

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 16 February 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **16 February 2004** when there were present:

Cllr T Livings (Chairman)

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs T J Capon, C J Lumley, P K Savill and D G Stansby.

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Bourne	Leisure & Contracts Manager
S Garland	Community Safety Officer
M Martin	Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

C Bentley	Operations Manager, Holmes Place
R McLean	StAR Partnership

82 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2004 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

83 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs M S Vince declared a personal interest by virtue of being a member of the StAR Partnership.

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

The Chairman welcomed the following representatives of local bodies to the meeting together with:-

- Russ McLean – StAR Partnership
- Carl Bentley – Holmes Place, the Council's Leisure Contractor.

In response to Member request, a copy of the first edition of the Council's Arts, Sports and Leisure Newsletter was circulated and Members noted that

this would be produced three times a year and circulated to all those listed on the Council's database. This provided information across the age ranges.

Members were reminded that the stocktaking exercise would continue, after which identified issues would need to be considered. Various organisations would be attending the forthcoming meetings of the Committee, which had been set aside to consider Youth Issues. These were scheduled to be held on 26 February and 9 March and Members agreed an additional date of 19 March 2004. Feedback from local schools and local authorities would be fed into the process.

StAR Partnership

Mr McLean provided Members with a handout listing the Member groups belonging to the Partnership together with a list of the supporting organisations.

Members noted that the StAR Partnership is a broad partnership of community and voluntary groups working together and supported by statutory organisations with the aim of developing and managing a diverse range of community projects in areas of deprivation within the district of Rochford. It aims through these projects to regenerate these areas by improving the health of the community, reducing crime and disorder, addressing social inequalities and achieving sustainable community development and empowerment.

Identified on the handout were 5 active projects aimed specifically at young people and covering those within the 11 – 16 age range. Further projects across all age ranges existed and more were under development.

- Footprints Youth Club – held at St Marks' Hall, Rochford on Friday evenings and managed by local parents and young people.
- Dads 'n Kids' Club – held at the Warehouse Centre, Rayleigh on Saturday mornings, which aims to help fathers and father figures build stronger relationships with their children.
- Youth Football Project – this is a nine month pilot project, with funding to continue beyond that timescale. This provides Neighbourhood, Healthy Living and Coaching Education programmes, using sport and in particular football to get the message across. By the end of October, it is anticipated that twenty young people will have achieved a football coaching qualification.
- The PACT Network – this would be launched on 20th March at the Freight House, Rochford to support Youthwork across the district. It aims to bring together volunteers and professionals with a view to building partnership working by providing support, training and resources, in particular to more informal groups such as Footprints Youth Club. At the launch, information around child protection and drugs awareness would be provided.

- Community Leadership – aims to get young people involved in leading the Partnership and encouraging them to improve their community by the use of their creativity and energy and by recognising and valuing their contribution.

Members applauded the work being carried out by the StAR Partnership and during discussion, the following was noted:-

- the aim was to build a community partnership from those organisations involved.
- the Partnership seeks to provide as much publicity as possible for the projects, including using the Council's newspaper, Rochford District Matters, which goes to all households in addition to linking with partner organisations' publicity. However, they are dependant on the willingness of local newspapers to give them the necessary publicity, particularly around the launching of new projects.
- they work closely with Essex County Council via the Youth Service and would be offering support to the local representatives on the Essex Youth Assembly

Members noted that the aim was to keep the programmes revolving and to replicate successful ventures, where funding allowed. The success of various programmes was also dependant on a core of volunteers.

Members were conscious that the age group targeted by this Committee's review of policies and services would be unlikely to read the Council's newspaper and agreed that officers investigate the feasibility and costs involved in producing a separate edition of the newspaper targeted specifically at young people, which could publicise all the activities being promoted by various local organisations. Advertising sponsorship could be sought to assist with funding. The Summer edition would be the most appropriate edition, when the Council's activities programme would normally be published. The format and style would need to be very different from the existing newspaper in order to personalise it for young people.

Resolved

That a report be brought back to this Committee outlining the feasibility and costs of producing a young person's edition of Rochford District Matters.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

The Council's Community Safety officer reported on behalf of the Rochford & District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) whose membership ranges from large responsible authorities to small voluntary organisations. Various projects had been undertaken, such as:-

- Employing a theatre group to go into local secondary schools tackling the issues surrounding domestic violence.

- Anti-bullying projects within the primary schools.
- 'Crucial Crew' involving over 900 year 6 pupils
- 'Teen Essex' for the older young people, dealing with peer education and drug issues.
- 'Roadrunner' - organised by Essex County Highways; two well attended events dealing with dangers involved in buying cars, speeding, and drink driving.
- The 'Risk' project making young people aware of the risks associated with drug taking. Working with StAR Partnership initiatives and funding for the PACT Network
- Lighting at Stambridge Youth Centre - £5,000 had been allocated.
- Youth Offending team – financial support for the hiring of venues for reparation panels and training sessions.
- 'Too Smart for Drugs' initiative led by the Police.
- 'Too fast, too furious, two dead' organised by the Fire Service.
- Promotion of the 'Bus back' services – to transport young people back from local night clubs; whilst this was an excellent concept it needed further refinement.

Members noted that the CDRP recognised the need to engage more with the media around publicising the work of the partnership agencies and to ensure that the work of the CDRP is recognised. However, they were pleased to note all that was being carried out, particularly in the light of the CDRP's role in educating young people in crime prevention and to informing of the organisations that exist to support them.

Holmes Place

Mr Bentley reported that the Clements Hall, Great Wakering and Mill Hall centres, in particular, were very much considered to be 'family centres' which provided a wide variety of activities across the age groups, but for young people, particularly up to the age of 11/12. After that age, the appeal would be limited to those who wanted to follow a particular sport or activity.

The current concern is that a lot of time has to be devoted, particularly at Clements Hall, to controlling young people who do not actually want to take part in any of the scheduled activities. This had been particularly difficult prior to Christmas and has involved staff being assaulted, but the Operations Manager reported that progress had been made in dealing with the situation. Members were heartened to noted that good progress had been made at the Great Wakering centre since the appointment of a new Manager who had engaged well with the young people. This had led to a reduction in the vandalism that had been experienced at this venue. In particular the introduction of "DJ-ing" had captured the interest of a number of young people, and it was hoped that this might be employed elsewhere.

Members noted that the activities aimed at the 11-16 age group included martial arts, gym sessions, table tennis coaching. The Operations Manager

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had identified that working with the StAR partnership might be a useful way forward in terms of the issues they were experiencing. He agreed that an element of vandalism was not an uncommon problem, but was particularly conscious of the need to protect fee paying guests at the various sites.

In general, Members were very optimistic in terms of the many and varied activities already provided across the District by a number of organisations, but identified the need to ensure that resources were employed in the most cost effective way, thus avoiding duplication of effort.

The meeting commenced at 10 am and closed at 11.35 am.

Chairman

Date