

Assessing the needs and provision for children and young people on the Chesham Fold Estate – May 2005

**Report Submitted By:
Martin Halton
Community Researcher
Social Research & Development (SRD)
Seedley & Langworthy Trust
(0161) 737 9918
martin.halton@sali.org.uk**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SRD would like to thank everyone who has contributed their valuable time to the delivery of this project. In particular:-

Norma Garry	Children's Fund
Steve Griffiths	Family Service Unit
Frank Fenton	Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association (Chair)
Louis Hough	Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association (Vice-Chair)
Dorothy Hoyle	Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association
Sylvia Hough	Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association
Alma Roscoe	Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association
Angela Lord	Hoyles Early Years Centre
Humera Mannan	Local resident/fieldworker
Liz Saunders	East Bury Initiative – Assistant Co-ordinator

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Purpose of Research	4
1.2 The Process	4
1.3 Number of participants involved in the project	6
2. METHODOLOGY	
2.1 One-to one interviews – with local residents on the estate	6
2.2 Focus group – with parents at the Hoyles Early Years Centre & Chesham Fold Community Centre	7
2.3 One-to-one interviews – with staff from Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association	7
3. FINDINGS	
3.1 Word on the estate – community perspective on need & provision for children and young people in Chesham Fold	9
3.2 Discussing the issues – exploring the parental perspective	15
3.3 Assessing the state of play of provision & delivery – the TRA perspective	16
4. DISCUSSION	18
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	21
APPENDICES	22
Appendix 1 –	Fieldworker advertisement
Appendix 2 –	Targeted leaflet to local residents
Appendix 3 –	Group discussion poster – advertisement
Appendix 4 –	Letter to local groups/agencies explaining nature of project
Appendix 5 –	Letter to parents/guardians of children from local Primary schools explaining nature of project
Appendix 6 –	Sample copy of questions used with local residents on the estate

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is the account of the community-consultation project conducted between February – April 2005 on the Chesham Fold estate in East Bury. The main aim of the project was to:-

- assess the needs and provision for children and young people on the Chesham Fold estate

The key objectives from the consultation were to establish from residents what provision on the estate for children and young people would:-

- improve the social life on the estate for young people
- would reduce young peoples' anti-social behaviour

The Seedley and Langworthy Trust (SALT) were commissioned to manage and deliver this project through their research consultancy service, Social Research & Development (SRD) on behalf of the Children's Fund and Family Service Unit. SRD would also work in collaboration with the staff at the Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association with a view to recruiting, training and supporting a team of local people to undertake the consultation aspect of the project using participatory approaches. If local recruitment wasn't successful, it was agreed that staff from SRD would conduct the consultation/fieldwork stage of the project themselves.

1.1 Purpose of Research

In order to meet the project's key aims and objectives, as outlined above, the consultation with key stakeholders in the area would need to:-

- Investigate networks in provision and services and their effectiveness, (e.g. formal/informal & structured/semi-structured)
- Assess local people's awareness of current provision for children & young people on the Chesham Fold estate/surrounding areas
- Explore possible barriers and gaps in provision and suggest possible solutions

1.2 The Process

The initial planning stages of the project involved trying to encourage local people from the estate to participate in the consultation as community researchers. Leaflets were

distributed through Chesham Fold's Tenants & Residents Association to every household on the estate, explaining the nature of the project and the training to be given. (See Appendix 1)

The plan initially, was to use focus/discussion groups as the main method of consultation. A targeted leaflet drop, inviting residents from the estate to the Chesham Fold community centre to discuss the issues surrounding current service provision and delivery for children and young people on the estate was done, again with the help of the staff at the centre's Tenants & Residents Association – TRA. (See Appendix 2) It was hoped that this method would allow for some useful qualitative information to be gathered and participatory techniques to be used. Further promotional literature advertising the discussion groups was distributed to local agencies and services to try and encourage participation by local residents with an interest in issues surrounding children and young people. (See Appendix 3)

The head-teachers from the 2 local primary schools, St.Paul's and St.Joseph's & St.Bede's were contacted via letters, explaining the nature of the project and finally local groups/agencies received project details regarding key objectives, timescales and points of contact for any queries regarding the project and its delivery. (See Appendix 4)

During the early stages of project it became apparent that the initial plans regarding the recruitment of local people as fieldworkers and the focus/discussion groups as the preferred method of consultation were becoming increasingly challenging. Despite repeated attempts to encourage local residents to engage with the project, the realisation was that local residents would have to be consulted using more traditional outreach methods, (e.g. door-knocking) and be consulted using a structured format of questions. In addition, SRD would deliver this consultation but would attempt wherever possible to encourage local participation and involvement during this phase of the project.

