

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Things to Do, Places to Go Strategy 2008

Adopted August 2008

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“Our vision in Solihull is that all children and young people, whatever their circumstances, can take part in enjoyable play, youth or leisure activity in their free time.”

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. More things to do and places to go are consistently requested by children and young people. Taking part in play and educational leisure time activity & free time contributes to personal and social development and has benefits for health and crime reduction.
- 1.2. The importance of play and positive activities for young people have become increasingly recognised by national government and are supported by strategy and financial resources.
- 1.3. Solihull has an active voluntary sector that provides a substantial part of the total Things to Do offer. The local authority provides a range of opportunities via the youth service, community arts & sports, libraries and playwork.
- 1.4. Children and young people have been actively involved in shaping current provision. The participation of disabled children and young people has been supported. The key messages from this dialogue are:
 - Parks need to look better and have less vandalism.
 - Outdoor play equipment should be more challenging.
 - Better sports facilities
 - More youth clubs
 - Mobile provision that can move to where children and young people hang out
 - Disabled children & young people wanted the chance to do more in the holidays and weekends with their friends.

2. Our Vision

“Our vision in Solihull is that all children and young people, whatever their circumstances, can take part in enjoyable play, youth or leisure activities in their free time.”

- 2.1. Solihull Children and Young People’s Trust acknowledges the importance of the Things to Do, Places to Go agenda for children and young people. This term is broad and seeks to cover three distinct but related areas: play; educational leisure time activities through youth work; recreational leisure time activity; play and leisure for disabled children and young people. These opportunities should be accessible for groups of children & young people with a common interest and account for the ability to pay.
- 2.2. This agenda links to the following local strategies:
 - Children and Young People Plan
 - Youth Justice Plan
 - Anti Social Behaviour Strategy
 - Local Area Agreement
 - Children’s Centres and Extended Services
 - Information Strategy
 - Extended Schools Core Offer
 - Child Care Sufficiency Assessment

- Care Matters
- CAMHS Strategy
- Disabled Children's Strategy
- Physical Activity Strategy
- Green Spaces Strategy
- Play Policy & Action Plan
- Youth Service Plan

2.3 This agenda links to the following national strategies:

- The Children's Plan: building brighter futures
- Youth Matters
- Aiming High for Young People: a 10 year strategy for positive activities
- Aiming High for Disabled Children
- Fair Play

3. Measures of Success

- Children and young people will be able to access enjoyable and affordable local play, youth or sport activities
- Disabled children and young people will be able to take part in inclusive or specialist play, youth or sport activities
- There will be an increase in the number of children and young people taking part
- Children and young people will be able to access high quality up to date information about play, youth or sport activities.
- Improved health and well-being of children and young people

It should be noted that the above term "play, youth and sport activities" includes art, performing arts, music and dance activity.

4. National Context

- 4.1. In October 2002, the Government commissioned a review of play, following an announcement in June 2001 of New Opportunities Funding / Big Lottery Funding for strategic investment in play for 0 – 16 yr olds (Getting Serious about Play: a review of children's play DCMS 2004).
- 4.2. The Children's Plan (2007) recognises the benefits of play and positive activity. Funds to redevelop outdoor playgrounds, train the play workforce and better include disabled children have been made available through the Playbuilder allocation. Investment in

youth facilities is available through MyPlace and there is a further pledge to resource out of school opportunities for young people.

- 4.3. Youth Matters: next steps (2006) sets out a vision of integrated youth support services helping all young people achieve the Every Child Matters five outcomes. The four areas for intervention are things to do, volunteering, information, advice and guidance and targeted support. Targeted youth support for vulnerable young people is supported by revenue for Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund.
- 4.4. Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities, sets out the government's plans for services to 13 - 19 year olds, building on the achievement of Youth Matters. The document recognises the significant national & international research that positive activity (with involvement of trusted adult) supports building of resilience amongst young people and reduce risk.
- 4.5 The RESPECT Action Plan 2006 highlights the need for sport and art activity to divert young people from potential offending by offering a positive use of free time. It makes direct reference to Youth Matters as a resource for this. The more recent Youth Taskforce Action Plan (2008) sets out a strong package of actions and funding to tackle anti-social behaviour, do more to tackle the root causes of bad behaviour and prevent young people getting involved in the first place
- 4.6 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is working to improve access to culture, sport and play for children and young people, to support delivery of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda.
- 4.7 The reduction in children and young people's presence in open spaces and limitation on the area they roam independently from home has been highlighted by several sources. The impact of this restriction on personal development has been suggested (Places to Go? Play England 2008).
- 4.8 The important role of the voluntary, faith and community sector in providing Things to Do and Places to Go is recognised, although hard to quantify. Within Solihull, it has been estimated that this sector provides over half of the available opportunities.

