

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

<p>THE INVOLVEMENT OF SPORT AND LEISURE WITH CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER, 2006.</p>
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**BARRY COPPINGER – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY
SAFETY AND LEISURE**

**Ian Parker
Director of Environment**

23rd November 2006

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To raise Member awareness of the activities delivered to Children Looked After, by the Sport & Leisure service in 2006.
2. To outline further opportunities that may be developed to enable children looked after to access sport and physical activity opportunities.

BACKGROUND

3. Sport and Leisure Services sit in Community Protection within the Environment Department. The service delivers sport and physical activity opportunities to the people of Middlesbrough. The service comprises the following facilities:-

Rainbow Leisure Centre
The Neptune Centre
Clairville Stadium
Ormesby Sports Complex Sports Development Team

Southlands Centre
Municipal Golf Centre
Acklam Sports Centre

4. Sport and Leisure is one of the few local authority services that operate in a commercial environment. Users must choose to engage with physical activity opportunities and then elect to use the service as opposed to those of private providers in the town.
5. The service carries an income target in excess of £3million for the financial year 2006-2007. This creates a need to balance social objectives with income generation. The service must continue to compete and to provide the quality and diversity of opportunity that customers have come to expect. Good service is recognised by both customers and external agencies, the service is a Charter Mark organisation and holds Investors in People status.
6. Further to a report submitted to the Corporate Parenting Board on behalf of Sport & Leisure in April 2005, the service engaged in consultation with the Children Looked After, Planning and Implementation Group and with the Sport, Leisure, Art and Culture Subgroup in November and December 2005.
7. Of the various opportunities that were presented in the April 2005 report, the Sport & Leisure Service were asked to provide:-
 - a) Holiday activities, and
 - b) Football coaching exclusively for Children Looked After
8. £3300 was sought and secured by the Sport & Leisure Service from a Big Lottery fund administered by Children Families and Learning Department to provide holiday activities and football coaching as well as to help support a local football festival for Children Looked After

SPORT AND LEISURE SERVICE WORKING WITH LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE

9. The following outlines the service provided to Looked After Children in 2006 by the Sport & Leisure Service with Big Lottery Funding:

Easter School Holidays

- Ice Skating and Swimming at Billingham Forum (2 x ½ days)
- Orienteering in Errington Woods (1 x ½ day)
- Outdoor Activities at Carlton Lodge (1 x day)

Summer School Holidays

- Horse Riding (1 x 1/2 day)
- Outdoor Activities at Carlton Lodge for older children (1 x day)
- Outdoor Activities at Carlton Lodge (1 x day)
- Surfing (1 x 1/2 day)
- High Ropes (1 x ½ day)

January-December

- Football coaching during a Tuesday Evening Youth Club for Children Looked After at Manor Farm Youth Club

September

- Co-ordinating role in the Tees Valley Ignite Football Festival event held at Eston Football Academy on 3rd September
10. These activities were in addition to ongoing work the Sport and Leisure service does with Middlesbrough's schools. Any young people being looked after accessing these schools are able to participate in the activities on offer.
11. A Sports Development Officer worked with the group and was able to form and build on relationships with the children enabling trust and respect. Children formed friendships, encouraging co-operation and support for each other. Young people who struggled with confidence in the activities were helped and supported by each other to complete tasks and gain a feeling of achievement. Most of the young people took part in activities that they had never dreamt of attempting and, for many, they had to overcome personal apprehension and fears. The changes that took place for the individuals, enabled them to take part in other activities with different young people, new leaders and other coaches. They gained confidence to mix with other children during the 'Ignite Football' days. New friendships were formed between young people, some of whom have kept in touch after the events.
12. **Outcomes of the Year's Activity Programme**
- 41 of the most vulnerable Middlesbrough children took part in the Easter and summer activity programmes. This was almost certainly the first opportunity that these young people had to engaged in. The range of activities included surfing, horse riding, orienteering and more adventurous activities such as raft building, canoeing and climbing.
 - 34 vulnerable children from Middlesbrough, Stockton, Sunderland and Gateshead took part in a soccer skills event organised largely by Middlesbrough Council's Sport & Leisure team at Eston Football Academy
 - Around 20 children took part in multi-sports and football coaching at the Looked After Children Youth Club in Coulby Newham on Tuesday evenings.
 - The range of activities selected provided stimulation and excitement and a variety of physical and mental challenges. Lessons learned during the Easter programme led to revisions in the Summer programme

- Activities encouraged the children to participate in physical activities and sports, and in the view of professional social workers, enabled young people to increase confidence in their own ability, increased their trust in others and showed them how to work as part of a team.
- Anecdotal comments from social workers who accompanied children commented as follows: “One young person came back from an outdoor activity with the biggest smile that I have ever seen, she didn't know you could do that in foster care, it was brilliant;” “young people have become friends during football tournaments, exchanging text numbers and continuing to meet after group events;” and “shy children have become more confident, particularly during the outdoor activities.”
- It is not yet possible to assess whether children have become more physically active , or developed new interests over the long term
- A survey is currently being carried out to assess children’s views on the activities

CAPACITY TO FURTHER DEVELOP WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER

13. The service is keen to further support the corporate care of ‘Children Looked After’ through provision of and participation in sport and physical activities. As well as enabling more recreational use, the service is keen to develop more structured programmes that are specific to the needs of particular young people. Funding will be required to enable this and attempts will be made to secure this from external sources.
14. The service must remain mindful of the need to meet income and expenditure targets as well as support corporate objectives, thus any initiative must be appropriately funded, should not unduly displace or disadvantage other users and should not be detrimental to the overall service.
15. The following are suggested areas of work that may be developed to enable greater levels of participation by young people being looked after. At this stage ideas are still to be developed and final costs are not suggested. Booking and consent forms may be a requisite for many of the activities.

IDEAS FOR ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT

16. Ideas for activity development indicated in the previous report remain available if demand and resources are available. These include:
 - A junior ‘Healthy Habit Card’ that would enable access to swimming and ‘Teen Tone Zone’ or “Kids Power” gym sessions
 - Pre-purchased allocation of places on coaching courses or on holiday activity courses

- Vouchers for free or discounted access to recreational swimming sessions.
 - Family Leisure Link Cards to be allocated to families fostering young people to be re- visited.
 - Provision of activity courses that could be delivered specifically for young people being looked after, as delivered this year.
 - Information made available regarding local sports opportunities
 - Skill based courses such as life saving and first aid skills or junior sports leaders awards.
 - Promotion and induction to junior fitness sessions such as Teen Tone Zone or Kids Power.
17. As well as the areas suggested above the Sport and Leisure Service would seek to be responsive to client and customer need. The service will also seek to involve colleagues in Streetscene in terms of provision of activity in parks and countryside spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive that a successful programme of activities has been delivered in 2006 for Children Looked After, as a result of close working between Social Workers and Sport & Leisure staff. This was made possible as a result of external funding.
- b. Members are advised that uptake of further opportunities would be beneficial and is possible, but will require funding if this is not to become a revenue budget pressure within the Sport and Leisure service.

REASONS

18. The Council is responsible for ensuring that the best possible outcomes are achieved in relation to the health of Children Looked After by the local authority.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Corporate Parenting Board Report; "THE CURRENT AND POTENTIAL INVOLVEMENT OF MIDDLESBROUGH SPORT AND LEISURE WITH CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER", 21 April 2005

Author: Diane Simon, Service Manager, Sport and Leisure Service
Telephone: 01642 515606

Address: Stewart Park, The Grove, Marton, Middlesbrough TS7 8AR
Website: <http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk>