

APPENDIX 2

Culture and Leisure Services

In terms of Culture and Leisure Services contributing to the Council's efforts to prevent Crime and Anti-social Behaviour there are a number of 'indirect' contributions that the service can claim to make.

Evidence of the impact that Sport and the Arts make to the Community Safety agenda have been identified in research undertaken by both Sport England and the Arts Council. Specifically these are as of impact have been identified as follows:-

1. Positive Activities:- Sport and Arts participation has been found to have a beneficial impact over both the short and long-term . Research has found a link between participation in Sports and Arts by people in their youth reducing the likelihood that they became socially excluded as adults. Furthermore research into Volunteering by young people identified that sports volunteering plays an important role in developing young people as active citizens who engage positively in their community. Sport has been identified as the most popular volunteering activity for young people and was also identified as particularly effective at engaging hard to reach groups, including disaffected young men.
2. Supporting Young People and Preventing Anti-social Behaviour:- Evidence from the national programme 'Positive Futures' showed that many young people were helped across a range of social issues, which included the propensity to commit anti-social behaviour through their involvement in sport and leisure activities.
3. Cohesion and Fear of Crime:- the Institute of Community Cohesion states that sport and leisure has a key part to play in developing social capital and facilitating cross cultural understanding. The refurbishment of facilities and spaces alongside the development of activity programmes has revitalised areas, changed patterns of use and perceptions of safety, contributing to the regeneration of an area.

In practical terms the Culture and Leisure Division has various examples of how the Council's support of Sport, Arts and Leisure activities delivers the impacts identified above.

In terms of 'Positive Activities' the Sport and Physical Activity Section

1. Leisure Centre Activities and Clubs
2. Sports Development Programmes and Sports Club support
3. Park Ranger Activities

1. All of the Council's Leisure Centres offer a wide range of clubs, classes and sessions for children and young people and the recently introduced Junior Membership Scheme has increased the offer and accessibility of facilities still further. Each centre has Learn to Swim, Swimming Clubs and Sports specific coaching programmes whilst Crystal Leisure Centre has a specific programme of activities on Friday and Saturday nights in an attempt to address the issue of young people not having anything available to do on these specific nights.
2. The Sports Development Service provides a general programme of activities run directly in partnership with local sports clubs. Activezone and Inclusive Active zone, Sportslink and the extensive summer Holiday Programme provide a wide range of opportunities for children and young people to engage in purposeful, positive activities and in 2012 the team delivered some 76,000 hours of physical activity to children and young people. Sports clubs are able to access advice and support for grant applications and specific training courses have been delivered to make clubs better able to deal with children and young people who exhibit challenging behaviour.
3. Throughout all holiday periods the Council provides an extensive range of activities for children and young people which has been added to by the Park Ranger Service, based at the Healthy Town hub sites, alongside the regular programme of weekly activities.

In addition to the general list 'Positive Activities' approach of providing facilities and programmes available to all children and young people the Council and partner organisations have also participated in 'targetted' programmes and initiatives.

For example Dudley Leisure Centre has worked with local police on a project for children from one of the local neighbourhoods where equipment was purchased (Dance Mats and Trixter Bikes) to provide activity sessions for an 'at risk' group. Similarly to 'Look Out' project utilises The Dell Stadium on Friday evenings for Sport and Social activities. 'Get Going/Keep Going' project based at Crystal Leisure Centre which provides holiday activities for Looked After Children has been so successful that a weekly session is being introduced.

Alongside the Council's own direct provision the service has worked with a number of sports clubs to provide targeted activities in club settings for 'at risk' young people. Specifically both Lions and Priory Boxing Clubs have been particularly successful in identifying young people within their catchment areas who are potentially at risk of offending and by providing them with exercise programmes have managed to channel these young peoples energy into positive activities.

In recent years the Council has seen the regeneration of a number of parks through the use of its own resources and significant levels of external funding that has been attracted to the borough.

Funding from the likes of 'Transforming Your Space', 'Liveability' and 'Play Pathfinder' saw many areas/parks benefitting from physical improvements including new/refurbished play areas, provision of Multi Use Games Areas and other features.

In terms of demonstrating the positive impact in respect of reducing levels of anti-social behaviour, changing patterns of use and revitalising an area perhaps the best example that can be given is from the Healthy Towns Project, specifically Silver Jubilee Park, Coseley. Whilst the purpose of the project is primarily 'health focussed' ie an attempt to address rising levels of obesity there have clearly been other benefits associated with it and the regeneration of Silver Jubilee Park and its use by the community is one of the most obvious.

Prior to the implementation of the Healthy Towns Project Silver Jubilee Park suffered high levels of vandalism and anti-social behaviour with Police attending call-outs to the site on an almost daily basis and damage to park facilities a regular occurrence. There was little formal use of the park given that people felt unsafe and the park had a careworn appearance.

The injection of funding from the Healthy Towns project enabled a significant number of physical improvements to the park to be implemented and Park Rangers were stationed there to provide a community information engagement link and develop programmes for the use of the park in partnership with the Friends of Silver Jubilee Park and other community organisations.

The impact has been remarkable with the site transformed into a vibrant public park, extensively used by the local community with minimal levels of vandalism and anti-social behaviour now being recorded.

Underpinning all sports and leisure activity in the borough is a robust child protection policy which is recognised nationally by Barnardos as an example of good practice. Through this the Council ensures that its responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and young people engaged in sport and leisure activities is properly discharged through appropriate staff training, recruitment procedures and advisory services to other providers.