

**Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee on – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**Update on Dudley's Healthy Town Programme**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Scrutiny Committee on Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education of progress made with the implementation of the Borough's Healthy Town programme, with specific reference to the Recreational element.

**Background**

2. The Healthy Towns Programme was funded from the Community Challenge Fund, which is jointly funded by the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department for Children and Family Services (DCFS).
3. The Dudley programme received £4.5 million over 3 years which came into the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and is being transferred to the Local Authority (LA) via a series of Section 256 Agreements.
4. Dudley's programme focused on three main areas:
  - The development of family healthy hubs, based in parks and open spaces.
  - The development of active green corridors.
  - Service reform – staffing and roles
5. The programme items funded from these external sources are but one part of Dudley's strategic approach to tackling the high levels of obesity in the borough link strongly to the Borough's 'Obesity Strategy'.
6. There are park hubs in each of the five Area Committee areas, providing facilities such as toilets, buildings, outdoor gym equipment, as well as activity programmes, staff and community events.
8. The active corridors have improved access and increased walking and cycling opportunities. This is being delivered through the development and implementation of cycle paths, footpaths, signage and cycle storage and training.
9. In the context of service reform the aspiration is that the influence of the Healthy Towns Programme will impact on all public sector agencies not just those with a health remit.

10. There has been an extensive promotion of health messages to assist people in taking action to improve their own health (in line with the national Change 4 Life programme). Dudley's programme is designed to have an impact on child and family health, reduce inequalities, and reduce air pollution, impact on anti-social behaviour, and increase social and community cohesion.

### **Hub Site Developments**

11. Activity Centre development over the last 2 years has seen the improvement of hub opening times. During the summer the centres were open until 7.00pm on 3 nights per week and the range of activities on offer within them has increased dramatically.
12. Operation of other physical activity areas within the Park Hubs has also improved with better tennis provision, supervision of Multi-use games areas, improved play equipment, and way marked healthy walking routes. Site signage and entrance signs have also made the Park more attractive. Disability access routes have also been developed around the Healthy Hubs sites.
13. The Active Travel Corridors development has provided 30km of cycle way in total, which is all complete and the focus for this year has been on promotion of TH infrastructure. Cycling code of conduct signs in Parks have been initiated in order to resolve conflicts between pedestrian and cycle traffic, the byelaws relaxation pilot concluded successfully and it is planned to roll this out to all parks in the Borough.

### **Healthy Towns Programme development**

14. A wide ranging programme of recreational activities has been established at the hub sites, through structured delivery of weekly activity programmes, holiday activities and expanded usage through Community groups.
15. Summer holiday programme figures

**The Table below shows the total attendances at the Healthy Towns sites over the summer holiday programme in the last 5 years.**

Year	Silver Jubilee Park	Netherton Park	The Dell	Mary Stevens Park	Huntingtree Park	Total at Hub sites
2008	94	149	n/a	26	96	365
2009	90	238	496	270	180	1274
2010	312	246	366	236	291	1451
2011	1038	366	429	1233	899	3965

2012	586	321	422	656	528	2513
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16. In 2009 there was a significant increase in attendance mainly due to the inclusion of marketing, promotional material and the national play week events organised by Children's Services in the Healthy Towns sites.
17. In 2011 the summer programme was delivered by the Ranger Service and saw significant increase in attendances with the Rangers building a network of children, families and community groups on each site. Unfortunately summer 2012 has shown a downward trend of 36% which was mainly due to the bad weather over the 6 week holiday period. On certain days torrential rain meant only 3-5 children attended the Wacky Wednesday sessions, which normally average 130 children.

### **Regular programme**

18. In September 2011 each Park Hub produced it first 6 monthly programme of activities, these have been refined and developed and now the programme provides a very comprehensive and enjoyable range of activities for all visitors to the Parks, which encourages participation in physical activity by those who may not otherwise participate.

### **Table of attendance on all ranger lead programmed activity at all sites for the last 12 months.**

	Silver Jubilee Park	Netherton Park	The Dell	Mary Stevens Park	Huntingtree Park	Total
July 11-Sept 11	1718	408	429	2139	1166	5860
Oct 11-Dec 11	803	376	0	1161	433	2,773
Jan 12-March 12	1130	983	55	1095	891	4,154
April 12-June 12	1652	1695	127	1483	1150	6,107
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,303</b>	<b>3,462</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>5,878</b>	<b>3,640</b>	<b>18,894</b>

19. Investment in Ranger staff development and training, funded through the PCT, has resulted in officers being trained via the nationally recognised industry standard Wright Foundation, GP referral course this enables direct referrals from primary care , gym instructors, post natal activity sessions, and Public Health Schools programmes. Two Rangers have now been trained in Nordic Walking to level 2, and can now deliver sessions at a much higher standard. The local Orienteering organisation Harlequins has delivered

training to the staff, and events management and customer services training has also been delivered.

Dudley now has a group of staff which are the envy of many local authorities.