5. Local Context

- 5.1 Solihull is a popular place to live, learn, work and play. As a consequence, the population is expected to increase from the 200,000 residents identified in the 2001 Census. The Census also indicated that there were just over 39,000 children and young people aged 5 – 19 years, 20% of the total population. Whilst this proportion is not expected to grow, it is noteworthy that 14% of school-age children and young people identify with a black or minority ethnic heritage, compared to the 5.4% figure for the borough as a whole, and this is forecast to increase.
- 5.2 Overall, outcomes for Solihull's children and young people are good. There is comparatively fair access to a wide range of leisure and cultural activities and the majority of children and young people enjoy good education and health outcomes. Nonetheless, this positive picture is not universal. There are areas within the Borough, most notably within the northern wards of Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge and Smith's Wood, where outcomes across a range of indicators are significantly lower.

5.3 Solihull's Children and Young People's Plan recognises the importance of enjoyable and satisfying free time and has a priority action for "Things to Do, Places to Go". The multi-agency working group has met regularly since 2007 to develop this strategy (see appendix 1 for membership). In February, the group agreed the following priorities:

Priority Target Groups		
Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Risk of anti-social behaviour & offending	Children & young people from 8 yrs upwards	Children & young people with disability, special needs

Comment: 6 main themes were identified. The top 3 most commonly cited themes are above.

Priority Activity/Intervention		
Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Outdoor	General range of positive activities	Inclusion & specialist provision for disabled children & young people

Comment: 7 themes were identified. Outdoor activity was a clear priority for stakeholders and covers sports, detached and mobile provision. Priority 2 covered activities for all agencies, uniform and non-uniform groups.

Priority Geographical Area		
Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
North	Rural	Urban south

Comment: 5 themes emerged. Borough wide theme is covered by the above priorities. Stakeholders felt that crime hotspots could be incorporated into the above according to target group.

5.4 The working group took part in a Turning the Curve exercise, in May '08, to apply an outcome based approach to the use of PAYP funds in 2008-09. This successfully enabled the group focus on what it wanted to achieve for young people and then draft a service specification.

5.5 The working group have recognised the co-existence of three potentially competing priorities of Play, Disability and Positive Activities for Young People (13-19). The group will consider the needs of disabled children within plans, maintain the pre-existing play strategy group to focus on needs of under 11's and consider positive activities within the Integrated Youth Support Service. The working group will receive reports from these 2 subgroups and agree any proposed decisions.

6. Needs Analysis

6.1 Data from a range of sources has been used to analyse need for Things to Do & Places to Go, the full details of which can be viewed in appendix 2.

6.2 A Community Services audit of public facilities for children and young people identified 34 play pitches, a rugby pitch, cricket pitch, 7 skate parks, 32 play areas, Arts Complex and 13 libraries.

- 6.3 The Play Strategy Group reviewed play facilities for children in 2008 and although provision has increased, there is a continued lack of play provision that meets the 3 Free Principle. A lack of holiday playchemes within childcare settings, in Shirley and Castle Bromwich was identified by the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2006).
- 6.4 Local authority information services have identified a range of activity but categorisation by provider and age of participants has not been possible. The Solihull Active searchable database contains 284 local organisations that offer opportunities in sport and physical activity. The Children’s Information Service database records 233 organisation that provide play, uniform groups, sport and dance.
- 6.5 The statutory youth service has 5 youth centres, 2 bases via housing, 1 information, advice & guidance centre, a rural mobile project, and base for the Youth Involvement and Democracy Team.
- 6.6 The voluntary sector has three forums for the Things to Do priority. SCVYS (Solihull Council for Voluntary Youth Service) support 50 organisations. The Children’s Voluntary Sector Forum represents 15 groups and Solihull Sports Council supports over 100 members who work with under 18s.
- 6.7 Accurate calculation of the number of children and young people taking part in positive activities is difficult to establish. However, data for stakeholders in the working group estimates that over 10,000 children and young people took part last year.

Table 1: Number of children and young people taking part in Things to Do in 2007-08

Service	Total Number
Open access play	959
Extended Primary School clubs	899
PAYP – Solihull	97
Youth Service	3,131
Fusion	633
SoLO	175
SCVYS	6,475
Positive Futures	707
Off the Wood	145
TOTAL	13,221

6.8 The views of children and young people are important in analysing need and data from a range of sources has informed this strategy (see appendix 3). The consistent message from these findings are:

- ‘More Youth Club type places’ and places for children and young people to call their own (e.g. youth pubs) – these could be run by young people.
- Making new friendships and spending time with current friends during free time was important and a key part of activity.
- More involvement of children and young people in developing and designing services, including at a strategic level, inspecting services and deciding how councils spend their money.
- Information support and advice in variety of settings, including one trained professional they can trust and or mentoring for young people.

- Events and accessible and affordable activities, e.g. adventurous, residential, music, art and sport.
- Safer facilities, safer communities and bullying support in and out of school.

7. Action Plan

7.1. The working Group has agreed the following actions for this financial year. Alan Michell will be responsible for ensuring that outcomes for children and young people are met. Helen Jackson will be responsible for ensuring that the commissioning process is implemented.

7.2. These actions will apply the commissioning process to new and existing grant streams and begin to take a commissioning approach to core funded services.

Action	Measures of Success (SMART)	Milestone Date	Resource	Responsible Officer
Apply commissioning rigour to core funded services	Commissioning lead to meet with all core budget holders by Sept 08 Core funded service evidence commissioning approach in project plans by March 09	March 2009	Core funds	Service leads
Commission PAYP funds	Range of positive activities available from July 08 Activities meet PAYP criteria	July 2008	PAYP grant	Alan Michell
Coordinate bid for MyPlace funds	Planning Day for bid held in Jul 08 Bid submitted Sept 08	July 2008	MyPlace funds	Alan Michell
To develop service specification for inclusive & specialist play from March 2009.	Service specification ready by Aug 08 Service tendered in autumn 08	August 2008	Children's Fund Grant	Helen Jackson

Action	Measures of Success (SMART)	Milestone Date	Resource	Responsible Officer
Develop sustainability plan for current grant funded play work	Circulate sustainability paper to ECS Jul 080 Exit plan with current providers Oct 08	October 2008	Grant and core funds	Helen Jackson
Agree local offer and priorities for Positive Activities with young people		November 2008	Core funds	Alan Michell
Review outcome of PAYP commissioning in 2008/09 to inform commissioning in 2009 – 11.	Monitoring & evaluation data for each service Working group review data and criteria by Nov 08	January 2009	PAYP grant	Alan Michell
To maintain link with other relevant groups: Short Breaks, IYSS	Commissioning officer to meet with AHDC leads & report to working group bi-monthly Head of IYSS to report to working group bi-monthly	March 2009	DCFS grants	Short Breaks: Jane Wilton IYSS: Alan Michell
Commission Playbuilder allocation	Project Plan complete by July 08 Works tendered in Sept 08 5 play areas redesigned by Mar 09	March 2009	Playbuilder grant	Helen Jackson
Maintain effective working relationship with Children's Information Service to ensure contemporary information is available	Publicity officer for Youth Service to meet monthly with CIS team	Ongoing	Core funds	Service leads

8. Next Steps

- 8.1. The Things to Do Strategy has enabled the working group to identify current provision, review consultation findings and good practice. The group will continue to use an Outcome Based Accountability Approach when commissioning new provision and redesigning existing services.
- 8.2. The group will ensure that children and young people are actively involved in the services they use and have the opportunity to be involved in strategic decision making.
- 8.3. The group will work Solihull Council for Voluntary Youth Service and Sustain to ensure the voluntary sector are represented in the working group and amongst providers.
- 8.4. The group will report regularly to the Children & Young People's Trust Board.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Things to Do Working Group Membership

