

Bromsgrove District Council **Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services**



Youth Provision Task Group Overview & Scrutiny Board

June 2013

Supporting officer: Amanda Scarce



Bromsgrove
District Council
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MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP

Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. S. Baxter
Councillor C. J. Bloore (withdrawn)
Councillor J. S. Brogan
Councillor R. J. Laight
Councillor P. Lamma
Councillor Mrs. C. J. Spencer

SUPPORTING OFFICER

Amanda Scarce – Democratic Services Officer
a.scarce@bromsgroveandreditch.gov.uk

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I must begin by say what a great pleasure it has been carrying out this investigation as the Task Group has been fortunate enough to visit some exceptional youth facilities and had an opportunity to hear the views and thoughts of young people from different parts of the District.

My thanks go to the Task Group Members who have attended a large number of meetings in a relatively short period of time and I hope they will all agree that it has been a great opportunity to go out and see for ourselves what is happening all over the District for young people.

I hope the information provided within this report and the recommendations go some way to summarise the scope of what is already available and how the Council can further engage with the young people in both promoting and shaping activities in the future.

Finally, special thanks go to Democratic Services Officers, Amanda Scarce for her support and organisational skills in keeping the Task Group on track and Jess Bayley and Pauline Ross for their support with research and note taking.

**Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths
Chairman of the Youth Provision Task Group**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 1 – The Positive Activities Scheme

Recommendation 1	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
That Worcestershire County Council ensures that regular meetings between the commissioner and local providers of Positive Activities (within the Bromsgrove District) take place to ensure there is no overlap of services and to enable best practices to be shared.	Councillor M. J. A. Webb	As soon as possible.
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p>Resource Implications There are no additional resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>		

Recommendation 2	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
That Bromsgrove District Council write to Worcestershire County Council highlighting its concerns in respect of the limited life span and uncertainty over the provision of a building for the youth services provided by EPIC in the Rubery Ward.	Councillor M. J. A. Webb	As soon as possible.
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p>Resource Implications There are no additional resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>		

Recommendation 3	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
<p>That Worcestershire County Council ensure that the activities provided from £15k provided by Sandwell Leisure Trust are commissioned through the Positive Activities process to ensure that no further delays occur.</p>	<p>Councillor M. J. A. Webb</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p>
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p>Resource Implications There are no additional resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>		

CHAPTER 2 – What is available to Young People within the District?

Recommendation 4	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
<p>That Bromsgrove District Councillors familiarise themselves with all facilities for young people within their Ward and build relationships with local providers where appropriate.</p>	<p>Councillor R. Hollingworth</p>	<p>Ongoing and to be reviewed in 12 months time.</p>
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p>Resource Implications There are no additional resource implications.</p>		

Recommendation 5	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
<p>That through the Local Strategic Partnership's Balanced Communities Group a process is found whereby all providers of youth activities throughout Bromsgrove District are given an opportunity to support each other and share ideas and best practice.</p>	<p>Councillor R. Hollingworth</p>	<p>Within 6 months of the date of approval.</p>
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation. Resource Implications Any support would be met from existing resources.</p>		

Recommendation 6	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
<p>That the Chairman of the Task Group (supported by Democratic Services Officers) give a presentation, of the Task Group's findings, to CALC in order to encourage Parish Councils to support local youth groups.</p>	<p>Councillor R. Hollingworth</p>	<p>Within 3 months of the date of this report.</p>
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation. Resource Implications Any support would be met from existing resources.</p>		

CHAPTER 3 – How the Council can promote the activities already available in the District

Recommendation 7	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
That Bromsgrove District Council launches a Twitter campaign to promote activities for young people across the District.	Councillor M. A. Bullivant	Within 6 months of the date of approval.
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p>Resource Implications Any support would be met from existing resources.</p>		

Recommendation 8	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
That Bromsgrove District Council uses active young people to help with and schedule the Twitter campaign including creating the #tag.	Councillor M. A. Bullivant	Within 6 months of the date of approval.
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p>Resource Implications Any support would be met from existing resources.</p>		

Recommendation 9	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
That via Twitter, Bromsgrove District Council carries out a consultation on youth activities in the District including which activities young people would like to see more/less of.	Councillor M. A. Bullivant	Within 6 months of the date of approval.
<p>Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.</p> <p>Resource Implications Any support would be met from existing resources.</p>		

CHAPTER 4 - CONCLUSION

Recommendation 10	Portfolio Holder	Completion Date
That the Overview and Scrutiny Board includes within its Work Programme an investigation into the provision of services available to disaffected young people and those not in education, employment or training within the District.	Councillor M. A. Bullivant	To be included within the work programme immediately following approval of the recommendation.
Financial Implications There are no financial implications arising from this recommendation. Resource Implications There are no additional resource implications.		

AREAS OF CONCERN WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT

Following its investigations, although not able to make recommendations in respect of these areas, the Task Group wished to highlight the areas of concern as set out below.

- Whilst there was an abundance of activities available around Bromsgrove itself and throughout the District, Members were concerned that there was little available within the Bromsgrove Town Centre area.
- Members were concerned that any increase in the hire charges for use of the facilities at the Ryland Centre (following the expiry of the subsidy provided by WCC) could have a detrimental effect on those groups which were currently based there.

AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE/EXCEPTIONAL VALUE WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT

Following site visits and interviews Members wished to highlight the following groups which showed areas of good practice and Members believed were of exceptional value to the communities they served.

