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## **YOUTH PROVISION – HAWKWELL/HOCKLEY/ASHINGDON**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information regarding the youth project that is being undertaken by Hawkwell Parish Council and now in partnership with Hockley and Ashingdon Parish Councils.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Hawkwell Parish Council have identified the increased provision of facilities for young people as one of their key priorities and have allocated £10,000 in their 2007/08 budget for this purpose. In order to lead the development of this work, they have set up the Hawkwell Youth Project Working Group, comprising Parish and District Councillors (including Ashingdon), Essex Police, young people and other residents. Indications of support have also been forthcoming from Hockley and Rochford Parish Councils.
- 2.2 During 2007, there has been a programme of ongoing consultation with young people and other residents, around how to achieve improved facilities for young people in the area. The Parish Council have also commissioned an independent consultant to oversee the project and to prepare a business plan for the identification and implementation of future initiatives.
- 2.3 The Business Plan titled “A Place to Meet” has now been produced, with its content having been approved by the General Purposes Committee of Hawkwell Parish Council.

### **3 PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 3.1 A number of initiatives have already been achieved in this area of the District, and in particular, at the Clements Hall playing fields, including the redesigned skate park that was formally opened on 31 May 2007. Additional benches have been put into this location, adjacent to the skate park, and temporary posts for football goals have been placed on the field through the summer period.
- 3.2 There has been extensive liaison with the local Police, which has produced many benefits in engaging with the young people and addressing some of the anti social behaviour issues that have existed in the area, to the rear of Clements Hall Leisure Centre.
- 3.3 As mentioned earlier in the report, the Business Plan “A Place to Meet” has been produced which has pulled together information from a range of sources, including views of young people and other residents, case studies of similar projects elsewhere in the country, associated costs and sources of funding.

- 3.4 The conclusion of the Business Plan is to aim to implement a three-stage improvement project, for improvement in facilities for young people.
- 1) One (or more) community shelters to be installed (initially at Clements Hall Playing Field)
  - 2) Installation of a portacabin/container type structure to act as a temporary meeting centre for young people.(at Clements Hall Playing field)
  - 3) The construction of, or the adaptation of, an existing building to provide a “permanent” medium sized youth centre, incorporating a range of social, recreational and educational activities (venue to be determined)
- 3.5 These three stages reflect not only the views of the young people, but also the relative complexities and timescales of achieving the different facilities. The shelter is the “quickest” win that has a comparatively low cost attached – possibly as low as £20,000 - and would not require arrangements being made for staff/supervision. The initial guidance from the Council’s Planning Department is that the shelter may not require planning permission although this would be confirmed once final proposals are submitted.
- 3.6 The portacabin stage could then provide an indoor meeting facility that meets the needs of the young people, but also plugs the gap whilst the third stage of a more permanent youth centre is developed and implemented.
- 3.7 As previously mentioned, there has been involvement and/or support from Hockley, Ashingdon and Rochford Parish Councils, in addition to other local groups such as the Hhappy Group (Hockley, Hawkwell & Ashingdon Parishes Project for the Youth) that has also been looking at ways of improving provision for young people. In order to facilitate a coordinated approach towards addressing the issue of youth provision, meetings have taken place attended by representatives of all the interested organisations, with an agreement reached that they would work in partnership, but with Hawkwell Parish Council taking the lead, due primarily to the work / research that they have already carried out.
- 3.8 Representatives of the working group have met with District Council Officers to discuss the options, how they can be progressed, (in particular the shelter), and also around possible external grant funding possibilities that may exist for such a project. One particular source could be through the Awards for All scheme that has now increased it’s maximum grant to £10,000 (previously £5,000). It may also be useful for the Parish Council to liaise with the Youth Service to identify whether there are any funding streams that they administer or have links to that may be suitable.

#### **4 NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 At a recent meeting of the Hawkwell Parish Council, it was agreed to write to the District Council outlining the details of the shelter proposal and requesting permission from the District Council to place the shelter on the Clements Hall

playing fields. It is anticipated that this letter will have been received by the time of this meeting of the Area Committee.

- 4.2 If permission is gained, then further work / research will be undertaken in relation to the funding of the project, prior to the purchase and / construction of the shelter.

## **5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Increasing the provision of facilities for young people in this area of the District could contribute to a positive impact on the level of crime and anti social behaviour in the area.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Implementation of any of the three stages of improved facilities will be subject to the Parish Council (and possibly its partners) allocating sufficient monies, accessing any external grants and any other general fund raising initiatives. For the first stage of installing a community shelter, there is a minimum estimated cost of £20,000.

## **7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To note the content of this report, and in particular, the progress made by Hawkwell Parish Council in developing additional and appropriate youth provision and to recommend to the Executive Board that agreement in principle be given to the siting of a community shelter on the Clements Hall recreation fields, subject to receiving written details from the Parish Council (including details relating to construction, location, future maintenance and insurance).

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**Background Papers:-**

Hawkwell Parish Council Youth Project Business Plan “A Place to Meet”

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