A more detailed explanation of the consultation process and approaches adopted will be outlined in the next section of the report. SRD would seek to gather information during the fieldwork phase of the project through 3 main approaches:-

- Door-knocking on the estate (using interview format)
- Focus/discussion group (with parents at the Hoyles Early Years Centre & Chesham Fold Community Centre)
- One-to-one interviews (with staff at Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association -TRA)

1.3 Number of participants involved in the project

- 114 people directly participated in the project through the 3 main consultation methods outlined below during February & March 2005

Breakdown of where the participants were consulted

1. Door knocking on the estate (using interview format)

99

2. Focus/discussion group (with parents from Hoyles Early Years Centre & Chesham Fold Community Centre)

11

3. One-to-one interviews (with staff from the Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association – TRA)

4

Total

114

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 One-to-one interviews – with local residents on the estate

The questions that would form the interviews with local residents were based on 4 themes:-

- Current usage of services/activities
- Quality of current provision
- Suggestions for changes/improvements in provisions
- Explanation of benefits/levels of impact these proposed changes would/could have on provision for children and young people

In an attempt to encourage greater participation, letters and copies of the questionnaire format were sent out to every parent/guardian of children from the local primary schools, St.Paul's and St.Joseph's & St.Bede's. (See Appendix 5 & 6)

2.2 Focus group – with parents at the Hoyles Early Years Centre & Chesham Fold Community Centre

After meeting with the centre manager at Hoyles Early Years Centre it was agreed that a focus group session could be facilitated with parents from the estate in order to get a parental perspective on the issues surrounding the needs and provision for children and young people on the estate. There was also to be discussions with parents from the estate at the community centre in Chesham Fold.

Key themes and issues to be explored:-

- Mapping provision and activities for children & young people (C&YP) on the estate – identifying existing provision/activities and suggestions/ideas for new provision/activities for C&YP
- Identifying major issues and solutions relating to needs and provision of C&YP on the estate
- Cost – Impact analysis of suggestions for improved provision

2.3 One-to-one interviews – with staff from Chesham Fold Tenants & Residents Association (TRA)

The interviews with the TRA staff would follow a similar format to those posed to local residents through the door-knocking part of the consultation. They would however, try and explore further issues surrounding current provision and delivery from an agency perspective. The TRA was identified as a key organisation to be approached during the consultation phase because of their current role in provision and delivery of activities for children and young people from the estate.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Word on the estate – community perspective on need and provision for children and young people in Chesham Fold

The findings shown below are those from interviews with residents living on the estate. This aspect of the fieldwork was assisted through the help of a local resident, who expressed an interest during the project to conduct some of the consultation with residents on the estate. There were 99 people in total who were interviewed in this part of the consultation.

1. Do you have a child? (based on a 114 responses)

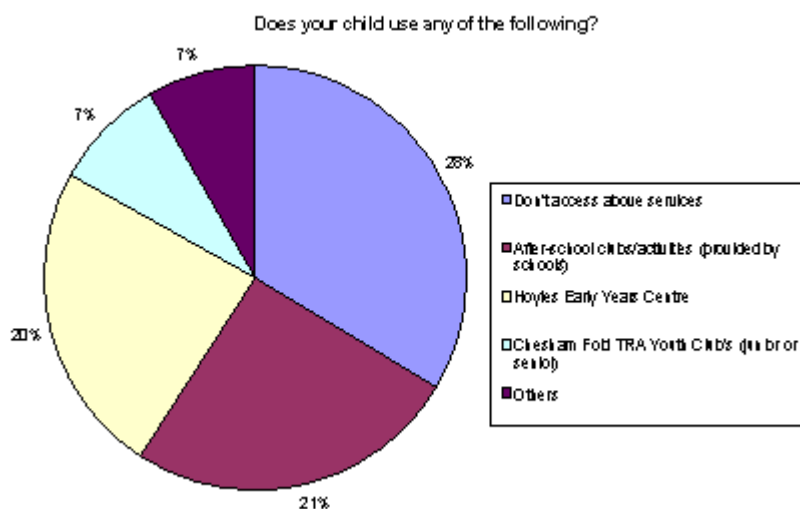
- Yes 70%
- No 30%

0-4 years	5-12 years	13-19 years
27%	30%	13%

(Current usage of services/activities)

2. Does your child use any of the following? (based on 81 responses)

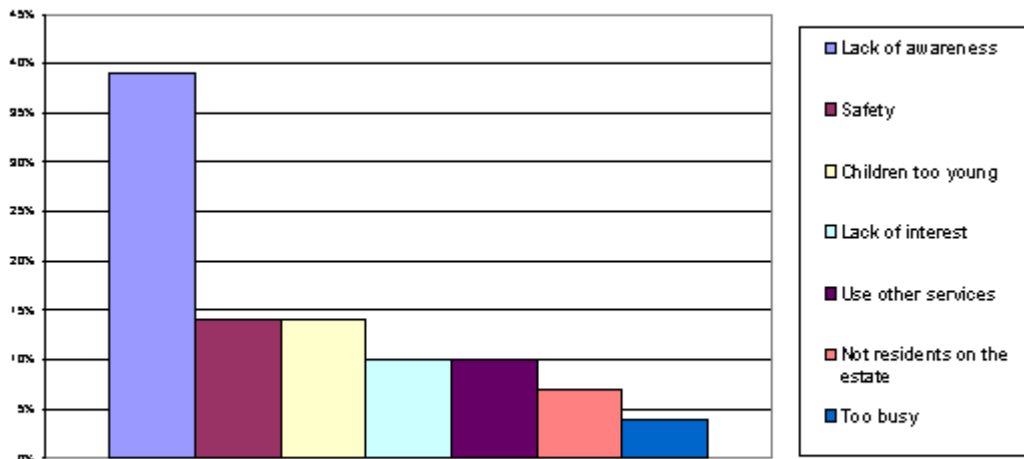
Don't access above services	28%
After-school clubs/activities (provided by schools)	21%
Hoyles Early Years Centre	20%
Chesham Fold TRA Youth Club's (junior or senior)	7%
Others	7%



Reasons for not accessing services (based on 28 responses)

Lack of awareness	39%
Safety	14%
Children too young	14%
Lack of interest	10%
Use other services	10%
Not residents on the estate	7%
Too busy	4%

Reasons for not accessing services



(Quality of services/activities on offer)

3. How do you feel about the standard of these services/activities?

- based on 37 responses
(ranked on a scale of 1-5 / 1 poor – 5 excellent)

1	2	3	4	5
0%	8%	8%	27%	57%

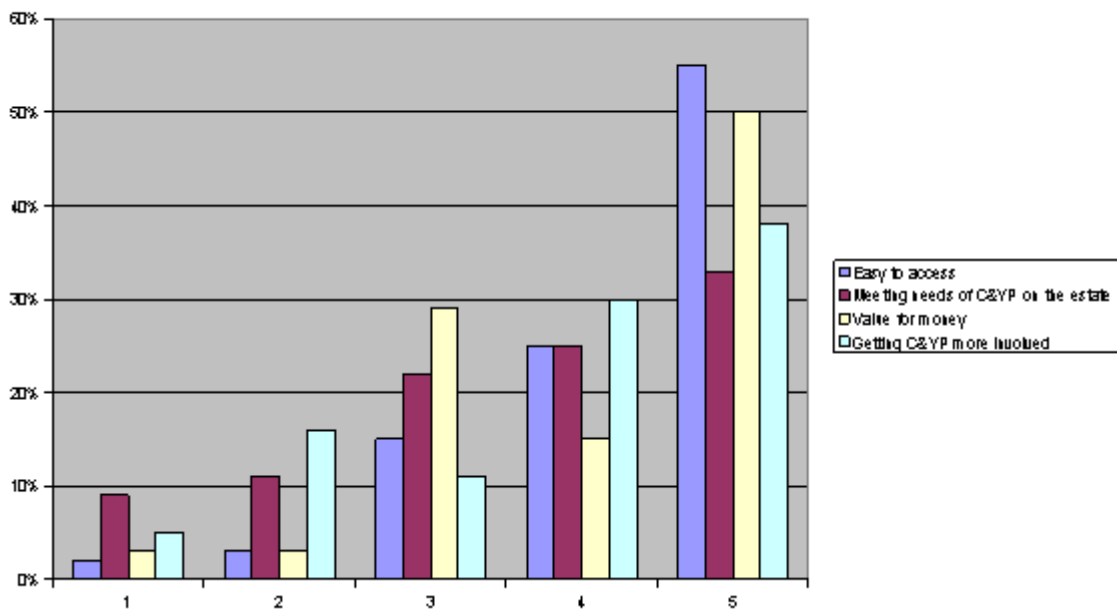
4. How would you rank these services/activities in terms of being:-

- based on an average of 37 responses
(ranked on a scale of 1-5 / 1 poor – 5 excellent)

* C&YP – children and young people

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Easy to access	2%	3%	15%	25%	55%
Meeting needs of C&YP on the estate	9%	11%	22%	25%	33%
Value for money	3%	3%	29%	15%	50%
Getting C&YP more involved	5%	16%	11%	30%	38%

How would you rank these services in terms of being

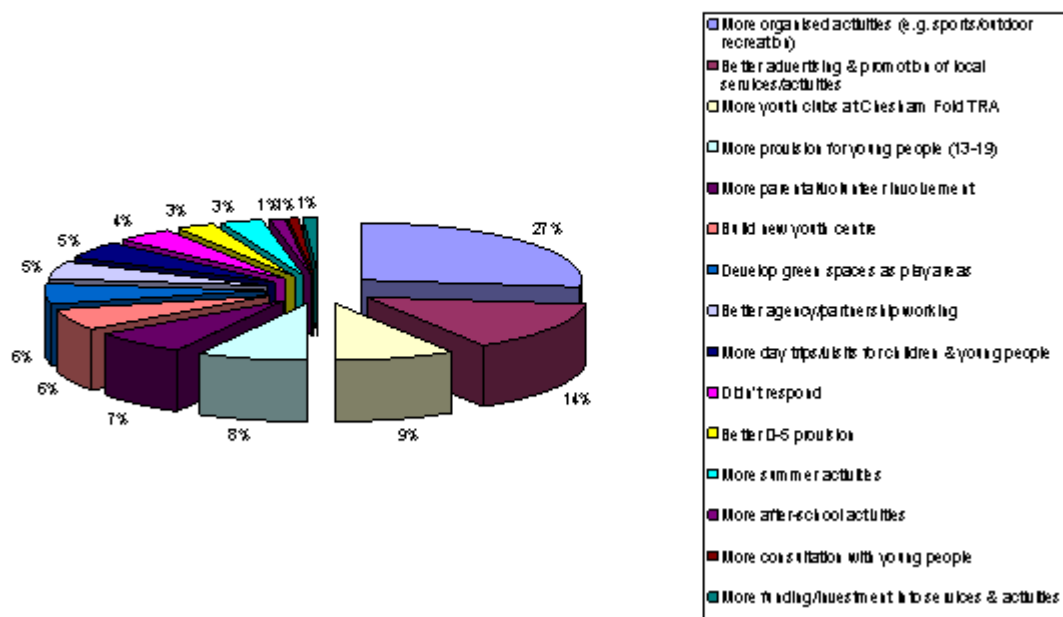


5. What suggestions/ideas do you have for improving the services/activities on offer for C&YP on the Chesham Fold estate?

(based on 116 responses-multiple answers)

More organised activities (e.g. sports/outdoor recreation)	27%
Better advertising & promotion of local services/activities	14%
More youth clubs at Chesham Fold TRA	9%
More provision for young people (13-19)	8%
More parental/volunteer involvement	7%
Build new youth centre	6%
Develop green spaces as play areas	6%
Better agency/partnership working	5%
More day trips/visits for children & young people	5%
Didn't respond	4%
Better 0-5 provision	3%
More summer activities	3%
More after-school activities	1%
More consultation with young people	1%
More funding/investment into services & activities	1%

What suggestions/ideas do you have for improving the services/activities on offer for C&YP on the Chesham Fold Estate?

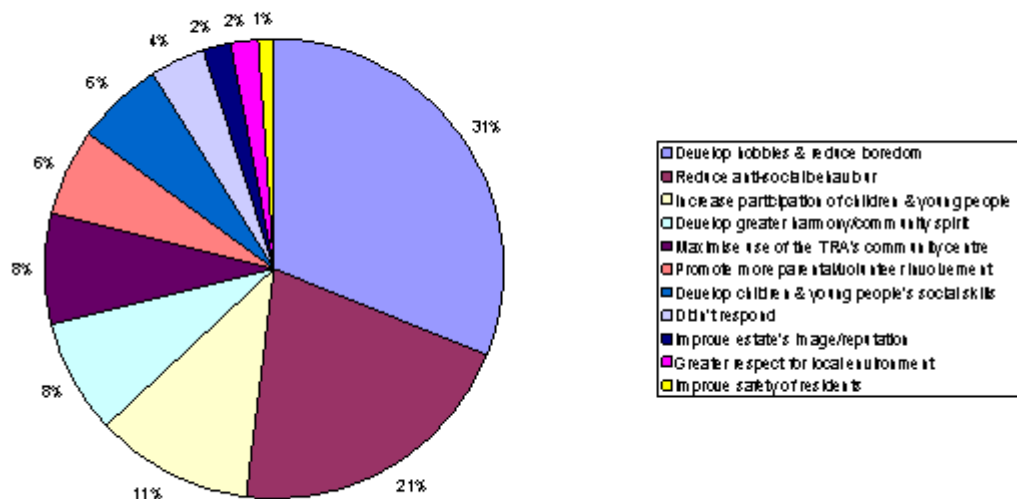


6. What good/positive things would these suggestions/ideas have for the estate?

(based on 132 responses – multiple answers)

Develop hobbies & reduce boredom	31%
Reduce anti-social behaviour	21%
Increase participation of children & young people	11%
Develop greater harmony/community spirit	8%
Maximise use of the TRA's community centre	8%
Promote more parental/volunteer involvement	6%
Develop children & young people's social skills	6%
Didn't respond	4%
Improve estate's image/reputation	2%
Greater respect for local environment	2%
Improve safety of residents	1%

What good/positive things would these suggestions/ideas have for the estate



Demographic information

(GENDER)	
Female	67%
Male	33%
(AGE)	
11-16	3%
17-25	19%
26-59	55%
60+	23%
(ETHNICITY)	
White British	92%
White Irish	3%
Mixed – White & Black African	3%
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1%

3.2 Discussing the issues – exploring the parental perspective

Through facilitating the discussion-led sessions run with parents at the Hoyles Early Years Centre and at the TRA's community centre it provided the opportunity to explore issues relating to the project from a parental viewpoint.

The session with parents at the early years centre proved interesting as they highlighted through the initial "mapping" exercise, the limited amount of provision currently on offer. Also, most parents weren't fully aware of the provision on offer at the TRA's community centre regarding the junior and senior activity clubs.

Identifying major issues and solutions relating to the needs and provision of children & young people on the estate – some parental feedback

ISSUES

Anti-social behaviour
Safety

Lack of facilities for young people
Lack of youth workers – nobody for them to engage with
Boredom – lack of worthwhile activities to interest them

East-side of the estate – access to facilities a concern (e.g. safety – reluctance of parents to allow children to visit park/community centre at night/without supervision)

SOLUTIONS

More emphasis on preventative strategies with younger children
More provision & activities for children 5-11

Better transport to recreational/sports centres etc...
More consultation with children & young people to establish needs and wants

Central meeting place – Chesham Fold's community centre
More advertisement and promotion of their youth clubs

More sporting opportunities – meeting point – pavilion area
Develop "green space" on East-side of the estate – miniature play area/sports area

Cost – Impact analysis of suggestions for improved provision

The participants discussed some of the possible ideas around improving provision and were asked to think about them in terms of the possible cost implications they may incur and the level of impact such suggestions could have for children and young people and the wider community.

Suggestion/idea	Cost	Impact
Develop “green space” on East-side of the estate	1) TRA could explore funding issues 2) Commit council to invest in site/area 3) Develop funding applications/business plan	1) High level of impact 2) Could reduce anti-social behaviour 3) Provides a safer environment for children on the east-side of the estate to play 4) Give parents on that side piece of mind – safer area for kids to go 5) Children would be more accessible – allow for other outreach services to engage with them, e.g. drug & alcohol awareness/sex education
More sporting opportunities:- (Pavilion area) 1) facilities – centre/hut 2)activities – teams/clubs	1) Could be low – site already exists 2) Training opportunity for local people to work with C & YP 3) Look for sponsorship/funding for equipment/kits etc...	1) High level of impact 2) Keep C & YP off the streets 3) Sporting teams could help promote teamwork/discipline 4) Focal point to address wider issues 5) Tackle health issues – promote healthier lifestyle

3.3 Assessing the state of play of provision and delivery – the TRA perspective

As one of the main providers and delivery agents for children and young peoples’ services and activities on the estate, the TRA staff provided a useful contact point in the consultation process. The interviews with them revealed a passion and commitment to tackling the issues relating to the lack of provision and engagement that has traditionally affected children and young people and the service providers on the estate. Their commitment to the delivery of the youth clubs is shown by their involvement, purely in a voluntary capacity at both sessions, especially the juniors (5-12 yrs.) The attendance at

both sessions is also encouraging, with the numbers over a 6 week period shown in the following table:-

Juniors	5-11 years	Seniors	12-19 years
8/3/05	25	3/3/05	16
15/3/05	24	10/3/05	closed
29/3/05	23	17/3/05	23
5/4/05	34	24/3/05	17
12/4/05	34	7/4/05	23
19/4/05	closed	14/4/05	20
		21/4/05	26

(* Figures provided by TRA staff)

Within the discussions there was however, an acknowledgement and honesty that there are limitations on the TRA and their capacity to maintain or possibly increase the service available without more parental or volunteer involvement. This issue becomes particularly relevant if, as suggested, the youth activities are “rolled-out” on additional evenings throughout the week.

The staff also conceded that they are constrained by finance and funding to a certain extent, which means the limitations that the centre has in terms of space can often limit the service they could provide. There is however, a general awareness and agreement amongst the staff that this shouldn’t detract from the more practical approaches they are ideally positioned to deliver like consulting and engaging more with children and young people and encouraging greater representation of young people as part of their TRA membership.

4. DISCUSSION

The community consultation project undertaken on the Chesham Fold estate revealed some interesting findings that need to be put into context against the relatively modest number of participants who were consulted. There are however, some important findings that warrant consideration and discussion.

On the theme of current usage of services/activities, nearly a third (28%) of responses didn't currently access local child/young people's provision. The main reasons being a lack of awareness (39%), safety (14%) & children being too young (14%). The issue of safety is reinforced through the feedback from the discussion groups with parents, who expressed a concern and reluctance to allow their children to access provision from the East-side of the estate. Lack of awareness was also reflected through the discussion groups as being an issue with parents not knowing about the TRA's youth and senior activity sessions.

The issue of quality of services/activities currently on offer showed a general satisfaction with service delivery but was confined to only a small number (37 responses) who answered this question. It would appear that there is a general lack of provision of services/activities for children and young people on the estate. Young people (13-19) in particular appear to have limited input and choice into what they need and want. More targeted consultation with young people on this issue would provide interesting feedback, especially regarding their assessment of whether provision is truly meeting their needs. Is it based on their needs or wants? There's a marked difference between the two.

Suggestions on improving provision and service delivery revealed a diverse range of ideas, with more organised/supervised activities (e.g. sports/outdoor recreation) the most popular response (27%). More effective advertising and promotion of services was also highlighted (14%), and echoes previous findings regarding a general lack of awareness on the issue of limited take-up of local services and activities. The TRA could intervene through using different methods of publicity to promote their youth clubs but there should be a collective responsibility through partner agencies to assist and support this process.

On the theme of possible benefits through improved provision for children and young people and the wider community on the estate, developing hobbies and reducing boredom (31%) & reducing anti-social behaviour (21%) were cited as the most important benefits. It could be argued that these benefits would stimulate many of the "spin-offs" of the other benefits identified, (e.g. greater harmony/community spirit, improve the estate's image/reputation). There would need to be however, more structured systems and networks (both formal & informal) in place, for this to flourish effectively.

Future considerations & implications for the TRA – exploring challenges and potential opportunities

Current & future challenges

The youth clubs at Chesham Fold TRA are currently well attended but rely heavily on informal systems of advertisement such as word of mouth promotion. Although take-up is good at the moment – major issues concerning the staff’s capacity to maintain delivering and supporting these activities has to be questioned. This could become even more of an issue if the sessions are “rolled-out” on more evenings. More parental and volunteer involvement would assist increased delivery and provide much needed support to the staff, but is this realistic considering the general apathy on the estate relating to community involvement and participation?

There appear to be major issues surrounding the TRA’s capacity to deliver its community engagement and participation strand of activity. They currently operate on a largely informal basis with their volunteers and wider community. Their ability to be sustainable will continue to be challenged unless more formal structures/systems for volunteer involvement and engagement are implemented in the short-term – with a view to long term organisational development. Developing an effective volunteer policy/programme that is inclusive and empowering for local residents should be a priority as a means of increasing the capacity of the TRA in future provision and delivery. Support to effectively establish such a programme could be explored through Bury CVS and the Volunteer Bureau.

Establishing a more clearly defined role for the TRA in future provision and delivery of community engagement and participation activities on the estate – especially those for children and young people also needs to be identified and addressed as soon as possible. Is their role one of facilitators, managers or delivers of services/activities? It currently appears to serve all 3 but is this being practical and ultimately effective? The findings suggested that local residents want more organised activities such as sports and recreation activities on the estate. How well positioned and resourced are the TRA to be effectively involved in such new provision and delivery?

Potential opportunities

The answer seems to be only through committed guidance and support from partner agencies, with the necessary resources and additional skills to effectively “champion” such new projects. Increased provision and delivery of these new activities could encourage greater participation and involvement by children and young people from the estate, whilst also offering volunteering opportunities for local residents in areas of sports development such as coaching, leadership and event planning/management.

Such volunteering opportunities supported and developed through both accredited and non-accredited training courses such as the Community Sports Leaders Award and Sports National Governing Body Awards could provide possible benefits that are two-fold. One it could provide possible employment opportunities for local residents who undertake the training and secondly, widen the capacity and role of the TRA in future community

activities. Could this be achieved through a partnership approach with the council's Sports Development Unit and link in with their community outreach activity? In addition, further funding opportunities to resource such a project could be explored through Sport England, The Big Lottery Fund and other key funding agencies.

The TRA needs to consolidate the encouraging work done currently with regards to its youth clubs by being more robust in encouraging the parents to get more actively involved. This current activity could possibly be used to "kick-start" the volunteer programme, offering personal development opportunities for the volunteers and to act as a catalyst to strengthen the capacity and skills of the TRA and its membership. This initial involvement by volunteers could "trigger" future commitment and involvement to the TRA – developing new areas/themes of community interest that the volunteers could support and in time, with support, lead on (e.g. formation of an events groups or children and young people forum/council).

The community participation strand of activity that the TRA is keen to develop offers real hope for more effective engagement with local people but only if it's "built-in" to their future ethos and practice. Their current perception of consultation and engagement being an "additional" or "bolt-on" part of what they do needs to change, and be replaced by an approach that sees it as fundamental and part of a good practice approach to their work with the local community. They need to encourage and facilitate consultation and involvement that is "needs-led", using existing and future activities such as the youth clubs to "flag-up" parents/volunteers and children and young peoples' issues/concerns and look at possible solutions that are driven by those groups.

The TRA needs to explore ways in which planning, delivering and evaluating their services become more inclusive and collaborative, encouraging future volunteers to take more of an active role. Children and young people, for example, could be encouraged to take more ownership through developing their own resources such as a newsletter, website or forum/council with support from the TRA and agencies such as youth services. This is the only realistic way of encouraging greater engagement and representation by children and young people on the estate.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

TRA needs to develop its community participation and engagement activity through:-

Developing an effective volunteer policy/programme that's inclusive and empowering. Support to develop this could be explored through Bury CVS and the Volunteer Bureau. The existing youth clubs could be used initially to recruit local parents, providing possible training and future employment opportunities, also widening the capacity and skills of the TRA and its membership.

Further volunteer, training and employment opportunities could also exist if more sporting or recreational activities were delivered, (e.g. sports development – coaching, leadership, event management etc....). Could this be achieved through a partnership approach with the council's Sports Development Unit where specific funding agencies are approached such as Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund?

Encouraging and facilitating consultation and involvement with its members and wider community that is "needs-led" and forms part of the organisation's philosophy and practice. This can be done through current and future activities such as the youth clubs in order to engage more effectively with parents and children and explore issues of real need and priority on the estate.

Establishing greater engagement and representation of children and young people through more participatory consultation and involvement approaches such as a newsletter, website and youth forum/council.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Fieldworker advertisement
Appendix 2	Targeted leaflet to local residents
Appendix 3	Group discussion poster – advertisement
Appendix 4	Letter to local groups explaining nature of project
Appendix 5	Letter to parents/guardians of children from Primary schools explaining nature of project
Appendix 6	Sample copy of questions used with local residents on the estate