

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF CHILDREN SERVICES TASK AND FINISH PANEL
HELD ON FRIDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2010
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 2.00 - 4.40 PM**

Members Present: Mrs L Wagland (Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder) (Chairman), , Ms R Brookes, Mrs P Brooks, Mrs T Cochrane, Mrs R Gadsby and Ms J Hedges

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: J Knapman

Officers Present J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services and Customer Relations)), F Hall (Arts Officer), G Wallis (Community Development Officer), J Warwick (Sports Development Manager) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

6. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted that there were no substitute members.

7. NOTES FROM LAST MEETING

The notes from the meeting held on 21 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

8. YOUTH COUNCILLORS MYSTERY SHOPPING REPORT

The Community Development Officer, Gill Wallis, introduced the Youth Council's mystery shopping report on youth clubs and venues in the district. Youth Councillors had taken on board the comments collated at their March Youth Conference which highlighted the fact that local young people felt there was a lack of places for them to go in the district. Members of the Youth Council initially mapped, then visited 12 youth projects over a three month period from July to September 2010. They went 'undercover' in two or threes to each of the venues and assessed them on such things as friendliness of staff, the range of activities on offer, opening times, promotion of the club and disability access. They later turned these into a star rating (given out of five stars) and gave feedback to each of the clubs. The ratings are to be published on the Council's website along with the text of the report and contact details for each club. The settings visited were Essex County Council, District Council and Third Sector providers. The Youth Council were surprised at the amount of venues spread out over the district although they found the quality of the settings varied greatly.

Youth Councillors then arranged a Presentation Evening on 26 October 2010 and awarded certificates and feedback sheets to each provider, along with a trophy to the "5 Star" winner, Youth Plus in Ongar.

Councillor Mrs Wagland suggested that the tube map style information poster designed by the Youth Council be placed on the Council's website and maybe

awards be given out at the annual Civic Awards for best club and facilities to enable them to raise their profile. She also wanted the Youth Council to know about this Panel's enthusiasm and appreciation for their work and gave a standing invitation for any members of the Youth Council who wished to, to come and talk to this meeting.

9. REPORT BACK FROM COUNCILLORS

It was noted that members of the Panel were asked to briefly report back to the other Panel members on progress made on their allotted research tasks.

1. Councillor Janet Hedges reported that she had been looking into childhood obesity and in particular at the 'MEND' scheme. 'MEND' stands for "Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do it" and was started by Great Ormond Street Hospital and University College London to work with local, regional and national partners to deliver healthy lifestyle programmes for children and their families. It was a 9 to 10 week intervention aimed at reducing childhood obesity. This had proved to be more sustainable in the long run and the participation of parents was essential to the success of the programme. The recipients could be self referred, or referred by a nurse or a GP, and would be in the age range of 7 to 13. There was evidence that any improvements made were sustained over a year later. In our District this programme was carried out in partnership with the County and Tottenham Football Club. Costs were mainly covered by the NHS although we put in some resources (mainly officer time) and so did Tottenham FC. It was a very time intensive programme and one or two families did tend to drop out after the first one or two sessions as they had to commit to two sessions a week for ten weeks. There was no evaluations built into the programme but the PCT did review it after six months.

The Panel wondered what would happen once Tottenham FC moved out of the area and went to Enfield; but officers were minded to think that the club wanted to keep working in this area. They were at present having some formal discussions with them and it may be that there will eventually be some costs to the Council.

2. Councillor T Cochrane reported back to the Panel on two playgrounds, one in Debden and the other in Waltham Abbey, that were due to be completed by March 2011, at a cost of total of £44 thousand. This was a one off Capital Funding to enhance play facilities and enable disabled and able-bodied children to get together.

The Councillor had found out that there were also some special ability sports clubs that enabled kids try out various sports, including a special educational needs trampolining project for primary school children. There was also a co-ordination programme for children with Dyspraxia and a lot of arts programmes, all project based, for people with special needs. The Panel were surprised at the amount of programmes that were available. The real difficulty was communicating this to the individuals concerned who, understandably, did not want to go to a place especially set up for "disabled" people.

3. Councillor R Brookes had looked into general activities for children including the trampolining programme for Children with additional needs. She had produced a written report which she tabled and which is attached to this set of minutes. The trampolining programme was to help children who had been identified as having special educational or emotional needs to develop confidence and self esteem. Whilst offering a good aerobic activity it also helped with coordination, suppleness and poise. These skills then benefit the children, particularly those with autism, in the classroom. Currently a shortened five week course is run in association with the

'Loughton Flyers' and includes activities and games provided by the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation.

