



Report of the East North East Area Manager

North East (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 23rd June 2008

Subject Review of the Palace Youth Project

Electoral Wards Affected:
Chapel Allerton

Ward members consulted
(referred to in this report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function Delegated Executive Function available for Call In Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

This report seeks to provide the Area Committee with a review of The Palace Youth Project transferred to Environment & Neighbourhoods Department on 1st February 2008. The responsibilities for the management of the centre has been delegated to the Area Committee and this will be formally covered by the Area Function Schedule which is due to be approved by the Executive Board.

The report outlines current and proposed youth provision delivered from the facility and opportunities to expand and improve this provision.

The reports asks the Area Committee to consider the review, address the issues that have emerged and decide on further action.

Purpose of this report

1. This report provides a review of the Palace Youth Project. The review has been undertaken in the context of the Community Centres Review approved by the Executive Board. It serves to understand current provision delivered from the project and across the inner north east area and help inform decisions about future provision and investment. The implementation of this review has been agreed a priority by the East North East Area Manager prompted by the annual budget cost of running the centre in comparison to its use prior to this review.
2. The report seeks to inform Members about:
 - The current level of use
 - Revenue budget information
 - The condition of the centre and backlog maintenance requirements
 - Opportunities to improve use of the building and expand provision

Background information

3. Previous reports to the Council's Executive Board and the Area Committee have covered the community centres review and the agreement of proposals to transfer responsibilities for community centres to the Area Committees. Two directly managed centres, the Mandela Centre and The Palace Youth Centre, have been transferred. The Area Committee now have responsibilities for this portfolio of centres and this will be formally covered by the Area Function Schedule which is due to go to the next meeting of Executive Board.
4. As outlined in the report to the Area Committee in June 2006, a number of responsibilities will also be transferred to the Area Management Team to carry out on behalf of the Area Committee, these are
 - Liaising with users, user groups, local members and management committees on issues relating to centres in their area
 - Developing proposals for re-shaping the portfolio in the area
 - Developing capital schemes and funding packages
 - Monitoring the service level agreement with Corporate Property Management for centres in the area and monitoring capital and revenue budgets
 - Ensuring where relevant, the leases and licences are in place and reviewed periodically
 - Developing, implementing and overseeing the administration of a new schedule of pricing and discounts for centre usage.

Context section

5. The building known as The Palace Youth Project is at 90-92 Shepherds Lane in Chapeltown. This is in Chapel Allerton ward and on the border of Harehills. It was

built approximately 86 years ago as two terraced properties which have now been converted into one property. The building provides offices, activity rooms for playing pool, multi-use rooms, toilets, computer suite and kitchen and administration facilities.

6. The Palace Youth Project was set up following the violent urban protests of 1981. The Scarman enquiry findings of the disturbances focused on discrimination, unemployment and poverty amongst the black and minority ethnic communities and highlighted the need for a more co-ordinated approach to tackling these problems. The taskforce set up to look into the causes of the disturbances in Chapeltown and Harehills identified a lack of youth provision and funding was made available to develop The Palace Youth Project.

Deprivation information – Chapel Allerton ward

7. The Indices of Deprivation 2007 identify areas of greatest need and provide a profile of the inner north east area. The index uses a number of indicators and is indexed according to 'Super Output Area' (SOA). The country is divided up into SOAs which are neighbourhood areas and ranked against each other.
8. In the inner north east compared to the 2004 Indices it is a generally improving position, with fewer SOAs across most indicators ranked in the most deprived 20% on the national scale. Nevertheless, the Chapel Allerton ward contains the city's most deprived SOAs within the:
 - overall Index of Multiple Deprivation – SOA containing the Sholebrokes, Chapeltown
 - employment deprivation – SOA containing the Granges/Hamiltons
 - income deprivation affecting children – SOA containing the Granges/Hamiltons and Shepherds Lane/ Spencer Place

Youth provision – Chapel Allerton ward

9. At the various community engagement events held this year, residents in Chapel Allerton ward have made comments about youth provision. They indicated that more activities for young people was a priority across the whole ward.
10. The absence of a secondary school in Chapeltown has implications for youth activity and family services provision. The emphasis within the Every Child Matters agenda is the creation of schools as local hubs for education, family services and activities for older children, thereby feeding into local community cohesion and regeneration. Young people and their families in Chapeltown who have to travel some distance to a secondary school are less likely to benefit from the provision of family services provided through the extended schools network and will be amongst those with the least connection with their secondary school.

