



Investing in Leisure and Culture

Background

In October 2003 **Vaga Associates** was commissioned to review the available research that proves the positive contribution of leisure and cultural services and to demonstrate how it can be constructively used in Enfield.

Since then presentations on the research findings have been made to: the Enfield Strategic Partnership Board and its five thematic groups:

- Better Enfield
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Education, Employment and Enterprise
- Health Improvement Partnership (HIP)
- Leisure and Cultural Services.

A copy of each of the presentations and a fact sheet summarising the findings for each theme can be downloaded from our websites: www.enfieldsp.gov.uk or www.vagaassociates.com

Priorities for Investment

The research helped to identify four priorities for the Leisure and Cultural Services Partnership Group:

- Health improvement (through the HIP Group)
- Crime diversionary activities for young people
- Education attainment
- Building capacity across the leisure and cultural sector.

An action plan has been agreed covering all four priorities for implementation with Neighbourhood Renewal Funding over the next two years.

Recommendations

During the research period numerous discussions have taken place with Board members of Enfield Strategic Partnership and its thematic groups.

The following recommendations are suggested to develop the impact of the work being undertaken, especially by the Leisure and Cultural Services Partnership Group:

Champion the cause

There are very strong and compelling reasons to invest in leisure and cultural services as highlighted in the presentations and the fact sheets. Having invested in a review of the research – encourage your members to promote it throughout their networks.

The benefits of leisure and cultural services will only be realised through further investment and a scaling up of activity especially in the deprived wards of the Borough.

“By 2012, Enfield will be a culturally vibrant borough, which celebrates the diversity and heritage of its people and values the contribution of faith communities to the cultural life of the borough. Cultural and creative industries will be developed to bring more employment to the borough and make Enfield an even more attractive place for people to live and work. We will foster the development of vibrant town centres and protect Enfield’s environmental heritage. More people will take part in leisure, sporting and cultural activities. We will work to ensure that everyone, including young people, can access a broad range of excellent cultural and leisure services so that they are able to realise their full potential for the benefit of the wider community.”

Enfield’s Future, The Community Strategy 2003/2006

Maintain the priorities

Four ambitious priorities have been identified. These are the areas to focus on for optimum impact.

Diversifying further will only dilute effort.

Be More Strategic

Borough-wide strategies are being prepared for the arts, sports and children’s play. The relationship between these strategies, their implementation structures and the Thematic Group should be fully explored.

There is potential for the Thematic Group to offer mutual support, to influence and be influenced by the policies and priorities that emerge from these strategies.

Join Up Working

Working collectively on a practical project or theme that is of common interest would help to facilitate joined up working between the different member agencies of the Thematic Group. The obvious common theme is building capacity and supporting an ‘Active Enfield’ initiative for recruiting, developing and supporting volunteers across leisure and cultural services.

Agree a practical theme to facilitate joint working between members of the Thematic Group.

Continue Networking

The interest generated by the presentations to the other thematic groups highlights the potential for cross fertilisation of ideas and supportive practice. A strength of the Thematic Group is its extensive network.

Seek opportunities for joint working with the other thematic groups such as a joint response with the HIP to Choosing Health? Choosing Activity: A consultation on how to increase physical activity by the DOH/DCMS.

Evaluate Impact

Ensure all work is adequately monitored for its impact.

Measure impact and reinvest savings (especially from health improvement and crime prevention) to scale up activity in areas of greatest need.