

Area North Committee – 24th September 2008

10. Enhanced Area Working: Supporting Young People in Area North

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Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of the progress of the service enhancement programme to support young people in Area North.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Members note and comment on the report, including the recommended next steps in Section 5 to complete the current service enhancement programme for young people.

Background

The Area Committee has previously recognised the importance of improving support to, and the involvement of, younger people to access and influence local services. The Area North Development Plan includes the local priority to **promote and enhance activities and informal facilities for children and young people** and in January 2008, an allocation of £10,000 was made to support a programme of work designed around improving local support for young people's activities and involvement. The budget was allocated from the Area North Service Enhancement programme towards the costs of a programme of grants to local youth partnerships or community groups and the additional staff costs to work with partners and manage the work planned. £6,000 was allocated to the villages and £1,000 each to Somerton, Langport and Huish, Martock and South Petherton.

Service enhancement programme

Following a review of known local needs, and discussions with a range of partners and community representatives, a number of issues were identified suitable for inclusion in a short term programme of support.

- In a rural area, small numbers of young people reduces the availability of services, including access to leisure.
- A range of agencies from the public and voluntary sectors are known to provide services to children and young people, and to adults working with young people, but a lack of coordination and leadership is often apparent.
- The importance of adult volunteers to support young people.
- The links between young people, anti-social behaviour and the availability of diversionary activities.
- The importance of involving young people in community life.

From this, areas of work were identified and included within the work programme of the Community Development Assistant (CDA), a temporary role to support this work and the associated supporting older people's programme. The CDA worked closely with the Community Development Officer, Community Safety Project Worker, members of the Sports Arts and Leisure Service, and a variety of partners, including Somerset County Council area youth workers to support the following areas of work:

- a special programme of small grants to support new or extended activities for young people.
- supporting local partnerships of community groups and agencies working together to address local needs and develop young people's involvement.
- identifying and networking the various agencies and volunteers working to support young people.
- collating information on current services, facilities and activities which support children and young people.

1. Parish projects

The size of the grants to village groups was limited to a maximum of £200 and the application process was kept as simple as possible with a one page form to complete. The programme was advertised through the local press, parish magazines and parish councils and all known groups and agencies were also contacted. Details of the grants awarded are contained in Appendix A.

All groups were asked to return an evaluation form and photos where possible at the end of their activity and a summary of those comments received to date is included in Appendix A.

2. Market town youth partnerships

A range of groups within Langport & Huish, Martock and South Petherton worked together to plan a programme of activities within their own town/village, whilst groups within Somerton took an individual – though no less successful – approach. Grant details are included in Appendix A.

The following groups were involved:

- **Langport & Huish** - Langport Youth and Community Group, Area Youth Worker, Langport Town Council, police, faith groups
- **Martock** – Youth Affairs Committee, Parish Council, Youth Parish Council
- **South Petherton** – Youth Parish Council, Parish Council
- **Somerton** – Monteclefe Junior School, St Cleers Chapel, Somerton Tennis Club, Area Youth Worker, Junior Youth Club

3. Other work

- The CDA provided support to community-led holiday play schemes and the Big Lottery funded play programme (Appendix B).
- The database of youth and play facilities has been reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- A networking event for those involved in youth work across the voluntary and paid sector was held. This has led to a better understanding of different roles and has provided people with contacts. The meeting coincided with the reorganisation of the Somerset County Council's Children & Young People's Directorate and included a presentation by an Area Youth Co-ordinator.
- Regular attendance at meetings of the Langport Children's Centre Steering Group.

4. Additional Information

- a) SCC's Local Area Delivery Team is in the process of moving into their Kelways offices.

- b) A church youth worker has recently been appointed to work in Huish Episcopi School and the surrounding area (taking up her post on 3 September).
- c) Equipment has recently been purchased from Cllr Roundell Greene's frontline councillor grant and is now available for use by community groups within Area North. There is a sand pit (and sand), a water tray and toys, a large snakes and ladders and a marquee (9mx3m). If any group would like to use any of the items for a community event, they should contact the CDA in the first instance.
- d) The Somerset Rural Youth Project continues to work in the area and has been instrumental in the establishment of a youth club in the Seavingtons.
- e) The new Children's Centre has now opened in Langport, though there have been some difficulties recruiting a manager for the childcare provision and this part is not expected to open until Spring 2009. Details of the centre are attached as Appendix C.

5. Next steps

- Convene another networking meeting for all those involved with youth work, including those who have received grants from the service enhancement programme.
- Support local partnerships of those working with young people.
- Complete the grants evaluations.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

The work referred to above supports the following objectives:

- 2: Maintain above 75% the people satisfied with the way the council runs the district
- 8: Work in partnership with the public and private sectors in developing and delivery of the Market Towns Vision
- 9: Identify and address the particular issues affecting rural areas
- 11: Improve the health and well-being of our citizens
- 16: Maintain above 80% the people satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live

Other Implications

Local Area Agreement Targets:

- Theme 29: Develop strength and role of community groups and voluntary organizations.
- Theme 34: Improved joint working.

Background Papers: *Report on Improved Area Working – ANC December 2007*
Supporting Young People in Area North – ANC January 2008