Review process

11. It was considered that the most appropriate way to undertake this review was through discussion and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders who are familiar with the facility. These are;

- Youth Services – Neil E Bowden, Pat Brook, Adrian Lee, Terence Holness
- East North East Area Management Team, Anna Turner
- Voluntary and community groups who either use the centre or offer provision in Chapeltown – REEMAP, Chapeltown Junior Youth Inclusion Project, Friends of the Palace Youth Centre, Mandela Centre management committee, Archway, IMPaCT partnership, Positive Activities for Young People
- Chapel Allerton ward members

Provision at the Palace Youth Centre

12. At the inception of this review there were 2 regular users of the centre, Youth Services and a local domino club. To alleviate pressure on the budget, the caretaking service has been reduced and key holding agreements put in place with current users. The total income gathered for 2007/09 was £750. The estimated net revenue budget for 2008/09 is £80,890.
13. The Youth Service provision at The Palace offers activities to support young people to escape the pull of crime and provide them with opportunities and chances to develop skills and talents. This involves activities that target the needs of each individual, for example support measures to include educational activities, issues about work, tackling drugs alcohol misuse and peer pressure. Young people involved in the project gain a range of practical skills to develop their confidence and self-esteem. For example, young people have taken up business and sports opportunities; many have undertaken accredited training leading to full-time employment.
14. In recent years, due to a lack of capacity in the Youth Services to staff the sessions and problems associated with the physical condition of the building that prevent it from achieving its potential, prior to this review, only 2 youth sessions per week were delivered, Each session attracts up to 40 young people.
 - Mondays 7pm – 9pm, young men 13 – 18.
 - Wednesdays 7pm - 9pm, young women 13 - 18
15. This provision is increased during the school holidays when the centre runs daily activities under The Positive Activities for Young People programme (PAYP). This is a targeted programme providing diversionary activities for young people aged 8-19 who are at risk of social exclusion and community crime.
16. In recent months current users of up to 70 young people have formed a group, “The Friends of The Palace Youth Project”. They have been successful in securing £10,000 Youth Opportunities Funds (YOF) which has been used to purchase new window blinds, furniture and a cyber suite. There is potential for a further bid to the Youth Capital Fund pending the outcome of this review. This funding is aimed at enabling Local Authorities to develop new approaches to strategic investment in youth facilities particularly in deprived neighbourhoods. The involvement of young people is central to this initiative.

17. At the outset of this review the only other user of the facility was a domino club who meet every Sunday between 4- 8pm. There are between 4- 6 users of this activity.

Condition of the building

18. A survey was undertaken by ADS on behalf of Asset Management in March 2006. The building falls within the B grade category which indicates that it is satisfactory, performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration. To comply with current legislation and to bring the building and its facilities up to a good standard, certain work needs to be undertaken. Major repairs and refurbishment will be required in approximately 10 years time allowing the building life expectancy to extend to approximately 30 years.

19. The following works required are given together with their budget costing:

Works	Imminent	Essential	Desirable
Building works	4,200	10,090	14,660
Health and safety	6,000	0	0
DDA	1,500	3,000	13,500
Electrical	0	0	685
Mechanical	400	1,000	0
Asbestos removal	0	0	150
Total	12,100	14,090	28,995

20. In addition to this, the central heating system broke down in September 2007 and the boiler has subsequently been condemned. This has had an adverse effect on sessions as they now rely on portable oil heaters provided as a temporary measure by Corporate Management Services. A new central heating system is required at a cost of approx £4,000.
21. There are backlog maintenance issues for community centres across the city. This is being reviewed corporately and the needs of The Palace, as outlined above, will be fed into the process for resolving these matters.

