

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**R-EVOLUTION Multi – Use Centre**

**BRIEFING REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMISSION 1 – 14TH JULY 2008**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide a brief background to the R-Evolution project, and to summarise progress to date.
- 1.2 To summarise outstanding challenges.
- 1.3 To make recommendations for a viable future model with anticipated costs, and proposals for how this is funded.

**2. BACKGROUND & PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 2.1 On Christmas Eve 2003, Telford & Wrekin PCT was invited to bid for uncommitted, Strategic Health Authority Capital money – bids had to be made that day, and demanded a commitment to spend the money that financial year!
- 2.2 Within hours the PCT put in a bid for £600K to develop a Young People's Centre. The proposal recognised that socially excluded young people, who probably need more support than their peers, are less likely to access traditional health and other Support/leisure services.
- 2.3 The vision was to create a multi agency venue, with a strong 'young person centred ethos'.
- 2.4 The bid was successful, and even after an initially abortive attempt to base the centre in Malinslee, the SHA agreed to allow T&W PCT to carry forward the money into the next financial year because they recognised the need for a unique and innovative 'joined up' approach to supporting vulnerable young people.
- 2.5 Around the same time, the Borough of Telford & Wrekin had accommodation problems for the Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit (the PRU), which was in temporary premises and needed to secure a permanent base.

- 2.6 This situation resulted in a range of meetings taking place between officers of Children's Services and the PCT to develop a joined up young person facility reflecting the ethos - identified in 2.3 above
- 2.7 The two statutory partners were joined by a third and very significant partner – 'nacro Shropshire', and initially received support from the other children's agencies at that time – Connexions, Youth Development Service, Youth Offending Service, Schools, Police etc. Other interested parties have attended various stakeholder events and all had expressed interest in becoming involved.
- 2.8 A cabinet report was approved in July 2005 which set out a vision of how the development of the project would operate. This was to follow a '3 phase process'
- ✓ Phase 1 – establishing the PRU and organising timetabled targeted sessions with eg; CAMHS, Connexions, teenage pregnancy work, drug & substance misuse work, targeted youth work, work with some of our LAC children etc.
  - ✓ Phase 2 – As phase 1 – but operating 9a.m. – 10 p.m. with a drop in facility included, but on a more targeted basis.
  - ✓ Phase 3 – As above – but including weekends and trying to develop sports, clubs and community and environmental project work.
- 2.9 It was recognised from the outset that the centre was developed as an amalgamation of different budgets, into a pooled budget arrangement, in order to get the centre 'up and running'. It was further recognised that through the non statutory status of Nacro, they would be in a much stronger position to generate external funding sources, which would enable future staffing resources to be secured.
- 2.10 It was further recognised that phases 2 and 3 would only go ahead once external/alternative funding sources were found.

### 3. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

#### 3.1 **Successes**

- ✓ The refurbishment and building contract (undertaken by Nacro) was completed in May 2006, on time and within budget!
- ✓ The PRU moved in for the final summer half-term (June-July 2006)
- ✓ BTW and the PCT agreed and signed a Section 28A pooled budget agreement (capital costs) and a Section 3 pooled budget (revenue costs) which incidentally is the only formally agreed pooled budget agreements for the children's service in T & W
- ✓ Nacro are 'managing the building' on behalf of BTW and PCT, providing a part-time Manager as well as investing £20k in kind themselves into the project.

Overall, Phase 1 has been very successful, with some initial PRU/building operational issues now generally overcome, (NB – this will always be a changeable situation due to the nature of the cohort of children present). The PRU recently appointed an excellent Head of PRU, who has now successfully ensured an equally successful Ofsted inspection.

Secondly, Nacro were successful in attracting European social fund monies, targeting vulnerable teenagers. Targeted drug and substance misuse work is also being delivered via Nacro

Some twilight and evening use is now being developed, with drug and substance misuse teenagers, as well as some targeted support around LAC children.

#### 4. **CHALLENGES**

- 4.1 Nacro have now withdrawn from the direct management of the building to allow for the appointment of a centre manager (to be temporarily based with Connexions 4 Youth) to allow greater capacity to be given to the development of provision within the centre. A twelve month seconded post is currently out to advert and we hope to have someone in post in time for the new term in September.
- 4.2 Due to the nature of the Centre being initially developed under an 'alignment of existing budgets', (due to lack of finances that were available), the centre is now wishing to be in a position to try to proactively develop phase 2, which if successful, would be best placed to support phase 3.
- 4.3 The targeted drop in sessions were (and are), envisaged initially to be supported by operational staff from these specific service areas, eg; LAC nights are currently staffed by existing LAC residential workers for example.
- 4.4 We (as a management board) feel that we have reached a stage of development of the project that we feel ready to embrace the next development phase, but need to have the profile of the facility raised. We have made a conscious effort not to promote it too much, whilst we have been 'bedding in' some of the initial operational issues referred to earlier.
- 4.4 We recognise that the drop in sessions programme is the area of development that now needs most support. One of the 'gaps' that we have is the active willingness of agencies to now see R-Evolution as a key vehicle in supporting the delivery of services to vulnerable teenagers. The schools are well supportive (via the excellent work of the PRU head), but perhaps support from agencies such as police, community services etc, now need a more corporate drive.

- 4.5 It was recognised at the outset that phases 2 and 3 would continue once funding (generally external sources) was identified. However, the ability to provide staff to support multi-gym sessions for example is currently limiting the range of activities that could be offered at the centre for part of the targeted drop-in. It is recognised however, that Leisure Services (in BTW) have focussed income targets and these would come under more pressure if staff had to be removed from a leisure centre to deliver a session at R-Evolution.
- 4.6 The management board have secured some short term funding to appoint a centre manager. The purpose of this post is to have some one in post who can act as a buildings manager and a worker to develop provision with young people; both directly and by involving existing and new partners.
- 4.7 Transport is a significant problem, (as it is across Telford in terms of movement across the Borough in the evenings for teenagers). The location of R-Evolution is both a help and a hindrance, in that it isn't sited in a area where 'there is an 'ownership by that area', thereby creating potential conflicts with other teenagers from other areas of the Borough. However, when it comes to access after 5.00 p.m., then Stafford Park becomes a problem.

#### 5.0 **CONCLUSION/SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD**

- 5.1. Having enthusiastically and successfully worked up phase 1 of the project, a more proactive approach to move forward on Phase 2 is required.
- 5.2 The Management Board is actively working up a potential operational model to best support the implementation of phase 2 (and eventually 3). This would be a 'core team' to support the general operation of the building, as well as set out a timetable arrangement of targeted drop in times in the evenings.
- 5.3 That identified costs are brought back through an agreed process. To be agreed through the R-Evolution Management Board.
- 5.4 Having operated from the building for a period of time it is clear that having a PRU based in the same building does impact on the development of the centre because of the room requirements and require movement around the building by groups of young people. The management board are to work with the CYP Leadership Team to consider different solutions.