**INTRODUCTION**

The Hertsmere Borough Council Youth Projects Team is continuously working to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of provision for young people in the borough.

Our 2011/2012 research project addressed the view “There is nothing for young people to do in Hertsmere”.

In October 2012, we embarked on a new research project to deepen our understanding of youth provision in the local community. Our 2012/2013 research builds on our findings from last year.

**Hypothesis ~ a youth research project addressing the view:**

**“Young people don’t need activities they need aspirations”**

Our 2011/2012 research uncovered some interesting findings with regard to the wants and needs of young people living in Hertsmere. We studied what the young people told us, in conjunction with motivational theory. Our analysis pointed towards the idea that what young people want/need is less about the ‘type of activity’ and more about having personal (psychological and physical) needs met.

This led us to become more curious about the types of projects in the local community that are successful.

Our previous research steered us to the above hypothesis as it highlighted a new point of view that the focus for the development of youth projects could be more effective. Our focus up until now has been on providing activities to entertain young people with the sub focus on reducing antisocial behaviour.

Our new thinking was spawned following a new summer project whereby young people were tasked with researching and developing an activity programme that they wanted for themselves and their peers. Despite them having full decision over this, the attendance numbers hit an all-time low.

The variation and type of ‘activity’ that is available and attractive to people is vast. Trying to meet needs from the perspective of ‘activity’ is virtually impossible with the available resources. People like to do all sorts of different things. However – if we focus on their *reasons* (or motivations) for taking part in an activity they can be narrowed down to a handful of basic needs which are described in all of the major motivational theories.

**MOTIVATION AND MOTIVATION THEORY**

**Content (need) theories.** *These focus on motivation via factors internal to the individual that energise or direct behaviour.*

Maslow: Physiological, security, belongingness, esteem, self-actualisation

Alderfer: Existence, relatedness, growth

Herzberg: Affiliation, power, achievement

**Process (cognitive) theories.** *These focus on motivation via conscious human decision processes.*

Vroom / Porter & Lawler: Expectancy

John Stacey Adams: Equity

Locke & Latham: Goal Setting

B.F. Skinner: Reinforcement

**We are currently carrying out this research and will share our findings during 2013.**