A future for The Palace

22. Since the transfer of the facility to Environment and Neighbourhoods a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to improve the operational management of the facility and to identify new provision that meets local needs. The following are new and proposed future providers of young people's services from the centre:
23. The Chapeltown Junior Youth Inclusion Project (Junior YIP) took up a letting in March 2008 on a temporary basis pending the outcome of this review. Junior YIP is a community based preventative project which seeks to identify and work with vulnerable 8-12 year olds in the neighbourhood. Working closely with schools they provide targeted support focusing in particular on the critical transition stage between primary and secondary education. Activities include home-work support, recreational activities such as pool, board games and table football as rewards for engagement

and positive behaviour and parent support sessions, including intensive family support. Since 1st May 2008 the project has engaged with 25 children and young people and 5 parents. There have been 10 sessions delivered with an average cohort of 15 children and young people. This has been in the form of weekly drop-in sessions held 2 days a week from 4 – 6pm and during the May half -term school holidays. Junior YIP works to a local management group of community practitioners who provide the project with guidance and direction. The rental income based on the space they occupy in the centre is £830 per year.

24. Being located at The Palace has created opportunities for improved partnership working with the Youth Service, West Yorkshire Police, local schools and neighbourhood wardens. Recent feedback from the Neighbourhood Policing Team comments on the positive impact of the project on the local community. One PCSO who is a regular visitor at the weekly drop-in sessions has said “Since this project has been at The Palace, we’ve seen a reduction in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour by children and young people. Let’s just say, it’s been a lot quieter”.
25. Feedback from children, young people, parents and the local community is extremely positive and encouraging. Children who engaged with the project previously but did not have access to The Palace or any other youth provision due to their age are delighted to have a facility that they now call their youth club. Young people using the centre and their families have also suggested other ways of improving their local community, for example they are organising litter picks in the area, have suggested they maintain the Woodland Mount pocket park at the rear of the building and have applied for funding for outdoor play equipment.
26. Junior YIP have been approached by “Business in the Community Cares”, an agency that organises support to community groups from local businesses. Involving the local residents in a “community challenge”, they can provide resources to help decorate the building. In addition, there are proposals for a joint bid by Junior YIP and The Youth Service to the National Lottery “My Place” fund.
27. Deen Enterprises currently operate from the Mandela Centre delivering activities to young Asian people aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour and raising educational attainment. Deen’s have identified a need for youth work to tackle gang culture and issues around peer pressure. Deen’s input at The Palace will create opportunities to build on existing partnerships with the Youth Services, youth offending teams and other voluntary and statutory partners.
28. Shantona provide integrated multi-agency services to Bangladeshi families and currently work from the caretaker’s house adjoining the Bangladeshi Centre. They have received substantial funding to expand their programme of activities beyond their original catchment area and are looking to expand to this area of Chapeltown.
29. From October 2008 the Youth Service will be charged for the office space they occupy. They identify The Palace as one of their current office sites so income can be expected if this arrangement continues. The rental income based on the office space they occupy in the centre will be approx £10,800 per year.
30. The alternative to future investment in the service is to dispose of the asset and transfer the current service delivery elsewhere. No suitable alternative provision can

be identified at present. Disposal of the building could net up to £100,000 capital receipt for the Area Committee plus there would be the revenue savings of approximately £80,000.

Members views

31. Chapel Allerton ward members have been consulted and their views are:

Cllr Dowson. "Considerable progress has been made in recent months to bring about increased levels of use of The Palace. This has already had an impact on the local community. The Palace provides access to the most hard to reach groups and their active involvement in further developing the centre helps them to take positive steps toward inclusion".

Cllr Rafique. "I believe The Palace is a very valuable resource for youth and community work. The building should be retained for the excellent work that's going on at the moment beyond June and for a long time".

Cllr Taylor. "Closure of The Palace could lead to greater exclusion for those young people at risk of being suspended from school or on the edge of crime. It is now being used more widely, creating opportunities for more young people to be diverted from street crime".

Recommendations

32. The area committee is requested to:

- (a) Consider the findings of the review
- (b) Indicate their commitment to the future provision of youth related services and activities from The Palace.