- The Basement Project
- Bromsgrove Rugby Club
- Woodrush Youth Centre
- The Lounge
- EPIC
- Stoke Parish Youth Club

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Board received a presentation on the work of the Local Strategic Partnership at its meeting held on 22nd October 2012. Following this presentation the Board agreed at its following meeting, in November 2012 to set up a Task Group which would investigate the youth provision within the District. The key objectives of the Task Group were to consider current arrangements to providing services for young people, to analyse opportunities to participate in youth activities, to scrutinise accessibility of current services provided by the Council and to identify any gaps within the services provided. Members believe that as Young People are a significant proportion of the local population an effective review of the subject would potentially enable them to address the needs of young people living in the District and in the long term have a positive impact on their future prospects.

(Full details of the terms of reference are available at Appendix 1 of this report.)

The Task Group has held a total of 18 meetings, which included 6 site visits and interviews with numerous internal and external witnesses. The Task Group has also considered written evidence from a number of sources and considered information provided by both Ward Councillors and Parish Councils. The initial meeting of the Task Group took place on 5th December when Members considered the Terms of Reference and discussed in detail how it would carry out its investigation, from the early stages Members were keen to visit facilities for young people within the District in order to find out what was available to them. The penultimate meeting of the Task Group took place on 29th May when Members formulated the recommendations which are now outlined within this report and the final meeting took place on 17th June to discuss the draft report before submitting it to the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its July meeting.

CHAPTER 1 – Positive Activities Scheme

At an early stage of its investigations the Task Group asked to meet with both the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services at the Council and the Commissioning Manager, Young People at Worcestershire County Council (WCC), as they were keen to hear what progress had been made in the commissioning of activities under the new scheme. Therefore following those initial discussions Members tasked officers with arrange visits to a number of youth facilities within the District. The aim of the visits was to see what each facility provided overall for young people. The Task Group Members visited 3 youth facilities within the District that were supported by the Positive Activities Scheme. During the initial meeting with the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC Members raised concerns over the recent “take over” of the Ryland Centre in Bromsgrove, which had previously been a base for youth activities and agreed that although this did not fall within the Positive Activities Scheme it would be important to investigate what the Ryland Centre was now providing for young people. Officers were therefore also asked to arrange a to visit the Ryland Centre in order to meet with Sandwell Leisure Trust, who had taken over the running of it.

Originally five providers of Positive Activities had been identified, including the Council; however Members were informed that one provider had withdrawn and it was anticipated that the provision of Positive Activities work at Rubery would now be picked up by EPIC who were also the provider at the Trunk in Charford (together with various other sites in Bromsgrove). At a later meeting with the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC Members were concerned to hear that although EPIC had taken over the contract at Rubery with effect from 1st April 2013, the issue of premises continued to be a problem; this was due to WCC’s initial decision to dispose of the current youth centre building in Rubery. WCC had however agreed to extend the life of the building until September 2013 with a view to alternative accommodation being sourced and Members were informed that various options were being considered with one in particular being favoured, subject to WCC’s agreement. The Task Group agreed that it was unlikely that a satisfactory conclusion would be reached in such a short period of time and that the uncertainty could be unsettling for the young people involved.

Bromsgrove District Council

During the course of discussions the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Sports Development & Physical Activity Manager provided the Task Group with a comprehensive list of all the activities available to young people within the District. This ranged from a simple list of parks and open spaces to a comprehensive list of sports clubs and activities. There was a number of school based activities where the Council works with the school to develop a coaching programme and activities throughout the school holidays. These activities were promoted through the Council’s website and local papers. Members were also provided with information on club and coach development, the Council has developed a good strong community sports club culture throughout the District

which included 8-9 football teams, including boys, girls and young people with disabilities. The Members were informed that some of the disabilities groups used the Ryland Centre as their base and as this had recently been “taken over” by Sandwell Leisure Trust were concerned about the knock on effect of any potential increased charges as due to the nature of the groups they tended to be made up of smaller numbers of young people. Members shared this concern not only for the disabilities groups but other smaller groups who would find it difficult to absorb any increase in charges or be able to find alternative accommodation at a reasonable rate.

The Council has a taster community sports programme which then feeds directly into the club structure. The Council’s aim was to facilitate and support these activities in order to reach a stage where a club could be handed over to volunteers to carry on the work. Members were given an example of this in the Gymnastics Club, where the Council funded a coach for 12 months, until the club became established and able to fund the coach itself. These were all activities which were very much reliant upon volunteers and where possible the Council put in appropriate support mechanisms to ensure the good work continued (this support often being provided by Sports England).

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services informed Members that in respect of Arts and Cultural events, whilst it was acknowledged that it did not have the money to support it that sports had, the events that were organized were well attended and supported. These included working with the Artrix Centre and Arts Alive, Youth Theatre events and Street Theatre. The Artrix Centre provided a good link for those young people who wished to explore the Arts further.

John Godwin, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, attended several meetings and supported Members throughout the Task Group process.



EPIC/The Trunk, Bromsgrove

Following on from initial discussions with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC it was suggested that Members visit the Trunk in Bromsgrove to see the work that it was carrying

out with young people. The Task Group Members visited the Trunk and spoke to the Managing Director of EPIC and the Youth Co-ordinator. Members were provided with detailed information about the work that was carried out at both the Trunk in Charford and other venues at Sidemoor and Catshill. The Task Group discussed the issues that had arisen in respect of premises for activities in Catshill, which had originally been based at the local middle school. The Youth Co-ordinator had set up a steering group involving other professionals in the area, including representatives from the Scouts and Parish Council. This has led to ongoing partnership working which the Youth Co-ordinator aimed to develop further. The Task Group were informed that following the loss of its building provision in Sidemoor and difficulties in finding alternative accommodation EPIC had sourced funding for a purpose built unit. The Health Authority had provided funding for a purpose built modular unit, the Health Hub at Perryfields and the Task Group members were informed that currently it was used for health related issues and for the provision of services for 13-19 year olds.

