



**BRINGING IMPROVEMENTS TO
DISADVANTAGED AND VULNERABLE
YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETY**

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Study Group

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**Guildford Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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1. Foreword

In June 2002, Guildford Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a small Study Group of five Members of the Council to investigate the extent to which the policies and activities of the Council and other statutory and voluntary agencies are meeting the needs of young people in the Borough, especially those disadvantaged and vulnerable.

The Study Group has worked hard over recent months to explore this issue and has attempted to identify key issues and, where possible, suggest ways in which the Borough Council and other organisations might make a difference.

In a departure from the traditional committee based way of considering matters, with elected Members receiving and debating reports prepared by the Council's Officers, the Study Group has taken an innovative approach to this subject. Starting with a blank sheet of paper, Members have talked to a wide range of people both from within the Borough Council and from other statutory and voluntary organisations serving the needs of young people. The Group has met on twelve occasions and has interviewed more than 25 "witnesses". This approach has enabled Members to build up a picture of some of the problems faced by young people today and how some of their needs might be met.

The Study Group has also reviewed information obtained by the Council as part of Citizens' Panel and Residents' Surveys to identify what people in Guildford and, particularly, young people say they want. Rather than conflicting with the views offered by the professionals interviewed by the Study Group, these surveys have tended to reinforce the messages received.

Obviously, the report does not provide all the answers, but it is hoped that by raising their profile, relevant agencies, including the Borough Council, will give serious consideration to the issues concerned and the recommendations arising from them.

Members would like to express thanks to the witnesses who gave up their valuable time to contribute to the investigation. From the Study Group's point of view, the process has been extremely interesting and informative and has given Members the opportunity to consider an important subject in an entirely new way.

Councillor Keith Childs (Chairman)

Councillor Chris Lawson

Councillor Auriol Earle

Councillor Pauline Searle

Councillor Sallie Thornberry

2. Introduction

Core Values and Strategic Priorities of the Council

Following a public consultation exercise, the Council first approved its “Core Values” and “Strategic Priorities” in June 1996. These were reviewed by Members in 2000 and the Council approved its current revised Core Values and Strategic Priorities in October of that year.

In March 2001, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported a suggestion from its Chairman, Councillor Keith Childs, that a useful role for the Committee would be to assess the Council’s performance against its Strategic Priorities, an exercise which had not previously been undertaken. As a starting point, it was agreed that a detailed investigation should be undertaken into one of the Council’s Strategic Priorities, namely:-

“Bringing improvements for the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our society.”

In view of the broad nature of this Strategic Priority, the Committee subsequently agreed in June 2001 that it would be necessary for the investigation to concentrate on a specific section of the community and, as a starting point, it was decided that the study should focus upon young people.

Objectives of the Investigation

In addition to analysing the Council’s own services and activities, it was agreed that the proposed study should also involve liaison with other external organisations operating in the area to ensure that the interests of young people were enhanced by collaborative working. As a result, the study would not be confined to an internal review of the Borough Council’s activities, but could produce recommendations to other organisations on matters outside the control of the Council.

Accordingly, the following objectives for the investigation were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

Objectives of the Investigation	
(1)	To assess the extent to which the policies and activities of the Council and other agencies are meeting the needs of young people in the Borough, especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable.
(2)	To identify and recommend measures which the Council or other agencies could take to further this objective.

It is intended that the outcome and findings of this study will be used to inform:-

- the production of the Surrey Youth Service Plan for 2003/04 and the Guildford Borough Youth Plan;
- the development of the Guildford Borough Community Plan; and
- relevant internal Borough Council Best Value reviews.

Appointment of Study Group

Local authority overview and scrutiny committees are encouraged to consider different approaches and formats for their meetings to fulfil their respective roles (scrutinising decisions, reviewing policy and investigating matters of local concern). It was anticipated that, as part of the proposed study into services for young people, Members might wish to attend site visits, view services in operation and interview witnesses and representatives of other organisations. Such an approach would provide an opportunity to:-

- seek facts and evidence pro-actively;
- put questions to and seek advice from a range of 'witnesses';
- gather evidence and scrutinise practice locally and elsewhere;
- consider written submissions from individuals and organisations;
- highlight best practice; and
- make recommendations for change.

In view of the type and extent of activities envisaged, Members concluded that it would not be practical for the detailed investigative work to be undertaken by the full Committee. The frequency of meetings of the Committee would also not enable the study to be completed within a reasonable timescale. Therefore, it was agreed that a Study Group comprising the following Members should be appointed to carry out the investigation, with progress reports being submitted to the main Committee at appropriate intervals:-

Membership of the Study Group
Councillor Keith Childs Councillor Auriol Earle Councillor Chris Lawson Councillor Pauline Searle Councillor Sallie Thornberry

Scope of the Investigation

The Study Group received initial briefings from Officers of the Borough and County Councils in connection with the proposed investigation, as follows:-

Dave Johnson, Local Director for Guildford, Surrey County Council
 Mary Wethey, Youth Development Service, Surrey County Council
 Kim Rippet, Housing Needs Manager, Guildford Borough Council
 Mike Beckwith, Leisure Strategy Officer, Guildford Borough Council

In the light of these briefings, Members considered the proposed scope of the investigation, including issues such as the definition of disadvantaged and vulnerable and the age group which the study would focus upon.

The Study Group agreed the following working definition of disadvantaged and vulnerable for the purposes of the investigation (based on the definition contained in the Children's Act):-

Definition of Disadvantaged and Vulnerable
<p><i>"A young person is considered to be in need if he or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by an appropriate organisation.</i></p> <p><i>Health means physical or mental health and development means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development."</i></p>

Members agreed that the investigation should concentrate upon the 8 to 13 year old age group, although it was accepted that a certain degree of flexibility should be retained to explore issues outside this age range as appropriate. In fact, as the investigation progressed, it became clear that it would not be possible or desirable to draw such definitive boundaries in terms of age.

It was intended that the investigation should commence by “mapping” the current services provided by statutory and voluntary organisations to the core 8 to 13 year old age group, including the support provided to this age group as part of the family. The Study Group would then aim to identify gaps and overlaps in service provision and possible ways in which such support could be coordinated.

In accordance with the agreed objectives, the Study Group aimed to conclude by assessing the extent to which the policies and activities of the Council and other agencies were meeting the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in the Borough and seeking to identify and recommend measures which could be taken to further this objective.

Witnesses

As part of the “mapping” exercise described above, the Study Group agreed that representatives of a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations should be interviewed. Accordingly, meetings were held with the following individuals and organisations during October, November and December 2002:-

Witnesses Interviewed by the Study Group
Daniel Arrow, Chairman of Guildford Youth Council
John Davey, Head of Environmental Planning, Guildford Borough Council
Robin Hales, Head of Corporate Strategy, Guildford Borough Council
Tracy James, Community Safety Warden for Westborough, Guildford Borough Council
PC Simon Kersley, Youth Affairs Officer, Guildford Police
Louise Kittow, Vice-Chairman of Guildford Youth Council
Ric Law, Disability Challengers
George Longland, Arts Development Officer, Guildford Borough Council
John Martin, Head of Community Services, Guildford Borough Council
Pippa Morris, Guildford Pupil Referral Unit
Richard Musgrove, Community Safety Warden Supervisor, Guildford Borough Council
Stephen Newt, Education Welfare Service, Surrey County Council
Mike O’Connor, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
Bruce Paterson, Tillingbourne Youth Worker
Lisa Scott, Programme Development Officer, Y Centre
Richard Simms, East Horsley Parish Council
Stephen Styles, Community Transport Manager, Surrey County Council
Jo Tester, Guildford Action for Families
Marie Treddenick, Community Safety Coordinator, Guildford Borough Council
Katie Webb, Play Development Officer, Guildford Borough Council
Rachel Wilkinson, Plantation Café
Carolyn Williams, Dial-a-Ride Manager, Guildford Borough Council
David Williams, Chief Executive, Guildford Borough Council

The information provided was received with much interest and proved invaluable in progressing the investigation, although it also highlighted the size and complexity of the task. The Study Group is very grateful to these witnesses and was certainly impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm shown.

A number of themes and issues arose from these interviews and these have been drawn upon to a substantial extent in the following chapters and in the formulation of the Study Group’s recommendations.

3. The Study

Statutory and voluntary agencies need to find appropriate ways to support many disadvantaged and vulnerable children. It is clear that, if young people are allowed to become disaffected, they may stay disaffected for a very long time. With this in mind, it is critical to address problems and gaps in service provision at an early stage and, therefore, an initial concentration on the 8 to 13 year old group seems to be justified. However, it is not possible or necessarily desirable to separate provision for these particular ages from others and many of the issues raised in this report will impact upon older and younger groups. Also, whilst this report focuses principally on the disadvantaged and vulnerable, it is recognised that many of the suggestions apply to all young people.

Coordination between relevant agencies, both statutory and voluntary, is vital to ensure that the needs of young people are met. This often involves the provision of family-orientated services to ensure that appropriate support is provided to parents and siblings, as well as to the young person themselves. It is of some concern that voluntary organisations in this field feel that gaps in statutory provision are becoming more significant.

Although problems can usually be identified at a relatively young age, concerns remain that there sometimes seems to be no effective way of dealing with certain young people. Some appear to be "lost" to the system and will not engage with any person or service provision. Sadly and although very controversial, there are occasions when the professionals believe that the most appropriate solution is to remove a child from their family. However, a severe shortage of foster carers in Surrey and elsewhere makes even this unfortunate action impossible in many cases.

A multi-agency approach is required to address the needs of these young people and it is important that respective organisations deal with the issues for which they are responsible. Information must also be shared between relevant professionals to achieve the best outcomes.

Positive comments about the "FISH" (Fun in the Summer Holidays) Playscheme, as discussed later in this report, and other initiatives operated by the Council, Police and Y Centre are encouraging. However, in the case of the disadvantaged and vulnerable, it is important to identify young people for participation in such schemes on the basis of need and the extent to which they would benefit.

The following chapters of this report discuss the themes and issues identified by the witnesses interviewed by the Study Group and suggest possible initiatives which might have a positive impact on young people and the communities in which they live.

The report also highlights relevant matters raised through recent consultation exercises undertaken by the Council, such as the Residents' Survey 2002 and the Citizens' Panel Surveys undertaken in January and July 2002. It is obviously important for the Council to listen to the views of residents, as expressed through such surveys, and a serious attempt has been made to reflect their concerns in this report. For ease of reference, the main findings of these exercises are set out in the following chapter, but references are also included at appropriate places throughout the report.

Although it is hoped that the Borough Council will accept the recommendations relating to its own activities and services, matters are also raised for consideration by other statutory and voluntary organisations.