Originally the courses were funded by Essex County but this had now been withdrawn this past summer; however local head teachers felt it to be so valuable that the Rural Local Delivery Group had decided to fund the project itself for its thirteen member schools.

The Panel agreed that this was an innovative way of helping children with low self-esteem. They noted that trampolining was also used with children with physical disabilities, such as wheelchair users, by means of a special hoist and extra helpers. Officers were looking at taking this into a joint venture with Waltham Forest and members agreed that we should be looking at entering into partnership arrangements with other organisations in the current economic climate.

Councillor Brookes concluded that the Primary School Trampolining Project was an excellent scheme and that EFDC should continue supporting it.

4. Councillor L Wagland reported that:
 - She was still waiting for 'Kids Company' to get back to her.
 - She noted that Essex County Council would pay foster parents more money to avoid children being put into care as this would still save more than it would cost for putting children into care. Redbridge Council had come to this conclusion a long time ago.
 - Caroline Wiggins to report to the next meeting on the Killed or Seriously Injured statistics.
 - Councillor Knapman to report back to the next meeting.

10. UPDATING REPORT FROM OFFICERS.

Officers played the Panel a short DVD on the various events and initiatives that the council put on over the years.

Gill Wallis, the Community Development Officer, then reported on the Council's programme for children and young persons from her team's perspective.

1. Crucial Crew was for year 6s (10 to 11 years old) and held once a year at Gilwell Park where various organisations (West Essex PCT, Essex Police, Essex Fire & Rescue Services, Road Safety Officers etc.) worked with the children on safety scenarios.
2. The Reality Road show was held for older (year 9s) young people. Officers went out to secondary schools, where they gave them more sophisticated messages about drugs and road accidents etc. this was first piloted last year and proved very successful.
3. The Safer Communities Team were also having a campaign called 'Bang out of order' which centred around Halloween and Fireworks night by talking to Primary schools about behaviour and consequences.
4. A Positive Introductions programme was set up to get skate ramps and a synthetic skating rink and then use the 'captive audience' to involve them in work on drugs awareness etc.

All these were funded by the Home Office and not from Council funds.

Other things that Community Development delivers include:

- Play schemes for 5 to 11 year olds are run in the school holidays with funded places for children from disadvantaged families;
- They also have a 'play in the park' Play Ranger initiative that encourages families to use open spaces;
- In conjunction with Country Care, the Green Team initiative is delivered which encourages environmental volunteers for the future; and
- There was also the EFDC Youth Council and Young Citizen of the Year.

The Panel noted that nowadays funding was becoming scarcer, with smaller pots of money being available and more people/organisations applying for it. They decided that it was important to show how EFDC make use of its resources and how it innovates and how well it works with its partners.

Felicity Hall, the Council's Arts Officer, said they were currently raising the profile of the Cripsey Brook, nature reserve. They have an artist working with year 5 primary school children who take them on site to work on various projects. They had made a film and had created and performed a dance performance, all to launch Cripsey Brook.

The Arts section also runs a variety of events throughout the summer including:

- Various family fun days;
- Theatre groups – touring around libraries;
- Animation workshops;
- Films that are taken around to various venues in the district (as there are no cinemas in our district);
- In 2012 they will hold a 4 day film festival; and
- Dance classes for schools.

James Warwick, the Sport Development Officer, informed the Panel of three projects coming up. They were:

- Healthy Living Festival coming up in January 2011 in Ongar then Debden. This was six weeks of activities, courses and classes on food and cooking and also looking to have various sports classes;
- To re-launch the 'Body Care' for primary schools, targeting year 6 pupils, focusing on sports, fitness, biology, and healthy eating. They were looking to replace MEND with this 'Body Care' project. They would be working with the Thomas Willingale School and Shelly Primary School and would have allotments installed at both schools and organise an 'inter-generational' day of activities;
- 2012 Olympic project – working with local sport clubs to provide 4 to 6 weeks taster sessions for young people. They were looking for funding for this at present.

They were also:

- Holding a free style football competition, the prize being a 6 month contract with Tottenham Hotspur FC;
- And a 'Health Works' project which started in mid November. They had secured £80 thousand funding from Harlow Health Centre Plus. It was aimed at 11 to 19 year olds, focusing on sexual health, drugs and obesity. If successful they would run it again in the future.

