

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 6 MAY 2004

1 REVIEW OF POLICIES AND SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN THE DISTRICT

1.1 This item of business was referred by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 May to Council with a number of final recommendations relating to its review of youth provision in the District.

1.2 A report from the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) summarising the information taken into account by the Committee during the review and identifying the various recommended actions is appended.

1.3 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

To agree the actions detailed at Section 8 of the attached report. (CD(F&ES)).

Sarah Fowler

Head of Administrative & Member Services

Background Papers:

None

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YOUTH PROVISION REVIEW - SUMMARY REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a summary of the information received during the review of the District's youth provision and to put forward various actions for the future development of this service area.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 16 October 2003, it was agreed that the Committee would undertake a review of the youth provision that existed in the District and the terms of reference were agreed as follows:

- To focus on the 11-17 age range.
- To look at existing policies and the range of services available within the District and who provides these services.
- To look at the way in which this is likely to change in the future (emerging new structures, procedures, etc.)
- To examine what services/facilities would be welcomed by young people.
- To put forward proposals in respect of the District Council's role, its policies and the services it provides.

- 2.2 A key part of the review was gaining input from other organisations that were involved in youth provision in the District and therefore, to achieve this objective, a series of meetings have been held to listen to and evaluate the information provided.

3 MEETINGS

- 3.1 There have been eight meetings held to undertake the review. This has involved representatives attending from a number of outside organisations connected with youth provision in the District and has proved to be a valuable exercise in "stocktaking" the level and nature of provision that is currently available in the District. The meetings and attendees were as follows:

28 th January	Review introduction & overview of Council's own youth provision.
16 February	Russ McLean, StAR Partnership Stephen Garland, RDC Community Safety Officer Carl Bentley, Holmes Place Leisure Management.
26 February	Louise Simkin, The Warehouse Centre Steve Leverett, Head of Strategic Partnership (ECC)
9 March	Mark Huges, Divisional Youth Manager (ECC) Acting Inspector Diable-White, Essex Police
19 March	Trisha Walton, Connexions
16 April	John Sheaf, Rochford Chamber of Trade
6 May	Acting Inspector Diable-White, Essex Police County Cllr Roy Pearson, Essex Youth Services

4 ORGANISATION SUMMARIES

- 4.1 RDC LEISURE: provides a wide range of activities at locations spread around the District, including the very popular summer swim scheme, which has increased in numbers each year, utilising school pools during the 6 week holiday. There are also a range of activities / projects that operate during term time, including the very successful "Hyper" activity programme at Great Wakering Sports Centre, which has been significant in reducing the vandalism problems that have existed at this site. The Council's Sports Development and Arts Development Officer posts are funded by Holmes Place for the duration of the 20 year leisure management contract and the section also regularly applies for, and obtains, external funding to enable greater provision, either provided directly by the Council or by assisting outside organisations with funding advice.
- 4.2 STAR PARTNERSHIP: gave details of a number of projects in which it is involved, such as the Dads'n'Kids Club and the Youth Football project. It liaises regularly with a number of other organisations such as the Warehouse Centre, Footprints Youth Club and Southend United FC, to facilitate greater provision. The level of activity that they are involved with also appears to be expanding at the present time.
- 4.3 RDC COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM: the team have been linked with the implementation of a number of projects that have dealt with issues such as domestic violence, anti-bullying, drug awareness and road safety. These have been achieved primarily by working closely with organisations such as Essex Police, the Fire Service, StAR Partnership and County Highways.
- 4.4 HOLMES PLACE: through the management of the Council's leisure facilities, they operate a wide selection of courses and activity sessions during term time and the school holidays. As part of the Leisure Management Contract, Holmes Place operate an outreach programme through the summer holiday, taking sporting activities out to various parts of the District. They have also

played a significant part in reducing the vandalism issues that were in abundance at Great Wakering Sports Centre, through adopting a pro-active approach towards how the centre is managed on a day-to-day basis. They have experienced problems with youths congregating around the Clements Hall site and on some occasions the youths have been requested to leave the building due to improper use of the facilities.

