



# SCRUTINY

## **REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES TASK AND FINISH PANEL**

**May 2011**

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## **1. Chairman's Foreward**

This Children's Services Task & Finish review emanated from an item on the Cabinet Committee agenda on 8 March 2010, regarding the newly established Essex Children's Trust arrangements and a request from Essex County Council for Epping Forest Council to sign a Memorandum of Agreement in respect of Children's Services and Safeguarding. Cabinet requested that: "the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to establish a Task and Finish Panel to investigate the Council's approach to Children's Services and its provision throughout the District."

I was charged with the task of Chairing the Children's Task and Finish Panel, due to my involvement as a Board Member on the newly established West Essex Children's Trust Board and my keen interest in seeing improvements in the services provided by Essex County Council. I was joined by the following Councillors on the panel, who played an active role in investigating local and Essex – wide provision;

Cllr. Rose Brookes – Vice Chair  
Cllr. Pat Brooks  
Cllr. Tessa Cochrane  
Cllr. Ricky Gadsby  
Cllr. Janet Hedges  
Cllr. John Knapman

We held our inaugural meeting in September 2010 and to set the scene, were provided with a detailed presentation on the existing children's services structures within Essex and an overview of the services provided directly by the Council's Community Services department. This was given by the Assistant Director Community Services & Customer Relations who was the Council's Lead Officer on the panel. Following the presentation, we agreed the draft Terms of Reference and scope of the review and committed to update and amend these as required throughout the review process.

Over the 7 months of the review, we sought to investigate the effectiveness of children's and young people's services and safeguarding arrangements, provided through Essex County Council; our own services and local partners. To accomplish this we utilised a range of methods including receiving presentations from council officers, site visits to various activity sessions, attendance at Epping Forest Children's Partnership meetings, one to one interviews with staff and a Question and Answer session with representatives from Essex County Council. This report therefore sets out our findings in relation to these exercises and contains a series of suggested recommendations for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider.

I would like to give my personal thanks to the panel members for their commitment in undertaking the review and to the following officers from Essex County Council for their valued contributions;

Wendi Ogle-Welbourn – Director of Children's Commissioning  
Lonica Vanclay – Locality Commissioner  
Cllr. Ray Gooding – Deputy Portfolio Holder Children and Families

Cllr Lesley Wagland  
Chair of Children's Services Task & Finish Review Panel

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Terms of reference for the Review:**

The original terms of reference for the panel were as below (a).

However, due to changes in arrangements for Children's Trusts and in response to issues arising throughout the course of the review, the terms of reference were updated as required and the final version is as shown at (b) below:

#### **Terms of Reference (a)**

1. To review the Essex Children's Trust Memorandum of Agreement in respect of children's services across Essex.
2. To review the purpose, operation and effectiveness of West Essex Children's Trust Board and the Essex Children's Trust structure.
3. To review current provision of children's and young people's services in the District including identifying the level of activity directly provided by the Council and the key responsibilities devolved to the Council under the Children's Trust arrangements.
4. To review the provision of Essex County Council Youth Services in the Epping Forest District, seeking to identify future needs and how these can best be met by the various Agencies involved in the delivery of Young People's Services.
5. To review current arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Epping Forest's Children, seeking to identify communication pathways and effectiveness of information sharing, including:
  - the Council's own policies and procedures;
  - West Essex Stay Safe Group;
  - ECC Stay Safe Group, and,
  - Essex Safeguarding Children Board

#### **Terms of Reference (b)**

1. To review the purpose, operation and effectiveness of Children's Services in Essex and the new Essex structure.
2. To review current provision of children's and young people's services in the District including identifying the level of activity directly provided by the Council and the key responsibilities devolved to the Council under the Children's Trust arrangements.
3. To review the provision of Essex County Council Youth Services in the Epping Forest District, seeking to identify future needs and how these can best be met by the various Agencies involved in the delivery of Young People's Services.
4. To review current arrangements for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Epping Forest's Children, seeking to identify communication pathways and effectiveness of information sharing, including:

- the Council's own policies and procedures;
- West Essex Stay Safe Group;
- ECC Stay Safe Group, and,
- Essex Safeguarding Children Board

## 2.2 Who was consulted as part of this exercise and how was evidence gathered?

Person or organisation	Method of evidence gathering
Julie Chandler – Review Lead Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation at initial meeting and ongoing provision of information in respect of children's services and safeguarding within EFDC and West Essex</li> </ul>
Community Services Section Heads: Felicity Hall Gill Wallis James Warwick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual meetings with Section Heads</li> <li>• Visits to a range of activity sessions</li> <li>• Detailed presentations made to the panel</li> </ul>
West Essex Children's Trust Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair of Panel and Lead Officer questions at West Essex Children's Trust Board meetings</li> <li>• EF Officer involvement in priority planning for service commissioning</li> </ul>
Epping Forest Children's Partnership (Representative Head teachers from local schools & Extended Schools; Epping Forest College, ECC Integrated Youth Services, Essex Police, Voluntary Sector agencies & VAEF, ECC, Children's Centre's)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at EFDCP meetings and planning &amp; development event</li> </ul>
Essex County Council: Cllr. Ray Gooding – Deputy Portfolio Holder SCF Wendi Ogle-Welbourn – Director of Children's Services Lonica Vanclay – West Children's services Locality Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essex County Council representatives were invited to attend a panel meeting and were asked a set of questions that had been pre-circulated</li> </ul>