Julie Chandler, Assistant Director Community Services, updated the Panel on Essex County Council's children services who had received an unfavourable Ofsted report. They had set up various trust boards and commissioned new services in October 2009 and were assessed again in summer 2010 by Ofsted who thought that they had not improved very much since the last inspection. They have since set up a new organisation, the "West Essex Local Children's Commissioning Board" with a new structure designed to change things. They were also looking into commissioning third parties to provide for adolescent and mental health services. At a recent meeting they had made it clear that only £100k was to be made available to our district for all current children services. Officers voiced their concerns about this and are in top level negotiations with ECC at present and will report the outcome to Cabinet.

11. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel then looked at their terms of reference and noted for item 3, as ECC were currently looking at how youth services are provided, the District may have some say on how it was developed.

The Panel also voiced their concerns about the ECC restructuring of the Children and Youth services in April.

Item 4 of the Terms of Reference referred to the safeguarding children's board and the Panel noted that they were not reporting back on referred cases within the seven day period specified and were taking much longer.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel agreed that the next meeting should be held at the beginning of January 2011 if possible. The Democratic Services Officer was to find a suitable date and agree it with the Panel Chairman.

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Minute Item 9

EPPING FOREST TRAMPOLINING PROJECT

*Run by the Sports Development Team, by Fabrizio Luca Ferrari & James Warwick
at Epping Sports Centre*

Background

Although the District Council has no statutory obligation to provide sports activities for children and young people, it is generally accepted as being a good thing to do for a number of reasons. The introduction of the National Curriculum and an increased emphasis on testing, results and league tables has meant that state schools, which cater for 93% of the child population, have often less time to devote to sport than previously. Research has shown that young people's participation in sport & physical activities in the UK has declined, particularly among teenage girls. The UK's figures are much less than, for example, New Zealand's or Australia's. Childhood obesity is now recognized nationally as a serious health problem. Children who exercise regularly are much more likely to do this as adults, so contributing to a healthier adult population in future, which will cost the state less!

Aims

The aim of the trampolining programme is to help children who have been identified as having special educational needs, emotional needs or social needs, develop confidence and self-esteem.

Project Delivery

(i) The project was identified following consultation with local primary head teachers who recognised that a trampolining activity would help improve self-esteem and educational attainment of many special needs pupils within mainstream education. Twenty years ago many schools, including primary schools would have had their own trampolines. As health & safety regulations have tightened many schools can no longer offer an activity like trampolining.

Pupils perceive trampolining as 'fun'. Whilst offering a good aerobic activity it also helps with coordination, suppleness and poise. These skills then benefit the children, particularly those with autism, in the classroom.

(ii) The project has been run at central locations e.g. Epping and Ongar Sports Centres, and the children have been brought in by coach from their schools accompanied by learning support assistants. Originally the project was run for ten weeks at a time. The Sports Development Team successfully applied for funding from the Performance Reward Grants offered by Essex County Council, but this funding was stopped in the summer term as part of the 'cuts' made following the change of Government in May. However, local head teachers felt it to be so valuable that the Rural Local Delivery Group has decided to fund the project itself for its thirteen member schools. The courses have been shortened to five weeks, and activities and games provided by a Tottenham Hotspur Foundation have been added to the programme.

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Evaluation

Outcomes are assessed by structured questioning of teachers (who are monitoring the children's progress) and of the children themselves. This is done before, during and after participation in the project. The attached case study notes refer. As well as improved confidence and self-esteem, the assessments show increased concentration in the classroom and improvements in reading and spelling.

Recommendations to the Task & Finish Panel

The primary schools Trampolining Project is an excellent scheme and EFDC should continue to enable the Sports Development Team to provide this programme.

The project delivers benefits which most primary schools on their own can no longer hope to do.

It successfully promotes physical and mental health in a group of children identified as having special educational, emotional and social needs.

The Sports Development Team has been very successful in attracting outside funding for the project.

Case studies - see appendix attached.

Appendix three - Case studies

Term 1

Introduction

Shelley Primary School, Ongar were the first school to take part in the trampolining project on a Wednesday morning of the first term September to December 2009. Due to the withdrawal of another school Shelley had the opportunity to refer nine pupils to the project instead of the original five.

The following case study is taken from evidence and information supplied from the Head Teacher and Head of Inclusion at Shelley Primary School, Ongar.

The following case study follows the evidence and information based improvements of one particular pupil who is said to have had the greatest improvements due to the project. Due to confidentiality they shall be named Pupil X.

