



## **SOCIAL**

### OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30th January 2007

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## **MINUTES**

### **Present:**

Councillor M Shurmer (Chair) and Councillors Boyd-Carpenter, Brunner, Cartwright, Field, Hill and Passingham.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer:**

I Westmore.

### **17. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Thomas.

### **18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest nor of any Party Whip.

### **19. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED that**

**the minutes of the meeting of the Social Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 13th of September 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### **20. FEEDBACK FROM TASK AND FINISH GROUPS REPORTING TO THIS COMMITTEE - APPEALS**

It was noted that there had been no further meetings of the Appeals Task and Finish Group since early December, in part due to a lack of dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Support.

Members were informed that a final meeting of the Group at which the outcomes of the review were to be considered was scheduled to take place on Monday, 5th February, with a final report being submitted to the Executive Committee at the end of March.

### **21. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – HELP AVAILABLE IN REDDITCH**

The Chair introduced a short information report and set out the reasons for the provision for victims of domestic violence being included on the present agenda. It was stated that there were concerns following the loss of the refuge house within the town centre

and the prevailing wisdom that women victims be supported within their own homes. Members wished to establish the exact processes now in place, present levels of provision and whether existing practises were the most appropriate.

The present system, whereby the perpetrator was removed from the home and the victim encouraged to stay with appropriate support, found some support. The advantage of this system was that it allowed the victim to maintain their normal routine to a great extent in relative safety and with a degree of discretion. It was noted that multi-agency protection panels were now routinely used in this context.

There was some disquiet that the two approaches to meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence could not both be accommodated and particularly that much of the current agenda was being driven by cost considerations. It was recognised that refuges were a short-term solution but some Members felt that they still had an important part to play.

Members did not consider that they were adequately informed as to the arrangements currently available to victims of domestic violence and requested that a report be prepared for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

## **RESOLVED that**

**a group comprising Councillors Boyd-Carpenter, Brunner, Field and Passingham be established to consider historical and current provision of services to victims of domestic violence, to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.**

## **22. USE OF DETACHED YOUTH WORKERS IN REDDITCH**

The Committee received a short information report detailing the present system of detached youth work within the Borough as provided by the County Council.

There was some discussion as to what the major issues were with youth provision and how the Committee and Council could realistically expect to influence the debate. It was suggested that the present means of youth provision was going in the right direction in becoming less attached to fixed premises but there was still the impression that youth workers were trying to organise children to a greater extent than was desired by service users.

A wider issue was considered to be the overall lack of provision within the Borough, with the detached youth work teams being under-resourced to make a significant difference to levels of anti-social behaviour.

The Committee agreed that Members should investigate the role of detached youth workers, present provision within the Borough and pull together an evidence-based case for what was required within Redditch. It was proposed that this be done initially through a meeting with Officers of the County Council.

## **RESOLVED that**

**a Group, open to all Members of the Committee, be established to consider current detached youth provision and assess present requirements within the Borough, to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.**

### **23. PASSENGER TRANSPORT WITHIN THE BOROUGH**

The discussion of passenger transport provision had been prompted by the recent decision to curtail evening bus services within the town and, in particular, by the bus companies running the 57 and 58 services in particular. This decision was felt to be particularly regrettable given that the new cinema was shortly to open within the Town Centre and Members were concerned that young people would be especially disadvantaged.

The reports of violence against bus drivers on this route were taken seriously by Members but there was the underlying feeling that such reports were on occasions being used as a pretext for withdrawing services that were not making money. It was, however, noted that this particular evening route attracted subsidies from the County Council.

As with the two previous items, there was the recognition that the County Council was a key partner and had the greatest influence over service provision, prompting some Members to question the influence that the Committee could have on this subject. However, Members agreed that a Group could investigate the matter prior to the next meeting.

## **RESOLVED that**

**a Group, comprising Councillors Boyd-Carpenter, Brunner, Cartwright, Field, Passingham and Shurmer, be established to consider evening passenger transport provision within the Borough, to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.**

### **24. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the programme of future work. It was suggested that the Committee could usefully consider how young people access the Arts within Redditch, particularly given that this was a service over which the Council had considerable control and influence. It was proposed that the present systems should be reviewed, along with access to funding, the barriers in place that

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prevented young people from gaining access and assistance available through the Council and its partners.

### **RESOLVED that**

**subject to the addition detailed above, the Committee's Work Programme be approved**

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m.  
and closed at 8.30 p.m.

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CHAIR