Name	Organisation	Representing
Chief Superintendent Scobbie	West Midlands Police	Trust Board Champion
Alan Michell	SMBC IYSS	Group Chair
Nicola Holmes	SMBC Youth Service	Youth Service
Andrew Williams	SCVYS	Voluntary Youth Sector
Andrea Lowndes	X-Stream	Voluntary Youth Sector
Janet Down	SoLO	Disability Services
Nick Garnett	SMBC	Leisure & Culture
Gill Magee	SMBC	Community Safety
Shelley Ward	SMBC	Youth Offending
Helen Jackson	Children & Young People's Trust	Commissioning
Steve Dawes	Extended Services	Play work
Ros Glover	SMBC	Publicity & Marketing
Mandy Mason	Solihull Community Housing	ASB Co-ordinator

9.2 Appendix 2: Needs Analysis

9.2.1 Summary of Solihull Play and Activity Opportunities (at March 2008)

Activity	Number of providers
Performing Arts	20
Structured Play	51
Sports	56
Uniform & Church Groups	110

9.2.2 Youth Service Needs Analysis (2006/07)

Youth Service Needs Analysis highlighted a number of areas in respect of 'Things to do and Places to go':

- Fear of violence / Fear of walking alone / getting mugged / people hurting others / other groups carrying weapons etc
- safety (for themselves on the streets) / personal safety / Being attacked by gangs - targeted because I'm 'different'
- Lack of facilities/provision /funding, particularly in rural area + lack of funding to develop activities & employ staff
- Lack of financial support for voluntary organisation working with YP Lack of alternative provision in the area / Earlier intervention needed (pre 14)
- Boredom on the streets was an on going theme, having nothing to do, nowhere to go (through not being able to afford leisure activities)
- Needing Something to do / Somewhere to hang out and take part / somewhere to sit and talk to /make friends (streets cold) / activities for young people to engage in – good choice & range / activities during holidays
- Someone to talk to who isn't family - confidentiality / Lack of support for parents
- Lack of local leisure activities like a cinema, eating places – other than MacDonalds.
- Young people's lack of a voice in shaping agendas and policies that affect them
- Community/leisure centres not designed to accommodate the faith practices of young people
- Hanging around on streets with nothing to do / boredom / Staying out of trouble

Young people linked to the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund Executive Group are utilising £50K of council baselined monies to commission youth activities (including sport) across the borough.

Young people engaged in commissioning activities for young people (September 2007) identified the following priorities:

- **Keeping safe on the streets** - An accredited self protection course.
- **Numeracy & Literacy** - An accredited course which targets those young people with low numeracy and literacy skills, but in an informal way. This is obviously a sensitive issue so we want this to be as creative as possible.
- **Stress Management** - Some of our group have been on the Train The Brain Course run by Solihull Youth Services and feel that this should be made available to as many young people as possible.
- **Anti Bullying** - To continue with the ABBA group, and make it more borough-wide.
- **'Gang' members** - Any diversionary activities aimed at potential or current 'gang' members.
- **Keeping fit and healthy** Young people having access to gyms, either organised visits or a gym that has a young person dedicated opening time.
- **More Youth facilities open more of the time** - We want there to be youth centre/provisions open at least one extra evening per week, in both the North and South of the borough.
- **Dance groups** - We would like more dance opportunities for young people.

9.3 Appendix 3: Engagement Findings

9.3.1 Play Strategy Consultation Findings (2006)

Approximately 970 children were consulted about play and free time activities as part of the play strategy. Overall, there was a lot of concern about safe play in parks and open spaces and a need for more interesting play equipment. The need for greater variety of outdoor provision for the 8 – 13 yr age range was highlighted.

9.3.2 Parent Action Community Team Survey (2007)

1230 children aged 10 – 16 yrs responded by questionnaire;

What clubs would you like to see in your area? Football/rugby, dance/drama & youth clubs

What do you think your area needs? Youth clubs, more/better clubs, fun stuff

What would improve your area? To be cleaner, less litter, more clubs.

9.3.3 PAYP Consultation (2008)

The key findings from this consultation with X-Stream, Fusion & SoLO were:

1. Need for outdoor, mobile provision that can move to where young people are
2. Personal and social development is important to give young people the chance to learn about the results on their action and think about safety.
3. Misuse of alcohol was often cited as a reason for getting into trouble.
4. Peer pressure, gangs and wanting to appear “cool” was also significant.
5. Making new friend and having the chance to spend time with existing friends was important to all ages and abilities.