EPIC also worked with local schools, often with small groups of young people who were presenting challenging behaviours and the Managing Director informed Members that the links with local schools were important in order to support the young people wherever possible. Activities were inclusive and where necessary arrangements would be made to put staff in place to provide a young person with one to one support. This was particularly important for the needs of young people with autism for example until they became accustomed to the environment within the Centre. There was a mix of staff at EPIC including some volunteers, but it was recognised that there was a risk from using volunteers and that it was difficult for people to make a regular commitment. This had an impact on the young people who often needed a constant presence and familiar face. A Youth Committee has been established at the Trunk and it was hoped that this could be replicated at the other centres. This had given the young people some responsibility for the activities which took place and allowed them to see "the bigger picture" as to how the centre was run.

In respect of the Positive Activities Scheme, the Managing Director confirmed to Members that it would be useful for all the providers from Bromsgrove District to meet regularly in order to exchange ideas and ensure that work was not being duplicated. This would be particularly useful for those groups that did not have such experienced staff as EPIC. The Managing Director also confirmed that she had met with Sandwell Leisure Trust and discussed the use of the Ryland Centre for some activities, but it was agreed that the facilities being offered were not conducive to the type of work that was needed.

The Managing Director confirmed that EPIC, following the withdrawal of the original provider, had been commissioned to provide youth services at Rubery and it was anticipated that her team would provide 2 evening sessions a week. She also informed Members that there was an ongoing issue with premises and that if this was not resolved there was concern that these sessions would not be able to go ahead. The Managing Director was invited to a further meeting of the Task Group, in late April 2013 and asked to provide an update on the situation at

Rubery. She informed Members that a mapping exercise had been carried out within the local area in an attempt to find suitable alternative accommodation, as she had been informed that although the life of the current building had been extended by WCC, this was only until September 2013. However, she had been able to employ 3 of the workers who had previously worked at the Rubery centre for WCC which had given the young people concerned some stability. Members raised concerns that WCC had not resolved this matter and that the search for premises was time consuming and that the Managing Director's time would be better spent concentrating on the activities provided for the young people.

Woodrush Youth and Community Centre

Task Group Members visited the Woodrush Youth and Community Centre and were given the opportunity to hold discussions with the Youth Management Team and Youth Committee. The Director of Youth and Community Provision and other members of staff were able to provide background information on the Centre, including details of the partnership with the school and Members found that, as was often the case; the support of volunteers was paramount to its success. However, through the Positive Activities scheme one of the projects the Centre was able to do was employ a youth worker one evening per week to provide drug counselling and to liaise with partner agencies on other health related issues such as smoking, alcohol and sexual health.

The Youth Management Team and Youth Committee members provided the Task Group with details of centre opening times and activities together with details of particular events which had taken place throughout the year. This included a Work Skills Programme which was linked with the local high school and included mock interviews, voluntary work and money management. The Director of Youth and Community Provision informed Members that she sat on the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and that it was important for more engagement with schools in order to ascertain what work skills employers wanted and to provide help in preparing young people for work. Other activities included a residential trip which concentrated on self esteem followed by the production of a DVD which had been distributed to all schools in Worcestershire.

The Youth Management Team played a key role in "balancing" the books and was given an opportunity to contribute ideas as to how funds were used. They were also encouraged to become involved in any issues, with the young people, that were witnessed or experienced within the Centre (where a zero tolerance policy was in place). The Youth Management Team explained that often young people who either had difficulty in fitting in or initially created problems found it easier to relate to the Members of the Management Team or Committee and often approached them for advice.

The Youth Management Team were keen for the Centre to be part of the local community and had offered the Centre's help and support for a local fun run. It had good links with the local churches and the local Community Safety Officers (CSOs) visited the Centre on a Monday evening and helped out with a football activity of a Tuesday, which had helped the younger age group (11-13 years)

interact with the CSO's whilst attending the Centre. The Centre was used during the day by the School and also a mother and toddler group once a week. The local church also used it for a youth group on Sundays.

The Task Group Members were particularly impressed with the relationship between the staff and the young people and how they were involved in every aspect of the Centre, together with how they took those responsibilities seriously.

The Lounge, Alvechurch

The Lounge was a relatively new youth facility and had been set up by local residents who were concerned about the tensions between the different generations within the community and anti social behaviour (ASB) by some young people and the perception of it by older residents. The Council and the Parish Council had been very supportive and WCC had provided pastoral care and support from youth workers in the early stages of forming the Lounge. The actual concept of the Lounge had come from the young people themselves, who had asked for a café type environment which was separate from school. The café was used during the day by local people of all age ranges and youth specific activities were held 2 evenings a week. It was also open as a drop in for the young people after school and during the school holidays. Members were informed that the café had become the hub of the community and as a consequence the older generation were much more accepting as they saw what was going on and this has had a positive impact on the village itself. The café has a Youth Management Committee, made up of 10 young people from all age ranges, which work on running the youth side of the café and work on projects to help within the community. The café had a good working relationship with the local Community Safety Officer who called in regularly and discussed ASB with those that were involved in it.

The Task Group was provided with details of the work that was carried out with the young people (including those that were vulnerable and more hard to reach) and was impressed with how innovative the staff were with the limited resources that were available to them and as was often the case, the majority of the staff were volunteers. The help and support provided by those volunteers was invaluable to the day to day running of the café in particular. The Task Group discussed with the staff whether they would find it helpful to hold regular meetings with other Positive Activities providers, not only to ensure there was not an overlap of work, but also to share best practice and it was confirmed that although they had made contact with both EPIC and Woodrush, regular meetings would be useful as these centres had much more experience and available resources so the opportunity to meet regularly would be useful.

