriate websites which would contribute greatly to the overall promotion of services. It was noted that members could not access information on the 'Whatever' website despite assurances from officers that detailed information as to what services were on offer could be obtained there. It was thought that Southwark were missing an opportunity to make the most of this website. It was seen as a potentially valuable tool to enhance effective communication and should be made fit for purpose.

6.1 The sub-committee recommends that Southwark looks into undertaking market research to find new, more effective and imaginative ways of informing young people, what provision is available.

6.2 The sub-committee also recommends that the 'Whatever' website is significantly improved to ensure that all services, statutory and non-statutory are listed there and that all of the mapping information is made accessible there.

7 Strategic Direction

The team responsible for youth service provision has moved five times within the Children's Services and Education department in recent years and it is thought that this may have contributed to the fragmentation and instability of youth provision overall.

It was thought that planning and shaping relevant services was very challenging bearing in mind the balance, mix and range of appropriate activities. Young people tend to be territorial, sticking with familiarity and people they know, dividing themselves along race, sex, cultural or religious lines and this had an impact on the types of provision that was needed and desired.

The deputy director of children's services acknowledged the need for more arts facilities and went on to say that there had been good provision made for disabled young people with statutory services for 14 – 19 year olds and the department hoped to build on that.

7.1 The sub-committee recommends that building on the recent good work of the department, the overall strategic view and leadership should continue to be developed and made stronger.

7.2 The sub-committee also recommends that mapping work already undertaken be made readily available, in a clear accessible format and includes all statutory and voluntary services so that clear links can be made with all community work and services.

8 Benchmarking

8.1 The sub-committee recommends that Southwark needs to be able to benchmark its situation pan-London regularly, with all the supporting statistical information necessary to lend context to Southwark's performance. This would include clear analysis data using the National Indicators, set up under the Joint Area Review.

9 Working with the Community

Wherever possible, Southwark should look at using volunteers from the community to assist with the running of youth services. This may foster greater understanding between different generations and community groups; help to break down barriers and encourage young people to mix with people of different religions, genders and ethnicities. Southwark should look at removing overly complex and rigid recruitment methods which could deter good candidates from coming forward.

It was suggested that mentoring programmes which have proved successful in the area of sport, could be extended to cover other activities.

The Sub-Committee heard about the advantages to having personal advisors who could assist young people with accessing relevant services. This could be especially useful to assist with access to advice on teenage pregnancy and homelessness.

9.1 The sub-committee also recommends that the recruitment procedures are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for those wishing to volunteer and do not inadvertently exclude those who can make a valuable contribution.

10 Working with Voluntary Sector Services

Southwark needs to be assisting its voluntary services to adequate information regarding funding possibilities. There were examples of services failing to obtain money simply because they did not know that money was available.

10.1 The sub-committee recommends that part of the overall effort to work more cohesively with voluntary and community projects should include a plan of publicity to ensure that voluntary agencies are aware that there is money to bid for, where to get it and how to bid or apply for it.

11 Funding

Details of maintained and voluntary funding streams are extremely difficult to scrutinise. Currently the situation is oblique. Each strand of funding is being obtained from different sources, bid for in separate processes, using differing criteria. It is therefore, problematic to compare funding across the board on a like by like basis. It has not been possible to see spends and budgets across the service.

11.1 The sub-committee recommends that the Youth Service ensures that all of their funding strands, budgets, spend and the justification for the allocations are completely open and accessible for public viewing.

11.2 The sub-committee recommends that the Executive should be looking at analysing the outcomes of this funding to find out whether Southwark is, in fact, getting good value for money.

12 Youth Council

Members hoped that young people were still being given the opportunity to have a voice on the issues that mattered to them. Members felt that perhaps this forum would benefit from more promotion and publicity. The Youth Council has been seen as valuable tool, adding to the improved quality of service planning as well as providing young people with the opportunity to become involved in a political arena; something that young people were particularly enthusiastic about.

12.1 The sub-committee recommends that youth services are more open about the work of the youth council, how it is run, how members are elected and to what extent they represent the communities borough wide.

13 Connexions Service

Members wanted a clear picture of how these services were working and if they were being successful at engaging and assisting young people, especially those in hard to reach groups.

13.1 The sub-committee recommends that there is an update made to Scrutiny to ascertain the current situation.

14 EYS Database

The EYS Data base needs to be re-examined especially in relation to voluntary organisations. Some services do not have adequate administrative support and Southwark needs to be realistic when looking at what low-funded projects are able and expected to provide.

14.2 The sub-committee recommends that Southwark re-examines whether or not the EYS system has to be taken up with poorly funded and struggling voluntary groups in order to receive the Council's funding assistance.

Acknowledgements

- 1) *Westminster House*
- 2) *Dog Kennel Hill*
- 3) *Damilola Taylor Centre*
- 4) *Salmon Centre*
- 5) *Cambridge House*
- 6) *Chief Executive of Centrepont*
- 7) *WhiteGrounds and Mint Street adventure playgrounds*
- 8) *Head of Services for Young People*

Background documents

- 1) *Southwark's Area Profiles*
- 2) *Every Child Matters and Youth Matters*
- 3) *Children and Young People, ten year strategy*
- 4) *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities, DCSF, July 2007*
- 5) *Children's Plan, DCSF, Dec 2007*
- 6) *Aiming High for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities – implementation plan, March 2008*

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Members of the Sub-Committee during the review were:

Councillor John Friary (Chair)
Councillor Nick Vineall (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Jonathan Mitchell
Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Ade Lasaki
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