- 4.5 STEVE LEVERETT, ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL: in his role as Head of Strategic Partnership with Essex County Council, explained the function of the Children and Young People Strategic Partnerships (CYPSP's) in planning and commissioning an integrated service to children and young people in the County. This function covers the 0-19 age range and is split into three work areas: 0-5 years, 5-13 years and 13-19 years.
- 4.6 THE WAREHOUSE CENTRE: ; provided an overview of how the centre operates as both a charity and a business and how the two strands are linked. The centre has the very profitable "mega-zone" facility, which assists in funding the youth club facility that is also in operation five nights a week, available to young people aged 8-17 years. A sports hall, multi-gym and conference facilities also help to provide a foundation for the charity side of the centre and they work closely with organisations such as the StAR Partnership.
- 4.7 ESSEX POLICE: gave an outline of the role of the Police in working with young people in the District and how they have attempted to address the disorder issues that have recently arisen. The level of resources available in the area was discussed, as were the use of deterrents such as Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC). The police have also provided funding for various schemes in the District, including mobile skateboard facilities and working with those identified as being in danger of offending. Extensive discussion also took place generally around what powers the Police have to deal with the issue of youth nuisance.
- 4.8 ESSEX YOUTH SERVICE: provided information on their service priorities, strategies and how the Youth Service is now primarily an educational service, rather than purely a recreational service. Various projects were outlined such as the "Prison! No Way" crime and reduction programme, summer camps and complimentary education programmes. Within the Rochford locality, it was noted that there are currently a few staff vacancies that have proven difficult to fill and have inevitably affected the level of provision. The Youth Strategy Group has recently been formed and is responsible for overseeing the work of the Youth Service in this locality. This has Member and officer representation from the District Council, in addition to representatives from the Youth Service, Connexions, Young Essex Assembly, Police and various other co-opted members.
- 4.9 CONNEXIONS: outlined how their role is to provide a broad based advice service to the 13-19 age range through schools, youth centres or individual referrals. This advice will be in the form of leaflets or personal advice and

covers a range of areas such as careers, child protection, drug awareness and generally assisting the young people in entering into society. They also have close links with the police and the youth service.

5 OTHER INFORMATION

- 5.1 A number of other organisations, whilst not attending the meetings, were invited to supply information and views about their involvement with youth provision in the District. Responses were received from King Edmund, Sweyne Park and Fitzwimarc senior schools, in addition to responses from eight of the Parish/Town Councils: Hullbridge, Rayleigh, Rochford, Hockley, Stambridge, Rawreth, Canewdon and Wakering.
- 5.2 Each of the senior schools advised that they are running a number of clubs and cover a wide range of sports and other activities such as drama, ICT, music, languages, art and technology. Many of these take place after school, although lunchtimes and before school times are also allocated to some of the clubs.
- 5.3 Fitzwimarc made mention of the educational visits that they run both in the UK and abroad, and Sweyne Park are in the process of trying to set up an Out of Hours Club for 8-11 year olds that, if successful, could be extended to 11-14 year olds.
- 5.4 An "Out of School Hours" learning co-ordinator is employed by Essex County Council, as a direct result of a successful bid for monies from the New Opportunities Fund, by a cluster of 10 schools in the Rochford area of the District. Whilst this is primarily aimed at primary aged children, the co-ordinator has also worked on joint projects with the Council's leisure development team, in implementing a range of activities including the very successful Hyper programme at Great Wakering Sports Centre.
- 5.5 The Parish/Town Councils gave details of a range of areas in which they are involved to varying extents. These have included skateboarding with a number of the Councils, inflatable fun days, playspaces, basketball courts, funding towards 57 South Street, youth clubs in conjunction with ECC, liaison with youth groups to gauge demand and provide funding towards activities that form part of the District Council's summer programme.