The Ryland Centre, Bromsgrove

Although the Ryland Centre did not form part of the positive activities scheme, the Task Group had been informed that Sandwell Leisure Trust, who took over the running of the Centre in early 2013, had pledged funding of £15k per year for three years to go towards activities for young people, either to be based at the Ryland Centre or within the town centre area. Members were keen to visit the

Ryland Centre following its refurbishment and speak to with representatives of Sandwell Leisure Trust to ensure that, wherever possible consideration continued to be given to activities for young people and to find out more about the funding which it had pledged.

During the visit to the Ryland Centre and discussions with the Chief Executive and Operations Manager from Sandwell Leisure Trust, it was apparent to Members that although the sports groups/clubs which had previously used the centre continued to do so and that the football pitches continued to be only used by youth teams during the weekend period, the focus of the Centre had now changed significantly and was aimed at a different type of clientele. Sandwell Leisure Trust confirmed that it had a 30 year lease with Worcestershire County Council and must continue the work covered by the Sports England grants and had also guaranteed that hire rates for current clubs/groups would not increase within the first year and that it would discuss any increases where necessary with the relevant groups. The Task Group was informed that young people would be encouraged to use the building whenever possible, but development of the gym membership was imperative to the success of the Centre.

Members agreed that whilst the initial work that had been carried out at the Centre appeared positive, it would be useful to visit again in six to twelve months time to see if this remained the case. In respect of the £15k funding, the Trust informed Members that it would be at the discretion of WCC as to how this would be distributed, however if appropriate there was a room available within the Centre which could be used for a youth group of some description. After further questioning it became apparent to Members that this would not necessarily be a suitable option and that careful consideration would need to be given as to how this money could best be used.

At the Task Group's penultimate meeting the Commissioning Manager, Young People WCC informed Members that a meeting had taken place in April 2013 to discuss the method for commissioning the £15k from Sandwell Leisure Trust. This would be along the same lines as the Positive Activities funding and it was hoped that it would be available in time to provide activities over the summer period. The specification for this was currently being written in consultation with Councillors. The Task Group were concerned that although the funding had been available from early 2013 it had still not been drawn down and the process not finalised.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 1

That Worcestershire County Council ensures that regular meetings between the commissioner and local providers of Positive Activities (within the Bromsgrove District) take place to ensure there is no overlap of services and to enable best practices to be shared.

Recommendation 2

That the Council write to Worcestershire County Council highlighting its concerns in respect of the limited life span and uncertainty over the provision of a building for the youth services provided by EPIC in the Rubery Ward.

Recommendation 3

That Worcestershire County Council ensure that the activities provided from £15k provided by Sandwell Leisure Trust are commissioned through the Positive Activities process to ensure that no further delays occur.

*Members interviewing
Representatives from
Sandwell Leisure Trust
At the Ryland Centre,
Bromsgrove*



CHAPTER 2 – What is available to young people within the District?

At the initial meeting of the Task Group it was agreed that although Members wished to look at the activities provided through the Positive Activities Scheme they also wanted to investigate what other activities were available for young people throughout the district, as Members believed from initial investigations that there was likely to be much more available than expected.

Officers were tasked with researching activities for young people by Ward area and received detailed information from the Leisure and Cultural Services team on what was provided by the Council. This was both written evidence and through interviews with both the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and the Sports Development & Physical Activities Manager. Members initial views of this information was that although there was a comprehensive choice of activities, many of them were sports orientated. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services informed Members that arts and culture events were organized through the Artrix Centre, Youth Theatre and Arts Alive. It was agreed that although Arts and Culture did not have the same funding level to support it as Sports had, the events that were organized were well attended.

Members arranged to visit the Artrix Centre and interviewed the Artistic Director who provided both a tour of the Centre and comprehensive information about the activities that they provided for young people throughout the year. Activities were also arranged during the school holiday period and the Artrix worked with the Council to ensure that these did not “overlap” with those provided by the Council. These activities were a mix of both free and charged activities and drop in sessions for families. The Centre also provided youth theatre/drama sessions throughout the week, some of which were aimed at young people with particular needs (at which parents or carers were able to also attend). During the site visit Members saw how the Centre has adapted some of the rooms to make them multi functional to accommodate as many groups as possible.

The Centre has a mobile cinema, which it had taken out to schools within the District and had also used it for open air film nights at the Avoncroft Museum. Members were informed that generally the 16-24 years age range tended not to use the Centre (particularly the cinema facilities) and although attempts had been made to engage with this age range it was felt this would never be successful as they preferred to access more commercial cinemas in particular.

Members were informed that the Centre also had a designated Education & Outreach Co-ordinator. The outreach work was largely aimed at those hard to reach young people through specific projects which could take up to a year to complete. Workshops were also carried out within the parks which were used to engage with young people and art graffiti was a particularly successful area. Member arranged to interview the Education Outreach Co-ordinator at a later meeting and she provided Members with a comprehensive list of the work carried out and how it was funded. West Mercia Police had assisted with particular

projects which were usually around diverting young people away from ASB, raising drug and alcohol awareness and educating them in life choices through the Outreach in Action Projects. Members were particularly interested in the work with the hard to reach young people, as they were concerned that this was a group of young people which could be vulnerable and unlikely to engage, for various reasons, in many of the other activities which were available from other providers.

Following on from the meeting with the Education & Outreach Co-ordinator the Task Group agreed that it was important for it to investigate what was available for those vulnerable young people that the Co-ordinator had spoken of, which led to the Operations Manager at the Basement Project being invited to a meeting together with a member of the Council's Community Safety Team.