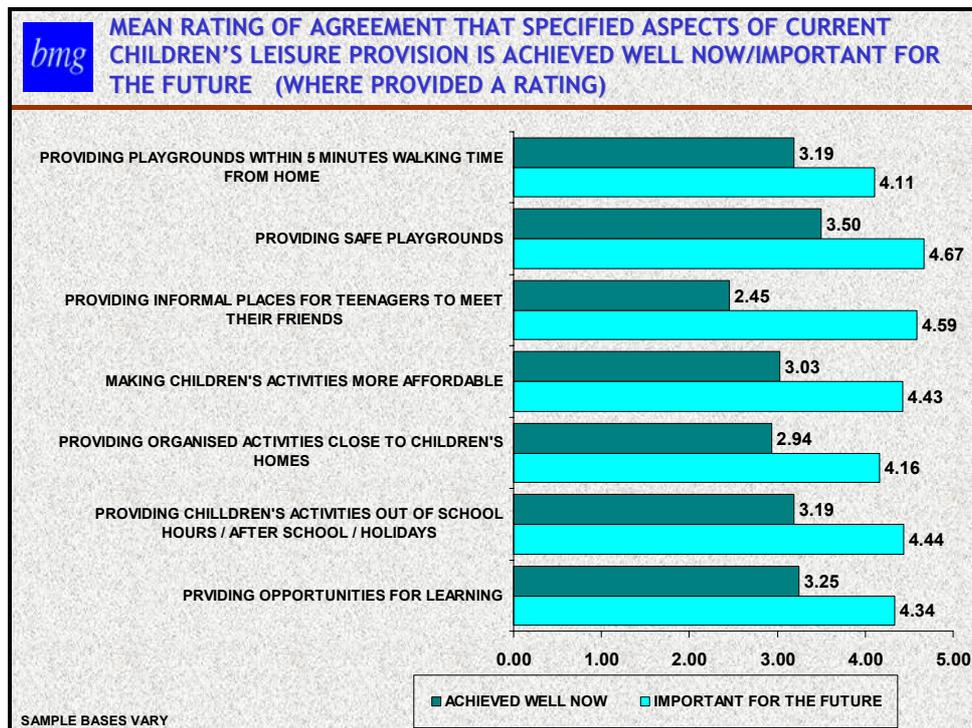
4. Residents' Views

This chapter highlights the principal issues relevant to the Study Group's work raised through the following surveys:-

- Citizens' Panel Survey: January 2002
- Citizens' Panel Survey: July 2002
- Residents' Survey: May 2002

Citizens' Panel Survey: January 2002

As part of the Citizens' Panel Survey undertaken in January 2002, residents were asked how they viewed current provision for children's leisure and what they felt was most important for the future. The full results are shown in the following chart:-



The difference between the figures for current achievement and importance for the future identify the main areas on which to concentrate. In this case, residents identified the following priorities:-

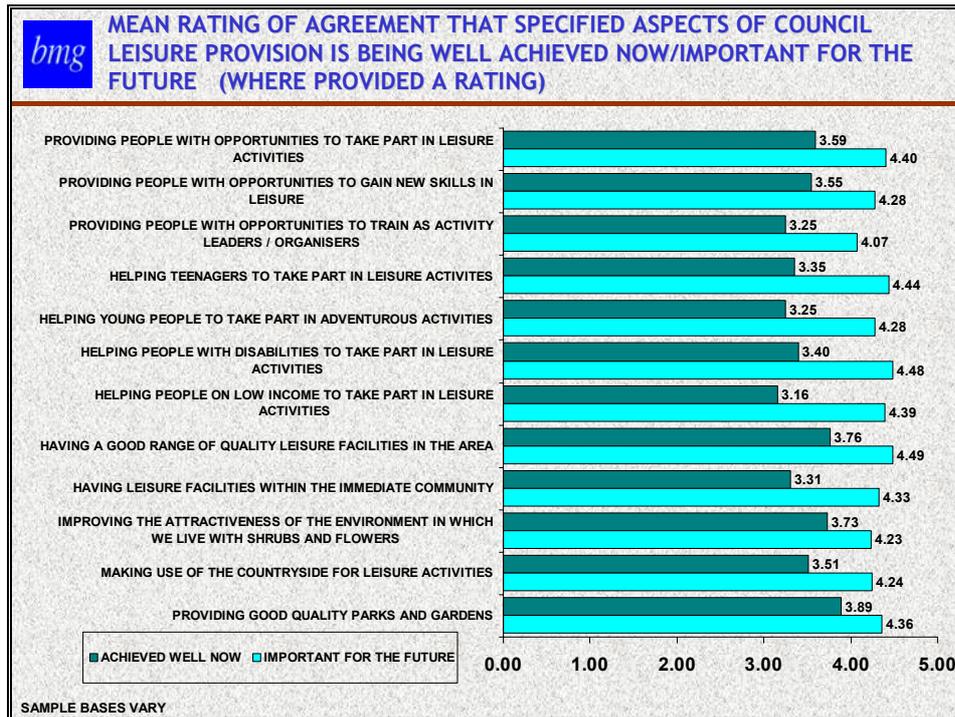
- providing informal places for teenagers to meet;
- making childrens' activities more affordable; and
- providing children's activities out of school hours, after school and during holidays.

These priorities are clearly reflected in later chapters of this report.

In a similar way, residents were also asked to what extent they agreed with a list of general leisure policies for the Borough Council, both in terms of activities that are achieved well now and those which are important for the future. The results, which can be seen in the following chart, show that the following priorities should be concentrated upon:-

- helping people on low incomes to take part in leisure activities;
- helping teenagers to take part in leisure activities; and
- helping people with disabilities to take part in leisure activities.

Again, the concerns of residents in relation to leisure provision clearly focus upon the young, disadvantaged and disabled groups.



The conclusions on leisure provision set out in this Citizens' Panel Survey report state:-

"... All children generally undertake some leisure activities, although many of these are not strictly of the sports or aerobic type. These may need to be encouraged by:-

- *providing safer (better supervised) play areas;*
- *increasing the number of off-road cycle paths;*
- *providing (more) out of school facilities, particularly organised team games etc.*

Parents of teenagers in particular, are concerned that there are fewer leisure activities which are aimed at this age group of child. This could be improved by:-

- *providing places such as cafes which will attract teenagers by offering internet access, social activities, such as discos, and games areas.*

Whilst attitudes are generally fairly positive to current provision, there is obviously some scope for future improvement, such as:-

- *encouraging people on low incomes and those with disabilities to participate in leisure activities; and*
- *providing more community based leisure facilities to alleviate some of the main barriers to participation, such as timing and location."*

Citizens Panel Survey: July 2002

All respondents to this Survey were asked to rate the importance which should be attached to eleven local service areas. At least nine in ten respondents consider spending on maintaining community safety (93%) and providing good quality, accessible health services (91%) as being important or very important. In terms of the Study Group's work, the following results are also of particular interest:-

- 85% consider the provision of affordable and reliable transport alternatives to the car to be fairly or very important;

- 75% consider the provision of improvements for disadvantaged or vulnerable residents to be fairly or very important (the highest concern about this issue was expressed by residents in two of the Council's more deprived wards - Westborough and Stoke); and
- 73% consider the provision of activities and opportunities for young people to be fairly or very important.

Residents Survey: May 2002

As part of the Residents' Survey 2002, a smaller sample of local residents in the 16 - 20 age range was also interviewed. Although not specifically within the age group being looked at by the Study Group, the results and views received are particularly relevant.

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the Council - both in terms of its provision of services to all residents as well as those aimed at young people. However, satisfaction is not as high in relation to services for young people. Whilst many positive comments were received, a number of negative issues were raised:-

- not a lot for under 18s to do (42 mentions);
- public transport poor, especially evenings and weekends (12 mentions);
- need inexpensive entertainment and places to go (10 mentions);
- need outdoor leisure and sports facilities for the young (7 mentions);
- Spectrum too expensive (5 mentions);
- need more policing (4 mentions); and
- transport too expensive (3 mentions).

Young people were asked about their attitudes to the Borough Council on a number of youth issues, with the following results:-

	Strongly Agree/ Tend to Agree	Strongly Disagree/ Tend to Disagree
The facilities for young people in Guildford are good	48%	40%
The Council listens to our needs	24%	38%
The Council understands what young people need	30%	49%
More money should be spent on facilities for young people in Guildford	85%	4%

Whilst views were mixed about the quality of existing services and facilities for young people, the majority would like to see more resources targeted at young people. Clearly, young people feel that the Council needs to listen more to them and make more of an effort to understand what it is that they need. A potential problem is that only 28% of this group feel that it is easy to make their views known to the Council.

Given a final opportunity to put forward other issues, the following were identified without prompting:-

- more facilities for young/teenagers locally/youth clubs/cafes 40%
- increase policing/security/night-time safety/crime prevention 21%
- improve/subsidise public transport/late night buses especially rural areas 18%
- cheaper/more leisure facilities 13%
- Spectrum expensive/disappointing 5%

Later chapters of this report analyse some of the issues raised through these surveys and in the interviews with witnesses undertaken as part of the Study Group's investigation.

5. Existing Policy Framework

This chapter explores the provisions contained in existing plans and strategies as they relate to young people and particularly the disadvantaged and vulnerable.

Guildford Borough's Cultural Strategy

The Borough Council's recently published Cultural Strategy is based upon seven cross-cutting themes:-

- **Citizenship** - encouraging engagement in the local community
- **Economic Development** - contributing to a flourishing business community
- **Environment** - enhancing the richness of where we live
- **Healthy Living** - promoting both physical and mental well-being
- **Lifelong Learning** - stimulating the desire to explore
- **Social Inclusion** - celebrating diversity and improving access
- **Young People** – respecting the voice of youth

Extensive consultation was undertaken in connection with the production of the Strategy, including through the Council's Citizens' Panel. The results are reflected in the final document with emphasis being given to the following priorities:-

- providing informal places for teenagers to meet;
- making childrens' activities more affordable;
- providing children's activities out of school hours, after school and during holidays.
- helping people on low incomes to take part in leisure activities;
- helping teenagers to take part in leisure activities; and
- helping people with disabilities to take part in leisure activities.

