
PROVISION OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Review Committee with a summary of the services that are provided to children and young people within the District.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the role that the District Council plays in the provision of services/facilities for children and young people, both as a direct provider, but also in its role as one of a number of key organisations that input into the strategic development of these services.
- 2.2 As intimated above, the Council is not by any means the sole provider of services for children and young people and, indeed, it is Essex County Council who are the designated “Children’s Services Authority” with overall strategic responsibility. This responsibility will include such areas as children’s social care, safeguarding/children protection, education, careers advice etc., with many of these areas being statutory services that must be provided.
- 2.3 Whilst the District Council is identified as a key organisation with regard to how it provides any services for children, it is not a statutory service that the Council must provide eg: holiday activity programmes etc. However, there still remains a great importance and profile around particularly the safeguarding / children protection part of the service.
- 2.4 In addition to the County and District Councils, other involved organisations/providers include the Primary Care Trust, Police, Fire Service, schools, Voluntary Sector and specific local organisations such as the Warehouse Centre and Virgin Active.

3 DISTRICT COUNCIL PROVISION

- 3.1 The Council provides a wide range of activities, events and projects for children and young people, primarily through its leisure services section, and can be of a sports, arts or healthy living nature. Although the Council’s own budgets for this provision are very limited, the extent of provision and its associated cost far outweighs these budgets due to a number of successful applications for external funding. In terms of specific projects or facilities, there are a number of examples detailed below that have been implemented over the last few years or are currently being undertaken.

Sweyne Park Pitches

- This is the creation of three mini and two junior football pitches to the rear of Rayleigh Leisure Centre, which are due to come into use early in 2011.

The project has benefited from a successful application for external funding from the Essex Football Association to the tune of £75,000.

Teen Shelters

- Over the last two to three years, the Council has allocated a small budget towards the provision of these shelters and there are now a number of them in place at various locations around the District. In most instances officers have looked to work in conjunction with the particular Parish / Town Council and, in a number of cases, this has enabled further external funding to be levered, in that the District Council, on its own, would not have been able to access and therefore achieved greater value from the Council's budget.

Great Wakering Young People's Community Project Teen Café

- This is a project that was initiated approximately two years ago, facilitated by the District Council, in partnership with ECC Extended Schools, Essex Police, Great Wakering Parish Council and the local primary school. It has created a safe place for young people to meet with their friends and take part in a range sports, art and play activities under the supervision of volunteers at the Seashells Children's Centre. The project has been funded again through the achievement of grant funding, this time through the ECC Local Priority Fund, with the facility available twice a week and proving to be a tremendous success, with currently approaching 300 members. The project now has full registered charity status with the Charities Commission.

Big Lottery Play Project

- Again this project was funded through an external grant of £200,000 from the Big Lottery and funded three separate projects – 9 installations of new innovative play equipment, the provision of a play rangers scheme around the District in the summer holidays and the provision of temporary ice rinks in the autumn / winter months. These projects were funded for a three year period which finishes in 2011 and all have proved to be very successful, with this summer's play rangers' attendances being the highest of the three years, at just over 2700 and 550 attending the ice rink sessions in 2010 (with two more sessions still to take place).

Activities

- 3.2 In terms of ongoing activities that the Council provides, again there is a wide range of sessions on offer, with comprehensive programmes organised for each of the school holidays through the academic year, but also a number of sessions that run throughout the year during term time. To give Members an idea of the range of these activities a number of them are listed below but this is by no means the complete range:-

- Summer basketball camps with the Essex Pirates
- Summer swim scheme utilising school pools
- Football sessions
- Street 20 cricket
- Trampoline sessions
- Climbing sessions
- Archery
- A range of arts based activities, including circus skills, pottery, fabric painting, puppet workshop
- Drumming workshops and many more.

- 3.3 The attendances vary between the various sessions, either due to their popularity, or where there are different capacities that particular sessions can cater for. However, generally speaking the activity programmes are very well attended and certainly cater for a wide range of interests. For example, this summer approximately 2500 vouchers were sold for the summer swim programme, 300 attended the drumming workshops, 120 at golf sessions, 40 at the Philharmonic Orchestra project, 50 at Hockley Woods art workshop and typically 25/30 at many of the other specific sports and arts sessions.
- 3.4 In addition to this range of activities, there are a number of special events staged during the year, that whilst many of them are not aimed just at children but for the whole family, they do appeal to a large number of young people. These include Wild Woods Day, where it was estimated that there were 2500 attendances, Rayleigh Arts Festival, with estimated attendance of 1250, London 2012 Open Weekend – 500 and Rochford District Sports Festival – 500.
- 3.5 In providing these activities, the Council works very closely with a number of partners, but particularly Virgin Active who are directly responsible for managing the Council's leisure facilities and also ECC Extended Schools. This partnership working is demonstrated by way of the Activity Programme brochures that are produced as a joint brochure, containing details on each of these organisations' activities, thus reducing the cost to each organisation and also assisting in avoiding duplication of provision. A good relationship exists with the local schools, which enables these brochures to be given out at the schools and therefore reaching a large proportion of the District's young people.