6 BUDGETARY INFORMATION

- 6.1 The County Council run the Youth Service and has a set budget for the operation of the services / facilities in the Rochford locality that is reported through the Youth Strategy Group. For 2003/4 their expenditure budget was approx. £272,000, although this was partially offset by income generated amounting to approx. £32,000, thus giving a net expenditure of £240,000.
- 6.2 The District Council does not have a separate "youth provision budget" but has a number of areas that have involvement with youth provision, with the

principal area being Leisure Services. For 2004/5 there are the following budget allocations related to youth provision:

Summer swimming scheme	£11,000
Summer activity programme	£9,100
Sports coaches (primarily Youth)	£5,000
Playspaces (capital programme – including £50,000 carried over from 2003/4)	£100,000
Total:	£125,100

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The overall level and variety of provision seems to be reasonably extensive, whether it was provided directly by the Council or by outside organisations in the District.
- 7.2 However, many of the providers could give their services/facilities a much higher profile, by making better use of the marketing opportunities that existed in the area, particularly the use of regular editorials in the local press.
- 7.3 It was not felt that the Youth Service had benefited from the change of direction that had resulted in it becoming primarily an educational service, rather than purely a recreational service.
- 7.4 It was also felt that there was possible duplication of service between the Youth Service and Connexions and that it was difficult to understand fully the level of services provided and how they could be accessed.
- 7.5 Members were impressed by the “on the ground” provision that was provided by both the Warehouse Centre and the StAR Partnership.
- 7.6 There seemed to be a growing issue in some areas of groups of young people gathering in the town centres, or other locations, and then this leading to nuisance or vandalism occurring.

8 ACTIONS

- 8.1 On the basis of the work carried out, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would recommend to Full Council the following:
- (1) Undertake an extensive consultation programme within the District's senior schools, via a short questionnaire, in order to gather the views of young people on current and future provision, ensuring that it is made clear that the Council can only gather opinion and act as a facilitator.
 - (2) Liaise regularly with Rochford's representatives on the Young Essex Assembly, through their attendance at the Youth Strategy Group, in order to gain further insight into the views of the young people.

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- (3) Produce a Youth Supplement of *Rochford District Matters* on an annual basis for the summer issue, the first issue being summer 2005.
 - (4) Provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an annual report each October, which provides Members with a summary of that year's developments/activity, etc in relation to youth provision, including not only the work of the Council but also what external organisations have achieved.
 - (5) Officer meetings to be held on a 6 monthly basis, involving the Council, the County's Portfolio Holder for Children & Families, Holmes Place, Warehouse Centre, StAR Partnership and the Youth Service, to discuss relevant issues, sharing of best practice and contacts, together with identifying future funding streams. One of the principal items on the agenda would be to discuss promotional opportunities and encourage all bodies present to maximise their activity in this area, in order to raise the profile and increase public awareness of the facilities / activities currently available.
 - (6) Produce a directory of local youth provision by September 2004, including services, activities and actual facilities that can be used as a useful information service for the public, but also for the organisations directly involved in the provision.
 - (7) The Council's Leisure Section to continue to research and apply for external funding/grants, to enable greater provision of services. This would also involve assisting local groups with applications for funding that the Council was not able to access itself. A summary of funding obtained would be included in the annual report each October, as detailed earlier.
 - (8) Continue to liaise with the Police through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, to deal with issues of youth nuisance where appropriate.
 - (9) Space to be made available on the Council's website for information directly related to youth provision, together with links to other relevant sites.
 - (10) Investigations to be carried out to assess possible future provision of teen shelters in the District, particularly in relation to costings, appropriate sites and identification of the provider.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Through carrying out the review, the issue of youth nuisance has been discussed and it has been highlighted that effective youth provision can have a positive effect in this area.

10 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The work outlined above recommended action by the Council, can be met from existing budgets. However, any specific new proposals arising from the further work suggested may have cost implications, eg, provision of teen shelters, which will need to be considered by Council as part of the annual budget making process.

11 RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES**

To consider the findings of the Youth Provision Review carried out by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to agree to the actions detailed in section 8 of this report.

Roger Crofts

Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

Background Papers:

None

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