## 3. Context

### 3. Background

#### 3.1 Government requirements for Local Authorities

##### **Children's Trusts**

The Children Act 2004 required children's services authorities to put children's trust arrangements in place by April 2008. Linked to this, the 2005 statutory guidance on interagency cooperation specified that all children's trusts must have a **child-centred, outcome-led vision** and should comply with a range of other essential features, including:

- **Integrated frontline delivery** - Delivery to be organised around the child, young person or family rather than professional boundaries or existing agencies. This included establishing the role of the 'lead professional' in each agency.
- **Integrated process** - Effective joint working to be sustained by a shared language and shared processes. This included using the common assessment framework (CAF) referral process and establishing systems for sharing information across agencies.
- **Integrated strategy** - This to involve planning, commissioning, reprioritising use of resources and pooling budgets and resources, including, production of the statutory children and young people's plan, involvement in signing off local area agreements (LAAs) and establishing and implementing joint commissioning arrangements.
- **Inter-agency governance** – Establishment of robust arrangements for inter-agency cooperation, involving, effective leadership by the local authority, full engagement of key partners, clear accountability and relationships built on a shared vision for improving outcomes for children and young people.

In March 2010, further new statutory guidance was issued on Children's Trusts, bringing together and replacing previous guidance on children's trust arrangements and the Children and Young People's Plan. The guidance reflected the following changes:

- Children's Trust Boards were placed on a statutory footing from 1 April 2010. Responsibility for developing, publishing and reviewing the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) passed from the local authority to the Children's Trust Board. The first new style CYPP was to be published by 1 April 2011
- The CYPP became a joint strategy in which the Children's Trust partners set out how they would cooperate to improve the well-being of children and young people in their area.
- The Children's Trust Board was responsible for monitoring the extent to which partners acted in accordance with the plan and for publishing an annual report which sets this out.

##### **New requirements under the Coalition Government**

However, in July 2010, the new Secretary of State for Education emailed all first tier local authorities informing them of his intention to revoke Children's Trust arrangements, including removing the requirement for a statutory Children's Trust Board and a Children and Young People's Plan. Within Essex, this change in direction saw the renaming of the Children's Trust Boards to Local Commissioning and Delivery Boards, although retaining the same representative members on the Board.

### **3.1 Children's Services - District Responsibilities**

District and Borough Councils do not have a statutory responsibility for the provision of children's services but they have historically played a key role in developing and providing mainstream activities for children and young people through leisure and community services. In addition, council housing teams play a pivotal role in ensuring that the needs of children and young people are met through providing a range of housing adaptations for those with special needs and disabilities. These local activities continue to be seen as a key element in the spectrum of children's services provision, often recognised for their significant contribution to health and well being.

In addition to this scope of activity provision the council has a Duty of Care in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its children and young people and this is formalised under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. This act requires the Council to have a Child Protection Policy, clear procedures for dealing with Child Protection issues, trained staff and safe and effective staff recruitment and employment arrangements.

The role of the District Council within children's services developed significantly with the establishment of Children's Trusts, with the council being delegated responsibility for chairing a new Epping Forest Children's Partnership. This forum evolved from a district Children's and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and has provided the Epping Forest strategic link to the Children's Trust structure, with a formal reporting mechanism to the West Children's Trust Board, via the Chair. In addition, the District Council has been represented on the Trust Board by an elected member throughout its operation.

It was this close involvement with the Children's Trust and concerns in regard to effectiveness of trust arrangements for children's and young people's services and safeguarding, which led the Council to seek clarity of information through a Task and Finish Review.



## 4. Summary of Recommendations

### **The Panel recommends:**

1. That the Council formally recommends to Essex County Council that Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Council's are in a position to and prepared to undertake commissioning of activities and programmes for children, young people and families, in order to improve health and well being.

**Reason:** *West Essex Statutory and Voluntary partners are confident that better, more cost effective services can be delivered to meet the needs of local residents.*

2. That the Council formally approaches Essex County Council with an offer to undertake management of local Youth Services in Epping Forest, following the redundancy of Youth Service Managers in July. And, that the Council formally tenders for delivery of the service from March 2012.

**Reason:** *To ensure appropriate deployment of Youth Workers during the period July 2011 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 and the long term provision of services for our most vulnerable young people.*

3. That Essex County Council is asked to provide regular statistics and data to the district council on numbers of children and young people 'Looked After' (in care) and other vulnerable children including those with disabilities living within Epping Forest District, and details of children from the district who have been placed 'in care' outside of the district.

**Reason:** *To ensure that the Council has a clear and current awareness of the status of Epping Forest's vulnerable children and young people.*

4. i) That Essex County Council is formally asked to develop a 'guidance note' for elected members, to assist them in dealing effectively and appropriately with potential safeguarding and social care issues in relation to families within their constituency. ii) That the County Council Social Care Service is asked to acknowledge a) its accountability to District Elected Members in regard to effective Corporate Parenting and b) that Councillors can be used as a resource to articulate on behalf of constituents.

**Reason:** *Councillors experiences of working with Essex County Council in regard to vulnerable families and child protection issues have been varied and on several occasions very negative. The guidance would provide Councillors with an outline of the role that they can play to support constituents; the processes in place to ensure that the right professional support is acquired and details of the expected communication exchange between Essex County Council and individual Councillors.*

5. That Essex County Council is requested to commit to meet with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the District Council in respect of Children's Services on an annual basis, with attendance of the Director of Children's Commissioning.