The issues raised through the consultation process are addressed in the Action Plan in the second part of the Strategy. Many of the actions, which would be pursued in conjunction with the Council's partners where appropriate, are cross-cutting and would apply to all residents, but the points which most closely relate to the Study Group's investigation are summarised below:-

Actions	Milestones
Investigate and encourage the wider use of school facilities for local groups and general public leisure activities	Identify areas of cultural need and organise meetings with schools to discuss opportunities to satisfy this need
Promote the provision of after-school/out of school activities for children	Identify needs and opportunities on an ongoing basis and promote after-school/out of school facilities
Encourage integration of socially excluded groups and those with special needs into leisure activities	Subsidise rates for all people on benefits attending leisure development initiatives from January 2003 Develop further proposals to reduce social exclusion by July 2004
Encourage further affordable and, where appropriate, free/concessionary pricing policies	Subsidise rates for all people on benefits attending sports development initiatives from January 2003 Help to encourage and promote the introduction of further policies to provide subsidised/free use of cultural facilities from July 2003
Use the Active Card to target increased participation, particularly amongst the young and disadvantaged	Add further companies and Borough Council initiatives to the Active Newsletter each time is published
Encourage better transport provision to cultural attractions and facilities	Arrange further meetings with partners to agree a strategic approach to this issue in the shortest possible timescale

Actions	Milestones
Encourage the participation of young people and youth organisations in cultural activities and courses as a valuable tool in social development and integration	Arrange meetings with partners to agree a strategic approach to this issue by July 2004
Encourage the development of affordable pricing structures to cultural activities for young people and provide activities at no cost where possible and appropriate	Introduce further affordable pricing structures from July 2003
Consult young people regarding cultural provision in the Borough	Arrange meetings with partners to agree a strategic approach to this issue by July 2004
Encourage all sports clubs to form junior sections and encourage the formation of new sports clubs in the Borough where there is clearly unmet demand	Work through Sport Guildford and the Borough Council's Sports Development Officer to achieve by December 2006
Continue to provide funding for children's playschemes throughout the Borough	Annual leisure grants process
Produce a strategy for children's and young people's formal play facilities within the Borough	Parks and Countryside Best Value Review 2003
Produce a strategy for skateboarding/BMX provision within the Borough	Leisure Development Best Value Review 2002 Parks and Countryside Best Value Review 2003

Guildford Borough's Anti-Poverty Strategy

Through initiatives such as the Social Exclusion Unit, Welfare to Work Programme, tax and welfare reform, National Minimum Wage, commitment to education and the promotion of joined-up local health and crime prevention, the Government has placed considerable emphasis on measures to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Although not directly responsible for all the relevant services and strategies, the Borough Council has recognised the importance of tackling poverty and social exclusion in its Strategic Priorities and policies, initiatives and services have already been developed to achieve this objective. In February 2001, the Council consolidated these measures within a formal Anti-Poverty Strategy to provide a framework for tackling social exclusion. The latest version of this Strategy was adopted by the Council in November 2002.

Objectives within the Anti-Poverty Strategy, which specifically relate to young people and the work of the Study Group and also complement many of the actions raised in the Cultural Strategy, include:-

Objectives	Actions
Ensure access to cultural, recreational, leisure and educational facilities	<p>Continue to provide grants, organise special events and provide concessionary rates for disadvantaged people and groups</p> <p>Continue to provide high quality parks and open spaces with free access to all</p> <p>Develop a Cultural Strategy for Guildford</p> <p>Encourage more events to be held locally and more dual-use of buildings</p> <p>Consult hard to reach groups in the Borough on cultural issues</p> <p>Increase number of concessions at leisure facilities</p> <p>Enhance out of school provision for young people</p>

Objectives	Actions
Provide subsidised transport for disadvantaged households	Continue to provide and develop the Community Transport Service Continue to support the standard concessionary bus fare Continue to support the Shopmobility Scheme Continue to provide financial support for the bus service to Spectrum
Promote the health and welfare of disadvantaged people in partnership with other agencies	Continue working with health agencies and Social Services to develop Integrated Care Teams (including commitment to continue support for projects and organisations linked to the Healthy Living Centre, such as the Park Barn Community Worker and Barn Project for disabled young people

Guildford Community Safety Strategy

As part of the production of the Guildford Community Safety Strategy 2002 – 2005, the Safer Guildford Partnership (a partnership between the Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, Guildford and Waverley Primary Care Trust, National Probation Service and Surrey Youth Offenders Team) consulted residents, Council tenants, community organisations and businesses to ensure that the projects chosen reflected the key concerns of people who live and work in the Borough. A survey of Council tenants undertaken in January 2001 indicated that a quarter were concerned by anti-social behaviour by children and teenagers. In addition, a residential fear of crime survey undertaken in March 2001 indicated that 39% of people were worried by young people “hanging around”.

Amongst the key areas of concern highlighted by the research were:-

- young people as offenders and victims;
- truancy; and
- safe places for young people.

Project Groups have been established within the structure of the Safer Guildford Partnership to address these and other identified areas of concern.

The Strategy aims to:-

- extend outreach initiatives to more youngsters;
- reduce the number of residents citing young people as a problem by 20%;
- cut the number of young people committing crime by 10%; and
- reduce the number of young victims by 10%.

Specific points included within the Action Plan relating to young people include:-

- work in Ash with vulnerable groups to raise self-esteem and offer learning opportunities;
- support young parents in Bellfields and Park Barn;
- establish a safe town centre base for young people;
- youth workers to engage youngsters at the skatepark, Spectrum and wherever they congregate;
- develop the Horsley Peer Education Project;
- appoint a rural youth worker;
- develop work in Ash and Tongham;
- assess the needs of Merrow, Burpham and Slyfield; and
- work with young people in Westborough and Tongham to see if they need youth shelters.

Community Plan for Guildford

The Borough Council is required to develop a Community Strategy for Guildford to improve and promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the whole community. The Council has worked with Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, Guildford and Waverley Primary Care Trust, Parish Councils, business community, voluntary sector, local interest groups and the public to prepare a first draft of the Strategy, which was published in November 2002.

The issues arising from the extensive consultations have been divided into the following nine themes:-

- business and the economy;
- community issues;
- culture and leisure;
- the disadvantaged and vulnerable;
- environment and sustainability;
- health;
- housing;
- community safety; and
- traffic and transport.

The document identifies priorities emerging through public consultation and sets out the current action being undertaken to address those concerns and future initiatives to be developed. The issues raised by the public as part of the development of the Community Plan most closely relating to the Study Group's investigation are summarised in the following table.

Theme	Priorities Emerging Through Public Consultation
Community Issues	Involvement of communities and provision of necessary resources Involvement of young families in their communities Increased local support for children, young people and the elderly The need to tackle social inequalities in Guildford Ensuring the rural areas are not forgotten Improved community transport More buildings for community use, including schools Marriage and parenting support, including teenage mothers
Culture and Leisure	Alternatives to town centre pubs and clubs, more youth clubs and activities, gigs on weekend nights and affordable discos Lifelong learning and leisure activities open to all Loyalty card for young people at Spectrum Evening community use of school buildings Better public transport and better links between health and sports
Disadvantaged and Vulnerable	Public services and voluntary agencies to work together to tackle social exclusion Services to be both accessible across the whole Borough and targeted at disadvantaged groups and individuals Local rather than centralised services Holistic approach to young people's needs, covering culture, housing, education, training, employment and meeting places
Health	Health provision to be targeted at disadvantaged and vulnerable people
Public Safety	Young people as offenders and victims Truancy Safe places for young people

6. Surrey Youth Development Service

Role of Surrey Youth Development Service

Surrey County Council's Youth Development Service aims to:-

- identify young people's needs at critical points in their transition to adulthood;
- deliver youth work that intervenes to address identified needs; and
- offer additional and complementary learning opportunities that are distinct to those offered by formal education.

This should be achieved by identifying and then addressing the needs of young people in defined neighbourhoods. Work with young people should take place in a variety of settings, including youth centres, schools and colleges, streets and recreation grounds. The emphasis of the service must be pro-active, flexible and responsive.

The County Council has a statutory obligation to provide a youth service, although current legislation allows local authorities considerable discretion on the range of services they provide and the level of resources they allocate. Within Surrey, the service is aimed at all young people aged 11 - 25.

The Learning and Skills Act 2000 created a new Connexions Service for all young people aged 13 - 19. The overall aim of the service is to help young people achieve their potential and make a successful transition to adulthood. The service is required to be universal and to offer integrated advice and support to every young person. There are clear expectations that a significant part of the Youth Development Service will be aligned to the Connexions Service and, in Surrey, this will involve a 40% alignment of the youth service budget by April 2003, rising to 80% by April 2004.

With the aim of ensuring that the Youth Development Service is relevant and responsive to local needs and that there is effective utilisation of local buildings, Borough profiles are being produced which will indicate the resources available and level and range of activities taking place within Guildford. It is also proposed that there will be a Borough Plan for Guildford, which reflects agreed local priorities and shows how they will be met.

The Youth Development Service needs to provide a range of youth initiatives in the Guildford area, which aim to respond to the identified needs of young people. Much of this work should target disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. However, the ability of the service to deliver the full range of youth work is currently being severely hampered by continuing recruitment and retention difficulties.

Work is currently delivered through a full-time youth centre in Ash and part-time centres in Stoughton and Bellfields. The Youth Service withdrew its provision from Guildford Youth Centre in Leapale Lane in March 2002 and, since then, has been searching for an alternative town centre location for the provision of services to Guildford's young people. In November 2002, the Borough Council accepted a bid from Surrey County Council for the use of the Discovery Centre in Ward Street as a base for youth work delivery and the Connexions Service. This network of buildings and their effective utilisation will be crucial to support the core objectives of the Youth Development Service.

Implications of Connexions

Some elements of the present youth service remain outside the scope of the Connexions Strategy, including more generalist services and support to young people outside the core 13 - 19 age range. As mentioned elsewhere, many young people have relatively little disposable income, no transport of their own and only limited access to public transport. For them, the provision of facilities within their own communities is critical and the availability of local youth centres for their own purposes will remain important.

The alignment of much of the Youth Development Service with the Connexions Partnership gives rise to a number of implications, which may necessitate the development of alternative strategies. For example, this new focus will change the existing balance of provision and there is likely to be less emphasis on the more generic aspects of the service and on young people outside the core age range. Therefore, the County Council has indicated that it will be exploring a number of options to determine how best to sustain this provision, including:-

- engaging the local community and voluntary organisations which may have an interest in developing aspects of this work;
- opportunities to access alternative forms of funding, such as the Children's Fund, to provide facilities for some age groups; and
- continued provision of these services and facilities by the Youth Development Service as part of its peripheral activity, but within clearly defined budget parameters.

Findings of the Investigation

An unfortunate recurring theme heard during the investigation was the absence of any meaningful input into support services for young people in the Guildford area by the Youth Development Service. A number of community development initiatives have been implemented by the Borough Council and the Police and, despite concerted efforts by individuals such as Community Safety Wardens and Neighbourhood Police Officers to deal with issues concerning residents, the Youth Development Service seems unable to respond to problems for which it is responsible. This often results in Police Officers and others being diverted from their core activities and has caused this report to explore the possibility of expanding the role of Community Safety Wardens into this area of work. In the absence of an effective service, particularly for the 8 to 13 age range, the Borough Council will need to explore alternative ways of working, for example through church youth workers, although this in itself cannot provide the answer.

The Study Group is also concerned about the rigid distinctions in age ranges identified for support by the Youth Development Service and Connexions Partnership. The provision of support for young people surely needs to be determined by reference to need rather than age. Times have changed, with young people often facing significant difficulties at an earlier age, and it appears that the Youth Development Service has failed to adapt to this.

The current stance that everything will be alright once the Connexions Service has settled down is not acceptable. Surrey County Council seems to be giving very little thought to provision outside the Connexions Service and must recognise that it has responsibilities for other age groups and areas of youth work. It is considered that a fundamental review of youth service provision is required, including the possibility of decentralising the role to the Borough Council. The Executive is requested to consider this important suggestion and authorise the Officers to discuss options for the future provision of the service with the County Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the introduction of the Connexions Service and concerns about services to young people outside the 13 to 19 age range and other activities not encompassed by this strategy, that the Officers be authorised to enter into discussions with Surrey County Council about the devolution of this role to the Borough Council.

