

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
19 JULY 2007

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF YOUTH PROVISION

1. Overcoming the Problems

Encouraging more volunteer opportunities for this age group.

5.1 The Councils should set the example by looking at their own activities and find volunteering opportunities for young people in environment, care, events etc. They should publicise the need and responsibility of organisations to bring on the “next generation” and encourage them to identify opportunities for young people to become involved in suitable voluntary organisations. They can ask those they fund and others to do this.

Enabling young people to find volunteer opportunities.

5.2 There are volunteering web-sites for adults and older young people, e.g. Millennium Volunteers, Community Service Volunteers etc. but nothing we can find for young people in the 13 to 16/17 age group. Currently those that find opportunities do so through friends and family. The young people’s suggestion is that volunteering opportunities should be advertised in school and information on a youth web-site would be a good way to publicise opportunities.

Building the confidence to try volunteering.

5.3 For young people who are not encouraged or introduced to volunteering by their home and family this encouragement comes from school, church and youth service. The extended schools initiative should be used to introduce young people to youth service activities that support Youth Achievement Awards, Youth Arts Awards, Duke of Edinburgh programmes and volunteering opportunities. The skills needed to achieve this are available in the Youth Service, South Hill Park, voluntary sector and some non-teaching school staff.

Knowing what is available.

5.4 The Working Group looked for a young people’s web-site that identified “things to do and places to go” for young people. There are national sites, pieces of information on a variety of local sites, e.g. sports clubs’ sites, some links through the clubs information on the Council web-site but it appears that there is no site that brings together things for young people to do.

5.5 It is suggested that the Council promotes a web-site that highlights things to do for young people that will be easily found. It should range, as our audit did over all sectors, so maybe commercial sector advertising or sponsorship could support this activity.

Adult volunteers to support youth volunteering and activities.

5.6 Publicity, recruitment and training are things to which the Council could contribute. The training, support and Criminal Record Bureau checks are an aspect of this for all voluntary youth workers, not just those connected with the Youth Service. It could be a vehicle for supporting the development of “youth

places” in existing organisations and overcoming concerns about bringing in younger members and child protection requirements. The Council could also facilitate insurance information and arrangements.

Access costs & transport.

- 5.7 We noted that one access obstacle is paying a sizeable bill up-front; would it be feasible to pay in several instalments rather than requiring the full cost at the outset? The Council could be promoting free taster sessions, both at its own facilities and with other providers. The Working Group thinks that the net cost of providing membership of Bracknell Forest Borough Council facilities for all children resident in the Borough for free or for a nominal fee may not be great. (Preliminary investigation suggests that an initial loss of income in the order of £55k may result but this could possibly be off set by increased usage and associated income generation.) If this could be introduced it would mean that all young people would have access at member prices not just those whose parents purchase membership for them.
- 5.8 It is difficult to suggest solutions to the cost and availability of transport but if the e+ card is developed for transport applications it could open a way to reduced fares for young people up to age 16 or in full-time education.

The town centre.

- 5.9 The young people’s comments are a timely reminder that as the new town centre is being developed consideration is given to how this age group will have a positive place in it.
- “There is nothing in the town centre; will the new town centre have things for us?”
 - “Could there be a no-alcohol club for young people? Or a youth café?”

The Working Group has not had time to take this further but recommend that the Council’s Town Centre regeneration team seek the views of the Youth Forum on what would be appropriate and work to deliver facilities for young people in the new town centre.

Much of the town centre is not being replaced and the opportunity to deliver something sooner should be taken if it arises.