**Reason:** *To strengthen the ongoing working relationship between the Council and Essex County Council and highlight any areas of best practice or concern.*

6. That all District Councillors are reminded of the requirement to attend Child Protection training provided in-house by the Council and are aware of the procedures and contacts for making a referral to Social Care.



**Reason:** *It is possible that Councillors will come across Child Protection/Safeguarding issues amongst constituent families and will therefore need to be aware of the various processes and referral pathways.*

7. That the Council seeks to provide a core range of prioritised activities and programmes for children and young people with a proven record of success in the development of self esteem, confidence and a positive attitude, with personal health and safety awareness, such as the Trampolining programme, Crucial Crew and Reality Roadshow.

**Reason:** *The success of initiatives provided has been evidenced by schools through detailed evaluation exercises which have shown the following changes in children who have participated; improved confidence; improved enjoyment of learning; new feelings of being an important person at school and home and better all - round attainment*

8. That the Council agrees to commit Community Services Officer time to seek and secure external funding in conjunction with district and cross border partners, to support activities and programmes that will meet the gaps in provision for children and young people that will arise following the withdrawal of Essex County Council funding

**Reason:** *A very significant number of positive activities and programmes for children, young people and families will cease to be provided over the next 6 – 18 months, due to the cessation of key funding streams and financial constraints of local authorities. External funding will become even scarcer and it will be essential to work in partnership to develop bids with a chance of success.*

9. That the Council prioritises officer time to support local voluntary sector organisations in the writing of funding applications that will deliver targeted services for children and young people.

**Reason:** *Successful bid writing can be very time consuming and also requires a great deal of practice and experience which the Council can offer through Community Services staff who have been extremely successful in the past.*

10. That the Council's Community Services builds on the excellent work undertaken by Epping Forest Youth Council, such as the Tube Map Project where youth councillors identified, assessed and rated effectiveness of local youth provision.

**Reason:** *The Task & Finish Panel were very impressed with the work undertaken by the Youth Council and are mindful that Youth Councillors are in the best position to evaluate quality of local provision for young people.*

## **5. Report**

### **5.1 Background to the Task and Finish Review**

The Council's Cabinet Committee received a presentation from Essex County Council in April 2010, which outlined the Essex Children's Trust Structure and Memorandum of Understanding in respect of Children's Services that Districts were required to sign up to. At this meeting, Cabinet took the decision not to sign the Memorandum on the basis that an adequate explanation could not be given to explain to the committee what 'aligning of resources' would actually require of the Council. In addition, members of Cabinet and interested members of the Council attending the meeting, had been very concerned by a recent Ofsted report for Essex County Council which had 'red-flagged' some areas of Children's Services provided.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee was therefore asked to establish a Task and Finish Panel to consider the Council's role and approach to delivery of children's services under the new trust arrangements and to make recommendations as to whether the Council should sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding with Essex Children's Trust. The Task and Finish Panel were also asked to gather information regarding local provision for children and young people including the Council's own Community Services; work undertaken by the voluntary sector and local youth services provided through Essex County Council.

### **5.2 The Review Process**

The initial meeting of the Panel was held on September 21<sup>st</sup> 2010. At this meeting Members were advised that Essex County Council had announced a revision of Children's Trusts, in line with the new coalition government guidelines to revoke Children's Trust arrangements. The new name for the West Children's Trust Board was to be West Children's Commissioning and Delivery Board and the Terms of Reference for the panel were therefore revised in light of these changes.

The Panel were additionally advised that the only change within the new, proposed Essex structure for children's services was the deletion of the district Children's Partnerships across the County. This change to existing arrangements had already been met with serious concerns amongst local stakeholders represented on Epping Forest Children's Partnership, including head teachers from local schools, voluntary sector representatives and managers of Essex Youth Services. The Task and Finish Panel therefore additionally sought to consider the importance of the Council retaining management of the Epping Forest Children's Partnership and nominated a representative to attend meetings of the Partnership.

To set the scene for the review, the Panel were provided with a detailed presentation on the existing children's services structures within Essex and an overview of the services provided directly by the Council's Community Services department and the voluntary sector. This led to the Panel being given responsibility for investigating the effectiveness of this local provision, with each being nominated an area of provision to focus on, including; activities for children with disabilities, initiatives to address obesity and local interventions to help improve emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people.

### **Consultation and Investigation**

Panel members visited a range of locally delivered activities, interviewed providers in person and by phone and provided oral and written reports to the Panel. Further detailed presentations were made at subsequent meetings by Section Heads from the Council's Community Services teams, with the opportunity for questions and answers.

To complete the review, the Panel invited representatives from Essex County Council, including the Deputy Portfolio Holder for Children and Families, Director of Children's Commissioning and Locality Commissioner, to answer specific questions and concerns of the panel and wider elected members.

### **5.3 Key findings of the review**

#### **5.3.1 Services provided by Essex County Council**

The Task and Finish Panel noted that a second Ofsted of Essex County Council children's services had been undertaken in August 2010 and 'some improvements' had been seen. The Council had however again been graded as 'Unsatisfactory' within some service areas including Child Protection remaining as 'red flagged'.