7. Local and Community Based Provision

Local residents often express concerns about young people “hanging around” places such as the local shops in the evenings and the question “what are you going to do for young people” is often raised. In response, large numbers of young people say that they just want “somewhere to meet” or “a place to go”.

Young people often want informal facilities to meet and socialise (e.g. coffee, television, music, computer games and pool). This has clearly been expressed as a priority by the Council’s Citizens’ Panel and Residents Surveys and is reflected in the Borough’s Cultural Strategy and draft Community Plan. Such meeting places need to be safe, supervised and supported and must offer activities that young people want and will enjoy. It is possible that local businesses could be encouraged to help fund such facilities or support them by providing materials to decorate or equip a venue.

Much positive feedback has also been received from other local authority areas about the provision of simple outdoor shelters or meeting places for young people. The Police are supportive of such facilities as they are able to keep an eye on local young people. However, there are often problems in finding suitable locations for such facilities due to opposition from neighbouring residents.

Young people need facilities on their door-step. For example, Guildford Spectrum is two bus journeys away for many and the cost of transport and admission may be prohibitive. Parents may also be concerned about their children travelling further away from home. The Cultural Strategy does include objectives to improve access to leisure facilities by disadvantaged groups through concessionary pricing and the Council’s “Active Card” scheme and this is to be welcomed. However, although measures such as these may assist in increasing participation amongst target groups, further efforts will be required to engage disadvantaged and sometimes disillusioned young people. In the meantime, basic local provision will remain vital.

The Police also prefer young people to stay in their local areas where they are known - something which would be encouraged by the provision of very local facilities, such as the simple erection of, say, football goal posts. In some instances, the lack of available green open space in local areas is a barrier to the provision of such play opportunities but, in many cases, it seems that school playing fields are not being used enough out of normal hours for this purpose.

A small community-based scheme in Merrow led by a group of young people and supported by the Borough Council and the Police provides an impressive “model” for the development of such facilities. The young people concerned had been involved in fund-raising to meet part of the cost of providing goal posts and nets on an area of open space. The group had also been given responsibility for looking after the facilities provided and this involvement had been vital in engaging them and giving them ownership of the project. This had made the young people in the community particularly protective towards the equipment.

There could be opportunities to extend this successful approach for the provision of small-scale facilities to other areas and, perhaps, young people could be directed to sources of funding to “kick-start” similar local projects. However, there can be opposition to such projects in some areas and, therefore, the support of parents and the wider community needs to be gained. Replication of the Merrow project in other areas could also be constrained in some cases due to lack of acceptable sites.

The importance of local provision must be recognised and this theme is highlighted in the emerging Community Plan.

Supervised Meeting Places

The Citizens’ Panel Survey undertaken in January 2002 concludes that parents of teenagers are concerned that there are fewer leisure activities aimed at this age group. The findings indicate that this could be improved by providing places, such as cafés, which will attract teenagers by offering internet access, social activities and games areas. In the Residents’ Survey 2002, young people also refer to the need for more youth clubs and places to meet.

A place to meet might involve a building with facilities such as television, music, computer games and pool. The feeling of ownership is again important and this can be helped by allowing young people to decorate premises and decide what facilities and activities should be available. As mentioned previously, such meeting places need to be safe, supervised and supported and often it can be the lack of people to provide this support, rather than premises, which causes the greatest difficulty.

A successful approach has been achieved in East Horsley, where the Parish Council provided a youth club for the exclusive use of local young people as part of the extension of the village hall. The club room was decorated and the facilities and equipment chosen by the young people themselves. The club is extremely successful attracting a capacity attendance on the two nights it opens each week (one for 11 and 12 year olds and the other for 13 to 15 year olds). A key feature is that the club is the young people's own space, relaxed and not too serious, where they can decide what, if anything, they want to do. One disappointment has been the failure of Surrey County Council's Youth Development Service to fulfil its commitment to provide two youth workers on two nights each week and the success of the club seems to rely heavily on the dedication of a local organiser with support from a team of volunteers.

Similar success can be seen at the Plantation Café in Guildford town centre, which is operated by the YMCA. The venue is extremely popular after school and at weekends amongst its target age range and particularly teenagers. When visiting, the Study Group was extremely impressed by the environment and atmosphere of the venue. As well as offering many programmes and services, the Plantation Café offers the type of safe, informal meeting place so often identified as a priority by parents and young people alike. Due to lack of resources and with the exception of its fortnightly "gig nights" on Fridays, the venue closes at 6.00 p.m. each evening. This issue needs to be addressed as it is often in the evenings that young people require a safe place to go. The lack of such places is often the reason for complaints about young people "hanging about" and causing problems elsewhere. Initially, it would be desirable for the Plantation Café to open later on Friday and Saturday evenings and it is recommended that the Officers consult the YMCA as to how the Council might provide support to achieve this objective.

The Plantation Café has relatively restricted space for events and would often be able to fill a greater capacity. There would also appear to be a market for similar venues in the town centre. Guildford's Community Safety Strategy recognises the need to provide more safe places for young people to meet and the action plan includes:-

- to work with cafés in the town centre to explore partnerships; and
- to establish a safe town centre base for young people.

In addition, the draft Community Plan identifies a priority emerging from public consultation as being to provide more youth clubs and activities, gigs on weekend nights and affordable discos.

Surrey Youth Development Service should consider the need for such informal opportunities for recreation and socialising as part of its proposals for the Discovery Centre and at its other existing youth centres.

Youth Shelters

Some people in local communities view groups of youths as being frightening and blame them for damage, graffiti and nuisance. Complaints about young people congregating near shops and community buildings or playing ball games around homes and cars are frequent and often difficult to resolve. The Police may be called to deal with such problems, but the short-term solution of moving people on is not effective as they merely move back as soon as the Police Officers have left. These conflicts can escalate and result in more serious offences against people and their property.

Young people themselves resent being seen as a problem and often consider themselves as the victims. They complain about a lack of facilities and often wish to be involved in finding solutions to the problems. If suitable locations and structures are not provided for young people to meet, they will continue to use places not intended for this purpose, which may then result in confrontation and complaints. If young people don't have a place of their own to go, it may increase the risk of minor

damage when they meet in unsuitable places and lead to a spiral of anti-social behaviour and, perhaps, the start of a criminal record.

When young people are asked what facilities they would like, their requirements are often surprisingly modest - just somewhere dry where they can meet their friends. Clubs and youth organisations, although popular, tend to open for just a few hours each week, which means young people have to find something to do for the rest of the time. It may be that they would just like a simple shelter with seating in a safe place. Involving young people in any decision, increases the chances that the facility will be used properly and looked after.

A youth shelter is a structure designed to meet the social needs of young people - a sheltered place to sit and talk. A roof provides protection from the weather, but most shelters are open on all sides, enabling all round visibility, natural policing and safety for users. A litter bin is also generally provided to keep the area tidy. The most successful shelters are linked to some type of sporting facility, such as football goal posts, basketball hoop or skateboarding ramps.

The location of shelters has proved to be the most difficult to resolve. Local residents are concerned about noise and behaviour, the local authority and young people are concerned about their safety or that of the equipment. The objective should be to achieve sufficient views for the safety of users and as a deterrent to vandalism, without excessive annoyance to nearby houses.

Possible benefits of youth shelters include:-

- provides a non-confrontational place for young people to go and meet;
- develops involvement by young people and pride in their neighbourhoods; and
- reduces damage, graffiti, crime and fear of crime.

It should be recognised that, if the shelter is poorly designed or located, there is a potential for various problems:-

- availability of drugs and under-age drinking;
- conflicts between groups about use and abuse;
- litter and maintenance costs; and
- noise and annoyance to nearest residents.

Youth shelters are not able to solve many of the broader issues, but provide an idea to help deal with some common problems. It is more effective to use several approaches at the same time than to rely upon one. A youth shelter may experience some of the problems referred to above, but these would be likely to occur anyway.

It is important to work closely with the young people involved in the location and design of such shelters or meeting places. A specialist youth worker could assist and advise or Community Safety Wardens could be used as a channel of communication for young people to give their views on the provision of such facilities. Lighting may provide an improved level of safety and increase the usability of a shelter. It also makes the shelter and its users more visible, but light pollution may be an issue in rural areas. In the end, it should be the users (the young people) who decide if a shelter needs to be lit or not.

Examples of the success of youth shelters and meeting places from around the country, including a local initiative at East Horsley, are given in the following table.

Location	Report on Scheme
East Horsley, Surrey	<p>There was a perceived problem about young people “hanging around” the village centre. It was recognised that there was nowhere for them to go and that a place needed to be provided where they could meet their friends. In response to this need, the Parish Council provided a seating area aimed at young people, with the following key features:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ robust but attractive seating provided; ➤ area later expanded to include a basketball hoop; ➤ easily “supervised” as the site is not hidden away; and ➤ area is lit at night. <p>Young people have gravitated naturally to the site and it is very well used. The initiative has been successful in moving young people away from the village centre and is considered to have been an inexpensive and simple solution to an identified problem. Very few complaints are now received about young people and many of the previous problems have disappeared.</p>
Marcham, Oxfordshire	<p>Problems had been reported about young people congregating outside a local shop. The young people were consulted and asked what they wanted - the answer was “a place of their own”.</p> <p>A strong, vandal resistant shelter/meeting place was designed and built, decorated by young people and sited besides a play area and cricket pitch. Following its introduction, anti-social behaviour has reduced and there is now very little vandalism of the children’s play area.</p> <p>Every few years, the shelter needs redecorating as generations grow up. New teenagers are provided with the materials to redecorate it and, therefore, take ownership.</p>
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire	<p>Ball games in residential areas had been identified as a problem by residents. A wooden bandstand with benches was constructed, together with a football wall with cricket stumps and a basketball hoop. The only problem identified has been the unexpectedly high level of use. Litter is now all in one place and, although unsightly, it is easier to clean up.</p>
Burnley, Lancashire	<p>For some time, the Police had been responding to complaints of anti-social behaviour by youths. During questioning of offenders, it emerged that they did not have a safe place to meet, which would not disturb the neighbours. Subsequently a youth shelter was built in a park and reports of nuisance behaviour reduced by 29% in the whole town and by 50% in the streets near the park. Vandalism to play equipment in the town’s parks also reduced dramatically.</p>
Thurrock, Essex	<p>Following consultation with young people and residents about how to solve a youth nuisance problem, a “teenage village” was built made up of three small seating areas linked by ramps. The number of nuisance reports fell from an average of 30 per month to 5. Following this success, 14 similar structures have been built and only one has been damaged. The locations were determined following consultation at the nearest local school and with residents.</p>

It should be noted that the shelter may not be the most important product of the project. The process of involvement and empowerment may do more for the young people involved than the shelter itself. Young people can be involved at all key stages, including:-

- identifying the problem and determining the solution;
- if they want a place to meet, would a youth shelter provide the answer;
- setting the design brief (including lighting) and deciding the location;
- fundraising for initial construction and ongoing maintenance; and
- redecoration and maintenance (passing on ownership)

The Borough Council's Director of Leisure Services is currently undertaking a consultation exercise to ascertain "gaps" in the provision of playgrounds and associated equipment in the Borough as part of the preparation of a "Fixed Equipment Playground Strategy". In addition, the Safer Places for Young People Project Group of the Safer Guildford Partnership is undertaking a survey to assess the needs of young people in this respect.

Subject to the outcome of these consultation exercises and, in particular, the views of young people themselves, it is very much hoped that the provision of youth shelters and seating areas is given a high priority in the emerging Playground Strategy. It is also hoped that priority is given to basic provision in all areas rather than a small number of large, expensive schemes within specific areas. As highlighted throughout this report, local provision with a feeling of ownership will be the key to the success of facilities provided and this point has been accepted in the draft Community Plan.

The provision of a youth shelter or meeting place could be an ideal project for a community-based initiative, with local young people being involved in fundraising and other aspects of their location and design. Parish Councils may also wish to consider whether the provision of a youth shelter or meeting place might help to address perceived local problems in a similar way to East Horsley. It is intended that a copy of the good practice guide "*Youth Shelters and Sports Systems*" published by Thames Valley Police will be circulated to all Parish Councils in the Borough with this report.

Funding of Community Initiatives

As will be noted previously in this report, terms such as involvement, engagement, liaison and ownership recur in discussions about the provision of facilities for young people. The initiative in Merrow is particularly encouraging and the Study Group would welcome the extension of this successful approach for the provision of small-scale facilities.

An initial view was that a community fund could be established to "kick-start" such local projects. However, it should be recognised that funding for such "self-help" schemes is already available from many sources, both internally from existing Council budgets and externally from several other agencies, charities and voluntary organisations. For this reason, it is recommended that an existing Officer from the Borough Council be identified as a source of advice on potential sources of funding for such community projects and it is suggested that the Community Safety Coordinator would be well placed to fulfil this role.

It is also considered that the Borough Council should produce and publish a guide for the public on local charities to identify potential sources of funding for various projects or services. Such a guide would obviously cover a far greater range of activities than those within the scope of this particular report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That Surrey County Council Officers be requested to submit a report to the Guildford Local Committee on opportunities for the increased use of school playing fields out of school hours for community uses and informal recreational activities.**
- (b) That the Officers be requested to consult Guildford YMCA on the support which the Borough Council could provide to enable the Plantation Café to open later on Friday and Saturday evenings.**
- (c) That Surrey County Council Youth Development Service be urged to consider opportunities for increased informal recreation and socialising by young people as part of its plans for the use of the Discovery Centre in Guildford and within its other existing youth centre premises.**

RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

- (d) That, subject to the outcome of relevant consultation exercises, the Director of Leisure Services be requested to give a high priority in the preparation of the Borough Council's Fixed Equipment Playground Strategy:-**

 - (i) to basic provision in all local communities rather than a smaller number of large, expensive schemes; and**
 - (ii) to the provision of local youth shelters and meeting places.**
- (e) That a copy of the good practice guide "Youth Shelters and Sports Systems" published by Thames Valley Police be circulated to all Parish Councils in the Borough with this report.**
- (f) That the Community Safety Coordinator be nominated as the Council's contact point for advice on potential sources of funding for community projects involving young people.**
- (g) That a guide for the public on local charities be published by the Borough Council to identify potential sources of funding for local projects and services.**

8. Communication and Engagement

Young people often feel that their views are not listened to. It is important, therefore, to be able to contact, engage and liaise with young people. However, consultation and communication needs to be handled with care. Disillusionment may arise if young people are asked what they want and nothing is delivered. Young people also need channels of communication to make representations to relevant authorities.

Young people are often very idealistic and efforts must be made to tap into their desire to support their communities by giving them opportunities to become volunteers (e.g. improvement of local waste ground etc.). Such projects could provide young people with certain skills, as well as engaging them in community life.

A key issue in developing such initiatives is that someone must take responsibility for identifying community projects in which young people can become involved and then engaging them and organising participation. It is also important to gain the support of parents and the wider local community.

Community Safety Wardens obviously have an important role in representing their local communities and have been energetic in building relationships, trust and confidence with young people in their areas. With good local knowledge, the Wardens represent a good channel of communication for young people to identify what they want. However, whilst the Community Safety Wardens will do as much as possible to organise and engage young people, they are not professional youth workers and, when problems are identified or initiatives suggested, they often need to be referred to other appropriate agencies. It is hoped that Surrey County Council's Youth Development Service will be able to take more of a lead in progressing, encouraging participation and organising community projects such as those described in this report.

Community Safety Wardens

The Council currently employs seven Community Safety Wardens covering the following parts of the Borough:-

Ash, Ash Vale, Christchurch, Merrow, Onslow, Park Barn,
Pilgrims, Stoke, Stoughton, Tongham and Westborough

These areas were selected using the results of the Residents and Business Fear of Crime Surveys undertaken in 1998 and 2001, actual crime statistics and environmental factors, such as fly tips, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, dog fouling and vandalism.

The posts were initially funded for a three year period through a 50% grant from the Home Office with match-funding from the Safer Guildford Partnership (80% of which was provided by the Borough Council).

Very positive comments have been received in relation to the role of these Wardens and the extension of their coverage throughout the Borough would be welcome. However, at the present time, the priority is to assess the effectiveness of the initiative and secure resources for the continuation of the present scheme when current Government funding ceases after 2003/04.

In conjunction with various other agencies, particularly the Police, Community Safety Wardens have been involved in many youth projects and initiatives, including:-

- visits to schools, youth and community centres;
- consultation with young people about local facilities (e.g. through organised youth groups and informally through young people congregating at play areas and other places);
- attendance at many events for young people;
- refurbishment of a recreation area by young people;

- establishment of a youth forum in one area;
- facilitating the provision of local facilities, including fundraising; and
- involvement in local community groups and play events.

Amongst many other responsibilities, the job description of the Community Safety Wardens includes:-

- liaising with youth, Police, Youth Offending Team, Surrey County Council, Youth Strategy Action Group and the Borough Council's Nuisance Investigation Team to reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour amongst teenage children and youth;
- working closely with local residents, existing community groups and the Borough Council's Tenant Participation Officer to promote community development; and
- working with statutory and voluntary agencies to develop community-based services, for example luncheon clubs for retired people, mother and toddler groups etc.

It would often appear that Community Safety Wardens and the Police are trying to encourage local initiatives amongst young people in local communities. However, the County Council is often unable to respond to or progress ideas and projects. In this respect, the potential development of the role of Community Safety Wardens as a focus for community initiatives could be investigated further.

The Study Group is extremely pleased with the positive response to the appointment of Community Safety Wardens, an initiative which should be applauded. The Wardens are performing excellently in representing local people and being advocates for their communities. It is because of this success that the Study Group wishes to extend the enabling role of Community Safety Wardens to ensure that they provide a valuable channel of communication for young people in their areas and particularly amongst those groups and individuals which are most difficult to engage. Steering groups are currently being established for each Community Safety Warden's area and it is suggested that these bodies could be used to provide an increased emphasis on youth issues. Initially, it is proposed that a specific item on issues relating to young people should be included on the agenda for each meeting of the Steering Groups and that a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after six months to review the emerging themes.

Whilst accepting that the Community Safety Wardens are not trained youth workers (and not wishing them to become so), Members are keen that the Officers explore the opportunities for them to play a pivotal role in engaging, organising and empowering local young people.

Police Community Support Officers

Surrey Police has been awarded Home Office funding for 52 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Following a bid by the Safer Guildford Partnership, nine of these posts will be allocated to Guildford. Although less than Members would have liked, this additional resource can only help in addressing problems within local communities. The Police are currently considering the areas in which the PCSOs will be deployed and it seems likely that the locations will largely be determined in accordance with policing rather than community development requirements.

PCSOs will not have powers of arrest and it is intended that they will deal with certain issues, such as youth problems and attendance at community events, to free up the time of specialist Neighbourhood Police Officers. PCSOs will work with the Borough Council on noise and neighbourhood disputes.

Coordination and liaison between the new PCSOs and existing Community Safety Wardens and Neighbourhood Police Officers will be essential to ensuring that they fulfil complementary roles. For instance, issues such as hours of work will need to be discussed to ensure their availability at different times of the day and evening. However, it needs to be made clear that PCSOs will not fulfil the current role and responsibilities of Community Safety Wardens and their appointment should not lessen the Council's commitment to securing funding for the continuation of the warden scheme.

In this respect, there is some concern that the focus of the Home Office is moving towards the policing rather than community building end of the spectrum and it is very much hoped that this does not impact on its support for the Community Safety Warden scheme. In addition, the three year support provided by the Home Office for PCSOs gives rise to the recurring concern of what happens when the funding ends. If such funding does cease after three years, it would not be surprising if the Police sought support for their continuation through the Safer Guildford Partnership.

Rural Areas

It is often in rural areas, which are usually not served by a Community Safety Warden, that it is more difficult to find someone to engage young people and organise their participation in local community projects and initiatives. A youth worker has been appointed in the Tillingbourne area through funding provided by the Lychgate Youth Trust (which is supported by five local churches). This has resulted in the establishment of a number of youth clubs and other activities and is proving to be a successful development.

Many urban churches have dedicated youth workers, but this often proves more difficult for rural churches to afford. Therefore, the joint initiative between churches in the Tillingbourne area may provide a useful model for the provision of youth work in other rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That an item on issues relating to young people be included on the agenda for each meeting of the Community Safety Wardens' Steering Groups and that a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after six months to review the emerging themes and potential community projects.**
- (b) That the Borough Council and Surrey Police be requested to give careful consideration to the coordination of the roles and future deployment of Community Safety Wardens, Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Police Officers to ensure that they fulfil complementary roles and appropriate coverage of the Borough.**

9. Holiday Playschemes and After School Provision _____

Widespread agreement exists as to the benefits of improved holiday and after-school play provision. However, it is recognised that many particularly vulnerable young people will not engage with such formal provision for financial or other reasons. It is important to note that, although some families are unable to afford the cost, others are not motivated to participate, as attendance at such schemes is not seen as a priority by parents.

A high level of support is expressed for the “FISH” (Fun in the Summer Holidays) playscheme, which is managed and coordinated by the Council in conjunction with the Police and a number of other organisations. In particular, it is felt that initiatives such as this are important in giving better life experiences to deprived children than they would get at home and in providing positive contact with adults.

The Y Centre also operates an excellent summer camp programme and events in other school holidays, including half term. The summer camp, which was available for three weeks in 2002 and was attended by 120 to 145 children each week, is open to any young person in the 8 to 11 and 12 to 14 age groups, although some places are reserved for referrals from Social Services, Schools and Disability Changers. However, in 2002, this was limited to ten Social Services referrals and six special needs referrals. It is planned to extend the programme to four weeks in 2003 accommodating some 500 children and, together with the “fun days” arranged by the organisation, a total attendance of 730 children is likely to be achieved.

Churches in the area also operate a number of “holiday clubs”, many of which include disadvantaged young people. It is important to ensure that there is an appropriate level of coordination between these schemes and that they are widely publicised, particularly amongst the often harder to reach disadvantaged groups. It is recommended that the Director of Leisure Services consult with providers of holiday schemes and activities in the Borough to achieve these objectives.

The benefits of summer holiday activity schemes, as expressed by a number of the witnesses interviewed by the Study Group, are supported by the findings of the Youth Justice Board Survey, which stated:-

“The reduction in crime in areas suggests these schemes are not just beneficial to the young people involved, but make a real contribution to improving the quality of life for the people living in these communities.”

In view of the support expressed for such schemes, the remainder of this chapter explores how these activities might be developed within the Borough.

FISH Holiday Playscheme

The FISH scheme currently provides a two week, venue based, summer holiday programme for young people aged between 11 and 16 years old. The programme, which encompasses arts, play and sports activities, aims to target:-

- children from the areas of the Borough with the highest identified social deprivation indices, namely the Wards of Ash, Stoke and Westborough;
- children from low-income families, who are unable to access alternative activities; and
- young people referred to the scheme through agencies such as the Police, Social Services, Pupil Referral Unit and Disability Changers.

The intended benefits of the scheme are shown in the following table:-

Intended Benefits of FISH

- (a) To provide activities to assist in preventing crime in areas with the highest identified social deprivation indices.
- (b) To provide accessible activities for children from low-income families.
- (c) To provide up to 300 childcare places during the summer holidays.
- (d) To provide fully inclusive activities for children with disabilities.
- (e) To actively encompass children referred to the scheme by Social Services, Pupil Referral Unit and the Police.
- (f) To support young people in lifelong learning techniques.
- (g) To encourage young people to live healthier lifestyles.
- (h) To encourage further participation of young people in cultural activities.

As can be seen, the target groups and the intended benefits of the scheme can be directly related to the Council's Strategic Priority "*Bringing improvements for the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our society*". However, despite the widely recognised success of the scheme, there are some concerns relating to its ability to attract young people from its specified target groups and areas.

In total, 213 different children attended *FISH* in 2002, with 137 attending each day during the first week and 140 attending each day during the second week. This was an increase in the number of children attending of 46% compared to 2001 and represented 92% of the scheme's capacity. However, of the 213 children attending over the two week period, only slightly over 30% were drawn from the target Wards. In addition, one of the project's aims is to provide a fully inclusive project, which is achieved by seeking referrals from the Police, Social Services and Disability Changers, as well as attracting children from low income families. However, as the following table shows, there was a significant reduction in the proportion of children attending from these targets groups in 2002 compared with the previous year:-

Number of Children Attending Entitled to a Concessionary Rate			
Concession	2001	2002	% Difference
Income Support	32	18	- 13.5%
Council Tax Benefit	0	3	+1.4%
Police	5	7	- 0.1%
Social Services	15	26	+ 1.9%
Disability Changers	20	17	- 5.7%
Total No. of children	72 of 146	71 of 213	- 16.0%

The figures show that 10% of the available places were filled by children from low-income families and 23% were occupied by referrals from the Police, Social Services and Disability Changers. A number of applicants to attend were entitled to the Working Families Tax Credit, but were not entitled to the concessionary rate as the *FISH* scheme is not an accredited scheme as it operates for only two weeks rather than three.

The Study Group is delighted to note that an improved venue for the *FISH* programme in 2003 has been identified. The improved facilities at Kings College, including access for the disabled, can only enhance the scheme and the increase in capacity from 150 to 200 young people each week is particularly welcome. However, the Group is strongly of the view that the scheme should be increased from its current two weeks to a three week period and believes that options to achieve this objective, including the possibility of an alternative venue hosting the scheme for the additional week required (for instance in Ash or Effingham) should be investigated.

Amongst the many benefits of extending the scheme, its operation for three weeks would enable the project to receive quality assurance accreditation, which would allow families receiving the Working Families Tax Credit to be offered the concessionary rate for participation. Such an initiative can only

assist the scheme in attracting its target groups and would directly support the Council's Strategic Priority insofar as it relates to young people. The Policy Panel (Leisure) has recommended that the FISH Playscheme should continue for a two week period in 2003 with an increase in the number of places available from 150 to 200 at an additional cost to the Council of £8,000. The cost of extending the project for a further week in 2003 is estimated at an additional £15,000 and this is reflected in the recommendations set out below.

In view of the principal objectives of the scheme, it is considered that the focus of the FISH programme should clearly be on the disadvantaged and disabled target groups. Although an earlier opportunity is given to young people in target wards to reserve a place, it needs to be recognised that many particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable children or their families will not easily engage with such formal provision. Therefore, alternative ways of encouraging participation amongst these young people should be developed. In the first instance, it is suggested that Community Safety Wardens, Police Community Support Officers, Neighbourhood Police Officers and local youth workers should be used to assist in the identification of appropriate local young people for attendance at the scheme.

FISH is clearly a highly regarded initiative. However, play provision is concentrated within the summer holiday period and a longer-term goal would be to ensure similar activities can be accessed during other school holidays and half-terms. Perhaps, initially, the opportunity to develop a "*FISH*" type programme during the Easter school holidays could be explored and it is recommended that a report on this possibility, together with the associated financial implications, should be submitted to the Policy Panel (Leisure) during 2003.

Family Play Open Days

The Study Group acknowledged the success of a previous free family play open day at Stoke Park in Guildford, which attracted over 700 people, and of the family play activities provided at the Surrey County Show. Such events, as well as being immensely enjoyable for the whole family, are important in teaching parents the value of simply finding time to play and take part in rewarding activities with their children. However, events such as this may not attract the particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged groups (who could possibly gain most benefit). Transport may also present a greater problem to these families - two bus journeys for a lone parent with three children is likely to present quite a challenge.

For these reasons, the Study Group considers that the possibility of holding similar play and activity events locally in targeted, deprived areas should be explored. This would accord with the objectives of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, which encourage the staging of more events locally. It is proposed that, as an initial trial, sponsorship should be sought from local businesses to fund family play open days in Ash, Stoke and Westborough Wards in the Summer of 2003. The estimated cost of each event, subject to the activities provided, would be in the region of £500 to £1,000.

The outcome of any such event held in the Summer 2003, together with the success or otherwise of the associated sponsorship drive, could be reviewed by the Policy Panel (Leisure) in the Autumn with a view to deciding whether the initiative could be rolled out to other wards in 2004.

After-School Clubs and Activities

It is widely accepted that increased provision of after-school clubs and activities would be beneficial and this objective is reflected in both the Council's Cultural and Anti-Poverty Strategies and the emerging Community Plan. It was also identified as a high priority through the Citizens' Panel Survey undertaken in January 2002 and was emphasised in the conclusions. However, the difficulties in providing activities which would be accessed by some disadvantaged young people are acknowledged as many will not participate in formally organised activities.

The provision of after-school clubs and activities is important to many in the local community, but can be particularly important for disadvantaged families by increasing the employment choices and opportunities for parents. However, many of these clubs are not proving to be sustainable and may often be unaffordable to some families, especially those with three or four children. It is evident that there is a need for after-school activities to be available and this provision must be supported by the appropriate agencies.

At present, most after-school clubs are either operated by a voluntary management committee comprising parents who use the club and representatives of the school and possibility community. The clubs are run on similar lines to small businesses with separate bank accounts from the school. Sometimes, individuals might actually establish a club as a small business.

The schemes need to charge a minimum of £7.50 per session (from 3.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.) to break-even. For clubs in disadvantaged areas, this charge is often too high and many families are unable to afford it. The clubs try to charge a lower amount, but then find themselves in financial difficulties. As they are registered by Ofsted, concessions can be offered by the clubs to parents receiving the Working Families Tax Credit, but this only assists a small proportion of parents. Often, the schemes lose momentum with the continual fundraising requirements and cease to operate due to lack of resources.

Staffing represents another significant problem. Not many people want to work for three hours a day (particularly at the times required) for a small salary. This is a major issue with childcare generally, affecting many providers across the spectrum.

Despite there being no simple solutions to these problems, the Borough Council's Cultural and Anti-Poverty Strategies, draft Community Plan and the views expressed by residents (for example through the Citizens' Panel) require this important area to be addressed and improved. One option would be for the Council to establish a budget to provide annual grants for after-school clubs in a similar way to that currently operated for holiday playschemes. This would be of particular help to clubs in disadvantaged areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to liaise with the providers of holiday playschemes and activities in the Borough, including the Y Centre and local churches, to ensure that there is an appropriate level of coordination and that they are widely publicised, particularly amongst the often harder to reach disadvantaged groups.**
- (b) That the FISH Holiday Playscheme be extended to three weeks duration in 2003 to enable it to receive quality assurance accreditation.**
- (c) That provision of £15,000 be included in the draft revenue estimates for 2003/04 to fund the extension of the FISH programme to a three week period.**
- (d) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to:-**
 - (i) investigate and make appropriate arrangements for the extension of the FISH programme to three weeks, including the possibility of an alternative venue hosting the scheme for the additional week required (for instance in Ash or Effingham);**
 - (ii) use Community Safety Wardens, Neighbourhood Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers and local youth workers to assist in the identification of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people for attendance at FISH and to encourage participation in the programme amongst this group in the deprived target wards; and**
 - (iii) submit a report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) in 2003 on the possible development of a "FISH" type programme during the Easter school holidays, including the associated financial implications.**
- (e) That, subject to the receipt of external sponsorship, the staging of trial local family play and activity days in Ash, Stoke and Westborough Wards in the summer of 2003 be approved.**

RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)

- (f) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report reviewing the outcome of the family play and activity days described in (e) above to the Policy Panel (Leisure) in the Autumn 2003 with a view to deciding whether the initiative should be rolled out to other targeted wards in 2004.**
- (g) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) on the possible establishment of a budget to provide annual grants to after-school clubs.**
- (h) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2003 advising Members of progress with the arrangements for the initiatives described above.**

10. Opportunities for Disabled Children

The provision of play opportunities for all young people is vital to enable them to learn basic life skills. A young person with an impairment may need more practice to learn these basic skills, but the disabled often have fewer opportunities to access play.

The fact that Disability Challengers currently has a waiting list of 650 families, including 96 Guildford residents, demonstrates the shortage of opportunities for disabled young people. It is to be hoped that a proposed expansion to a second premises in Waverley Borough will assist in reducing the current waiting list.

It is important to enable all young people to develop together and programmes in the community such as "FISH", which involve both disabled and non-disabled young people, are vital in achieving this aim. Inclusive activities need to be developed by all agencies, as disabled young people do not have a wide range of choices. Schemes such as "FISH" and "MADZone" (which is discussed further below) are a starting point, but more needs to be done.

A more specific issue is the need to provide play and leisure opportunities for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Aspergers Syndrome and respite provision and support groups for their families. The number of children with ADHD and Aspergers Syndrome is increasing significantly and their needs must be addressed. This particular group is likely to have a major impact on statutory and voluntary services in the future and it is hoped that increased provision of appropriate opportunities could enable some of these young people to learn strategies to deal with the problems they face. A recognition of the needs of the families of this group is reflected in current work to establish a Guildford and Waverley ADHD Parent Support Group, which is referred to later in this report.

MADZone

MADZone is a joint initiative between the Borough Council and Disability Challengers providing a one week multi-art form project for disabled young people and their siblings. Morning sessions are open to children aged between 5 and 11 and the afternoons are for young people in the 11 to 17 age range, with 12 places being available on each session. MADZone has previously been held twice each year during the October and February half-term holidays. However, from 2003, it is planned to replace the existing schemes with a single two week project held during the Easter holidays.

MADZone is a very highly regarded initiative and demand for places amongst the younger age group in particular is extremely high. The waiting list for a place for 5 to 11 year olds is often more than double the number available. The places are filled within days and the level of frustration for parents is apparent and understandable.

There is clearly an unmet demand for additional places and it would be desirable for the capacity of the project to be extended. Increasing the number of places provided at existing sessions would have a number of financial implications, particularly in view of the high staffing ratio required to supervise and support young people attending MADZone. There could also be issues relating to the optimum size of group to work with and venue space required. Ideally, it would be desirable for MADZone to operate both during the Easter and two half-term holiday periods. However, extending the project to four weeks in this way would obviously have more significant financial and management implications.

The importance of providing inclusive opportunities for young disabled people has been referred to previously and schemes, such as MADZone, which provide opportunities for whole families to attend are extremely valuable. For this reason and in view of the unmet demand for additional places, it is recommended that a report be submitted to the Policy Panel (Leisure) on options for increasing the capacity of MADZone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) on options for increasing the capacity of the MADZone project.

11. Transport

Expectations amongst the general population about transport, access and mobility have increased significantly in recent years. However, a minority have difficulty accessing the services and facilities which most people take for granted.

The provision of affordable and reliable transport to the car is clearly a major concern to people in Guildford and was raised as a key issue by young people themselves in the Residents' Survey 2002. In response, the provision of subsidised transport for disadvantaged households is included as an objective in the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and improved community transport provision is highlighted as a priority in the emerging Community Plan.

Transport is a major issue in relation to the provision of facilities, activities and services for young people. Lack of transport can be a barrier to participation in activities by all young people, but this is particularly the case for the disadvantaged and those living in rural areas. The families of disadvantaged young people often do not have access to their own means of transport and the cost of public transport can be prohibitive. In addition, participation in after-school and holiday activities by young people in rural areas is often difficult.

Better use could possibly be made of vehicles owned by the Borough and County Councils and those of other agencies as, currently, many of these vehicles are only used at certain times of the day or week and are free at others. The priority must be to provide safe, reliable and affordable transport for children.

The provision of transport to the main sports and leisure facilities could help to overcome social exclusion and it is encouraging that the Director of Leisure Services is currently investigating the possible introduction of a bus service linking certain parts of the Borough with Guildford Spectrum and other Council venues, which could be linked to discounted charges for the use of these facilities and transport for young people. As transport problems for young people have been identified in this particular investigation and through various consultation exercises undertaken by the Council, including that on the Cultural Strategy, this initiative would clearly be beneficial to all young people, but particularly for disadvantaged families for which transport tends to be a greater concern.

This chapter of the report looks at other options for improving transport opportunities for young people. This includes making better use of vehicles currently owned by the Borough Council, for example, dial-a-ride and day centre buses. Also, having noted how community buses have been successfully introduced in certain areas, Members are also keen to investigate how this concept can be encouraged more widely.

Dial-a-Ride Buses

Although the potential community use of the Borough Council's dial-a-ride and day centre buses has been considered previously, the issue is being revisited as part of a Best Value review of Community Services. There are a number of factors which need to be taken into account when considering the options, particularly the restrictions relating to the use of the vehicles imposed by the required permit, including:-

- the service can only be offered to "members", who are required to register before travelling;
- journeys must be pre-booked 48 hours in advance;
- should the dial-a-ride service be extended to other client groups or should a group hire scheme be introduced;
- the vehicles, which have specialist disabled access, are difficult to replace if damaged;
- arrangements for picking up and returning the vehicle and keys;
- compliance with the Council's stringent rules about drivers; and
- vehicle mileage limits imposed by the leasing arrangements.

In view of the requirements of the scheme in terms of registration of members and pre-booking of journeys, a dial-a-ride type service is not likely to be the best solution for young people. On the other hand, the use of these specialist nine-seater vehicles for group hire may not be financially viable and the cost may become higher than the hiring charge from a private company.

However, the Council has expended significant resources on the acquisition of eleven mini-buses and it is evident that these vehicles should be deployed to meet identified needs. The dial-a-ride buses currently only operate during office hours and there is obviously capacity in the evenings and at weekends for their extended use. Despite the problems identified, there is an acceptance that they are not insurmountable and that opportunities exist for organised journeys to be made to venues such as Guildford Spectrum, youth discos and play, sports and arts activities. One option delivered in other areas would be to form "travel clubs" utilising existing Council drivers. Surrey County Council has indicated that it would be likely to provide financial support for any additional uses of dial-a-ride vehicles introduced to meet identified community needs. For this reason, it is recommended that a further report on options for operating such a scheme be submitted to the Policy Panel (Housing and Community).

Pegasus Project

As part of the Government backed Pegasus Project, the Guildford area will receive 25 new buses with the core objective of transporting significant additional numbers of pupils who are not entitled to free transport to school each year. This initiative is clearly targeted at reducing the number of school trips undertaken by parents by providing a safe and reliable alternative.

Surrey County Council is currently in discussions with potential bidders to operate the service and it is apparent that, outside the core schools business, operators will be looking to utilise buses to their full extent during and after school creating opportunities for potential community uses. If an unmet need for community trips can be demonstrated, it is highly likely that the contractor would be prepared to provide a service.

Community Buses

A community bus is a small bus (9 - 16 passenger seats) operated by a local community-based organisation, which provides a registered bus service using volunteer drivers. Special permits issued by the Traffic Commissioner are required before services can commence. Dispensations of many of the rules governing public transport is allowed when operating these buses and they can provide vital links in areas where public transport is less likely to be readily available.

There are currently six community buses in Surrey (with two operating in the Guildford area and a further one on-line) and it would seem that they offer the greatest potential for improving transport opportunities for young people. Unlike the Council's dial-a-ride vehicles, community buses can carry members of the public. Drivers must be unpaid, although some flexibility exists in that they may be paid expenses, including a loss of earnings allowance.

Although certain rules apply to the operation of community buses, in practice considerable flexibility exists as to the routes operated and provision of other required journeys.

Brokerage Schemes

Many charities and voluntary organisations spend many years raising funds for mini-buses. Despite the extensive effort required, many of these vehicles are significantly under-used (in some cases, perhaps only once a week).

Brokerage schemes aim to maximise the use of all vehicles owned by voluntary organisations. Instead of individual organisations each raising funds for their own vehicle, brokerage schemes operate by levying a charge to voluntary groups for the use of a mini-bus from a central pool. Such a scheme has potential advantages for groups serving the needs of young people and it is recommended that Surrey County Council Officers submit a report to the Guildford Local Committee on the possible establishment of such a scheme in the Guildford area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the Director of Housing and Health Services be requested to submit a report to the Policy Panel (Housing and Community) on options for the possible community use of the Council's dial-a-ride and day centre vehicles, including the possible establishment of travel clubs.**

- (b) That Surrey County Council Officers be requested to submit a report to the Guildford Local Committee on:-**
 - (i) the potential use of buses provided under the Pegasus Project to meet identified needs for community use;**

 - (ii) options for encouraging the development of community buses in the Borough; and**

 - (iii) the possible establishment of a brokerage scheme in Guildford for the use of mini-buses by voluntary and community organisations.**

12. Support for Parents and Families

The provision of support for parents is a key issue, which can have a beneficial knock-on effect for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people. The attitudes of parents are vital to the behaviour of their children. For instance, 50% of children picked up by truancy patrols are with their parents. If education is not thought important and is given a low priority by parents, their children are more likely to decide not to go to school when they are older.

Many statutory and voluntary organisations have close links and provide support to the families of vulnerable young people – for instance, advice on form filling and accessing services. Home visits are often undertaken to assess the situation and to identify how the family can be supported to ensure, for example, that a young person is able to participate fully in mainstream education. In many cases, parents try to be supportive, but they often don't know how.

Parenting groups could play a vital role. It appears that there are not enough local parent groups and that the quality of those in existence varies greatly. Parenthood education must be delivered in a very specific way and, in many cases, in the home as clients are unlikely to access other formal provision. There are difficulties in getting people to attend such groups and, in this respect, they must be seen as being a mutual support service where the parents themselves can make a positive contribution. Many of the parents of vulnerable children did not succeed at school themselves and would resent a classroom ethos, so groups must not make people feel they are being talked down to or patronised.

One practical issue in relation to parenting courses is the availability of appropriate venues for meetings at appropriate times of the day (schools are often not appropriate venues).

The increase in the number of young people suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Aspergers Syndrome has been highlighted as an important issue, which cannot be ignored. It is estimated that 5% of children suffer from ADHD of which one-fifth require drug therapy. A local parent support group for ADHD has recently been established and the Chairman of the Study Group attended the launch meeting in December. The importance of this type of group cannot be overstated and Members feel particularly strongly that the needs of families experiencing ADHD, including siblings, should be addressed.

The ADHD Support Group will require annual funding of £1,500 to operate and, subject to the Director of Housing and Health Services being satisfied as to its constitution and funding not being available from elsewhere, it is recommended that a grant for this sum should be provided by the Borough Council. The Support Group will be requested to submit a report to the Council after a year of operation reviewing its progress to enable Members to identify how successful aspects of this support could be extended to other parent and family support groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That, subject to the Director of Housing and Health Services being satisfied as to its constitution and funding not being available from elsewhere, a grant of £1,500 be awarded to the recently established ADHD Family Support Group to support its annual running costs.**
- (b) That, in the event that this relatively modest sum cannot be found from within existing budgets to provide this grant, a supplementary estimate in the sum of £1,500 be approved for the current financial year.**
- (c) That the Group be requested to submit a report to the Council after 12 months of operation to enable Members to determine how successful aspects of this support could be extended to other parent and family support groups.**

13. External Funding

With the introduction of the Connexions Service and the withdrawal of much of Surrey County Council's support for young people outside the 13 to 19 age range and for certain types of other youth work, it will become increasingly important for the Borough Council and other organisations operating in the Guildford area to fill these important gaps. As 80% of the Surrey Youth Development Service's budget becomes aligned with the Connexions Service in 2004, it will also be vital to access funding for initiatives targeted at young people and activities not catered for by this new strategy.

Children's Fund

The Children's Fund was introduced in response to work of the Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team on Young People, which highlighted the need for improved preventative services. The Fund will primarily target 5 to 13 year olds at risk of social exclusion, bridging the gap between Sure Start for pre-school children and the Connexions Service for 13 to 19 year olds. It aims to assist in the delivery of preventative services over and above those currently provided through statutory agencies and specific programmes.

The Fund is currently rolling out across the country in three waves and aims to cover the whole of England by April 2003. The first 40 areas received Children's Fund money in 2001; a further 50 areas will be supported in 2002 and the remaining parts of England will receive money in 2003. The first areas were selected according to levels of child poverty, with a number of rural and coastal areas facing particular difficulties also being included.

The Fund can be used to support an exceptionally wide range of services. The key factor is that the services must help prevent children and their families suffering the consequences of poverty. The Fund should not displace money provided by statutory agencies, but genuinely add new services in each area.

There is no centralised application procedure for the Children's Fund. Money will be distributed by local partnerships comprising a balance of statutory, voluntary and community sector representatives. Representation from faith groups, ethnic minority communities and real and the meaningful involvement of children in the design and delivery of services are key elements of the Fund. The partnership group for Surrey is just beginning to be established and is planning to consult children and communities on the type of activities and services they would like.

In view of the County Council's reducing role in the provision of services to younger children, it is vital that the Borough Council and voluntary and community groups operating in Guildford are in the best position to benefit from the opportunities offered by the Children's Fund. To this end, it is recommended that the Children's Fund Programme Manager at Surrey Voluntary Service Council be invited to make a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity on the potential of the Fund and on initiatives the Council could develop to alleviate child poverty which would qualify for support from this source. It is also suggested that guidance is circulated widely amongst local voluntary, community and other organisations working with young people.

Fundraising Officer

The Borough Council's Policy Panel (Leisure) has previously requested a report on the possible appointment of a dedicated Officer to research and apply for funding from external sources for Council projects. Whilst investigating the provision of services to young people, it has become apparent that many Borough Council Officers are spending an increasing amount of time seeking external support for various initiatives. It is also clear that the award of external grants creates a significant amount of work in terms of required paperwork and monitoring information.

The Study Group strongly supports the principle of the Borough Council appointing a dedicated Fundraising Officer and considers that the cost of such a post would be substantially outweighed by additional external resources received from grant-making bodies and through savings in other Officers' time. Therefore, it is recommended that a report be submitted to the Executive on the merits of such an appointment. It is also considered that this report should address the possibility of such an Officer

being available to offer advice to voluntary organisations on potential sources of funding and grants. In the case of this particular study, this could include opportunities generated by the Children's Fund and support for schemes such as after-school clubs

This proposed additional advisory role would respond to concerns from voluntary organisations that an increasing amount of their time is spent in the search of funds - a problem which seems to be compounded by the perception of Guildford as a wealthy area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the Children's Fund Programme Manager at Surrey Voluntary Service Council be invited to make a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity on the potential of the Fund and on initiatives the Council could develop to alleviate child poverty which would qualify for support from this source.**
- (b) That guidance on the Children's Fund be circulated to local voluntary, community and other organisations working with young people in the area.**
- (c) That a report be submitted to the Executive on the appointment of a Fundraising Officer by the Borough Council.**

14. Guildford Pupil Referral Unit

As part of this study, specific problems were identified in relation to the play area at Guildford Pupil Referral Unit. Despite being resurfaced within the last year at considerable cost, a number of health and safety concerns, including a low fence and spikes attached to perimeter walls, mean that the headteacher is unwilling to allow pupils to use the area. In addition to potential safety concerns, the low fence, which has only recently been erected, also precludes the playing of ball games.

The headteacher is also keen to provide some play equipment, such as a climbing frame and basketball hoop. However, Surrey County Council has indicated that obtaining planning permission for such equipment is likely to be problematic. Having visited the Pupil Referral Unit, the Study Group is surprised at this conclusion and is of the view that an acceptable scheme could be achieved. It is recommended that County and Borough Council Planning Officers meet the headteacher at the Pupil Referral Unit to discuss potential schemes for the provision of play equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That Surrey County Council be requested to address the health and safety concerns preventing the current use of the play area at Guildford Pupil Referral Unit.**
- (b) That a meeting be arranged between Surrey County Council and Borough Council Planning Officers and the headteacher of the Pupil Referral Unit to discuss options for the provision of play equipment at the site.**

15. Recommendations

That the Council be requested to commend the following recommendations to the Executive:-

Surrey Youth Development Service

- (1) That, in the light of the introduction of the Connexions Service and concerns about services to young people outside the 13 to 19 age range and other activities not encompassed by this strategy, the Officers be authorised to enter into discussions with Surrey County Council about the devolution of this role to the Borough Council.

Local and Community Based Provision

- (2) That Surrey County Council Officers be requested to submit a report to the Guildford Local Committee on opportunities for the increased use of school playing fields out of school hours for community uses and informal recreational activities.
- (3) That the Officers be requested to consult Guildford YMCA on the support which the Borough Council could provide to enable the Plantation Café to open later on Friday and Saturday evenings.
- (4) That Surrey County Council Youth Development Service be urged to consider opportunities for increased informal recreation and socialising by young people as part of its plans for the use of the Discovery Centre in Guildford and within its other existing youth centre premises.
- (5) That, subject to the outcome of relevant consultation exercises, the Director of Leisure Services be requested to give a high priority in the preparation of the Borough Council's Fixed Equipment Playground Strategy:-
 - (a) to basic provision in all local communities rather than a smaller number of large, expensive schemes; and
 - (b) to the provision of local youth shelters and meeting places.
- (6) That a copy of the good practice guide "Youth Shelters and Sports Systems" published by Thames Valley Police be circulated to all Parish Councils in the Borough with this report.
- (7) That the Community Safety Coordinator be nominated as the Council's contact point for advice on potential sources of funding for community projects involving young people.
- (8) That a guide for the public on local charities be published by the Borough Council to identify potential sources of funding for local projects and services.

Coordination and Engagement

- (9) That an item on issues relating to young people be included on the agenda for each meeting of the Community Safety Wardens' Steering Groups and that a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after six months to review the emerging themes and potential community projects.
- (10) That the Borough Council and Surrey Police be requested to give careful consideration to the coordination of the roles and future deployment of Community Safety Wardens, Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Police Officers to ensure that they fulfil complementary roles and appropriate coverage of the Borough.

Holiday Playschemes and After-School Provision

- (11) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to liaise with the providers of holiday playschemes and activities in the Borough, including the Y Centre and local churches, to ensure that there is an appropriate level of coordination and that they are widely publicised, particularly amongst the often harder to reach disadvantaged groups.
- (12) That the FISH Holiday Playscheme be extended to three weeks duration in 2003 to enable it to receive quality assurance accreditation.
- (13) That provision of £15,000 be included in the draft revenue estimates for 2003/04 to fund the extension of the FISH programme to a three week period.
- (14) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to:-
 - (a) investigate and make appropriate arrangements for the extension of the FISH programme to three weeks, including the possibility of an alternative venue hosting the scheme for the additional week required (for instance in Ash or Effingham);
 - (b) use Community Safety Wardens, Neighbourhood Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers and local youth workers to assist in the identification of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people for attendance at FISH and to encourage participation in the programme amongst this group in the deprived target wards; and
 - (c) submit a report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) in 2003 on the possible development of a "FISH" type programme during the Easter school holidays, including the associated financial implications.
- (15) That, subject to the receipt of external sponsorship, the staging of trial local family play and activity days in Ash, Stoke and Westborough Wards in the summer of 2003 be approved.
- (16) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report reviewing the outcome of the family play and activity days described in (15) above to the Policy Panel (Leisure) in the Autumn 2003 with a view to deciding whether the initiative should be rolled out to other targeted wards in 2004.
- (17) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) on the possible establishment of a budget to provide annual grants to after-school clubs.
- (18) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2003 advising Members of progress with the arrangements for the initiatives described above.

Opportunities for Disabled Children

- (19) That the Director of Leisure Services be requested to submit a report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) on options for increasing the capacity of the MADZone scheme.

Transport

- (20) That the Director of Housing and Health Services be requested to submit a report to the Policy Panel (Housing and Community) on options for the possible community use of the Council's dial-a-ride and day centre vehicles, including the possible establishment of travel clubs.
- (21) That Surrey County Council Officers be requested to submit a report to the Guildford Local Committee on:-
 - (a) the potential use of buses provided under the Pegasus Project for community uses;

- (b) options for encouraging the development of community buses in the Borough; and
- (c) the possible establishment of a brokerage scheme in Guildford for the use of mini-buses by voluntary and community organisations.

Support for Parents and Families

- (22) That, subject to the Director of Housing and Health Services being satisfied as to its constitution and funding not being available from elsewhere, a grant of £1,500 be awarded to the recently established ADHD Family Support Group to support its annual running costs.
- (23) That, in the event that this relatively modest sum cannot be found from within existing budgets to provide this grant, a supplementary estimate in the sum of £1,500 be approved for the current financial year.
- (24) That the Group be requested to submit a report to the Council after 12 months of operation to enable Members to determine how successful aspects of this support could be extended to other parent and family support groups.

External Funding

- (25) That the Children's Fund Programme Manager at Surrey Voluntary Service Council be invited to make a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity on the potential of the Fund and on initiatives the Council could develop to alleviate child poverty which would qualify for support from this source.
- (26) That guidance on the Children's Fund be circulated to local voluntary, community and other organisations working with young people in the area.
- (27) That a report be submitted to the Executive on the appointment of a dedicated Fundraising Officer by the Borough Council.

Guildford Pupil Referral Unit

- (28) That Surrey County Council be requested to address the health and safety concerns preventing the current use of the play area at Guildford Pupil Referral Unit.
- (29) That a meeting be arranged between Surrey County Council and Borough Council Planning Officers and the headteacher of the Pupil Referral Unit to discuss options for the provision of play equipment at the site.

Circulation of Report

- (30) That a copy of the Study Group's report be submitted to:-
 - (a) the Guildford Local Committee;
 - (b) the Borough Council's Members' Working Group appointed to co-ordinate the development of the Community Plan; and
 - (c) appropriate statutory and voluntary organisations operating within the Borough, including Parish Councils.

References

Guildford Borough Council Citizens' Panel Survey: January 2002

Guildford Borough Council Residents' Survey: May 2002

Guildford Borough Council Citizens' Panel Survey: July 2002

Proposals for the Youth Service: Report to Surrey County Council's Executive on 22 July 2002

The Youth Development Service in Guildford Borough: Report to Surrey County Council's Guildford Local Committee on 12 September 2002

FISH Holiday Playscheme 2002 - Evaluation: Report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) on 29 October 2002

Bringing Improvements to the Disadvantaged and Vulnerable in Our Society: Interim report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 November 2002

Services for Young People: Report to the Policy Panel (Leisure) on 10 December 2002

Youth Shelters and Sports Systems: A Good Practice Guide 2002: Thames Valley Police

Guildford Borough Anti-Poverty Strategy: November 2002

Guildford Borough's Cultural Strategy: December 2002

The Youth Development Service in Guildford Borough: Report to the Guildford Local Committee on 12 December 2002

The Community Plan for Guildford (First Draft): December 2002

Guildford Community Safety Strategy 2002 - 2005: Safer Guildford Partnership