

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 22nd June 2009

Agenda Item 9(i)

CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Mrs Wendy Schmitt**CABINET PORTFOLIO: Communities**

Portfolio covers:-

- Community Development
- External Funding
- Voluntary Sector
- Equality and Diversity
- Community Safety
- Children and Young People
- Community Transport
- Concessionary Fares
- Community Facilities (halls, toilets, etc)

REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 21st April to 2nd June 2009Community Development

A part time project officer will take up post on 8th June to carry forward the Creative Communities Project, an LAA project. This will use a range of activities in residential areas as the mechanism for engagement between all age groups to improve community cohesion in areas of tension among residents.

External Funding

Developed and submitted a bid to the Migration Impacts Fund on behalf of the Braintree District LSP to fund the salary of the Diversity Development Officer up to March 2011.

Voluntary Sector

- a. At the LSP 3rd Sector Partnership meeting on 18th May an update was given regarding the ESTIC (Essex, Southend & Thurrock Infrastructure Consortium) web portal. The first stage collecting voluntary and community group information is due to go live at the end of June. It plans to bring different groups and services from the Voluntary and Community Sector together.
- b. Due to the difficulties some Voluntary Sector Groups have in bidding for contracts a Procurement Workshop will be held on 14th September where BDC Procurement Team will train them. The cost will be between £1300 and £1400, funding will be sought from the LSP.
- c. Volunteers will be sought to collate the BDC Welcome Guide.
- d. LSP projects will be reviewed regularly to identify opportunities for 3rd Sector Involvement.

Equality and Diversity

Work done with the Polish group REVI for their Polish week in May

Community Safety

1. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) was held on 13th May
 - a. Judith Harvey, who represents local schools in SW Braintree on the Local Delivery Group, which has funding to support Extended Schools, gave a report on the group's activities. Many aspects of its work e.g. promoting community cohesion and health related programmes link to the CDRP work. The work in schools is about early intervention and prevention. The CDRP agreed that it would be beneficial if she became a member of the group.
 - b. A presentation was given by Open Road treatment agency; an Essex based charity working with people and families who have problems with drugs and alcohol. It was felt that some partners might be in a position to offer them accommodation in Witham, Halstead and the rural areas to enable them to do outreach work.
 - c. Neighborhood Watch (NW) are awaiting news on their funding application for the twice-yearly printing of their newsletter, Watchword.
 - d. Domestic Abuse. The action plan should be adopted w/c 18th May.
 - i To increase awareness of DA a pack for school children is being developed.
 - ii Closer working with NW to raise awareness in small communities.
 - iii 5 specific areas have been chosen, services for women who wish to stay in their homes safely, sanctuary schemes, mobile phones, migrant communities and support for male victims.
 - e. Hate Crime, action plan is still being worked on to raise awareness of this under reported crime.
 - f. Drug and Alcohol Reference Group (DARG)
 - i A comprehensive programme is in place for National tackling Drugs week 8-12 June, part of which is a poster competition for Year 8's to show 'What would put you off drug taking', I am one of the judges.
 - ii They are looking for a local gym to use in a project for at risk young people to work out in.
 - g. Road Safety
 - i Young drivers are being targeted with a drama 'Too much Punch for Judy', in senior schools, college and The Foyer. Plans for the year are in place
 - ii There is a big drop in killed/seriously injured numbers in 2008
 - h. Criminal Damage Group.

This is being set up on 2nd June.
 - i. ASB Review.

This is ongoing, there has been a big drop in offences, however it can quickly flair up again.
2. A meeting was held at the Rickstones Pavilion and Play Area with Ward Councillors, residents, the police, Community Warden and the Parks Department, youths had been using the car park in a noisy and dangerous manner with their cars. As I had already brought the problem to the attention of the police they had already stopped the problem. The residents were told how important it is for them to ring the police or ASB team of any further incidents, they will not be considered a nuisance, and this is the best way to raise such issues.
3. The Being Safe Project was officially launched on 27th May at Tabor School, by the District Commander, Chief Inspector Gooden and myself. A speech was given by the High Sheriff as the trial of the project had won a High Sheriffs Award. It is targeted at Year 8 (12-13 year olds) and is designed to complement the citizenship element of the curriculum. There are 4 one hour workshops; Knife Crime, presented by Essex Police Safer Schools Officers, ASB, BDC Prevention and Education Officers, Homophobia, Action for Men and Racism, Essex Racial Equalities Council, these are extremely hard hitting workshops. There were approximately 60 delegates from all over Essex,

including other councils, GP's surgeries etc. From the very positive feedback it is highly likely that other districts will wish to take it up. During the day I gave an interview to Chelmsford Radio, to the question of 'Why are you doing this' I responded that Braintree District is an area of low crime and ASB, with an overall drop of 20% in ASB last year and we intend to keep it this way with ground breaking projects such as this.

Children and Young People

1. A Youth Worker has finally been recruited for the Silver End Youth Project
2. A £60,000 children's play area was opened on the Rickstones playing fields, I gave an interview to Chelmsford Radio

Community Transport

1. Procurement implemented for replacement minibus.
2. District wide promotion of new service (day trips) sent to all current members of Community Transport.
3. Ongoing promotion for volunteer recruitment.

Community Facilities

1. Refurbishment of Forest Road and Dengie Close halls now complete.
2. Petition discussed at Braintree Local Committee regarding the public toilets in the bus park remaining open for longer. A Task and Finish Group will look at public lavatory provision.
3. A meeting was held on June 1st with members of Halstead Town Council to start a feasibility study on the replacement of the Halstead Community Centre.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING:

Cabinet Member Cllr Wendy Schmitt 01376 345363
Deputy Cabinet Member Cllr Liz Edey 01376 563463