



ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

17 NOVEMBER 2008

FINAL REPORT – REVIEW OF COMMUNITY CENTRES

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the findings of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Panel's review of Community Centres.

AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

2. The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to undertake a review of both the Council's Community Centres and its Youth and Community Centres

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

3. The terms of reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:
 - (a) Through the examination of the Youth/Community Centres in Middlesbrough assess their effectiveness and consider if they are providing value for money.
 - (b) To examine what is being done to support the involvement of the community in the running and management of their local community centres
 - (c) To examine good practice in other areas and consider if that good practice could be implemented in Middlesbrough.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

4. Members of the Panel met formally between 23 July 2008 and 17 November 2008 to discuss/receive evidence relating to this investigation and a detailed record of the topics discussed at those meetings are available from the Committee Management System (COMMIS), accessible via the Council's website.

5. A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:
- (a) Detailed officer presentations supplemented by verbal evidence.
 - (b) Visits to a number of community centres to talk to volunteers and staff
6. The report has been compiled on the basis of their evidence and other background information listed at the end of the report.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

7. The membership of the Panel was as detailed below:

Councillors J Cole (Chair), T Mawston (Vice Chair), S Bloundele, C Hobson, R Lowes, A Majid, F McIntyre, H Rehman and B Taylor

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. In a paper by the Charity Commission for England and Wales it was acknowledged that the Government recognised that community centres could make an enormous difference to the well being of their communities. That they were an important resource and contribute to the economic and social regeneration of their local communities.
9. The report outlines the 6 attributes of a successful community centre which were as follows
- 1. a governing document that is workable and up to date which outlines what the trustees need to do
 - 2. a trustee body that is diverse, knows the extent of its role, responsibilities and powers
 - 3. a building that meets legislative requirements and that can facilitate a range of activities
 - 4. an effective means of communicating and consulting with the local community to ensure that its needs are understood
 - 5. a funding regime that is sustainable and diverse to allow trustees sufficient flexibility to direct their activities in accordance with local needs and interests
 - 6. a strategic plan that takes account of the impact of proposed changes on all aspects of the running of the charity.

THE PANEL'S FINDINGS

10. The panel learnt that the town had a history of supporting local communities to develop neighbourhood resources. Reflected in such schemes as children's play areas, youth centres, community councils and community centres. Middlesbrough Council had led by providing a locally managed central resource.
11. It was noted that there had been two major changes in recent years, firstly how the building of community centres had been funded in the last 10 years and how they were managed. Capital funding had moved away from the local authority to national programmes and charitable donations. Secondly the use of management committees to support and resource activities had become more commonplace.

History of Community Centres in Middlesbrough

12. There were 10 community centres in Middlesbrough which were managed by Middlesbrough Council. There are other centres, including village halls, owned and managed by voluntary management committees. However for the purpose of the review the panel chose to concentrate on Community Centres and Youth and Community Centres.
13. Of the ten community centres in Middlesbrough, eight were built less than twenty years ago. The oldest centre was the Newport Neighbourhood Centre, which was built as part of the new housing built between Union Street and Newport Road in the mid seventies. The newest centre, Marton, was built in 2003. In between those dates, the Council built 7 centres to meet the need for community meeting spaces. The exception to those was the International Centre, which was a building purchased in 1984 and was being used as a centre to meet the need for the population in the north of the town.
14. The panel learnt that in the last 20 years, most of the centres had been managed as stand-alone buildings that serviced tightly defined neighbourhoods. Core funding from the Council met the running costs of the centres, which were managed by the Council's Community Development Service.
15. The Community Centres in Middlesbrough are as follows

Community Centres	Youth and Community Centres
Brambles Farm	Beechwood
Charlbury Road	Coulby Newham
Grove Hill Resource Centre	Grove Hill
International Centre	Joe Waltons
Langdon Square	Kader
Linthorpe	Newport
Marton	North Ormesby
Netherfields	Thorntree
Newport Neighbourhood Centre	Whinney Banks
Park End	

16. The table at appendix 2 shows the centres, their opening times, examples of their activities, staffing and budget

THROUGH THE EXAMINATION OF THE YOUTH/COMMUNITY CENTRES IN MIDDLESBROUGH ASSESS THEIR EFFECTIVENESS AND CONSIDER IF THEY ARE PROVIDING VALUE FOR MONEY

17. The panel learnt that the Active Neighbourhoods Team (ANT) was brought together in October 2006 to manage the Council's work in community centres and offer support to the network of Community Councils. In the first 18 months their work concentrated on the following:

Improving the fabric of community centres – supported by financial contributions from management committees, approximately £180,000 had been spent to date and £70,000 would be spent in the remainder of 2008.

Supporting town-wide learning for volunteers – the team worked with individual management committees to support their activities. Including town wide events for volunteers which attracted 100 residents.

Extending local access to IT facilities – in February 2007 2 of the 8 centres had computers with internet access. In June 2008, seven of the centres had computer hubs which were available, free of charge, to local residents.

Promoting greater use of the centres – all of the community centres took part in promotional events. Including open days and publicity of the facilities in the media.

18. The panel learnt that the opportunities for community centres to be a 'beacon resource' for local communities were many. Whilst there were also few constraints they were nevertheless significant.
19. The panel learnt that the opportunities for Community Centres were as follows
 - all of the centres had a bedrock of support from local communities and volunteer led management committees
 - most of the centre buildings were now in a better physical condition than they had been in the past 20 years
 - the support for community centres was organised, co-ordinated and proactive.
 - Resources had been released to extend centre programmes
 - A body of workers existed that was sharing both resources and knowledge to extend usage at the centre
20. The constraints were listed as
 - centres relied on external funding to some extent, both earned income from lettings, etc and fundraising. As Council facilities the centres were unable to access some funding streams aimed at the voluntary and community sector.
 - Centres relied on volunteers in addition to paid staff to operate beyond a standard 37 hours per week. The desire to maximise usage/activities places pressure on both staff and volunteers and any staff absence (due to sickness, holidays etc) could increase the pressure.
21. The panel learnt that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken in order to make community centres fit for the 21st century and that this work was part of a longer process which would be undertaken through a series of short and long term goals.

Short Term Goals

22. The short-term goals focussed on improving support for volunteers and management committees, further promotion of centres and managing the new IT provision and extending the centres' programmes.
23. Volunteers were regarded as the backbone of many activities at community centres. Volunteers could serve a dual role both as members of management committees and taking part in centre-based activities. In order to enhance the skills of volunteers the ANT will be working with volunteers on specialist skills such as

minute-taking, bookkeeping and chairing meetings. The team will also work with volunteers to promote and celebrate volunteering.

24. A key strand of ANT's work in 2008/09 was the programme of publicity and promotion. The proposals which were underway to achieve this was the community centre blogs on the Evening Gazette website, information on the council web site, enlarging the community centre magazines and the holding of open days in the centres.
25. The new IT facilities would be monitored to assess their usage. Leading to the possibility of extending the software available. Tuition would need to be provided for new users and links with colleges to provide IT based learning would be developed.
26. The panel learnt that all of the centres had some spare capacity. With the busiest centres operating at 80% capacity. It was a challenge to workers and volunteers to increase usage. Revenue funding was considered an issue but centre usage could still be extended.

Longer Term Challenges

27. In the longer term the key challenges included keeping the momentum that had been made given the current financial position and improving external funding would be key. Centres would have to remain fully integrated with the broader community, regeneration and neighbourhood management initiatives, whilst the management of the centres has become a more specialised one it was recognised that it should not become an isolated one.
28. The panel was given a copy of the ANT Work Plan for 2008/09 that summarised the team's key activities.
29. The centres were generally open from 8.30am until 5pm and many were open until 10pm depending on activities. Many were also open on weekends. It was highlighted that the management committees were keen to ensure that their community's needs were met and were willing to accommodate users' requirements for evening or weekend openings where possible.
30. Members were interested in the cost of hiring centres. Rates were generally set according to the group's ability to pay. Separate rates were charged for community groups, adult education and commercial users. Income generated from lettings was usually used by the Centres for improvements or to purchase additional equipment.
31. The service was generally provided by a single worker and all the centres had a voluntary management committee. Some groups and volunteers using the centres were responsible for opening and closing the buildings whilst some centres had a caretaker.
32. The panel learnt that whilst community centres provided a space for community groups, activities, a base for external services and office space, they also contributed to community regeneration, and promoted a sense of community. There was a diverse range of activities that took place at the centres including parent and toddler, computers, churches, sporting events, Community Councils and ward surgeries. Some external services were provided including credit unions, Citizens Advice Bureaux, health promotion and employment training.

33. The panel had concerns about the longevity of management committees. Especially if new people did not volunteer, existing members resigned or members became too old to continue. The panel learnt that the Council had contingency plans in place, existing users of the centre would be asked if they wanted to get involved and the Council would help the centre to find new volunteers. The Council was also trying to invest in supporting volunteers and share good practice.
34. The panel had concerns about the income in centres and especially that the well attended centres would get richer and the less well-attended centres would get less money and therefore lose services and fewer people would go, leading them to lose more money. The panel was told that this was not the case, all the centres were different and had different facilities, therefore they could not be treated corporately although the Council worked with the management committees to help them plan.

Youth and Community Centres

35. The panel learnt that Community Centres were run by the Council's regeneration department and the Youth and Community Centres were run by the Council's children, families and learning department.
36. Youth Centres were open to young people on an evening, a minimum of 4 evenings per week but centres were open for drop-ins and user groups 5 to 7 times per week depending on capacity. There was a Centre Manager, Team Leader, Caretaker and sessional workers. The nights that the centres were open was determined by the need and the human resources available.
37. Each Youth and Community Centre had a young person involved with its management committee.
38. The panel were interested to know why some of the youth centres were not open on a Friday evening however the panel were informed that there was not much demand for the facilities on a Friday evening, although the outreach workers use Friday evening as an opportunity to go out and discuss with the young people what needs they have and what facilities they would use. The Operation Plan was based on feedback that workers get from young people.
39. Each centre had a centre manager and a caretaker who worked a 37-hour week. They had Team Leaders and administrative staff who worked approximately 20-30 hours per week depending on the capacity at the centre.
40. At the time of writing the report there were 12 Youth Work Apprentices who worked 37 hours per week. However that was due to cease from March 2009 due to lack of funding. Members were informed that there were issues around capacity. The process had become bigger than anticipated and that the service could not manage within the current human and financial resources.