Each Activity Centre offers the following range of activities:-

- Health Walks
- Nordic Walking
- Green Fit
- Beginners running
- Multi skills activities
- Family sports sessions
- Buggy Walks/ toddlers sessions
- Beginners running
- 60+ Gentle exercise
- After School clubs
- Bootcamp
- Ladies Boxercise
- Lads and Dads Football
- Family orienteering
- Antenatal exercise

Activities provided by the PCT at Activity Centres include:-

- Slimmer's Kitchen
- Get Cooking
- Stop Smoking clinics
- Children's Weight management classes
- The expert patients programme
- Health Trainers 1-1's
- Fit Blokes

### **Partners in delivery**

20. Age Uk Dudley, the Tandrusti programme and Action Heart have all been commissioned by the PCT to deliver at the Healthy Hub sites.
21. Police, Friends Groups, Youth Services, and Public Health are all key holders and can access the Activity Centres through usual booking arrangements. This process was developed in order to provide extended out of hours coverage of the parks in the early evening. Adult and Community Learning and Me2 are also operating from some of the Activity Centres.
22. Pilates, Tai Chi, Military Fitness programmes are also being offered to residents from Healthy Hubs and in other town Parks such as Quarry Bank Park, Wollescote Park and Wordsley Park. Parks Services charge the activity provider for these types of sessions. Bookings can now be made for rooms

and for use of the Park for physical activity programmes through the normal fees and charges process. The market is growing for this type of activity across the Borough, and small businesses can operate alongside the provision that the Local Authority delivers.

23. The Ranger Service is also successfully delivering physical activity programmes at the Dell for Dudley Stroke group, there are 25 members of the group signed up to the regular weekly sessions. Members of the group have remarked at how the sessions are really assisting with their rehabilitation. The service has also delivered physical activity sessions to young people in Pensnett with the "Look Out" project which provided an 8 week programme which was well received.

**Table of attendance for all activity including partner activity recorded on Healthy Hub sites in last 12 months**

	Silver Jubilee Park	Netherton Park	The Dell	Mary Stevens Park	Huntingtree Park	Total
July11-Sept 11	1718	408	429	2139	1166	5860
Oct 11-Dec 11	976	654	0	2239	726	4,595
Jan 12-March12	1255	1288	155	2256	1256	6,210
April 12-June 12	2303	2346	127	3019	2063	9,858
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,252</b>	<b>4,696</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>9,653</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>26,523</b>

**Schools programmes**

24. The Rangers have been connecting closely with their local schools initially providing "Jump on Board", a 12 week nutrition and physical activity programme implemented by the PCT. This has been delivered to Key stage 2.
25. The PCT have also facilitated "Team toolkit", which provides team building sessions for teenagers. This has been delivered to a number of groups.
26. Environmental activities have also now been developed. The Ranger Team has designed a new environmental programme of activities to be delivered on the hub sites for key stage 1 and 2. Existing links to schools developed through the Jump on Board sessions will be explored further.

**Incentivised Sessions**

27. The Walk to Wimbledon Campaign was a physical activity programme that was run from Healthy Towns Hubs and a progress chart was available in the activity centres for participants to see how well they were achieving their target. All Dudley residents were eligible to participate through publicity campaign, registration was in local Park Hubs which helped to bring in extra participants to programmed activity.
28. This was a well supported walking initiative that saw over 350 Dudley residents sign up for the New Years challenge of walking 126 miles in the duration of five months. Due to the success of the campaign it will continue to be run on an annual basis.

### **Run England Programme**

29. The Run England project has been set up in partnership with Walsall PCT, Sandwell Council and Wolverhampton College and now comes under the umbrella of Run Black Country. The objective of the programme is to increase participation at entry level throughout the Black Country. The Activity Centres have been running regular running sessions to contribute to Run England objectives and some external funding has been made available through the programme

### **Outdoor Gym development and evaluation**

30. The provision of outdoor gyms at Healthy Hub and other park sites has proved very successful in engaging residents and park visitors in physical activity. The gyms not only provide a platform for supervised fitness sessions, but are available to any user at any time of the day, and unlike indoor gym equipment do not require gym induction. The gyms have been evaluated as the single most influential factor in increasing activity levels.
31. The service is exploring ways of establishing outdoor gyms in other Parks, and has been working with Friends groups at a number of the main park sites to explore funding opportunities. There is already a new gym at Quarry Bank Park and the respective Friends groups are eager to see gyms established at both Buffery Park, and Green Park.

### **Anti- social behaviour in Parks**

32. Anecdotal evidence from Friends groups, Park users, Police and on site staff has stated that there has been a considerable reduction in antisocial behaviour in Park sites which are offering the new Healthy Towns Package of activities.
33. Not only do increased numbers of visitors on site act as a deterrent to nuisance, but the Rangers can focus attention on nuisance and either engage with the youngsters through sport and physical activity or call in the Police when necessary.

