



Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, s. 122, Cabinet is required to consider and respond to a report of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee within two months of its agreement by that Committee. In this case, Cabinet is required to do this by 26 October 2011 at the latest. Cabinet is also required to give reasons for its decisions in relating to the report, particularly in instances where it decides not to adopt one or more of the recommendations contained within the report.

<p style="text-align: center;">REPORT OF THE TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE LIVING AMBITIONS TOPIC GROUP</p>
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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 6 July 2010, the Towns & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to continue a topic group to scrutinise the Council's Living Ambitions section of the Havering Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 1.2 The following Members formed the topic group at its outset: Councillors Linda Hawthorn (Chairman), Wendy Brice-Thompson and Garry Pain.
- 1.3 The topic group met on two occasions and carried out 3 site visits with officers.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE REVIEWS (Agreed 28 July 2010)

- 2.1 To focus on specific activities and programmes available for younger people, that are provided by Culture and Leisure services. These activities and programmes, should, where possible, have specific learning outcomes

- 2.2 These would include:

Sports Development Team (coaching)
Libraries Services (Literacy and reading groups)
Music School in Havering

3.0 FINDINGS

3.1 Sports Development Team

The aim of the Sports Development Service was to provide and enable opportunities for all the community to participate in sport and physical activity allowing each individual to achieve their full potential.

The Sports Development Service worked in partnership with a wide variety of organisations including Sport England, Governing Bodies of Sport, Youth Sport Trust, London Active Partnership, schools, voluntary sports clubs and the private sector.

The Sports Development Service provided structured sporting activities for all the community.

The main areas of work were

- Sports activities and events
- Inter-borough events
- Community Football Project
- Coach Education
- Liaison with Havering Sports Council

3.2 Libraries Services

The Topic Group visited Hornchurch Library and spoke to members of the reading group. There was 14 members present.

Reading groups had been around for years but they have recently enjoyed an enthusiastic revival in many public libraries and the media in general. Library based groups aimed to provide a fun and relaxing environment where readers could enjoy and share each other's opinions and experiences of books. Refreshments were provided and everyone was welcome.

The reading group members were very enthusiastic and explained that they were like-minded people, who were able to socialise, read books that they might not have done otherwise and then discussed the book at length.

The reading group were very supportive of the services that the library provided and their only concern was that of the group closing down.

Other points raised during the visit included

- Sometimes the group needed large print books and these were not always available
- On occasions members needed to keep the books for longer than was permitted

- There used to be a member of staff in attendance but now the group was co-ordinated by members.

3.3 **Music Schools in Havering**

The Topic Group made two visits to music schools in the borough.

Havering Music School

The school had over 80 full and part time staff teaching which taught over 3,500 pupils per week in primary and secondary schools across the borough.

All primary schools received Wider Opportunities teaching to another 2,500 pupils per week

Lessons were provided to pupils of all abilities from beginner to advanced on most orchestral instruments, plus voice, drum kit, keyboard and piano.

In secondary schools the lesson times rotated to avoid missing the same lessons, as music lessons were usually taught during the day.

Pupils could work towards graded music examinations. Exam results counted towards university entrance and were valued by employers.

Pupils were encouraged to play in bands, choirs, orchestras and ensembles at evening and Saturday Music Centres.

Pupils regularly performed at concerts and other events.

Classes included brass, woodwind and percussion where a former pupil was the teacher.

Fees varied between £19 to £37 per term according to what was being taught and the length of time spent at the school.

The Topic Group also met with the friends of the music school who helped out in the café who spoke very passionately about the school and how the children enjoyed attending. Both the teachers and the friends of the school were concerned about the possible withdrawal of funding in the future which could force the school to close.

Abbs Cross Music School

The music school bought into the Havering Music School services which provided teachers and the instruments needed.

Members observed a viola lesson that only one pupil attended and were impressed by the standard of teaching and noted the advantages of one-to-one tuition.

The pupils started at the intermediate level and worked through the grades from level one to level six with exams taken at regular intervals.

All pupils were accepted to the school regardless of musical ability.

School assemblies and an Art Week were used to encourage natural motivation.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that funding for the music schools was continued
- 4.2 To enquire as to whether the Library Service could release a member of staff to co-ordinate the Library Reading Groups.
- 4.3 To look at the range of large print books available in the libraries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of its review, the topic group met and held discussions with the following people:

Ann Rennie/Ruth Gedalovitch (Libraries/Reader Development Team)
Margaret Campbell (Sports Development Team)
Isobel Liebman (Havering Music School)

Financial Implications and Risks:

None

Legal Implications and Risks:

None

Human Resources Implications and Risks:

None

Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and Risks:

None

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Background Papers List

None