Case Study

41. Cllr G Rogers was invited to the panel to give his views of what it was like to be involved in a Youth and Community Centre. The Kader Youth and Community Centre was built in 1975 and since then the management committee have been involved in raising money for the running and maintenance of the centre.

42. One of the main issues that had affected the centre was the increase in Adult Education fees. In the past there had been concessionary fees for the elderly however the increase in fees and the fact that the elderly now have to pay full price has affected the number of people attending the courses so in turn had affected the amount of income that the centre could raise.

Value for Money

43. The panel was interested in the marketing of Community Centres and whether or not details of the activities and facilities at the centres were reaching people. The panel was informed that details of Community Centres and the activities on offer were going to be publicised on the Council's website in the near future. There was also the 'News from the Centres' magazine that was distributed widely and which publicised the work of the centres.
44. Each Community Centre also had a 'blog' which was available through the Evening Gazette website and which highlighted activities and issues of interest from the centres.
45. The Youth and Community Centres also used the web to publicise their work. Especially through the M Grid website. It was also noted that the youth service was looking at developing a town-wide website for young people.

Visits

46. The panel visited a number of Community Centres which were chosen to show the various differences between the centres. The panel visited Marton Community Centre which was operated solely by a management committee. In order to build the centre capital of £100,000 had been provided by the Council and the remainder of the costs had been raised by the Management Committee.
47. Members visited the Charlbury Community Centre which housed a purpose built facility for Surestart and which was unique to Community Centres in Middlesbrough. It was noted that no funding had been received from Surestart during the current financial year and the playgroup had been entirely dependent on the Management Committee for funding.
48. The Newport Neighbourhood Centre was an older building which received some income from renting out office space within the centre. It was noted that approximately 500-600 people used the centre every week.
49. The International Centre had a number of offices which were hired out to community groups. The building had recently benefited from a refurbishment where £60,000 had been contributed by the Council and the Management Committee had raised £80,000 in order to contribute.
50. The Whinney Banks Youth and Community Centre and the Coulby Newham Youth Centre had worked with young people in order to raise funds for activities and equipment, including minibuses. The finances for each centre were raised monies raised via user groups.
51. Each centre had National Youth Agency Targets regarding the Contact, Participation, Recorded Outcomes and Accreditation to meet with the additional responsibility for targeted work. There was an expectation that 25% of weekly front

line services were devoted to the target provision. There were other targets for each of the centres which involve work with BME Groups, Health Youth Club, Teenage Pregnancy support, Youth People and Disabilities and those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs).

52. The targets were as follows

	2006-07		2007-08		2008 to Sept	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Contact	3475	3686	3701	3258	3507	1941
Participation	2073	2149	2078	2079	2104	1167
Recorded Outcomes	1268	1324	1347	1496	1261	706
Accreditation	699	826	623	821	631	428

53. The figures from 2008 to September were calculated from April 08, a projected final figure had been calculated to the end of March 09 to complete the targets.

54. Members were concerned about the drop between the target figures and the actual figures in 2008. Members were told that this was due to the fact that more youth work was taking place and that it had an effect on the number of contacts that had been possible. However the panel were assured that measures were in place to address that drop.

55. Further details of the visits are attached at Appendix 1.

TO EXAMINE WHAT IS BEING DONE TO SUPPORT THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE RUNNING AND MANAGEMENT OF THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTRES

56. The Youth and Community centres are run by Management Committees. The committees were made up of members of the local community, user groups, local councillors and young people. The Council funds the cost of repairs, staffing, cleaning, heating and lighting at the centres. However the committees are responsible for a number of administrative functions such as managing and maintaining the minibuses, covering administration costs, licences, volunteer costs, CRB checks on management committee members, employers and volunteers. Committee members also help raise funds. The committees had their own bank accounts that were audited by the Council.

Training for Management Committees and Volunteers

57. Members were interested to know if volunteers were provided with adequate training in order for them to fulfil their roles effectively. Members were informed that the services work in conjunction with Middlesbrough College to provide volunteers with training on a range of subjects to help them in their role. Subjects included minute taking, chairing skills, how to see external funding, managing books etc.

58. It was also noted that for Community Centres there were approximately 54 volunteers who in total give 220 hours per week which gave in total a £112,000 contribution to the centres.

