

**REPORT TO:** Employment Learning & Skills Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 8 March 2010

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Health & Community

**SUBJECT:** Annual Report on the Community Centres Service for 2008/09

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board on the performance of community centres in the 2008/2009 operating year.

**2.0 Recommendation: That:**

- i) The report be considered and Members comment on service performance.

**3.0 Supporting Information**

3.1 The community centre's service operates five venues: -

- Castlefields
- Ditton
- Grangeway
- Murdishaw
- Upton

It employs thirty one staff. The service also supports T.H.Brown Trust in operating Churchill Hall. The service sits in the Health and Community Directorate in the Community Involvement Team and works closely with community development.

3.2 Community centres are safe, accessible facilities located in the heart of our communities. They serve both the local and wider community and promote participation, inclusion and cohesion.

3.3 Community centres offer space and support of community activity and provide a platform for service delivery at a local level. They contribute to council priorities and are part of Halton's infrastructure in supporting community engagement from low level engagement activity to high end involvement in shaping services.

#### 4.0 Service Performance 2008/2009

4.1 The service collates and submits its performance data in order to benchmark the venues and the service. The Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) crunch all the performance data and provide operations reports for each of our venues. These reports demonstrate that Halton's community centres have achieved a continual increase on income and attendances over the last three years.

4.2 Overall the service has continued to demonstrate effective service delivery with a five percent (5%) increase in attendance, 291,591 and a nine percent (9%) increase in income £276,935 compared to the previous year as below: -

Centre	Attendances 07-08	Attendances 08-09	Variance	Income 07-08	Income 08-09	Variance	Hours of use
Grangeway	68,734	70,404	1670	£88,540	£91,997	£3457	3752
Castlefields	31,492	29,278	(2214)	£31,214	£29,770	(£1444)	3125
Upton	65,125	74,634	9509	£55,828	£64,357	£8529	3900
Ditton	87,915	95,260	7345	£58,558	£70,020	£11,462	4043
Murdishaw	24,032	22,015	(2017)	£20,038	£20,791	£ 933	3016
<b>Total</b>	<b>277,298</b>	<b>291,591</b>	<b>+14,293</b>	<b>£254,178</b>	<b>£276,935</b>	<b>+£22,757</b>	<b>17,836</b>

4.3 Both Grangeway and Ditton showed significant improvement in centre performance in 2008/09 and consequently were short listed for a 'Most Improved Performer' award, which Ditton won at the APSE Awards in December 2009. Halton has consistently had nominations for APSE Awards for the last three years.

4.4

Through our benchmarking data we are able to identify our usage by 'target audiences'. Table 2 shows the total number of attendances across all five centres by categories of usage.

Category	Total attendances	% Attendances
Culture (sports and Art)	91,770	31.47%
Health and Healthy Living	57,092	19.57%
Youth and Children	49,174	16.86%
Other	45,713	15.6%
Statutory agencies	27,766	9.5%
Commercial events	14,304	4.9%
Life long learning	5,772	1.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>291,591</b>	<b>100%</b>

4.5

The service continued to have Service Level Agreements in place with Halton's Youth Service, Children's Centres and Adult Day Services as below: -

Castlefields	Adult Day Services Monday – Friday Base room 9-5	Youth Service
Ditton	Children's Centre	Youth Service

	Monday – Friday	
Grangeway	Adult Day Services Monday – Friday Base room 9-5	Youth Service Exclusive use of the 'hub'
Upton	Adult Day Services Monday – Friday Base room 9-5	

This usage optimises the centre provision in terms of local delivery of council services for Halton's residents, utilising traditionally quieter periods for community centres and an income source to support the service's viability.

4.6

Community centres hosted the auditions for Halton's Got Talent involving the five centres with 43 acts and 60 young people taking part.

## 5.0 **Key Activities in Community Centres in 2008/2009**

### 5.1 Castlefields

5.1.1 Castlefields operational costs for staff costs per letting hour has decreased from £16 in 2004/05 to £9 in 2008/09. This reflects an increase in bookings and efficiency as there has been no changes to the staff structure and a backdrop of increasing staff and utility costs.

5.1.2 Castlefields is in the top quartile for low staff absence of 0.77% against an average of 3.36% in the national benchmarking. This is similar for Murdishaw and sets a local standard for the other centres to strive towards.

5.1.3 The centre achieves an average of 9.7 users per opening hour against a national average of 7.47.

5.1.4 Castlefields is working towards a new community facility in 2011 and is actively involved with colleagues in regeneration regarding design, fixtures and fittings and supporting external funding applications. £50,000 has been secured from WREN (Waste recycling environment network).

5.1.5 A café service has resumed at the centre five mornings a week and has steady levels of usage and volunteers.

5.1.6 A fruit and vegetable service was launched to assist people who experience barriers to transport and accessing shops to have fresh produce at a reasonable price.

### 5.2 Ditton

5.2.1 Primary income (includes ticket sales, room hire and admissions) has constantly risen at Ditton over the last five operating years from 22p to 62p per user.

5.2.2 Visits per 1000 of the population are consistently high and places Ditton as one

of the national top performers.

- 5.2.3 Ditton is ranked second out of all participating authorities for visits per household in APSE data.
- 5.2.4 Outdoor garden space has been developed for garden projects by user groups. This was supported by community development with funding.
- 5.2.5 A community café service two days a week provided by country garden has commenced. Future developments will be to expand this service and supply produce grown in the outdoor space to the café.
- 5.2.6 The portage building at Ditton is now being used by the Community Safety Team. This supports the stay safe initiative whereby young people who come into contact with the police have somewhere to go whilst their parents/guardians are contacted to collect them.