34. This has been most evident on Silver Jubilee Park in Coseley, which used to be a very poorly attended park with significant levels of nuisance crime. Levels of nuisance have decreased dramatically and as more people feel safe using the Park, visitor numbers increase.

### **Olympic Legacy**

35. As part of the Olympic Torch Relay in June 2012 the Ranger service provided Olympic themed activities at Silver Jubilee Park, Coseley throughout the afternoon and worked with over 900 people on the day
36. A 'Big Lunch' Diamond Jubilee celebration was organised with the Friends groups at Huntingtree Park. This event offered the opportunity for a street party in the Park with sports activities provided by the Rangers.
37. Cultural Olympiad performances were held at Huntingtree and Mary Stevens Parks. The Dudley Performing Arts service worked with a number of organisations to provide a dance based performance around play equipment.
38. There was also a National Band stand marathon event which took place at Mary Stevens Park funded through the Cultural Olympiad.

### **Green Flag Award recognition**

39. One of the outputs required by the Department of Health funding package for the Healthy Towns programme was to achieve Green Flag status for the Healthy Towns Parks. Two of the Parks have now achieved this status and have been recognised by peers from other Local Authorities for the considerable investment in the Parks. The Authority will be invited to the National Awards ceremony in November 2012.
40. The remaining Parks will be assessed sometime in the future and it is likely that Huntingtree Park will be submitted for assessment next year. However Mary Stevens Park will not be submitted for assessment for some time as we will link that to the Heritage Lottery fund application that is currently being prepared. It is unlikely that the Dell will be put forward for assessment given that it is not a 'park' in the context of the Green Flag's requirements for sites.

### **Programming for 2012-13**

41. Autumn/Winter programme development and operation in other parks across Dudley Borough; new leaflets are available in the Members room detailing the programme.
42. Walk fit is the Council's successful Health Walks scheme which has been operated by a committed team of Health Walk volunteers, and is delivered in some countryside locations. The Leasowes, Saltwells and Himley Walks are the most popular with attendances ranging from 40 – 80 on a weekly basis.

43. Walkfit will be extended to cover additional parks in the Borough through the next autumn / winter programme. There will also be provision of Buggy walks at Buffery Park and Wollescote Park. Nordic walking at Quarry Bank Park and a more regular Health Walk at Wordsley Park. These walks will be developed by the ranger service with the intention of building up the volunteer base of leaders for these walks
44. Volunteers are all trained to national health walk leader standard, and will also be provided with basic first aid training.

### **National and Local Evaluation of the Healthy Towns Programme**

45. The National evaluation of the Healthy Towns programme is being carried out by Queen Marys College, University of London. The results of this study will be available September 2013. A lot of the Dudley officers and participants were all interviewed by researchers in November 2011. This report will look at whole process of the Healthy Community challenge fund.
46. Local independent evaluation was commissioned via Worcester University, this research ran from 2009 to end of summer 2011 and shows very positive outcomes. Further research from Worcester University will be carried out over the next 2 years until the end of the Ranger led intervention.

### **Dudley leading as an example of Best Practice**

47. The Dudley Health Towns programme has been seen as a great success nationally, and is considered to be one of the better pilots run through the National obesity programme 2009-2011. The National evaluation team have looked at literature and research reviews alongside the eight healthy towns outcomes and approaches and have said that this is "one of the best examples of this work across the country". The development of partnerships across the public and voluntary sector has been hailed as particularly significant in the development of the project.
48. The following opportunities have meant that the findings from the Dudley project have been promoted to other Local Authorities, PCTs and other organisations interested in the delivery of health and wellbeing programmes within a green space environment.
  - Green Space Leaders programme, and National conference 2011
  - West Midlands Excellence in Public Health Conference April 2012
  - Birmingham City Council Head of Sports and Voluntary organisation visits
  - Chief Executive of Sport England site visits
  - National Advisory group on outdoor gym provision and safety.



- Green Flag submission for Innovation award 2012

### **Finance**

49. The funding for the Dudley programme is £4.5 million from the Department of Health over 3 years which has come into the PCT and been transferred to the Local Authority via a series of Section 256 Agreements. In addition, £200,000 was also allocated from the Council's Local Transport Plan funding received from the Department for Transport to part fund the costs of delivering the active travel corridors.
50. The programme levered in an additional £450k for development work on the Dudley no 2 canal and was used as match and support for £362k LSTF for active travel developments around the Brierley Hill and Quarry Bank areas.

### **Law**


51. Part 1 of the Local government Act 2000 empowers the Council to take action to implement measures it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.

### **Equality Impact**

52. The programme is borough wide, inclusive and accessible to all in line with the principles of Dudley's inequalities strategy.

### **Recommendations**

53. The Regeneration, Culture and Adult Education Scrutiny Committee notes the progress with the implementation of the Healthy Towns programme and comments accordingly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.B. Millar'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**J.B. MILLAR**  
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### List of Background Papers

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