TO EXAMINE GOOD PRACTICE IN OTHER AREAS AND CONSIDER IF THAT GOOD PRACTICE COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN MIDDLESBROUGH

59. The panel was interested in comparing the service with services provided in nearby authorities. The panel was told that locally the services provided in Middlesbrough were the best in the area using the resources that they had. Officers thought that the clear separation between Community Centres and Youth and Community Centres was a good model that worked well.
60. Members then asked if good practice was shared between centres in Middlesbrough. It was noted that the centres belonged to the Association of Community Workers and the Managers from the centres got together monthly to discuss good practice.
61. The Head of the Youth Service was a member of the Association of Principal Youth and Community Officers and received national updates on youth work. Managers from Youth and Community Centres also attended a regional youth work meeting and again managers from the centres in Middlesbrough attended monthly meetings in order to share good practice.
62. The panel had two concerns; firstly that the youth clubs weren't getting the time in the centres that was needed due to the clubs relying on some of the income from the user groups which would involve non youth activities. Secondly, that the user groups weren't getting the time that they should because of the youth provision. The panel thought that there was a balance to getting the provision right and that on the whole, based on the evidence that was provided, that centres were getting the balance right.

CONCLUSION

63. Based on evidence given throughout the investigation the Panel concluded:
- a) The panel were satisfied with the general opening times of the centres however Members did feel that weekend provision should be extended to ensure that there was somewhere for young people could go to on weekends.
 - b) The panel welcomed the publicity that the Centres received through their 'in house' magazine and the proposals that were being developed to ensure that the Centres had their own web page on the Council's website.
 - c) On the basis that the Council provided funding for the maintenance of buildings and some staff costs and the Centre's management committees funding all other costs, Members considered, given the evidence presented to them, that the Centres were currently providing value for money.
 - d) The panel welcomed the Whinney Banks Community Centre move to new premises however they had concerns that the location of the new building would

mean that the centre no longer had rooms to rent out and therefore raise funds from.

- e) The panel had concerns about the longevity of management committees and the position that this could put Centres in if they were no longer able to find volunteers.
- f) A drop in attendance at adult education classes had been reported to the panel. The panel therefore had concerns about the impact the increased adult education fees had on elderly people's attendance on courses.
- g) The panel was concerned that within the targets for participation and contact with young people in Youth Centres that there had been a drop off in 2008 for the contact rate. However the panel had been assured that action was being taken to rectify the situation.
- h) The panel wanted to highlight the good work of the volunteers who were often seen as the 'backbone' of centres. There were approximately 54 volunteers who give in total 220 hours per week of time to community centre activities and which equates to a sum of £112,000.
- i) Members were pleased to hear that the operation of the Centres in Middlesbrough was considered to be the best practice locally and that good practice was being shared amongst the Centres.

RECOMMENDATIONS

64. That the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive:

- a) That Centre opening times be adjusted to ensure weekend opening especially for use by young people where there is a demand.
- b) That the Council's proposals to publicise Community Centres through the Council's website should be completed as soon as possible.
- c) In view of the importance of Management Committees being able to seek external funding and their reliance on that funding, the Council should ensure that Management Committees are given the support they need in order to be able to seek external funding.
- d) That the Council ensures a smooth transition for the Whinney Banks Community Centre and ensures that the move does not take place until the new one is built and operational. That the Council also considers the long term funding implications for the centre to ensure its long term viability now that they no longer have the additional income from the rent of rooms.
- e) Given the importance of management committees who find funding for Centres the panel wanted to ensure that the council would give an assurance that they would intervene should a situation arise were no volunteers could be found for a management committee.

- f) That the Council reviews the cost of Adult Education fees for older people.
- g) That the department monitors the drop in the contact rate for young people in Youth & Community centres to ensure that the methods being put in place ensure that the targets are being reached.
- h) Given the importance of volunteers to Community Centres a campaign to increase volunteers numbers should be undertaken.
- i) That the good practice that is ongoing in Middlesbrough is continued to be shared between the centres.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

65. The Panel is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

- Abdul Khan, Community Manager, Active Neighbourhoods Team
- John Dilworth, Community Regeneration Manager
- Sandra Cartlidge, Head of Economic and Community Regeneration
- Lynne Coppinger, Operations Manager
- Cllr George Rogers
- Management Committee, Marton Community Centre
- Paul Swain, Charlbury Community Centre
- Newport Neighbourhood Centre
- Tasnim Niaz, Manager, International Centre

COUNCILLOR JOHN COLE CHAIR OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

November 2008

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Village Halls and Community Centres – Summary – The Charity Commission for England and Wales, December 2004

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

SITE VISITS TO COMMUNITY CENTRES 4 SEPTEMBER 2008

At the request of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel site visits had been arranged to the Marton Community Centre, Charlbury Community Centre, Newport Neighbourhood Centre and the International Centre.

PRESENT: Councillor Cole (Chair), Councillors C Hobson and Mawston
OFFICIALS: S Harker, A Khan, E Williamson

Marton Community Centre

Panel members were welcomed to the Marton Community Centre by members of the Management Committee and introductions were made. The present building had been built six years ago at a cost of £200,000 and consisted of ten modules joined together on site with a brick exterior. Capital of £100,000 had been provided by Middlesbrough Council with the remainder of the costs being raised by the Management Committee through the Lottery Fund and local fund raising. The Management Committee had twelve members and the Centre was registered as a charity. The Management Committee was solely responsible for running and funding the Centre, however if the Committee were to cease operations the ownership of the Centre would revert to Middlesbrough Council.

The Centre had an office, meeting room, hall, nursery, kitchen, toilets and reception area. The land surrounding the building was used for outdoor events including a recent annual gala and was also used as a play area by the junior youth club. The nursery had its own outdoor carpeted play area which was enclosed with fencing.