4 STRATEGIC ROLE

- 4.1 As mentioned at the beginning of the report, as well as being a direct provider of activities and services for young people, the Council plays an active and important part in the strategic development of children's services in the local area through its membership of a number of multi-agency boards and working groups. These groups are attended by a range of partner organisations similar to that detailed in paragraph 2.4 of this report, some of which are detailed below.

South East Local Children's Commissioning and Delivery Board

- This was formerly known as the Local Children's Trust Board and brings together a range of partners at a strategic level in the Rochford and Castle Point area, to determine needs and identify priorities and plans to secure better outcomes for children and young people. Within this aim there is specific priority placed on leading and improving on the five Every Child Matters outcomes, through effective commissioning of services, partnership resourcing and integrated working. The Council's representation on this board is by the Portfolio Holder for Young Persons, Adult Services, Community Care and Wellbeing, Health and Community Safety and the Head of Community Services.

(Every Child Matters was a Government Green Paper published in 2003, following a report into the death of Victoria Climbié, and its aim was to give every child the support they need to meet the five outcomes, namely, be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing.)

South East Local Stay Safe Group

- This is a sub group of the above Commissioning and Delivery Board and deals specifically with that Board's responsibility with regard to safeguarding and child protection issues. The representation is again through the Head of Community Services.

Safeguarding / Child Protection

- As previously mentioned in this report, the Council's responsibilities towards the safeguarding of children and young people is of great importance and where organisations have had issues of ineffective practice or procedures, the outcomes can be extremely serious and be of a very high adverse profile. Whilst the County Council is the designated "Children's Services Authority" as the District Council provides a range of services for young people, it must have in place effective processes and procedures to ensure that children's safety is maintained at all times.

It is a requirement under the Children's Act 2004 that every local authority (in our case ECC) has in place a Safeguarding Children's Board. This

board (ESCB) is a multi agency organisation, which brings together agencies who work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Essex. It has the role of improving outcomes for children by coordinating the work of these local agencies:

- Through developing multi-agency policies and procedures
- Contributing to strategic planning of Children's Services
- Conducting Serious Case Reviews where a child has either died or been seriously harmed
- Collecting / analysing information about all child deaths

The Council is required to complete what is called a Section 11 Audit and submit this to Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB) which answers a range of questions around what policies and procedures the Council has in place for safeguarding children and young people and includes training provided, reporting channels etc. Within this audit, it is also a requirement that the Council has a named responsible officer for safeguarding and for Rochford this is the Head of Community Services, backed up as a deputy, by the Human Resources Manager.

Rochford District Youth Council

This is set up and coordinated by ECC Youth Services and involves young people being elected by their peers to sit on the Youth Council. The purpose of this Youth Council is to provide another means of representing the views of young people in the District through liaison with key organisations such as the County Council Youth Services and District Council. From this Council's perspective, it is the Leisure team that has liaised with the Youth Council on a variety of projects, including a Youth Conference, consultation events and specific training for young people. They have assisted them in delivering these projects and have been regularly invited to attend the Youth Council meetings.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In the provision of services for children and young people, it is important that they are provided in an efficient and safe manner, addressing all issues of a safeguarding nature in order to minimise the risk of incidents occurring that could have a highly damaging effect on the reputation of the Council.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Whilst the Council has limited set budgets for the provision of activity programmes and events for young people, additional provision is provided through successful bids for external funding.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In putting together the various programmes of activities and events for children and young people, the Council aims to provide a range of different activities that looks to meet the diverse needs of as broad a section of the local community as possible.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to note the content of this report that summarises the role of the Council in the provision of services for children and young people, both as a direct provider and in contributing to the strategic development of these services.

Jeremy Bourne

Head of Community Services

Background Papers:-

None

For further information please contact Jeremy Bourne on:-

Tel:- 01702 318163

Email:- jeremy.bourne@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.