

# **Maidstone Borough Council**

## **External Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday 12 January 2010**

### **Holiday Play Schemes**

**Report of:** Apprentice - Overview, Scrutiny  
and Policy

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 At the meeting of the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2009, Members resolved:

“That a review of holiday play schemes be carried out later in the Municipal Year 2009-10”.

1.2 The scoping report considered at that meeting is included at Appendix A for information. [Please note that this scoping report is only suggested and has not been formally approved by the committee].

#### **2. Hotfoot Play Scheme**

2.1 Hotfoot is a play scheme run by Maidstone Borough Council for children aged 5 – 11 years with an opportunity for older children up to 19 years with disabilities to also join depending on their needs. Hotfoot currently offers over 700 places for children over the Easter period and about 5000 during the summer period. At present the scheme runs during the Easter and summer holidays. Hotfoot is solely run in the urban areas of Maidstone and does not travel out to the rural parts; these rural areas are covered by community play schemes, which receive funding from Maidstone Borough Council.

2.2 The 2009 Easter Hotfoot programme ran for one week at Bower Grove Primary School, Eastborough Primary School and Oaktrees Community School. The sites Hotfoot is held at over the Easter period have increased from one to two venues and then again to three venues in recent years due to a higher demand. The Easter programme in 2006/07 was running at one site and all 500 places offered were taken. In Easter 2007/08 when Hotfoot was increased to run at two sites, 610 places were offered and 589 were taken. Finally in 2008/09 when Hotfoot ran at three sites, 675 places out of the 680 were taken.

2.3 The summer programme for 2009 ran for three weeks at Eastborough and Sandling Primary Schools and for four weeks at Bower Grove Primary School and Oaktrees Community School. The scheme ran for four hours each day between 10am-2pm.

2.4 The schemes are delivered from school locations within the borough, with the venues being reassessed on a yearly basis to guarantee coverage of

the urban area and based on accessibility of the school buildings during the holiday period.

### **3. Community Play Schemes**

- 3.1 Within the borough there are many community play scheme providers (not for profit organisations). Five community play schemes that provide solely a summer programme are: Bearsted; Harrietsham; Headcorn; Marden; and Staplehurst. Bearsted is available for children aged 4-11 years for four hours a day between 9am-1pm.
- 3.2 Likewise Harrietsham runs for the same hours but accepts young people from 4-15 years. Headcorn, Marden, and Staplehurst all run for three hours between 9:30am-12:30pm however they take varying aged children, with Headcorn taking ages 4-11, Marden ages 5-11 and Staplehurst 3-11.
- 3.3 The council currently has allocated funding to provide support for community play schemes. Nine play schemes were awarded funding by Maidstone BC for 2009. The funding for community play schemes is designed to help assist play schemes in areas which the Hotfoot Scheme would have difficulty reaching or in areas where other sources of funding are more readily available. Below is a table showing the community play schemes that received funding this year and how much each scheme was allocated.

<b>Play Scheme</b>	<b>Amount Funded</b>
Bellwood Community School	£2850.00
Staplehurst Parish Council	£649.50
Headcorn Parish Council	£502.50
Yalding Parish Council	£429.60
Bearsted Parish Council	£521.50
Eastborough Primary School	£146.25
Harlequins Out of School Club	£847.70
Marden Parish Council	£649.50
Harrietsham Parish Council	£471.5

- 3.4 As part of Maidstone Borough Council's commitment to the community play schemes the council provides a community play scheme workshop in February each year for organisations who have applied for support under the scheme. The workshop also offers an opportunity to access two further existing training sessions for Council employees. These two courses cover child protection and first aid at a reduced cost of £10 each.

### **4. Other Local Authority Play Schemes**

- 4.1 Only four other local authorities in Kent were found to provide some form of a holiday play scheme. Tonbridge and Malling runs a summer programme for children aged 4-11 years. Similarly to Hotfoot the Tonbridge and Malling scheme runs for 4 weeks throughout the summer and last for four hours between 9am-1pm.