The members of the Management Committee agreed there was a need for additional storage areas within the building. Better soundproofing was also desirable as noise transferred from room to room during certain activities. The Management Committee had explored extending the present building but the cost of adding an additional module at £90,000, was prohibitive.

Panel members were provided with a list of user groups and activities which took place at the Centre. Although not used to capacity, the Centre was very busy and it was agreed that booking out the Centre fully could cause problems with events overlapping. As well as regular users the Centre was available for children's parties and fund raising activities throughout the year. The Centre charged a higher rate for groups who were running a business with a lower rate for community groups. The Centre did not need to advertise availability and bookings were generally made via word of mouth. The majority of users were local although there were some from the wider Middlesbrough area and also from out of the area.

The Junior Youth Club was very popular and was able to cater for 40 primary school age youngsters per session. The Club operated from 4.20 pm – 5.50 pm Monday to Friday during school term time and cost 50p per session. Activities available included crafts, table tennis, games console and outdoor games. Sessions were also arranged to include

visits and talks from the Police and Fire Brigade and the Club also put on plays which they organised themselves. Three paid workers ran the junior youth club together with several volunteers and all were qualified and CRB checked.

During the summer holidays the Centre had hosted a Playscheme for children living in the Marton or Marton West Wards and this had been very successful.

A Senior Youth Club for children aged 13 to 19 had been operated by Middlesbrough Youth Service but was currently suspended. It was hoped that the Senior Youth Club would recommence in the future.

The Nursery had been operating since 1979 and was also very successful. The Nursery was open from Monday to Friday from 9 am – 12 noon and had strong links with the local primary school.

Charlbury Community Centre

Panel Members were introduced to Paul Swain, Manager, who welcomed everyone and gave a tour of the Centre. There was a kitchen, two meeting rooms, IT room and three offices. Two offices were hired to SCAMPS, which was an after school and holiday care club. There was an enclosed garden outdoors and an area with fixed playground equipment. The Centre had been extended four years ago to include a purpose built nursery in partnership with Surestart.

The Management Committee at the Centre employed three workers and the Committee raised approximately £30,000 per year to run the Centre. The Management Committee also received funding from STEM (Stronger Together in East Middlesbrough).

In addition to SCAMPS, the Centre was hired for children's dancing classes every Monday and Thursday from 5.30 pm to 8.00 pm which were very well supported. Surestart held a weekly parent and toddler group and there were also some further education classes held at the Centre. The Centre was used as a collection point for the Pallister Credit Union every Thursday and this was very popular, with about 500 residents within Pallister and Town Farm signed up. A Junior Youth Club was held every Tuesday from 4.30 pm-6.00 pm for primary age children. The Club was run by the Centre Manager along with a volunteer and could cater for up to 20 children per session. Sessions included arts and crafts and games. Purchase of equipment for the Centre was usually funded via grants.

An open and family fun day held on 4 August 2008 had been well attended by the local community. The overall cost was £950 and funding had been obtained from various sources including the local Community Council and STEM. The idea of the day had been to make it available to as many people as possible without a cost to them.

Surestart had invested £450,000 at the Centre to provide a purpose-built facility for the playgroup. It was a 20 place setting and was inspected by OFSTED. The facility was unique to Community Centres in Middlesbrough. The staff received support in relation to training and development from Surestart and under new regulations nursery workers had to be trained to degree level. Surestart liaised closely with local schools. During the previous financial year Surestart had provided the Centre with £5000 of funding which had been used for refurbishment of the kitchen and replacement of windows. No funding had been received from Surestart during the current financial year and the playgroup was entirely dependent on the Management Committee for funding.

The IT room had been established with funding from the Council and had ten computers. There was a full time worker employed for 30 hours per week over 4 days covering 4 community centres. Funding for the post was due to finish in six months' time. The Centre Manager stated that charges for internet connection and maintenance were high and the cost of the worker was approximately £20,000 per year. The IT room operated on the basis of "drop in" sessions on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and the intention was to meet peoples' specific needs. The IT room was only open when it was supervised and help was provided across a range of activities including English and Mathematics skills, Microsoft Office, family tree, social surfing and digital photographs. A group of youngsters from a local school for special needs also used the facility on a weekly basis.

SCAMPS after school and holiday care club was open from 3.00 pm until 6.00 pm on school days and children from nine different schools attended. The cost was £6.50 per day which was reduced to £6 per day if the child attended every day. During the school holidays the Club was open all day at a cost of £15 per day if the child used the Club during term time or £20 per day if the Club was only used during school holidays. The Club was registered with OFSTED and could cater for up to 16 children although there were usually between 12 and 14 regular attendees.

Newport Neighbourhood Centre

Panel members were welcomed to the Centre and given a tour of the facilities. There were several administrative offices throughout the building, a hall, a meeting room, a meeting/training room, a computer suite, four kitchens and a dining room. There was also a day care suite for the elderly consisting of a lounge, kitchen, medical room and toilets as well as access to an enclosed garden area with seating. Another garden area had been developed and used recently to grow vegetables for the Middlesbrough Town Meal.

Some of the office space was rented by TRICS (Town Resident Independent Community Support) which was a voluntary group and the Community Development and Regeneration Team also rented self contained offices at the Centre.

The main kitchen was used by Millennium Meals to provide a "meals on wheels" service. Meals were also provided for the day care users and there was a dining club held on a Wednesday.

The Management Committee consisted entirely of volunteers and three staff were employed at the Centre: a manager, administrative assistant and a caretaker. A children's dance class was held at the Centre twice a week and this was due to increase to three times a week. There was also a youth club held on Saturdays.

Charges for local groups, ie the dance group, were usually per head, although private companies were charged a set rate for room hire.

The Centre was in use seven days a week and according to a recent survey 87% of users were local people. Approximately 500-600 people a week visited the Centre.

International Centre

Tasnim Niaz, Manager, welcomed Panel members to the Centre and gave a tour of the facilities. There was a reception area next to the main office where there were four

computers and three laptops. Anyone could use the computers free of charge. CCTV was fitted and could be viewed in the main office and there was a security system on the front door. There were nine offices which were hired by different community groups plus two meeting rooms/classrooms. There was a large hall with a stage and an adjoining dressing room. At the back of the hall there was a kitchen which was used for functions and by social services to provide meals for day care users.

There was a newly refurbished lounge area and a separate entrance on the north side of the building. The refurbishment of the lounge area had been carried out and paid for by the River City Church.

£142,000 had been spent recently on refurbishing the building, of which the Management Committee had contributed approximately £80,000 and the Council about £60,000. New furniture, carpeting and plants had been purchased.

The Chair thanked all present for attending the site visits.

SITE VISITS TO YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRES 6 OCTOBER 2008

At the request of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel site visits had been arranged to the Whinney Banks Youth and Community Centre and Coulby Newham Youth Centre.

PRESENT: Councillor Cole (Chair) and Councillor T Mawston

Information regarding activities in Whinney Banks Youth & Community Centre and Coulby Newham Youth Centre.

Both Centres have worked with the young people to fund raise for activities and equipment including new mini buses at both centres. The total amount at Whinney Banks over the last 12 months is approximately £22k and £17k at Coulby Newham. The funding streams have been Big Lotteries, Youth Opportunities Fund/ Youth Capital Funds, Community Chests and individual management committees.

The Management Committees comprise of community members, user groups, ward Councillors and young people.

The finances into each centre are raised via user groups and the Committees each have a treasurer. Middlesbrough Council Finance Department audits the accounts annually.

Both Centres are open for 5-6 sessions of Youth Work a week some at weekend's resources permitting.

Each Centre Manager has National Youth Agency targets of Contact, Participation, Recorded Outcomes and Accreditation to meet with an additional responsibility for targeted work. E.g. Children Looked After for Coulby Newham, and underachieving young males for Whinney Banks. There is an expectation that 25% weekly of front line services are devoted to the targeted provision. Other targets for other centres are Teenage Pregnancy work, BME groups, Healthy Youth Club standards, NEET's and Young people with Disabilities.

All centres have achieved the modified Healthy Schools standard (known as Healthy Youth Club standard) and been awarded accreditation. This ensures that Healthy options and cookery classes are about Healthy Living, food, exercise, emotional well-being etc. This was piloted in Middlesbrough.

All Centres have also achieved the National Children's Trust status of being approved centres for young people to attend youth clubs with disabilities, young people themselves made a self-assessment CD-ROM and were instrumental in assessing each centre. Again all have the quality standard mark and piloted in Middlesbrough following the success in Birmingham. The accreditation is called "Ask us we're included".

Ashok Kumar MP has invited Whinney Banks young people to Westminster next week, to present the DVD on knife crime they made and have been asked by the Mayor to produce a DVD highlighting Middlesbrough in a positive light to combat the recent Channel 4 programme.

There is a Positive Futures project operational from Whinney Banks and managed by the Youth Service. It is a National project, funded by Crime Concern and Football Foundation; the Middlesbrough project has been hailed as a success and a model of good practice. It works to promote positive self-image and confidence using sport or any activity attractive to young people. Drama has proved to be popular and dance. Young people there have been involved with national news about a documentary they produced about Alcohol, which was shown on the BBC national news. The project work with local employers trying to place young people who traditionally do not have many employment opportunities, this has been very successful. Young people are referred from the main secondary schools (Hallgarth, Kings Manor, Acklam Grange and St David's) the schools do not send staff and do not pay for the provision, due to the external funding, they refer young people at risk of truanting, disaffection etc.

Other schools work within North Ormesby Y&CC to work with young people from UCA who would be at risk of exclusion. UCA staff manages this process with support from Youth workers, the school pay for this provision, which goes directly to the Management Committee. All centres link to the local schools and develop links to support underachieving young people. Also all Centre Managers and other staff are trained as Common Assessment Framework, (CAF) panel members and lead practitioners to support the government agenda of Targeted Youth Support and Aiming High a Ten Year strategy for young people, this was supported by all centres and young people particularly around the Myplace bid where they developed another DVD in support of the bid and were involved in the consultation from the beginning.

The Youth Opportunity fund is mainly operational from Whinney Banks and young people across the town train to assess applications for money and monitor the projects evaluating them at the same time. Youth worker staff train to Open College Network standard in grant giving and monitoring and evaluation.

Coulby operates the Youth Council and currently we are trying to promote locality forums. The Chair of the Youth Council hails from Coulby Newham and attended the centre from about 13 having been given extra support by Youth work staff in terms of mentoring. He is also the Middlesbrough rep on the National Children's Board, now known as Youth Action. He represented Middlesbrough in Bali at a world conference to discuss Climate Change and was reported in their local press.

All centres have a U Project each summer, which engages with the year 11's to support them through the transition into College, work training etc. They report on individuals and support the young people taking them to Connexions One Stop Shop and interviews etc.

All centres are involved in Town wide events such as "I'm a Councillor Get me out of here." The Youth Debate, The Youth Festival to coincide with National Youth Work week to encourage and empower young people to have their say and the Youth Service manages the Youth Council, training etc.

Every Centre has at least one usually 2 staff who have achieved a qualification in teaching in the community as well as being qualified Youth Workers to support our BVPI's of accreditation. They deliver OCN, Duke of Edinburgh, in the main with also accreditation for Powerboating, canoeing etc delivered through the Tees Nautical Studies project managed by the Youth Service also.

All of the Community work is carried out is beneficial to both the older community and the youth work in terms of funding. Many centres provide specialist facilities

Recently we have started work with the Middlesbrough Council Play Manager and second a youth worker in 3 centres to work with young groups (9-12 years) to encourage younger people to feel confident in making the transition into the senior youth clubs. Although, we are only measured on our work with 13-19 year olds. It is a strategy to engage with more young people.

Other seconded staff work with DISC the Drugs and Alcohol provider and most youth work staff have been trained in early identification to support drug/alcohol users. All Centres have staff trained in C Card delivery, a confidential sexual health advisor service and condom distribution service.

The Youth work follows a youth work national curriculum consisting of awareness raising and development areas around:

Crime

Citizenship

Health

Education

Plus locally identified issues usually drug and alcohol misuse, homelessness, unemployment etc.

The Youth Service also supports Voluntary sector organisations such as Linxs, Safe in tees valley, and a Deaf Youth Project and until their closure the Azaad project. The Youth Service has been organising Youth Exchanges in Germany and Japan over several years however a group have recently returned from Ghana where they fundraised and built a playground for children in an orphanage attached to a leprosy colony. Also a group of young men have recently returned from Kenya where they climbed Mount Kenya and worked in the townships concreting school floors to stop children being infected through the soles of their feet by a bug, which eats their flesh. They will receive the Gold Duke of Edinburgh in January 2009 at Buckingham Palace.

There are many other activities that are carried out and may go un recorded, like the incident you witnessed when a parent contacted the centre for help when her daughter left home and left a letter. The staff located the girl and was thanked by her mother and the police who were alerted. I know each centre have their own stories of this nature, which constitute every day normal activities for the staff.

Youth and Community Centres

	Staffing	Opening times	Activities	Other Facilities	Any further Information
Beechwood	No Centre Manager, part time and sessional staff	Monday-Friday 7am-9pm	Middlesbrough Council Cluster Meetings, community council meetings, fun days, ICT groups, exercise classes, youth club, discos, Endeavour Training, Safe In Tees Valley, children's parties	Office space	Budget £18,099 and £30,000 for part time and sessional staff
Coulby Newham		Monday-Friday 9am-10pm	Weight watchers, dance group, karate, football, PCT, Youth Club, ward surgeries, Sure Start		Budget £99,110 plus £12,730 for sessional staff
Grove Hill	Centre Manager	Monday – Friday 9.15am – 9pm	Play groups, youth clubs, boxing, girls group, boys group, bingo	Summer playschemes, community council meetings	Budget £64,260 plus £12,730 for sessional staff
Joe Waltons	Centre Manager, Site Worker, Admin, Team Leader, 7 youth workers	Monday-Thursday 9-9pm Friday 9-12pm Saturday 9-3pm	Hairdressing, snooker, bowls, friendship group, healthy eating, dancing, youth club, adult fitness Slimming World, coffee bar, photography club, luncheon club	Work experience placement for schools, Erimus meetings, PERTEMPS meetings, training events, meeting facilities	Budget £144,140 plus £16,974 for sessional workers
Kader	Centre Manager, caretaker, (full time) clerical, team leader, cleaner, 2 youth workers (part time)	Monday-Thursday 9.30-9pm Friday 9-12pm	Computing, French, mother and toddler, gymnastics, art, junior club, youth club, table tennis, ladies group, Acklam Friends, blood donors, karate, further education classes		Budget £63,660 plus £8,487 for sessional staff
Newport	Centre Manager	Monday-Saturday various depending on activities	Youth Club, skating, badminton, model railway, guitar class, East/West, One Step Ahead, meetings		Budget £109,840 plus £12,730 for sessional staff

	Staffing	Opening Times	Activities/Users	Other Facilities	Any further Information
North Ormesby	Centre Manager Various part time staff	Monday – Friday 8am-9pm depending on activities Saturday 930-2pm Sunday depending on events	Bowling, Dancing, Boxing, ward surgeries, Neighbourhood Policing, Youth Club, Ladies Group, Deaf Project, Youth Drop in, sewing		
Thorntree	Centre Manager	Monday-Thursday 8am-9pm Friday 8-430pm Saturday Depending on activities	Local Groups, youth clubs, band, bowls, outreach, jazz band, healthy living,	Sure Start, STEM offices based in the centre	£78,639 plus £16,974 for sessional staff
Whinney Banks		Monday – Thursday 8am- 9.15pm Friday 8am-7pm	Local Groups, library, youth club, welfare rights, yoga, inclusion group, dance band, badminton, bingo, job club, tennis, football	Drop in sessions, Erimus meetings, PCT meetings, ward surgeries	Budget £68, 379 plus £12,730 for sessional staff

Community Centres

	Staffing	Opening Times	Activities/Users	Other Facilities	Any further Information
Brambles Farm	Site Manager	Monday-Thursday 9-4.30pm Friday 9-4pm Evenings 4.15pm-9pm (Some) Sunday 10.15-12.30pm Other times by arrangement	Line Dancing Councillors Surgeries Parent & Toddler, Youth Group, Church, Knitting, Baby Clinic, CAB, Bingo, Computers	IT Suite open 5 days, Annual Trips Organised, play scheme, Community Council meetings	
Charlbury Road	Site Manager	Monday – Friday 9-6pm Evenings (Some) 6-8.30pm Other times by arrangement	Computing, bingo, dance classes, Junior Club, SCAMPS, Craft, Credit Union, Adult Education, Sure Start, Community Council	IT Suite, playgroup, Community Council, play area	
Grove Hill Resource Centre	Community Worker, one full time admin worker	Monday – Thursday 9-5pm Friday 9-4.30pm	Sure Start, Credit Union, CAB, Learn Direct, Middlesbrough Works, Neighbourhood Management, Police	IT Suite	
International Centre	Site Manager and Caretaker	Monday-Thursday 9-4.30pm Friday 9-4pm Evenings 6-9pm Sunday 9-4pm	Adult Education, Credit Union, Chandni Ladies Group, Martial Arts, Iraqi Assoc, Teesside Pipe Band, Keep Fit, Save the Children, Refugee Forum, Church Groups, Social Services	IT Suite Workshop and recreation	
Langdon Square	Full Time Caretaker, 2 part time caretakers	Monday-Thursday 9-4.30pm Friday 9-4pm Evenings 5-10pm Saturday 930-1230pm Sunday 9-1pm Other times by arrangement	Adult Education, Take Heart Support Group, Yoga, Dance, knitting, National Trust, St John Ambulance, Breatheasy, Langdon Ladies, Social Services, Karate, Craft classes, blood donors	Major renovations taking place New management committee elected July 2008	
Linthorpe	None, Managed by volunteers	Monday – Friday 10am-12 noon Other times according to usage	IT Group, Art Group, Pilates, Dancing, Bingo, Quilters Group, Al-Anon, Blood Donors, Community Council, Keep Fit, Youth, Church, ward surgeries, sewing, scrabble and craft	The centre is managed by residents and is available for regular bookings and one-off events	

	Staffing	Opening Times	Activities/Users	Other Facilities	Any further Information
Marton	None, managed by volunteers	Monday – Friday 9-8pm Sat/Sun – 10.30-12pm Other times by arrangement	Table tennis, karate, Weight Watchers, carpet bowls, youth club, health visitor clinics, Women’s Institute, chess, Kuman Study group, sewing, nursery, belly dancing	Registered nursery, chess club, well used by young people	
Netherfields	Site Manager	Monday-Friday 9-6pm Wednesday 9-3.30pm	Keep Fit, parent & toddler, credit union, youth club, computer training, community council, badminton, hairdresser, bingo, carpet bowls, bingo	Three computers, ‘Art in the Community Event	
Newport Neighbourhood Centre	Community Worker, caretaker and admin staff	Monday – Thursday 8.30-4.30pm Friday 8.30-4pm Evenings 5.30-9.30pm Other times by arrangement	Social Services Day Care, Community Development Team, Millennium Meals, church, karate, bowls, sewing, dancing, adult education, keep fit, kickboxing, ward surgery	Local community organisation has offices there, mini bus is a well used resource, community allotment project, growing food for the ‘town meal’	
Park End	Community Worker	Monday – Thursday 9-430pm Friday 9-4pm Evenings 7-9pm Other times by arrangement	Bowls, kick boxing, STEM youth sessions, credit union, advice sessions, Middlesbrough Mums, Sewing, Sure Start, Junior Youth Club, Bingo, Arts & Crafts, Dementia Group	Negotiations with PCT to acquire disused clinic, base for Summer Playschemes	

Staffing Costs for 8 Community Centres

Post Title	Cost	
3 Community Managers	£45,900	The average cost per centre is £34,137 which equates to less than £94 per day per centre
Site Managers	£93,840	
Caretaker	£36,510	
Community Worker	£96,850	
Total	£273,100	