We know from the initial monitoring that the Head Teacher referred Pupil X on to the course to boost listening, attention skills and particularly their independence and organisation. Before attending the course the monitoring shows, the pupils academic based outcomes; spelling and reading ages are low;

- Spelling age of 5.11 years, just over two years below his calendar age
- Reading age 6.0 two years below his calendar age

In terms of self esteem the pupils does not seem to suffer as they scored 29/36 on the self esteem questionnaire a moderately high score.

Results

At the end of the ten week term in December the second monitoring conducted shows that academic based outcomes have improved slightly;

- The pupils spelling age jumped four points to 6,2 years of age
- Reading age remained stable at 6,0 years

In terms of self esteem following participation on the trampolining project Pupil X score improved from 29/36 to 33/36 most notably the pupils answers improved in two significant areas, these were:

- | | | |
|--|--------|-------|
| | Before | After |
| • I am an important member of my class | no | yes |
| • I am good at sports | no | yes |

Also in addition to the results shown above the Head teachers also states " Pupils X has probably benefited the most from the trampolining project, they have shown tremendous gains in self confidence and self esteem.

Pupil X has MLD's and a history of speech and language difficulties and their achievement is low compared to what is expected of a child their age. However following the term on the trampolining project Pupil X is showing more effort in all school work and showing some pride in their achievements.

Prior to attending the project Pupil X could not even jump and had very poor co-ordination generally. This has improved significantly”.

Conclusions

In all the project was described as a huge success by the inclusion manager of the school, who stated “ The monitoring may not reflect many of the skills that the children have brought back into school: better social skills, interaction, turn taking, increased listening and concentration.

Term 2

In term two the project concentrated on schools in the Epping area. The following case study is taken from feedback submitted by the head of inclusion at St Andrews Primary school North Weald.

Pupil D was referred to the project due to their lack of confidence and self esteem, which has come from having a troubled home life and at certain points in their life they were even in care. This background has meant that pupil D finds it hard to concentrate at school and as a result their academic attainment suffers.

The whole aim of the trampolining project is to boost the self-esteem of the participants through the activity its self and through creating a warm, fun, safe and secure environment for the participants to learn in. As we have been successful in creating this, there has been no need to treat participants any differently to each other. The teaching methods used by the coaches means we do not criticise or force participants to learn the sport of trampolining to become better at the sport for its own sake, but rather use the benefits of trampolining (releasing of endorphins to the brain) to help the children achieve their own personal goals and boost their feeling of well being.

According to the head teacher of the school pupil D was pleased to take part in the project despite having their own trampoline at home. The pupil normally does not interact well with adults and only has one or two friends. At the start the pupil was visibly shy and only spoke to the one other pupil from the same school and made little verbal contact even with the coaches. However after only the third week pupil D had become very chatty with not only pupils from the same school but also the other school that was attending. Pupil D even became more out going willing to try new things on the trampoline that they were initially scared of. The head teacher also noted that even pupil D's mother has said that pupil D interacts better at home and their self-esteem has been visibly boosted. Also the pupils scores as on the self esteem test improved notably;

	Before	After
Teacher Questionnaire	24/50	23/36
Self Esteem Questionnaire	33/50	34/36

Case Study 2 Term 2

The following Case study is taken from a pupil who attends Theydon Bois Primary school. Pupil S was referred on to the project by the head teacher of the school as the pupil had low self esteem and did not believe in there own abilities. This lack of self esteem was put down to a difficult home life and a recent positive assessment for dyslexia. The head teacher believed if given the opportunity this pupil could be more dynamic and with a boost to self esteem the pupil could full their potential.

During participation on the project this pupils was identified as having talent and potential in the sport of trampolining. Thanks to the close partnership and links with Loughton Flyers Trampolining Club the pupils was sign posted to the club as having potential. The club has worked with the participant since there taking part in the Trampolining project last spring and on the weekend of the 26th September the participant took part in a regional competition finishing second.

Term 3

Term three of the project saw schools from rural areas like Upshire, Abridge and High Beach as well as one school from Debden in Loughton participating in the project. Unfortunately one school withdrew from the project due to conflicts with there schedules.

This case study is taken from a pupil who attends Upshire school, the evidence comes from both a mix of feed back from the head teacher as well as observations from the coaches themselves.

Pupil A was an elective mute, will not talk to adults apart from family members and during school time will not communicate with peer group or teachers.

The young person worked with the same coach through out the ten week period and so as to develop a good relationship. This relationship developed to the point that limited verbal communication actually began to take place between the young person and the coach.

The head teacher informed us that the pupil will now talk to friends and peers during school time and though they still do not talk to adults from out side the family nucleus, they are a lot more active in school and use gestures to communicate wants and needs.

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