

Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 16 April 2004

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

Cllr T Livings (Chairman)

Cllr C J Lumley
Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr Mrs M A Starke

Cllr Mrs M S Vince
Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs T J Capon.

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Bourne Leisure & Contracts Manager
M Martin Committee Administrator

ALSO ATTENDING

J Sheaf Essex Chamber of Commerce

186 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T Livings declared a personal interest by virtue of being the Council's representative for the Warehouse Centre, the Chairman of the Youth Strategy group - Rayleigh & Castle Point and a school governor.

Cllr Mrs M S Vince declared a personal interest by virtue of being the Council's a member of the StAR Partnership and a school governor.

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

Members of the Committee noted that a letter of invitation had been sent to each of the three local Chambers of Trade inviting them to send a representative to the meeting to comment on areas where they might be able to be of assistance in this Council's review. Members were disappointed that there was no representation from either the Rayleigh or Hockley Chambers of Trade.

Members noted that the representatives from the Young Essex Assembly were very keen to be involved in the discussions of this Committee but had been unable to attend this meeting.

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The Chairman welcomed the representative from the Essex Chamber of Commerce who was substituting for Mr Squier on behalf of the Rochford Chamber of Trade.

During discussion it was noted that:-

- The suggestion made by Members at a previous meeting of this Committee around the possibility of the Chambers of Trade being involved in some type of commercial venture was a good idea but recent incidents of criminal damage together with the perceived lack of Police presence may deter many.
- Very good facilities had existed at one time at the Rocheway Centre.
- Members noted that Rocheway is the property of the County Council and questioned whether these premises might be available for use again in youth provision.
- The provision of a venue together with simple activities such as table tennis/playing cards/computer games could be sufficient to provide a suitable facility for young people.
- Alcohol was often too easily obtained by young people.
- Suitable accommodation across the district would need to be identified which might include involving the Council's Leisure contractor. Members had already learned of the good work being achieved at the Great Wakering site.
- Members had been made aware of the many good facilities which already existed, such as the Stambridge Youth Club, Footprints Youth Club, and the Warehouse.
- The change of direction by the County Council's Youth Service was regretted. It appeared to focus too greatly on providing activities with an educational rather than recreational bias and to generate an unnecessarily high volume of paperwork.
- Funding for projects might be available from large commercial organisations with a local interest.

Members noted that the Leisure & Contracts Manager anticipated reporting back to Members with a summary report on the outcome of recent discussions around the review of policies and services for young people within the district. This would include feedback received to date from consultation with Town/Parish Councils and local schools.

Members noted that the draft summary document would include the following detail:-

- Members' views around the County's Youth Service and its responsibility for supplying suitable recreational facilities for young people.
- The need to maximise public awareness of all the facilities that do exist; the decision to publish a separate youth supplement in Rochford District Matters had already been taken.

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- Officers should plan to meet with representatives from the Star Partnership, the Warehouse and Holmes Place on a regular basis to co-ordinate and make the best use of facilities.
- Regular officer meetings to be held with Youth Assembly representatives.
- Undertake a major consultation exercise through schools. This could be an agreed action with the actual consultation being an on-going exercise.

Members were conscious of the fact that it must not unrealistically raise public expectations. The function of the Council is to act as a facilitator and enabler; it does not have the capacity to deliver services, but rather to direct interested groups or organisations to available funding streams. The outcomes of this review needed to be practical, realistic and achievable.

Members agreed that in order to begin to draw the review to a conclusion, they wished to invite a senior Police officer to attend again to answer outstanding questions. Particular areas for which Members required clarification were types of discipline permitted in schools, the lower age limit for young people to legally be allowed out on their own, the legality around publicising the names of parents of young offenders.

It was also agreed that the County's Portfolio Holder with responsibility for young people be invited to a meeting to discuss the County's provision for young people. If considered appropriate, they may be accompanied by an officer. It was also requested that representatives from local schools parent associations be invited to attend.

On a Motion moved by Cllr P F A Webster and seconded by Cllr C J Lumley, it was:-

Resolved

That in order for the Committee to begin to draw the review to a conclusion, the following be invited to attend a future meeting:-

- A senior Police officer
- The County's Portfolio Holder with responsibility for young people.
- Representatives from local schools' parent associations.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.

Chairman

Date