

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE
16 SEPTEMBER 2004**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**THE OVAL PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. To provide the Committee with information regarding a consultation project carried out with children and young people who live in The Oval Managed Neighbourhood.
- 1.2. To advise the Committee of the children and young people's recommendations for facilities and activities in the neighbourhood following the verbal presentation at North Dudley Area Committee on 13 July 2004.
- 1.3. To seek Committee support for the work of the Neighbourhood Manager and partner agencies to develop an action plan with the children and young people to address their needs for activities and facilities in their area.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Following the appointment of a Neighbourhood Manager for The Oval Neighbourhood, Upper Gornal, surveys of residents views were carried out on a wide range of issues, including service provision, community safety, employment, the environment and activities for children and young people.
- 2.2. Initial results of the surveys indicated that there was concern from a large number of residents regarding a lack of facilities for children and young people in the area. This was a view given by adults, children and young people alike.
- 2.3. It was decided by the Neighbourhood Manager that engaging with children and young people should therefore be a priority, as this would have a major impact on the community and improve the quality of life for children and adults. A partnership working group was established with several agencies, including Barnados, Dudley Council for Voluntary Service, West Midlands Police and officers of the Community Education and Development Division to determine the best way of engaging with the children and young people to determine their views.
- 2.4. Members of Dudley Youth Council joined with the partnership group to make a bid to the Birmingham Foundation Local Network Fund for funding to appoint a consultant organisation, Play Train, to carry out a consultation project.

- 2.5 The bid was successful and a programme of activities with the children and young people commenced on 4 May 2004. The programme was carried out in separate sessions with 4-11 year olds and 12 – 16 year olds.
- 2.6 The project was developed and facilitated by Play Train, but to ensure future sustainability, the Neighbourhood Manager, the Development Officer for Involving Young People and Dudley's Member of the Youth Parliament participated in the consultation process with the children and young people.

3.0 THE PLAY TRAIN YOUNG CONSULTANTS

- 3.1 The children and young people were recruited as “young consultants” either through contacts already made by the Neighbourhood Manager or through partnership working with High Arcal School.
- 3.2 Structured, but informal sessions were held weekly at The Quarry club. A day trip to various sites in Birmingham, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Dudley gave the young people the opportunity to explore play activities outside of the immediate neighbourhood.
- 3.3 The children and young people presented their recommendations to relevant Council officers at meetings in June and July.
- 3.4 The recommendations made by the children and young people are as follows:

3.4.1. 4 - 11 year olds

- There should be somewhere safe for children and families to play. This area ideally would include an inside and outside area.
- An inside area should include somewhere to –
 - Sit and eat
 - Dress up
 - Make things – art and craft
 - Play games
 - Build things
 - Dance
 - X Box games
 - Computer
 - Cars
 - Read together
- An outside area should include –
 - Slide
 - Monkey bars
 - Rope swing
 - Cat and mouse swing
 - Swing ball
 - Parallel rope bridge
 - Area for football

- Basket ball hoop
- Bikes and tricycles
- Table tennis
- Sand
- Bark flooring
- Cobweb structure
- Different size equipment for young children
- Adults to keep the children safe and stop the playground being vandalised.
- Fencing to keep nasty people out
- Space to build dens
- Wheelchairs to play on
- Water

3.4.2. 12-16 year olds

- There should be an outside area with the following things:
 - Skate park
 - Multi sports pitch for tennis, football, basketball
 - Metal litter bins
 - Benches
 - One large and two small youth shelters (so that girls can be separate to boys if they want to)
 - There should be a fenced off area to protect from dogs
 - There should be a designated dogs area
 - Cat and mouse swing
 - Wooden climbing structures and balancing pole
 - Security lighting for darker evenings
 - Security cameras
 - Police presence

- The Quarry building and youth club would be more inviting if the following changes were made:
 - Decorate the outside of the building with a community arts worker to facilitate the project which would consist of only young people's work
 - Make a proper sign for the building that includes the name, activities, times of opening etc. This needs to be much bigger, brighter and inviting.
 - Table games such as Monopoly, Guess Who? and Cluedo
 - Organised activities like – art and craft, trips, dance workshops, girls club, self-defence etc.
 - The youth club should be open more regularly. Separate nights for 10-13 year olds and 13-17 year olds.
 - Play schemes/activities should be organised over school holidays.
 - During the youth club there should be an organised indoor games session
 - We would like a computer with internet access so that we can use it to do homework

- The lights inside the club should have security covers to stop balls from shattering them.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The Committee note the contents of this report and agree to receive further reports from the Neighbourhood Manager on the progress of this project.

4.2 The Committee support the work of the Area Youth and Community Team and Neighbourhood Manager in developing an action plan with the children and young people to enable them to deliver the recommendations made in their report.

5. FINANCE

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however, once an action plan has been developed there will be a need to seek funding, possibly external or through a bid to the Capital Allocations sub-committee of the North Dudley Area Committee.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 This report has positive implications for the Council's Equal Opportunities Policies in that Neighbourhood Management seeks to improve the opportunities for socially excluded people living in priority neighbourhoods.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That Committee accept the proposals set out in paragraph 4 above.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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