During the interview with the Council's Community Safety Project Officer Members were informed that rather than engage in general youth provision, the team seek to identify and target those young people who are most at risk of offending and those who are at risk of harm from participating in inappropriate and/or anti-social behaviour. The work tended to come under the categories of enforcement, education or diversionary activity and took place periodically throughout the year and historically increased its focus on youth activity during the school holidays. The areas covered vary from the Schools Respect Programme, which is a 12 week programme of community safety workshops to target groups of young people in local schools who have been identified by teachers as having challenging behavioural issues, to Community Safety Diversionary Activities. These activities have included projects such as DJ skills sessions, the Community Safety Angling Project and leisure and sports activities and were offered to young people who had shown some improvement in their behaviour and/or had signed up to Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. The Team always aimed to encourage young people to get involved in more general Community Promotions such as environmental action days.

The Basement Project was a charitable organisation which had been set up some 15 years ago and was aimed at homeless and potentially homeless young people from age 16 – 25 years. The Project helped young people find accommodation and provided support at various levels dependent upon each young person's needs. The Operations Manager attended as a witness and provided the Task Group with information on the work it carried out. Members were keen to find out how the Project was staffed and funded. The Operations Manager informed them that there was a total of 5 paid staff and the remainder were volunteers. The Project had a Board of Trustees and donations and fund raising events played a large part in funding the Project and funding of £25k was provided from the Council's homeless fund (which the Project had to apply for annually). The Project had worked with over 200 young people over the previous year, who had come to the Centre from all over the District (and in some cases outside of the District).

A variety of work was carried out, from working within schools on a programme of “story telling” which was based around homelessness and how people were affected by it to workshops which covered cooking, shopping and raising the young people’s self esteem. The young people were encouraged to join in with stands/stalls which the Project had at events throughout the District, such as the Street Theatre. The aim was to identify each young person’s individual needs and tailor the work around them. Members were impressed with the commitment and work that the Basement Project undertook with limited funding and resources.

As part of the investigation the Task Group agreed that it would be helpful to find out from other Members if they were aware of activities for young people within their own Ward, whether provided by the Council or other agencies. An email was sent to all Ward Members asking them to provide (a) a list of youth services that they were aware of that were available to young people within their Ward (this could include Brownies, Scouts or activities organized by the local Church for example) and (b) if they had ever been contacted by any young people in respect of youth provision within their Ward. Officers also undertook this exercise, by carrying out research on the internet, in order for a comparison to be made. (Information received from Councillors is attached at Appendix 5.)

A limited response to this request was received and has led to one of the recommendations listed below being put forward. However, from the information that was received Members were informed that Stoke Parish Council had funded a youth club, once a week, for young people in the area for the last four years. The Task Group were interested to see how this had been set up and arranged to visit when the Youth Club was taking place. During the subsequent visit the Task Group interviewed Mr. George Verney, who provided background information on his involvement with and running of the Youth Club.

Members interviewed George Verney at Stoke Parish Youth Club and spoke to the young people in attendance.



The youth club completely relied upon volunteers and had become self-sufficient in many ways. The Treasurer for example held a Food Hygiene Certificate which enabled her to provide food preparation/cooking lessons for the young people. The majority of volunteers were first aid trained, with two youth club members also being trained. Several of the volunteers had originally been members themselves and had asked to stay on and help once they had reached the club's age limit. The Club was very much community orientated and Mr. Verney gave examples of how the young people had helped some older members of the community by sweeping snow and collecting shopping during the winter months. Members were impressed with the dedication of the volunteers and the enthusiasm and enjoyment that the young people showed during the visit.

Following on from the visit to Stoke Parish Youth Club all parish councils were contacted and asked to provide details of any activities for young people that the parish contributed towards or organized, whether it was a one off event or on a regular basis. Although several responses were received and parish councils provided funding for activities, the Task Group were not aware of any other parish council provided a similar facility to Stoke.

Receipt of the information from parish councils and the visit to Stoke Parish Youth Club has led to the formulation of recommendation 6 detailed below. The Task Group believe the youth club is an excellent example of a community working together, with minimum financial support and was something which could be replicated in other Wards within the District. It highlighted to Members that providing activities for young people was not necessarily always about large funding streams and providing paid professional staff.

Also highlighted in the information provided by Councillors was the abundance of Scouts/Girl Guide groups that were available throughout the District. In order to find out more about the Scouting movement, Mr. Roy Clarke, District Commissioner for the Scouts was invited to attend as a witness. The Task Group were informed that there was 9 groups throughout the district of Bromsgrove and membership started from aged 6 years (Beavers) up to aged 25 years for Network members. Members were provided with detailed written evidence in respect of the work of the Scouts Association and the training available. The Scouts Association received no funding and therefore relied upon volunteers and fund raising events. Hagley was the largest unit in the District and as such tended to be "self sufficient" whereas many of the other units tended to work more closely together and shared events and outings. The challenge was to keep the young people interested enough to move up to each different stage and to finally become leaders themselves at aged 18. The majority of the units were open all year round, with only a 2 week break during the summer and met once a week. Girls are allowed to join the Scouts if they so wish, although it was confirmed that there was some strong Girl Guide groups within the District. The District Commissioner confirmed that the Scouts were made up from a good cross section of local communities and that although they are encouraged to participate in all outdoor activities it was recognised that this did not appeal to everyone and therefore there was always opportunities to take part in less

physical activities. It was confirmed to Members that there was a hardship fund available for those unable to afford the annual fees and a family discount could also be applied. The Scouts units try wherever possible to contribute to the local communities and held a Community Week regularly to raise awareness of the Scout movement.

