

# **REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR**

**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny Co-ordination

**REPORT OF:** Councillor Maton

**TITLE:** 'Delivering Safe Spaces for Young People, Sustainable and Accessible Youth Facilities'

**DATE:** 29th January 2009

**VENUE:** Central London

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## **1. Recommendation**

## **2. Background**

Following proposals to change the nature of the provision of youth services in Coventry, it was thought that this event would offer the opportunity to gain experience and ideas from other projects around the country. The issues raised at the event about the way facilities for young people are provided, could form the basis of further discussion about the way forward for youth service provision in Coventry.

### **Woking YMCA**

There were a number of presentations including one from the Chief Executive of Woking YMCA that addressed many of the themes touched upon by other speakers. He was talking about the development of a youth centre in Woking. The key points made were:

- Importance of consultation with stakeholders, potential funders and young people prior to the development of projects.
- Setting up networks of organisations involved with young people was seen as important and this included talking to schools about how they could be linked into provision within schools.
- It was important to fill Youth Centres with programmes but also ensure they were linked to the revenue streams that would make the youth centre project pay
- Having a central location was crucial for their project's success but this also required investment in ensuring that there was adequate transport for young people to enable them to access the facilities

The next project the YMCA is involved with will include housing for young people as an additional element.

The YMCA centre is open 6 days a week until 10pm – and safe and accessible transport is a key contributor to the success of the project.

### **Young people with disabilities**

One presentation highlighted the needs of young people with disabilities. This was a presentation by young people themselves and they stressed the need for youth provision to be young people led and centred. This requires “a service that will offer to all young people a range of ways to participate and make informed choices”.

Provision also needed to be inclusive, focusing on how buildings and services could be designed and delivered around disabled young people requirements as promoted by disabled young people themselves rather than determined by their impairments or ‘special needs’.

### **myplace**

A presentation by a representative of the Big Lottery’s **myplace** programme I am sure left those areas who have not been successful in gaining youth provision through this route, envious. This is a programme that has provided a number of multi-million pound centres across the country.

One example was Fairplay in Chesterfield (<http://www.fair-play.co.uk>). This is a mixed development of new-build and refurbishment on one site, with a wide range of services and activities. As well as a range of youth activities it hosts services such as Connexions, Women’s Aid and local colleges also attend.

It is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector led project with a local authority partner. One of the keys to the project winning funding was the level of consultation with young people. The centre is open 9am to 8pm and up to 10pm on weekends and school holidays.

### **Other presentations**

These echoed points made by other speakers, including the importance of accessibility (most of the projects given as examples were large scale buildings located at the heart of a community with a large catchment area). High quality design and the need to involve young people in that process was stressed on a number of occasions. Provision often involved a partnership of organisations but led either by a local authority (County Councils were prominent in the examples given) or by 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations.

### **Cost of attending**

Conference	£402.50 (incl VAT)
Travel	£120.00

### **3. Benefits**

The conference provided a range of examples of youth provision outside of the traditional, local authority run, youth service. It identified a level of provision that went well beyond that which young people in Coventry currently have available.

A number of principles were highlighted, primarily:

- involvement of young people in all aspects of the design and delivery of provision,
- scale - there was an emphasis on large scale, central buildings open for 6 or 7 days a week for 10+hours a day, meeting the needs of a range of age groups and providing a range of additional services – but the question of fair access and public transport was never fully addressed
- quality – the quality of equipment and materials should be high
- partnership – a mix of providers and agencies involved in these projects

#### 4. Value for Money

Having identified number of positives from the event – I would consider that the cost of the event and, in particular the conference material (basically a set of PowerPoint slides) was expensive. However, I would emphasise the need to look at examples from outside of the City and to look more strategically at the way that services for young people are developed.

This event brought together a number of good examples and at a time when these were not readily accessible through other sources.

List of background papers

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Papers open to public inspection

**Description of paper:**

**Location**

**Approved by Cabinet on:**

**Report:**