


Non-Executive Report of the: Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee 8 th March 2018	
Report of: Will Tuckley, Chief Executive	Classification: Unrestricted
Recreational Activities for Children and Young people in Tower Hamlets	

Originating Officer(s)	Ludovica Orlando Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Wards affected	All Wards

Summary

- 1.1 This report submits the recommendations of the Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee's review on the recreational provisions available for young people in the Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 1.2 The aim of this report is to investigate the current provisions for young people in the borough to stay active and to look at what grants are allocated to improve this service.

Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Grants Scrutiny sub Committee is recommended to:
 - Agree the draft report and the seven recommendations (Appendix 1).
 - Authorise the Divisional Director for Strategy, Policy and Partnership to amend the draft report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee arranged two sessions to specifically look at the different provisions offered by the Council for young people to stay active in the Borough. In order to provide a complete overview of the current provisions offered by the council, this review involved numerous Services including Youth and Communities, Sports, Leisure and Events and Public Health.
- 3.2 This review fits timely with the other work done by Tower hamlets Council as Services are in the process of creating a Strategy that looks at physical activity in the Borough. The aim of the physical activity strategy is to encourage and support inactive residents to get physically active in the Borough.
- 3.3 Alongside the physical activity strategy, two other strategy documents were created, the Open Space Strategy- which looked at parks and outdoor facilities- and an Indoor strategy- which looked at Indoor Sport Facilities. Both involved conducting an asset mapping of Council facilities and it gave the Services a better understanding of the resources available to better tackle the challenges that the Council is facing, like population growth and high demand on the services.
- 3.4 For the scope of the review, the term “**recreational activity**” was used to identify any activity proposed and promoted by the Council that got children and young people under the age of 24 moving around and engaged, from table tennis to team sports. Moreover, the review focused its efforts in identifying activities carried out outside of school hours, therefore excluding PE or other in-school activities. This review specifically avoided defining these activities as “sports”, as the term can be more alienating, especially to women and girls. Just like the national context, Tower Hamlets Council is moving to that strategic approach to physical activity.
- 3.5 The review was arranged in order to get a better understanding of the current provisions and facilities, and enquiry whether we are equipped to handle the population growth projections. Being the second most densely populated local authority in the UK, Tower Hamlets population is projected to reach 365,200 by 2027 – equivalent to around 15 additional residents per day for the next ten years. It is for these reasons, and the fact that we currently have the fourth youngest population in the UK where almost half our residents (47%) are aged 20-39, that our strategic planning must reflect these trends and find creative ways to keep the children of the borough active.
- 3.6 Alongside the population growth, this review aimed at looking at our grants allocation system, and seeing what grants are currently awarded

and whether we can better coordinate these fundings with service necessities.

3.7 The Review was underpinned by three core questions:

- What Council provisions are currently available for Young People to stay active?
- How does our Grants Programme support young people to be physically active?
- What recreational facilities do we have in the Borough and what can we do to make them more accessible?

3.8 The review was chaired by Cllr Andrew Wood, Chair of Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee and took the form of two evidence sessions:

Session 1, held in January 2018 received evidence from the Council's Public Health service, Youth and Community, Sports and Physical Activities,

Session 2, held in February 2018 received evidence from Grants, Arts Parks and Events, and Sports, Leisure and Culture. During this session members were joined by Robert McLean, the relationship manager for London Sports.

3.9 The report with recommendations is attached as Appendix 1. There are 7 recommendations arising from the review which are outlined below:

Recommendation 1:

That an online booking system be implemented to improve access, better data analysis and targeting of resources.

Recommendation 2:

To adopt the "Open Opportunity Data System" developed by London Sports which will expose customers to opportunities in a more user-friendly way and make getting active easier for young people.

Recommendation 3:

To adopt a multi-purposed approach when designing new youth hubs to optimise the limited space available in the Borough and provide more flexibility in facility usage.

Recommendation 4:

To embed "playable" spaces within the planning regime to optimise the limited space available in the Borough and ensure developers provide chances for young people to be physically active through Sports England Active Design model.

Recommendation 5:

To encourage children and the wider community to spend time outside, moving around and interacting with each other. To explore "Play Streets", used for example in Hackney, to simplify the process behind closing roads to allow greater activity

Recommendation 6:

Maximise use of facilities by investigating using a commercial operator model for existing outdoor sports facilities owned by the council.

Recommendation 7:

Encourage the maximisation of space by working with developers to encourage them to adopt an interim / meanwhile approach for outdoor sport and recreation on development sites prior to them coming forward for development.

- 3.10 Once agreed, the Working Group's report will be submitted to Cabinet for a response to the recommendations.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 As stated in the Scrutiny Review report, the Main Stream Grants Program has been extended to the end of March 2019. A total of £0.384m has been awarded to cover 30 projects for Youth, Culture and Sports.
- 4.2 The seven recommendations in paragraph 3.9 of this report will require ongoing evaluation to determine that the costs can be met within the current awarded grant.
- 4.3 If additional costs are identified, these will need to be met within current service budget allocations or proposals put forward to Members as part of the Councils normal budget reporting mechanism.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions.
- 5.2 This report advises as to 2 scrutiny sessions arranged by the Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee to specifically look at the different provisions offered by the Council for young people to stay active in the Borough. 7 recommendations have been proposed and all are capable of being undertaken within the Council's powers.

- 5.3 The Council has a statutory duty pursuant to section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to cooperate with safeguarding partners with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority's area, including in relations to their physical and mental health and emotional well-being, and education, training and recreation; amongst other.
- 5.4 The Council has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This is referred to as the Council's best value duty. Best Value considerations have also been addressed in paragraph 7 of the report.
- 5.5 When considering its approach to this report and its recommendations, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Information relevant to this is contained in the One Tower Hamlets section below.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The focus of this review is to encourage the Council to make a conscious effort to promote and invest in keeping our youth active by supporting the running of physical activities,

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendations in this report are made as part of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's role in helping to secure continuous improvement for the council, as required under its Best Value duty.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 There are no direct sustainable actions for greener environment arising from this report.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Recommendations from this review aim to develop a Borough-wide vision of available Recreational Activities for Children and Young People and to make an informed by a comprehensive impact assessment. An evidence based approach to policy development such as this would reduce the risk of poorly targeted service provision and investment.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The recommendations from this review aim to assist Services in providing Children and Young People safe spaces to learn, socialise and keep active. By investing in Children and Young people we hope to reduce antisocial behaviors and increase their participation in community activities.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Scrutiny Review report: recreational activities for children and young people in Tower Hamlets.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

- NONE