The Task Group had been provided with detailed information from the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services about the sporting activities which the Council supported, but following the information provided by some Councillors Members agreed it would be helpful to receive information from a more “independent” sports provider within the District. Mr. John Blackhall, Chairman of Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club was therefore invited to attend as a witness. Mr. Blackhall informed Members that there were currently 20 teams ranging from under 5s to under 17s at the Club, together with girls, adults and veterans teams. The Club was accredited with 150 volunteers, coaches and first aiders and was completely self-funded (although the Council had previously provided funding for 2 floodlight pitches). There was an annual subscription fee, however if there was a problem with payment the Club would look at each case sympathetically and help where possible with kit and tour visits for example. The Club worked hard to help the young people develop personal skills as well as skills on the field and had a Welfare Officer who was available to everyone. Mr. Blackhall discussed with Members the future plans of the Club and how it hoped to make improvements to the facilities, funds were continuously being raised by various events and monies secured in a separate development fund account. The ground was regularly used by local schools and for school competitions and county matches and tournaments. The Club had a good standard of coaching and the younger players were now being coached by ex players. Members acknowledged that it was important that the Club maintained this interest and appreciated the hard work and dedication of the volunteers at the Club.

Members had also requested that a press release be produced to invite members of the public, of any age, to put forward their views, experiences and ideas. Officers were approached by the Sixth Form Achievement Co-ordinator at Hagley High School on behalf of a number of pupils who were carrying out a survey into what activities young people wanted in Hagley. There had previously been a youth project (part funded by Hagley Parish Council), but following the lose of a paid youth worker and difficulties in finding a replacement; this was no longer the case. Members were keen to hear the views of young people throughout the district and duly invited them to attend and give a presentation on the findings of their survey. The presentation highlighted that the most popular facility requested was that of a skate park and that pupils were concerned that there was not enough facilities for teenagers living in Hagley in comparison to towns such as Kidderminster and Bromsgrove. The pupils informed Members that although there were activities available which were organised by the local church, this type of activity was not always suitable for everyone.

Hagley was keen to ensure that an independent youth project was reintroduced and asked for help from the Task Group in securing a paid youth worker as they believed that youth activities enabled young people to met with other teenagers

and develop social skills. Although sympathetic to their needs, but as highlighted at Stoke Parish Youth Club, Members did not believe that it was always essential to have a paid youth worker to make a youth club successful.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 4

That Bromsgrove District Councillors familiarise themselves with all facilities for young people within their Ward and build relationships with local providers where appropriate.

Recommendation 5

That through the Local Strategic Partnership's Balanced Communities Group a process is found whereby all providers of youth activities throughout Bromsgrove District are given an opportunity to support each other and share ideas and best practice.

Recommendation 6

That the Chairman of the Task Group (supported by Democratic Services Officers) give a presentation, of the Task Group's findings, to CALC in order to encourage Parish Councils to support local youth groups.

Pupils from Haybridge High School gave a Presentation to Members on activities for young people in Hagley.



CHAPTER 3 – How the Council can promote the activities already available in the District

As the work of the Task Group drew to a close it was apparent that there was an abundance of activities available to young people throughout the district. However, it was recognised that there were gaps in particular areas, which could, in some cases, be addressed by support and assistance from the community (as shown at Stoke Parish Youth Club). The Task Group concluded that the activities that were already available needed to be promoted in such a way that the young people would become more aware of what was on offer and also be given an opportunity to take part in the promotion and where possible improvement of the activities.

With these thoughts in mind, the Task Group interviewed the Communications Manager in order to find the most effective (and cost effective) way in which to promote those activities provided by the Council and where possible other organisations. Various options were discussed with the Communications Manager, including the use of a young peoples' supplement to the Together Bromsgrove magazine which was circulated to all households within the District. However, it was agreed that it was unlikely that form of "advertising" was one which young people would access. The Communications Manager explained to Members how Twitter could be used and how this could actually evolve by allowing the young people to lead on producing a #tag thread. It was also explained to Members that as this began to be used, it could also be used not only to promote activities for young people but also as a tool to ascertain which activities were successful and what activities they would like to see more of, leading to an informal online consultation process.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 7

That Bromsgrove District Council launches a Twitter campaign to promote activities for young people across Bromsgrove District.

Recommendation 8

That Bromsgrove District Council uses active young people to help with and schedule the Twitter campaign including creating the #tag.

Recommendation 9

That via Twitter, Bromsgrove District Council carries out a consultation on youth activities in the District including which activities young people would like to see more/less of.

Members met with the Youth Management Team and the Youth Committee at Woodrush Youth and Community Centre.



CHAPTER 4 - CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion of the Task Group was that there was a large amount of activities available for young people in the District and that they needed to be promoted and encouraged to participate in them. Whilst acknowledging that there was a wide range of activities, Members were concerned that although these were available to everyone, there was a small minority of young people who could potentially have difficulty in accessing them for various reasons.

A particular group that caused Members concern were those hard to reach young people who the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator at the Artrix Centre worked with, together with those that the Community Safety Project Officer worked with in schools and those that accessed the facilities at the Basement Project. The Task Group was also provided with statistics (split into Ward areas) in respect of young people not in education, employment or training and again, although not a large number, Members were concerned that it was this group who perhaps needed both support and access to activities the most.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 10
That the Overview and Scrutiny Board includes within its Work Programme an investigation into the provision of services available to disaffected young people and those not in education, employment or training within the District.

The scope of the work of the Task Group has been immense and it was felt some areas which it had covered warranted attention being drawn to them as Members, although noting that recommendations on these areas would not be appropriate, were concerned about the long term effect that these issues could have on young people. Similarly, during the course of its investigations the Task Group visited and spoke to many people whose work within the community and with young people was truly inspirational. The success of these clubs/projects was due to the dedication of the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to support the young people.

The Task Group Members wish to draw attention to the following areas of concern together with areas of good practice/exceptional value to the District.

AREAS OF CONCERN WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT

Following its investigations, although not able to make recommendations in respect of these areas, the Task Group wished to highlight the areas of concern as set out below.