### 5.3 Grangeway Community Centre

- 5.3.1 For four years Grangeway has consistently performed higher than the national average in APSE indicators, this is reflected in being shortlisted in the last few years for most improved performer awards.
- 5.3.2 The centre has had a gradual reduction in costs per user from £2.45 five years ago to £1.55 in 2008/09, a 37% improvement. This contrasts with the national picture where the net cost per user increased across the board.
- 5.3.3 Usage at G'way is consistently above the national average, which again contrasts with the national picture that has decreased over a two-year period.
- 5.3.4 A community café, Grangeway was launched to provide a training opportunity for NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) individuals in partnership with HITS any YMCA and supported by Area Forum funding. Over the year twelve young people have been involved in operating a café service two days a week serving an average of thirty people per day.
- 5.3.5 Youthbank and the Youth Parliament have relocated to the Hub at Grangeway providing more focus on youth related activity.

### 5.4 Murdishaw Community Centre

- 5.4.1 The centre is in the top quartile for the 'health and healthy living' category of usage accounting for over 80% of letting time.
- 5.4.2 The centre is also in the top quartile for low staff absence at 0.73% against an APSE national average of 3.36%.
- 5.4.3 Staffing cost per letting hour has reduced from £20 in 2005/06 to £16 in 2008/09, this reflects the increased efficiency in centre performance.

- 5.4.4 Support continues to the Board of Management at Murdishaw and their project group. The project group accessed area forum funding for a youth games night to purchase games consoles and equipment to provide diversionary activity for local young people. This activity is provided one night a week with a variance of between 15 and 30 young people attending. This initiative is to be further developed with 4 Estates delivering more sessions per week.
- 5.4.5 The project group secured WREN (Waste Recycling Environment Network) funding to develop a community garden in the grounds of the centre. This provides gardening plots and so far the Alzheimer's Society, the Stroke Association and Country Garden Catering have adopted plots. This space has also enabled the delivery of an eight-week gardening class.
- 5.4.6 'Lunch Bunch', a support group for carers of people with alzheimers has become established and meets weekly.

## 5.5 Upton Community Centre

- 5.5.1 Upton won an APSE Award in 2007/08 for most improved performer and therefor enjoys high levels of performance. The centre has recorded double the number of visits per 1000 of the population than other local authorities.
- 5.5.2 The centre's usage stands at 19.14 per hour against a national average of 7.47. This places the centre in the top quartile of national performance.
- 5.5.3 Upton has delivered two 'splash' schemes during the period with thirty young people participating in each scheme involving forty sessions.
- 5.5.4 Upton continues to support the HEARTS theatre school and their annual performance of a pantomime heavily supported and attended by the local community in the first week of December.

## 6.0 **Key Developments and Activities for 2009/10**

Prime Minister visit at Ditton  
 Intergenerational Activity – Halloween Events  
 Halton's Got Talent – Auditions  
 Develop and sustain community café provision  
 Accommodate Adult Day Services at Murdishaw  
 Prepare for new community centre at Castlefields  
 Review service level agreements  
 Further develop stakeholder approach to service delivery and opportunities to access external funding  
 Passport to health courses  
 Baby Welcome Awards for all venues.

## 7.0 **Implications for the Council's Priorities**

The community centre's make a significant contribution to supporting the councils priorities. Activities across the centres that impact are: -

### 7.1 **Children and Young People**

- Halton's Got Talent
- The 'Hub' at Grangeway
- Youth Service delivery at Grangeway, Castlefields, Ditton and Murdishaw
- Upton Splash Schemes
- Games Nigh at Murdishaw
- Various sport sessions, kickboxing, wrestling, karate, taekwondo
- Various dance sessions, cheerleading, street dance, musical mini's
- Various theatre, tanza, Split Ends, Hearts.

### 7.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills**

- Grangeway café training for NEETS
- Volunteer opportunities and placements in community cafes
- Halton People Into Jobs outreach
- ICT drop in and classes
- Adult learning short courses
- Pupil placements
- Public Sector Pathway to Employment placements
- Arts classes and activities i.e. pottery, years ahead, riverside arts.

### 7.3 **A Healthy Halton**

- Lunch Bunch at Murdishaw
- Fruit and Vegetable initiative at Castlefields
- Castlefields Health Eating Group (CHEG)
- Physical activity i.e. dance classes, sports
- Smoking cessation classes
- Weight management classes

### 7.4 **A Safer Halton**

- Community centre's hosting neighbourhood policies team community engagement meetings
- PCSO's holding surgeries
- Stay safe initiative at Ditton
- Safer Homes for Older People (SHOP) equipment outlet
- Home Equipment at Low Price (HELP) for young families
- Police comments box in Castlefields
- CCTV improvement at Murdishaw and Upton.

### 7.5 **Urban Renewal**

- Community gardens at Ditton and Murdishaw
- Community centre's hosting playbuilder consultations
- New community facility at Castlefields, part of wider regeneration project.

### 8.0 **Risk Analysis**

8.1 Community centre's act as emergency rest centres as part of the Council's wider emergency planning provisions.

8.2 Continuing plans for the service have been developed.

9.0 **Equality and Diversity Issues**

9.1 Community centres offer accessible spaces and are fully DDA compliant.

10. **List of Background Papers Under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.**

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.