

**YOUTH PROVISION IN SOUTH BRACKNELL**  
**Director Children, Young People and Learning**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This progress report updates members of the Panel on progress towards the development of additional youth provision and facilities in South Bracknell.

**2 SUGGESTED ACTION**

- 2.1 The Children's Services and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the contents of the report.

**3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Provision in Great Hollands

- 3.1 As part of the transfer of housing stock to Bracknell Forest Homes, the Council made a commitment to invest £1m from the proceeds into youth facilities in south Bracknell.
- 3.2 In preparing to deliver this commitment, a number of options for location and provision have been evaluated within the relevant area. The priority community for delivery has been the Great Hollands neighbourhood and work has focussed in that area.
- 3.3 Identifying a site for a new youth centre in that area has been challenging. Throughout discussions with them, young people have been firm in their view that they would like provision to be located in the neighbourhood centre and options for delivering that have been explored. Discussions have coincided with the desire to make improvements to the centre in Great Hollands.
- 3.4 In the Autumn 2009, a potential site was identified. The current leaseholder was prepared to negotiate a surrender of lease with Corporate Property and this was concluded in early February. Some detailed work has been undertaken with the Planning Department and a request for planning permission was submitted on 9 February 2010. The necessary building work has been put out for tender with responses due in mid March.
- 3.5 The premises are located at 1 Great Hollands Square. This is the first property next to the car park at the Square and is next door to the Talkshop which is currently being used as a base for some youth activities. As a result of the location, the building footprint can be significantly enlarged to provide a good space for young people and at the same time enhancing the appearance of that part of the Square. A plan is attached. The facility is planned to open in the summer 2010.
- 3.6 Members of the Panel will be aware that a considerable amount of youth work has taken place in the area over the past few years. Great Hollands Square was a location for the Silver Bus prior to a better facility being developed in partnership with the Talkshop. During 2009/10 a small revenue budget for youth work in the area has been used to good effect. As well as regular sessions, a number of special projects have been undertaken in the area. A member of staff from the Youth Service has developed a positive relationship with young people through work with Easthampstead Park School and also with South Hill Park which culminated in activities that spread into the Town Centre during school holiday periods. The D of E Award Scheme is being established by the Adventure Education

Worker at EP school and this will transfer to the new centre when it opens. A core group of young people has been involved in generating ideas for the new provision and the Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People has been supporting engagement activities.

- 3.7 For 2010/11 the revenue budget increases to that of comparable provision elsewhere in the Borough. This has enabled the appointment of an experienced youth worker to be appointed from April 2010. Over the coming months, she will build up her team of sessional workers and volunteers in order to develop provision for young people. Strengthening relationships and building trust and confidence are key elements in the success of any new provision.
- 3.8 Young people have worked with youth work staff and the Corporate Communications team to develop an identity and name for the new centre – The Zone. This will be a welcome addition to the other facilities in Bracknell Forest: Woodies in Priestwood, Trax in North Ascot, the Spot in Sandhurst, The Way in Harmanwater and smaller facilities at Whitegrove and Edgbarrow.

### Mobile Provision

- 3.9 In addition to a new fixed facility, a new mobile facility is planned to replace the Silver Bus. The Silver Bus has been good provision over a period of years, but has frequently been troublesome in terms of reliability. It also lacks flexibility in terms of where it can be parked and who can drive it. There are not suitable locations for it to work across South Bracknell at the present time. The Silver Bus is still on the road and is a regular visitor to Birch Hill.
- 3.10 A specification for a new, smaller, more manoeuvrable vehicle has been drawn up and put out for tender. A supplier has been identified and work is currently being undertaken with this supplier to finalise aspects of the interior layout and exterior design. The new provision will be available in the summer as well.
- 3.11 A dedicated team of youth workers work with the bus, and without it when it is not available. This team have been working with young people where they congregate to form positive relationships with them. Friday night provision is incorporated into this activity. Regularity of contact is important in terms of developing trust and confidence. This team of workers is skilled in terms of signposting young people to sources of advice and support and encouraging them to take part in positive activities.

### Other provision in South Bracknell

- 3.12 Other provision has been established for young people in the Birch Hill area outside of that provided by the Youth Service which is encouraging. The Easthampstead and Wildridings areas are more challenging and will be the next area for development.
- 3.13 Work is undertaken by the Youth Service with residents of both Holly House and Rainforest Walk, both located in Easthampstead but there is little more than that at present. Further exploration of the possibilities in these areas will be the next stage of development in South Bracknell. The initial stages of this will be the deployment of the detached team and mobile provision to the area.

### Contact for further information

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