- Whilst there was an abundance of activities available around Bromsgrove itself and throughout the District, Members were concerned that there was little available within the Bromsgrove Town Centre area.
- Members were concerned that any increase in the hire charges for use of the facilities at the Ryland Centre (following the expiry of the subsidy provided by WCC) could have a detrimental effect on those groups which were currently based there.

AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE/EXCEPTIONAL VALUE WHICH THE TASK GROUP MEMBERS WISHED TO HIGHLIGHT

Following site visits and interviews Members wished to highlight the following groups which showed areas of good practice and Members believed were of exceptional value to the communities they served.

- The Basement Project
- Bromsgrove Rugby Club
- Woodrush Youth Centre
- The Lounge
- EPIC
- Stoke Parish Youth Club



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST

This form is to assist Members to scope the overview and scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

- Topic: **Youth Provision Task Group**

For the purpose of this review young people will be classed as aged between 13 and 19 years (in respect of young people with learning disabilities this would increase to 24 years).

Specific Subject Areas to be investigated:

There would be a number of key objectives to this review:

- 1) To consider current arrangements for providing services to young people in the district.
- 2) To analyse opportunities for young people to participate in youth activities and how these opportunities might be extended. This could involve:
 - Interviewing representatives of the Artrix.
 - Interviewing representatives from local sports facilities
 - Interviewing representatives from The Trunk and other facilities within the District
- 3) To scrutinise the accessibility of current Bromsgrove District Council Services to young people and to identify any actions that could be taken to improve accessibility.
- 4) To assess the barriers to participating in youth activities facing young people living in the district and how these barriers could be overcome.
- 5) To assess actions that could be taken by the Council and others to improve marketing of local youth related events. This should involve:
 - Reviewing current actions taken to market local events.
 - Interviewing local young people to identify their preferred forms of communication.
- 6) To investigate actions taken by other district Councils to ensure that appropriate youth services are delivered to young people living within their boundaries. This could involve:
 - Assessing scrutiny reports on the subject of youth services produced by other local authorities.
 - Interviewing representatives of other local authorities.
- 7) To investigate the potential for Bromsgrove District Council services and other service providers to address any current gaps in youth service provision.

(i.e. please state what Members hope to achieve through this investigation):

Possible Outcomes

In the 2011 census 5,500 children aged 10-14 years old and 5,800 children aged 15-19 yrs old, were recorded as living in Bromsgrove district, out of a total population of 93,600. Young people are therefore a significant proportion of the local population. An effective review of this subject could potentially enable Members to address the needs of young people living in the district and in the long-term have a positive impact on their future prospects.

The review would also help Members to identify any gaps in youth service provision as well as an opportunity to promote the activities already available and any actions that could be taken to address the gaps.

- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence? **YES**
- Which officers should be invited to give evidence?
(Please state name of officer and/or job title)

- Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
- Arts Development and Events Manager
- Senior Community Safety Officer

- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence? **YES**
If so, who and from which organisations?

- Representatives of Worcestershire County Council involved in co-ordinating the Positive Activities for Young People framework.
- Representatives of other local authorities that have reviewed youth services (the Task Group will be provided with copies of scrutiny reports from a variety of local authorities and will have the authority to determine which representatives they ask to interview).
- Representatives of West Mercia Police
- Voluntary Sector Service Providers

- What key documents/data/reports will be required?

Education Select Committee Report 2011

- Is it anticipated that any site visits will be required? **YES**
If so, where should members visit?

- Youth activities within the district
- Other local authorities (locations to be determined by the Task Group as part of their investigations).

- Should a period of public consultation form part of the exercise? **YES**
If so, on what should the public be consulted?

Throughout the review it will be important to engage with local young people as they will be affected by any changes that the group might propose to the delivery of youth services in the district.

(Please Note: A separate press release requesting general comments/suggestions from the public will be issued in the normal way at the beginning of the investigation.)

- Have other authorities carried out similar overview and scrutiny exercises? **YES**
If so, which authorities?

A large Number of local authorities have reviewed the subject of youth services. The following Councils have been listed because they completed the review recently and / or because the review was completed by a neighbouring authority.

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Rotherham Borough Council
- St Helen’s Metropolitan Borough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Westminster City Council

- Will the investigation cross the District boundary? **NO***
If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate? **N/A**
If yes, please state which authorities:

- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group/Board whilst the Overview and Scrutiny exercise is being carried out? **NO***
If so, who and from which organisations?

- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the Overview and Scrutiny exercise?

It is anticipated that this review could be completed in a maximum of six months. It is anticipated that a draft report will be presented to the Board meeting to be held on 15th July 2013.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were declared at various meetings held throughout the Task Group's investigation:

Councillor	Interest Declared
Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Chairman)	Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust (Atrix Operating Trust) As a Worcestershire County Councillor contribution from Discretionary Grant given to the Lounge, Alvechurch
Mrs. S. Baxter	As a Member of Wythall Parish Council a contribution was made to Woodrush Youth and Community Centre
J. S. Brogan	Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust (Atrix Operating Trust)
R. J. Laight	Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Development Trust (Atrix Holding Trust)
P. Lammas	Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Development Trust (Atrix Holding Trust)
Mrs. C. J Spencer	Member of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust (Atrix Operating Trust)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Group wishes to thank the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services for his support throughout the Task Group's investigations and the Democratic Services Officers, Amanda Scarce, Jess Bayley and Pauline Ross.

Thanks also go to all those Ward Councillors and Parish Councils who took the time to respond to requests for information.

The Task Group would also like to thank the following for allow the Members access to their facilities and sparing the time to discuss, at great length on many occasions, the work that was carried out at those facilities.

