
SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES – LINK RADIO PROJECT

1 SUMMARY

Members to consider a report which outlines a locally run project to link sheltered housing schemes with a community radio station.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Following three years of research visiting residential homes and sheltered housing schemes, it became clear that a radio service designed specifically for this type of audience was an unfilled need. In 1984 the service was established covering the administrative areas of Southend and Castle Point.
- 2.2 By 1985 the Group formed themselves into a charitable trust and ideas were canvassed from the establishments they served. These helped to shape the programme content that the service eventually adopted. Link Radio had associations with the Reminiscence Centre in Rochford Hospital. The trust established its own premises and acquired radio broadcast equipment through donations and its own fund-raising activities.

3 COMMUNITY SERVICE

- 3.1 Link Radio provides a community based radio channel capable of being broadcast to local authority or privately run homes or sheltered schemes across South East Essex. The signal is received through the users own television set and the facility permits an “in house” on-screen caption being generated by the Scheme Manager or Warden. This allows the service to be used as a `notice board' for information individual to the scheme.
- 3.2 Link Radio plays music and has programmes specifically targeted for a mature audience. The service users do not have to pay a subscription charge.
- 3.3 The service is funded by a variety of grants, charitable donations and fun-raising organised by the Trust. These events include variety shows, fetes, boot fairs, line-dancing and sponsored entrants in the London Marathon.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following initial contact with the immediate past Chairman of the Council, an invitation has been extended to Rochford to join the

distributed network and include its sheltered housing schemes across the District.

- 4.2 The Council currently manages 14 Sheltered Housing Schemes. Hardwick House, Rayleigh is the subject of an ongoing review and for the purposes of this report is still included for costing; as is Crown Hill which is a cluster of pensioner designated properties without communal facilities.
- 4.3 System installation and the purchase of 14 x 14" T.V. sets for scheme manager monitoring of captions would cost in the region of £30,300 (August 2001 prices).
- 4.4 Officer negotiations with Link Radio have secured a generous contribution from the Trust of £5,892 (this would be reduced to £3,928 if only 12 schemes were to be adapted to accept Link Radio). This reduction is offered by the Trust as a sign of good faith and in an attempt to assist in the success of the project proceeding to fruition. Funds would be secured by the mechanisms outlined above (para 3.3) and would be available immediately upon take-up.
- 4.5 The Capital Programme for 2001/02 is fully committed, but elsewhere on this Agenda Members will be considering the Capital Programme for 2002/03. The Head of Service has included an inflation linked figure in the programme for Members' deliberation. This is based on 14 schemes and the higher discount element from the Trust.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

The inclusion of an item of expenditure of £25,600 in the 2002/03 Capital Programme.

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Background Papers:

Exchanges of correspondence with Link Radio

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