- 4.2 Ashford Borough Council runs its holiday play scheme during all the school half terms and main holidays with the exception of the Christmas period. Like Tonbridge and Malling, Ashford's scheme is available for the ages 4-11 years, yet operates between 10am-3pm for five hours.
- 4.3 Unlike the previous council play schemes Gravesham Council holds a scheme during the first two weeks of the summer holiday, referred to as "Play in the Park". Unlike the other schemes this programme provides one hour sessions between 10:30am-4:30pm of play activities in the park with the child's parents staying with them. Play in the Park is offered to children aged 5-11 years.
- 4.4 Also different to other play schemes Swale holds multi sports activities on selective days throughout all of the holiday periods. Running between 10am-2:30pm these multi sports days are aimed at the slightly older age range of 8-14 years.

## 5. Play Scheme Charge Comparison

- 5.1 Community and Council led play scheme charges in the borough are as follows:

<b>Play Scheme</b>	<b>Duration (hours)</b>	<b>Daily Charge</b>	<b>Hourly Charge</b>
Hotfoot	4	£6	£1.50
Bearsted	4	£6	£1.50
Harrietsham	4	£3	£0.75
Headcorn	3	£3	£1
Marden	3	£3.50	£1.17
Staplehurst	3	£3.50	£1.17

- 5.2 There are also discounts offered when two or more children from one family take part in the Hotfoot scheme:

<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Weekly Charge</b>
One Child	25.00
Two Children	50.00
Three Children	61.20
Four Children	75.00

- 5.3 Council-led play schemes in other Kent districts charge as follows:

<b>Play Scheme</b>	<b>Duration (hours)</b>	<b>Daily Charge</b>	<b>Hourly Charge</b>
Tonbridge and Malling	4	£7	£1.75
Ashford	5	£10	£2
Gravesham	1	Free	Free
Swale	4.5	£4	£0.89

## **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 Members are recommended to consider the attached report on Hotfoot and discuss this with the Assistant Director of Customer Services and Partnerships.
- 6.2 Members are further recommended to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community Services regarding the options listed at Section 7 of the Hotfoot Report.

<b>Name of Review: Holiday Play Schemes</b>
<p><b>What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review</b></p> <p>To consider all of the schemes offered by the Council to check:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best value</li> <li>• Whether they cover all ages/areas/minorities/social class</li> <li>• Whether they have remained relevant since their inception</li> <li>• Comparison to other authorities</li> <li>• Whether the Council is expected to provide the service and what else is available if it didn't</li> </ul>
<p><b>What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 6 strands:</b> Age Gender Race Sexual orientation Faith Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check whether play schemes offered by the Council are inclusive.</li> <li>• If the Council did not offer its play schemes, would there be alternative provision for all groups?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Which witnesses are required?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member for Community Services</li> <li>• Sports, Play and Youth Development Manager</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation. *</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service user consultation</li> <li>• Visit a play scheme</li> </ul>
<p><b>What information/training is needed?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on other services provided and on what other local authorities provide</li> </ul>
<p><b>Suggested time for review and report completion date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 months – one meeting for interviews, one to consider evidence and agree recommendations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How does the review link to council priorities?</b></p> <p>A place to live and enjoy. A place to achieve and prosper. A place that has strong healthy and safe communities.</p>
<p><b>How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?</b></p> <p>1 <i>Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers</i></p> <p>2 <i>Enables the voice and concerns of the public</i></p>

3 *Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role*

4 *Drives improvement in public services*

1 – Providing a 'critical friend' challenge to a Council service.

4 – Ensuring that services respond to public demand.

**Any co-optees or expert witnesses?**

Co-opt a service user?

\* What do you know about the equality groups and the make-up of the people using the service or in the area? Qualitative and quantitative information

Think of the wider 'community' including people who possibly do not currently use the service but could or should.