Artrix Arts Centre, Bromsgrove

Andy Woods, Artistic Director

Ryland Centre, Bromsgrove

Paul Slater, Chief Executive and Ash Rai, Deputy Chief Executive/Operations Manager, Sandwell Leisure Trust

The Trunk, Charford

Debbie Roberts and Kate Higginson

The Lounge, Alvechurch

David Shoesmith and Emily Yates

Woodrush Youth & Community Centre, Wythall

Kay Parker and Faye Parker

With special thanks to members of the Youth Management Team and the Youth Committee

Stoke Parish Youth Club, Stoke Heath

George Verney

WITNESSES

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

Internal Witness:

- John Godwin - Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
- Laura Kerrigan - Sports Development & Physical Activities Manager
- Anne Marie Darroch - Communications Manager
- Sarah Kelsey - Community Safety Project Officer

External Witnesses:

- Paul Finnemore – Commissioning Manager, Young People (Worcestershire County Council)
- Debbie Roberts – EPIC
- Roy Clarke – District Commissioner, Scouts, Bromsgrove
- TC Peppercorn – Outreach Co-ordinator, Artrix Arts Centre
- Jackie Hooper – Operations Manager, Basement Project
- John Blackhall – Chairman, Bromsgrove Rugby Club

- The Task Group also received a presentation on “*Youth Facilities for Teenagers in Hagley*” from three pupils at Haybridge High School (accompanied by Linda Bridges, Sixth Form Achievement Co-ordinator)

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Youth Provision Task Group - Youth Provision in each Ward – details provided by Members

WARD	Youth Clubs	Cricket Clubs	Football Clubs	Rugby Clubs	Other Sports Activities	Scouts/Guides /Brownies	Church Groups	School Clubs/Other
Alvechurch	The Lounge Coffee bar & Youth Club	Alvechurch Cricket Club	Alvechurch Lions Football Club	Kings Norton Rugby Club (incl Aussie Rules & American Football) Five Ways Rugby Club	Alvechurch Fisheries			
Beacon	<i>No response received</i>							
Catshill			Youth football team		Judo, Karate, Dance School, play parks	Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, Guides, Rainbows	Sunday School	
Charford	The Trunk – youth club		South Bromsgrove High School – football coaching St Andrews Church Hall – football coaching from Kidderminster Harriers		Aston Fields – Well fit, Martial arts tuition. South Bromsgrove High School – Martial Arts St Andrews Church Hall – Martial Arts, Well Fit	Charford Scouts Hut – Scouts, Marimba Scouts (Muslim) St Andrews Church Hall - Rainbows		South Bromsgrove High School – Samba Band
Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath	Youth club	Cricket teams	Football teams	Bees Rugby Team Woodrush Rugby Club	TKD, Judo, Jujitsu, Redhill Archers, dance troupes, Road Cycling Club, Tennis, Hockey	Rainbows Brownies	Jam, Christian Life youth group, Boys Brigade	Film club, animal club, gym club, drama, chess, eco, gardening, trampoline
Furlongs	<i>No response received</i>							
Hagley	School Youth Club					Brownies, Scouts, Adventure Scouts	Free Church offers some activities	
Hillside	<i>No response received</i>							
Hollywood & Majors Green	Woodrush Youth Club		Football teams		Tennis Club, Gym Club	Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers	JAM Club (Jesus & Me)	
Linthurst	Not aware of any youth activities							
Marlbrook			Football teams					

WARD	Youth Clubs	Cricket Clubs	Football Clubs	Rugby Clubs	Other Sports Activities	Scouts/Guides /Brownies	Church Groups	School Clubs/Other
Norton			Football pitches					Various parks & open spaces
Sidemoor			Bromsgrove Sporting FC – adult team, under 18s, several junior teams		King George Rec – several junior teams play here.		New Song Church – YP group putting on plays, drama and socialising.	
Slideslow		Bromsgrove Cricket Club		Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club	Bromsgrove Tennis Club, Bromsgrove Hockey Club, Karate	7th Bromsgrove Scout Group, Rainbows, Brownies x 2	Five Alive Church Group	
Stoke Heath	<i>No response received</i>							
St Johns	St John's Church Youth Club				Mini Tennis at the Ryland Centre, Various activities at the Dolphin Centre	1 st Bromsgrove Scouts & Beavers	St John's Sunday School, All Saints Sunday School, Methodist Centre Boys Brigade, Night Club	IT facilities available at the Library
Stoke Prior	Stoke Parish Council run youth activities at Avoncroft				Active sports area at Harris Bush with new pavilion.			Play areas in Ryefields Road and Shaw Lane
Tardebigge	<i>No response received</i>							
Uffdown					Holiday sports Clubs provided by Youth Sports	Rainbows, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Ranger Scouts	Sunday School	Play areas
Waseley	<i>No response received</i>							
Whitford	2 x youth clubs					Scouts, Guides, Brownies		
Woodvale	<i>No response received</i>							
Wythall South	<i>No response received.</i> However, see below – many of the activities in both Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath & Hollywood & Majors Green overlap into Wythall South.							

Additional info re Wythall activities:

- The church youth club meets on Sunday evenings which usually involves a meal followed by a debate, alternating weekly with a social activity. Six times a year they plan to have a 'Challenge Sunday' where they challenge other Youth Clubs within Bromsgrove to a variety of activities. They have a youth band and other activities include drama, dance, videos, and games. There is also youth football on Friday evenings at Woodrush School on Astroturf which is also enjoyed by youths from outside the church.
- JAM Club (Jesus and Me) meets at the Coppice school after school on Wednesdays for infant and junior children. Volunteers and returning youths from Woodrush help to run these sessions which include bible readings and plenty of games, stories, art and craft making etc.

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Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

Telephone: (01527) 881288, Fax: (01527) 881414, DX: 17279 Bromsgrove

e-mail: scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk