

Committee: COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item

Date: 25 OCTOBER 2005

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Title: **COMMUNITY SPORTS OUTREACH WORKERS**

Author: Gaynor Bradley (Leisure Manager) 01799 510348

Item for decision

Summary

This report advises members about the work undertaken by the Sports Outreach Workers from January to September 2005 and recommends that if external funding cannot be obtained to continue with the project that the Council includes these workers within the 2006/07 base budget as an ongoing cost.

Recommendation

Members agree to the inclusion of £20,000 for the cost of the Sports Outreach Workers within the draft 2006/07 base budget to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee in January 2006, with a final decision being made at that time or on receipt of further information on possible external funding.

Background Papers

Background papers relating to the scheme are available from the author of this report.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	The Outreach Workers have undertaken an exercise of writing to all Parish Councils to establish what requirements the areas might have. One of the main areas of their work is to consult generally with young people and this they do on an informal basis by meeting up with groups of young people and by working on occasions from the Mobile Information Bus alongside Essex County Council's Youth Workers.
Community Safety	We have been successful in achieving Home Office funding from the Community Safety fund in the past. This is because sports outreach work can have the effect of engaging young people in positive activities as opposed

	to young people having very little to do during the evenings. (However, it should be noted that Community Safety funding is normally only awarded for the start-up of a project and not for ongoing running costs.
Equalities	From an equalities point of view, the Sport Outreach project offers young people access to sports activities and coaching either free of charge or at discounted rates.
Finance	<p>Currently external funding of approximately £20,000 per annum has been raised externally over the last three years but it has become increasingly difficult to achieve external funding for an established project. Therefore, to continue with this project would require the Council to absorb the cost of this work within the revenue budget with effect from 1 April 2006</p> <p>This spending pressure was on the list of proposed budget reductions put forward to the Resources Committee on 29th September. That Committee resolved that committees could put such pressures back into their draft budgets if they found compensating savings elsewhere. Officers, by supporting this spending pressure are therefore proposing an increase of up to £20,000 in the budget reduction target for this Committee's medium priority services, moving the amount required from £56,685 to up to £76,685. Proposals to meet this target will be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.</p>
Human Rights	Offering a sport outreach service on an ad hoc basis provides young people with greater opportunities to develop sporting and social skills and to develop confidence and a sense of self-worth.
Legal implications	None.
Ward-specific impacts	Specific Wards will have benefited from the Outreach Workers visiting the areas and further requests have been received for them to visit other areas.

Workforce/Workplace	Currently we have funding until 31 March 2006 for 4 posts. However, we currently only have two employees in post as a third left recently. We are now trying to recruit a further two posts.
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Situation

1. The current level of funding provides for one Community Sports Outreach Co-ordinator contracted to work 12 hours per week and three Community Sports Outreach Workers contracted for 6 hours each per week. The Outreach Workers are located within the Leisure Team and directly managed by the Sports Development Officer.
2. The Sports Outreach programme has been operating for three years now and has proved to be a successful way of engaging with young people who would otherwise spend evenings gathering in the community with little to do. This view has been endorsed during discussions with the Youth forum and the local Police.
3. The activities that the Workers have been involved in previous years have been reported to this Committee and this year to date has seen a continuation of that work in addition to new developments, for example:
 - Providing regular coaching for basketball sessions at Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre on Wednesday evenings where 30 – 40 young people play between 6.30 – 8.00 p.m. During this period two young people have achieved level1 coaching qualifications.
 - A trip was organised for a group of 30 young people interested in basketball to see the London Towers Basketball Team play at Crystal Palace.
 - Cricket, football and softball activities have been delivered to groups of young people in Takeley, Stansted, Newport , Saffron Walden, Arksden and Clavering.
 - A Summer sports programme was delivered on Saffron Walden Common for approximately 60 guides and scouts.
 - Supported the work of the Youth Staff operating from the Mobile Information Bus by delivery sports activities to groups of young people they have been working with in Birchanger, Elsenham and Newport. This was through the Summer period and is still continuing.

- Prepared and delivered a sports programme for a Guide group in Great Chesterford and a Scout group in Clavering.

Targets

4. Planning to set up a district wide football league.
5. Planning to undertake sports coaching for some of the youth clubs.
6. Planning to undertake work in other areas of the district. However, it is necessary to recruit a further two members of staff to enable the Sports Outreach workers to cover more of the district.

Pay-Offs/Penalties

7. The scheme has been very successful and it has the potential for further development.
8. The Outreach Sports Workers are now well known in the district by young people and the Police and are respected and trusted.
9. The young people participating in the activities have given positive feedback to the Sports Workers that they welcome them into the areas.
10. By continuing with the Outreach project the Council will be investing in local young people and providing them with a service that encourages and interests them in physical activities and socialising.

Risk Analysis

11. The following have been assessed as the potential risks associated with this project.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Young people will not wish to engage with the workers and will not trust them.	Low	Low	The Workers deliver letters to young people for them to take home to their parents to let them know that they are legitimately working for the Council. The Workers have the necessary skills and abilities to communicate and build relationships with the young people.

<p>That the Workers will find themselves in very challenging or unsafe situations.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>There have been some episodes where the Workers have felt at risk when approaching a group of young people. However they always work in pairs and have been instructed to walk away from situations that they feel uncomfortable with.</p>
<p>We are unable to recruit more Workers.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>With part-time evening working it is difficult to recruit people who might be in other employment. This of course has an impact on the areas of the district that can be visited. It is likely that it will be necessary to build up a pool of staff that can be employed as Outreach Sport workers as well as they casual work they undertake for the Council</p>