##### **Service Commissioning:**

The Panel were advised that in November 2010, the County Council had instigated a series of commissioning meetings for West Essex for funding from April 2011 onwards, which local stakeholders were invited to attend and these were to determine priorities for local services in respect of emotional health and well being, young people, family support and parenting. At these meetings attendees were advised that Essex intended to continue to commission existing partners via a 'closed' preferred partner route, but that there would be a limited amount of funding (approximately £130,000) for local commissioning across Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford.

District partnership representatives had opposed this approach on the basis that the proposed commissioning of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Tier 2, (which was to consume 95% of the resources available), had not previously demonstrated improved 'services on the ground' to children and young people. Far greater success and better value for money had been seen through locally delivered and developed interventions provided by the District Council's and voluntary sector partners.

This raised the question as to why Essex was intending to procure services in the same way as previous years, with the risk of not improving over 2011/13. This approach was also in complete contrast to the Governments' plans for 'Big Society' and 'Place Based Budgeting' and added to other concerns of the panel around 'transparency'.

West partners therefore agreed to write to the Chair of West Essex Children's Commissioning and Delivery Board to raise their formal concerns. A copy of the letter is attached at Appendix 1. In addition the Leader of Epping Forest Council and the Chair of the Task and Finish Panel wrote to Essex County Council with their concerns, as attached at Appendix 2.

##### **Integrated Youth Services:**

The Panel were provided with details of the young people's services provided through County's Integrated Youth Team, which consisted of evening drop in youth clubs in 4 x locations in the district (Limes Farm, Waltham Abbey, Ongar and Loughton) and provision of a Youth Bus, which visited rural areas of the district on a weekly basis. The service also provided Connexions careers advice and support to young people, and operated two Youth Centre buildings, in Ongar and Loughton.

However, towards the end of the review period, the Panel were informed that County had taken a decision to reduce its Integrated Youth Services budget by 50% from £14m to £7m in 2011/12 and that this would result in loss of the Connexions service and a significant reduction in provision of youth services in Epping Forest. The Integrated Youth Services Manager for Epping Forest would also be made redundant in July 2011 as part of the cuts, but no other line management had been put in place.

**Child Protection/ Safeguarding:**

Essex Safeguarding Children Board which includes representatives from statutory and non-statutory partners from Essex had appointed a new Chairman in light of the poor Ofsted of 2009. Arrangements for Child Protection had been revised and new procedures put in place to address issues of poor practice. However, local intelligence on effectiveness of these new procedures and systems (including first hand experiences of members of the Panel), continued to highlight a range of concerns in regard to coordination of services, effectiveness of support given and lack of efficiency on behalf of Social Care.

These incidents had resulted in a range of negative consequences for local families and children, including unnecessary break-up of a family with one young person being taken into care and moved over 100 miles out of the District; higher costs incurred by Essex and partners due to lack of initial efficiency and a general loss of confidence in the referral system developed by Essex.

These concerns had been raised repeatedly by the Chairman of the Task & Finish Review Panel at meetings of West Essex Children's Commissioning and Delivery Board and by the Council at West Stay Safe group meetings.

**Consultation with Essex Representatives:**

The Panel had the opportunity to raise these concerns and a range of other queries directly to Essex County Council at a Panel meeting in March, where Cllr. Ray Gooding (Deputy Portfolio Holder – Children and Families), Wendi Ogle-Welbourn (Director of Commissioning for Children's Services) and Lonica Vanclay (Locality Commissioning Manager), were invited to a question and answer session. Councillors A Boyce and R Barrett were additionally invited to attend this particular meeting following their attendance at an in-house Child Protection training session and emergence of concerns of EFDC staff that deal with Social Care.

A range of questions were sent to Essex County Council in advance of the meeting and some of these were answered through a presentation provided by Wendi Ogle-Welbourn at the beginning of the meeting (as attached at Appendix 3). In addition, the presentation provided the Panel with details of the required budget savings from Essex Children's Services over the period 2011/2014 which amount to £46m and how this figure would be reached.

The Panel were then able to seek answers to outstanding queries not covered. A list of questions and respective answers from Essex County Council can be found at Appendix 4.

### 5.3.2 Epping Forest Council Services for children and young people

The Council's Community Services Team provided the Panel with detailed presentations of the services currently provided for children and young people in the district and an overview of the council's management of Child Protection and Safeguarding. Full details of these briefings can be found within the minute extract of the Task & Finish Panel from November at Appendix 5, but the following information lists the key highlights:

#### Safety Awareness Programmes for local children & young people:

- Crucial Crew events for children in Year 6 held once a year at a main venue over the period of 2 weeks, where various organisations (West Essex PCT, Essex Police, Essex Fire & Rescue Services, Road Safety Officers etc.) provide the children with interactive safety scenarios ranging from Road Safety to Internet and drugs/alcohol awareness;
- Reality Road Show (for Year 9's). Road shows in secondary schools, similar to Crucial Crew, but where partners provide more advanced scenarios and messages about drugs, alcohol, sexual health and road accidents etc. and;
- 'Bang out of Order' event, centred around Halloween and Fireworks, with advice to primary school children about behaviour and consequences of misuse of fireworks and provision of young people's activities and events

It was noted that these events are externally funded, but rely heavily on a range of EFDC officers' time to plan, organise and manage, along with daily operational support from the various partners involved.

The outline cost of providing of these events is as follows:

Crucial Crew £12,000.00 – Main cost venue hire, plus officer/partner time

Reality Roadshow £4,000 – Officer time for planning and organisation at each school

Bang Out of Order £2,000

#### General activities and programmes:

The following list provides a 'snapshot' of the range and type of activities and interventions provided and funded by the District Council throughout the year for children from toddler age to teenagers. Where possible, the actual cost of activities has been provided:

Activity Detail	Approx Expenditure – (per day/session)	Approx Income – (approx per day)
<p><b>Playschemes</b> for 5 to 11 year olds provided during school holiday periods (approx 8 x weeks per annum) which include arts/crafts, sports, games and arts/drama and many other activities. Children are charged a day rate of £10/£5 concessions for playschemes. In addition a number of places are earmarked for children from disadvantaged families which are funded via local school clusters. The biggest cost of providing playschemes is staffing to meet guideline ratios to children and venue hire to accommodate over 100 x children;</p>	<p>Site Leader x 2 - £170.00 Staff x12 - £675.00 Venue hire - £120.00 <b>Total - £965.00</b></p> <p>* It should be noted that the playschemes usually operate on the basis of 1 x staff : 8 Child ratio for under 8's and 1:15 for over 8's, hence staff costs can vary considerably.</p>	<p>90x £10 - £900.00 *20 x £5 - £100.00 <b>Total - £1000.00</b></p> <p>* Income based on 90 x children paying full amount of £10 per day and 20 x children at concessionary price of £5 per day</p>

<p><b>‘Play in the Park’</b> -Play Ranger initiative</p> <p>This is a ‘free’ initiative that encourages families to use open spaces, by providing equipment and supervision over two hour periods. These sessions can attract Up to 200+ participants per time.</p>	<p>1 x core staff 2 x casual staff - £32.00</p>	<p>Nil</p>
<p><b>The Green Team</b> initiative, delivered in conjunction with Country Care, which encourages environmental volunteers for the future. For ages 5 – 11 years</p>	<p>3/4 x core staff from Community Services and Countrycare</p>	<p>15 x £2.50 - £37.00</p>
<p><b>EFDC Youth Council</b> and Young Citizen of the Year. Provision of officer support to induct, train and develop youth councillors to enable them to consult with other young people and represent their views on local services. For young people aged 13 – 18 years</p>	<p>1 x ft YP Officer - £30,000 1 x p/t YP Asst - £9,000 Expenses Budget £12,000</p> <p>* These figures do not include overheads and support services. The expenses budget is primarily to pay for youth councillor transport to meetings etc.</p> <p>Plus Committee Officer and other management time to support the programme</p>	<p>Nil</p>
<p><b>Healthy Living Festivals</b> in super output areas of the district. A range of activities and classes delivered over the period of 4 – 6 weeks for families, including fitness, healthy eating, healthy food preparation etc.</p>	<p>The main direct expenditure for this initiative is for marketing and tutors. All over costs relate to administration and organisation of the programmes, which is undertaken by a wide range of staff.</p>	<p>Nil</p>
<p>Social Inclusion programme for young people in conjunction with Tottenham Hotspur Foundation. Range of sports and activities available over the course of the week in Limes Farm Chigwell, Debden and Waltham Abbey</p>	<p>The bulk of the costs for these sessions are covered under the Section 106 agreement with Tottenham Hotspur, which comes to an end in March 2012. However staff time is need to plan, organise and promote.</p>	<p>£1 per person per session</p>
<p><b>Children’s Touring Theatre groups</b> for 5 – 8 year olds;</p>	<p>There a charge made by Theatre Companies for their work which ranges from £500 - £800, plus charges are made for venue hire. Plus, core Arts staff time for administration and organisation</p>	<p>Income achievable is dependant on size of venue, but shows are provided on a minimum of a break even basis, but generally achieve a profit</p>

In addition to the detailed breakdown above, there are many other activities that are delivered, managed and organised by core EFDC staff in conjunction with partners, but these are more difficult to cost individually:

- Animation workshops;
- Film screening in various venues in the district
- Range of after school dance classes across the district
- 'Body Care' health improvement programme for primary school Year 6 pupils
- 2012 Olympic projects– work with local sport clubs to provide 4 to 6 weeks sports taster courses
- We Don't Do Bored Club in Waltham Abbey – a weekly youth session for young people aged 13 – 17 years
- Toddlers Tuesdays at Epping Forest District Museum
- Family Fundays at Museum – these are charged on a 'donation' basis, with a charge made for specific activities such as 'Willow Weaving' etc.
- Health Works project for young people 13 – 19 years, aimed at improving health and wellbeing through training, mentoring and development. (Funded by £100,000 from Harlow Health Centre's Trust and secured via a competitive process).
- Youth Theatre in Loughton
- After school clubs in sports and dance

### **EFDC Youth Council**

The Panel were presented with a short report on a 'Mystery shopping' exercise that Youth Councillors had taken part in, to assess local youth clubs and activities in the district.

The Youth Council had initially mapped and then visited 12 youth projects over a three month period from July to September 2010. Going 'undercover' in two or threes to each of the venues, they assessed the clubs on such things as friendliness of staff; range of activities on offer; opening times, promotion of the club and disability access. They later turned these into a star rating (given out of five stars) and gave feedback to each of the clubs. The ratings were published on the Council's website along with the text of the report and contact details for each club which had been designed as a Tube Map. The settings visited were provided by Essex County Council, District Council and Third Sector providers.

Youth Councillors had arranged a Presentation Evening on 26 October 2010 and awarded certificates and feedback sheets to each provider, along with a trophy to the "5 Star" winner which was Youth Plus in Ongar. The Tube Map is attached at Appendix 6.

### **5.33 Reports from Panel Members**

Members of the Panel were asked to briefly report back to the other Panel members on progress made on their allotted research tasks.

#### Health improvement initiatives for children and young people

Cllr. Mrs Hedges reported that she had been looking into childhood obesity and in particular at the 'MEND' scheme - "Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do it". This was a 9 to 10 week intervention aimed at reducing childhood obesity. The participation of parents was essential to the success of the programme and recipients could be self referred, or referred by a nurse

or a GP, and were in the age range of 7 to 13. The programme was organised in partnership with the County and Tottenham Hotspur Foundation. Costs were mainly covered by the NHS although EFDC & THF allocated officer time. It was a very time intensive programme and one or two families did tend to drop out after the first one or two sessions as they had to commit to two sessions a week for ten weeks.

#### Provision for children and young people with disabilities

Cllr. Mrs Cochrane reported back to the Panel on a range of initiatives, including funding that the Council had secured for two 'enhanced playgrounds', one in Debden and the other in Waltham Abbey, that were due to be completed by March 2011, at a cost of total of £44 thousand. This was a one off Capital Funding from 'Aiming High', to enhance play facilities for disabled children and encourage children of all abilities to play together.

The Councillor had also found out that there were a range of special 'ability' sports clubs that enabled disabled youngsters to try out various sports, including a special educational needs trampolining project for primary school children. There was also a co-ordination programme for children with Dyspraxia and a lot of arts programmes, all project based, for people with special needs. The Panel were surprised at the amount of programmes that were available.

#### General activities for children

Cllr. Mrs R Brookes had looked into general activities for children including the trampolining programme for children with additional needs. The trampolining programme was to help children who had been identified as having special educational or emotional needs to develop confidence and self esteem. Whilst offering a good aerobic activity it also helped with coordination, suppleness and poise. These skills then benefit the children, particularly those with autism, in the classroom. Originally the courses were funded by Essex County but this had now been withdrawn this past summer; however local head teachers felt it to be so valuable that the Rural Local Delivery Group had decided to fund the project itself for its thirteen member schools.

The Panel agreed that this was an innovative way of helping children with low self esteem and concluded that the Primary School Trampolining Project was an excellent scheme and that EFDC should continue supporting it through allocating officer time to organise, manage and deliver sessions. The complete breakdown of costs of this provision is shown as below:

Hall Hire	£28.45 per session x 10 weeks	£284.50
Head Coach	£25.00 per hour x 10 weeks	£250.00
Assistant Coach	£20.00 per hour x 10 weeks	£200.00
Assistant Coach	£20.00 per hour x 10 weeks	£200.00
Transport costs	£55.00 per journey x 10 weeks	£550.00

Total cost of one school participating in project = £1484.50

To date, this programme has been funded through Essex County Council performance Reward Grant £17,885.26 (although 50% of this funding was withdrawn in 2010/11 as part of Essex County Council cuts); Epping Forest Local Delivery Group South £14,000 (schools consortium) and £6,500 (rural schools consortium) via a Big Lottery Fund Awards for All application that was written by Community Services.

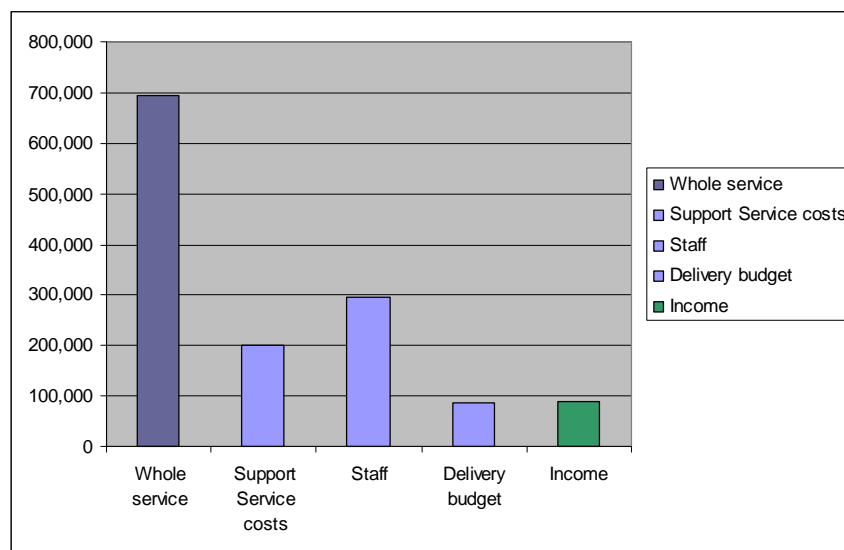
The Council's role in this programme has been in initial conception and development of the intervention, planning, administration and management of the programme, along with the complete responsibility for devising evaluation and monitoring and liaison with schools.

### **Overview of Community Services Expenditure**



The Panel noted that it is very difficult to provide a definitive breakdown of costs in relation to all of the activities, events and programmes provided for children and young people by the Council's Community Services teams, as many of the staff employed within these areas have a much wider remit that just services for children. This includes work with elderly people; work with disadvantaged communities and work with disabled people and those with special needs of all ages.

However the following chart shows a breakdown of the Community Services budgets (shown in £100,000's) and the various elements of expenditure for the entire provision, which includes residents of all ages and abilities. The graph shows the total budget for the service areas and a break down of how this total is made up.



### External Funding

In addition to the above core funding provided by the Council, Community Services has been very successful in attracting external funding to add value and expand programmes of work with children and young people and this has amounted to just under £1,000,000 over the last 2 years. However, the Panel noted that external funding was becoming scarcer and harder to secure due to the level of organisations applying for it. It was therefore decided that it was important to demonstrate how EFDC makes use of its resources and how innovative and well it works with its external partners

### **5.35 EFDC Child Protection and Safeguarding**

The Panel were advised that following a 'self audit' in 2009/10 and subsequent independent assessment, the Council's approach to child protection and safeguarding was seen as a model of best practice for other district and borough authorities in Essex. This was mainly due to the existence of a Corporate Safeguarding Group and up to date Child Protection Policy and procedures.

The Council however still needed to ensure that all staff in contact with children, young people and families were appropriately trained and that it had in place a safe recruitment and employment policy. It was noted that the council had also committed to Safeguarding as one of its key Objectives for 2011/12 and this would include providing training for all Councillors.

The Panel were clear that Child Protection training should be mandatory for Elected Members to ensure that any local issues involving constituent families were dealt with correctly and that Members were aware of the procedures and processes to be followed.

## **6. Conclusion and Executive Summary**

The work undertaken by the Children's Services Task and Finish Panel covered a very wide range of issues, from reviewing and evaluating the District Council's own children's services and arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and families, to reviewing services provided by Essex County Council, their centrally commissioned partners and our local voluntary sector partners in the district.

This was achieved via a range of methods including presentations from officers, site visits and meetings and culminated in a question and answer panel with Essex County Council, involving the Deputy Portfolio Holder for Children and Families, Director of Children's Commissioning and West Locality Commissioner.

The key outcomes and findings of the Children's Services Review in accordance with the Terms of Reference were as follows:

1. The immediate deferment in the Council signing the Memorandum of Understanding with Essex County Council in respect of Children's Trust arrangements;
2. Identification of key strengths and models of best practice in regard to the District Council's own services for children and young people and priorities for future delivery;
3. Clarification around the future provision of Essex County Council Youth Services; the potential impact of funding cuts on the most vulnerable children and young people and the opportunities for local commissioning in the future;
4. Direct representation to Essex County Council in respect of local concerns around safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, resulting in a commitment from the County Council to provide a Child Protection Guidance Note for Elected Members across Essex to enable them to support the Safeguarding process;
5. Re-enforcement of the District Council's commitment to Child Protection and Safeguarding for staff and Elected Members.

In addition, there were further positive outcomes from the review which included:

1. Building of foundations for a strengthened working relationship with Essex County Council in regard to Safeguarding and children's services in general;
2. Identification of what funding is available for the provision of children's services in Essex; how it is commissioned across the County and potential future opportunities for local commissioning;
3. Confirmation from Essex County Council of their commitment to deliver very early and low resource interventions to prevent the need for high cost care and support at a later stage;
4. Confirmation of the excellent children and young people's activities and programmes developed and provided by the District Council, and the potential opportunities for these to be used as models of best practice for delivery across West Essex in the future.

The panel concluded that the working relationship with Essex County Council would benefit from increased communication with District Elected Members and that it was the wish of the Panel to be able to speak highly of the services provided for children and young people by The County Council.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

### **The Task & Finish panel would like to thank:**

Cllr. Ray Gooding – Deputy Portfolio Holder SCF, Essex County Council

Wendi Ogle-Welbourn – Director of Children’s Services, Essex County Council

Lonica Vanclay – West Children’s services Locality Commissioner, Essex County Council

Epping Forest Children’s Partnership

Julie Chandler – Assistant Director Community Services and Customer Relations

Felicity Hall – Arts Officer

Adrian Hendry – Committee Officer

Gill Wallis – Community Development Officer

James Warwick – Sports and Health Development Manager

## **8. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

Dear Theresa

We are writing to you in your role as Chair of the West Essex Children's Trust Board to formally state our collective view on the commissioning process presently being undertaken by the Essex Children's Trust, to advocate certain principles which we believe should be adopted in that process and to express some concerns about what appears to be the present direction of travel.

As you are aware we have tried to positively engage in the recent consultative processes in the West and recognise that a formal report of the outcomes of that process will be submitted to the WECTB on 16/11 and from there will feed into the JCB for final determinations. However, whilst we expect that the views we expressed will be properly represented within the formal report, it is possible that the main thrust of these views may be lost within the detail of it and the West Board and the JCB may find it helpful to have these views separately represented.

We wish to state at the outset our full commitment to the priorities identified by the JCB and the locality Boards and as most recently presented in the paper "Proposal for Future Working Arrangements in Essex". We also endorse the principles set out in that paper relating to the driving forces of the 'Big Society' and 'Place based' commissioning. Furthermore, despite the withdrawal of the statutory duty to engage, we remain committed to the original principles of a Children's Trust approach to the provision of high quality services.

However, our experience of the West consultative process and our understanding of the state of play in regard to some specific areas of commissioning have raised some concerns as follows:

#### 1. The apparent lack of an integrated approach to commissioning

The three main priorities on the table for consultation relate to Emotional Health & Well Being, Family Support, Early Years & Youth Activities. Given the central importance of these services to safeguarding and early intervention & prevention, we believe it is crucial that these are commissioned in a way which will maximise synergy and integration. In the context of a reduced resource envelop and the need to prioritise and target resources and services better, a fully coordinated approach to commissioning is likely to produce best value for money. Whilst we appreciate that the timetables for commissioning or re-commissioning may not all coincide (and we are aware of issues surrounding the re-commissioning of Children's Centres and uncertainties over areas such as School Improvement) we are strongly of the view, as exemplified by work already undertaken on the commissioning of Tier 2 CAMHS, that there is a real danger of an uncoordinated and piecemeal approach happening and a significant opportunity for integrated commissioning missed.

2. The apparent disjunction between the stated principles of the Proposal for Future Joint Working Arrangements in Essex, 'Big Society' thinking and where ECT seems to be in its commissioning approach

Paragraph 6 of the paper 'Proposal for Future Joint Working Arrangements' references as policy drivers the 'Big Society' & 'Place Based Budgeting' and appears to endorse an emphasis on local commissioning to deliver local priorities. We would certainly endorse this view because our experience has been that the only impactful integrated service delivery has eventuated when local communities have been able to take ownership – that is partnerships of locality based groups who know and trust each other, have developed joint working over many years, who know their clients, who know how to access the hard to reach and the most vulnerable and who have an evidenced based history of effective delivery. In addition the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove in his letter of 4<sup>th</sup> November 2010, restates the aim of the Coalition Government to shift power to the lowest possible level.

Using CAMHS Tier 2 as an example, we fail to see how a central commission which will consume 95% of the resource envelope is going to fulfil the principles of the Big Society & Place Based Commissioning and the Coalition Government's reform programme principles.

We do appreciate the present challenges faced by the Children's Trust, and the need to reconcile/balance forces driving local authorities to consider larger geographical scale working arrangements and the most cost effective service model solutions whilst at the same time taking account of the need to empower locality ownership and solutions.

We appreciate the added difficulty of trying to do this within a context of PCT commissioning being progressively handed over to locality based groups of GPs.

At the same time, there is a simpler reality to be forced. In the areas of EHWP, Family Support, Early Years & Youth Activities, local partnerships of one kind or another across West Essex (and leaving aside any LPF funding) have been investing in the region of £5m p.a in what we term as 'targeted' support, usually delivered within universal settings. This funding and these services will cease 31/3/11. There is a danger of a significant 'black hole' in service provision appearing between the 'universal' and the 'specialist' levels, which to date has been filled by this targeted provision. Nothing in the plans to date for the future commissioning of EHWP, Family Support, Early Years or Youth Activities seems to us to be likely to fill this gap. This is likely to put increasing strains on the ability of universal services to fulfil their obligations and on the capacity of the specialist services to cope with an increasing demand on an already reduced capacity service.

We advocate a 50% balance between central and locality commissioning in all these key priority areas.

3. The apparent lack of synergy between the rhetoric of service transformation and the reality of the commissioning process

We were constantly and rightly urged at the consultative workshops to think outside the box, to think about how services might be delivered differently, more smartly and more effectively.

We have difficulty therefore in understanding (and again using the example of Tier 2 CAMHS) why the JCB appears to be going down the road of commissioning a 'traditionally' configured Tier 2 CAMHS service.

All the evidence suggests that the traditional Tier 2 CAMHS service in Essex has over the last 10 years failed to deliver a sufficiently good and cost effective service. We appreciate that there have been many reasons for this and this comment is not a reflection on the quality of the work of managers or workers in the service. In the context of a likely reduced resource, we do not see how commissioning what looks at present, from the service specification available to us, to be a replication of the same kind of service but by a different provider is going to drive forward service transformation and innovative solutions.

In West, in our various sub-partnership groups, we have good evidence of the delivery of Tier 2 type CAMHS services in ways which have exemplified early intervention and prevention, swift & easy access, provision at the point of demand/need and of integration with wider family support services and wider aspects of Emotional Health & Well-Being – all at about 42% of the hourly cost of traditional Tier 2 CAMHS.

4. The apparent disjunction between the principles of good practice in commissioning promoted by the Commissioning Support Programme and the principle being utilized by the Essex Children's Trust

If the example of the CAMHS Tier 2 commissioning process is to replicate then we do not see how this can be said to reflect best practice or the 8 principles of commissioning. Use of a limited preferred bidder methodology is not per se poor practice, but the use of this methodology with only one type of service provider would normally be regarded as failing to develop a proper market and failing to investigate a range of innovative service models with the likely consequence of not securing best VFM.

In conclusion, we are concerned that the present direction of the commissioning process may fail to take account of the potential for transformation, innovation and effective integrated working at a locality level that local experience and practice have exemplified and therefore not secure best value for money.

Fundamentally, what we can't see is how the apparent present approach to commissioning will harness and enhance the expertise and contribution of mutuals, co-ops, the voluntary sector, groups of schools, locality based Children's Partnerships etc in the effective provision of Children's Services nor exploit the many possible links to Adult Services, all of which lie at the heart of the transformation of public services at a time of reduce resources.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Fluskey – Chair Harlow Education Consortium  
Lynn Seward – Harlow District council  
Julie Chandler – Epping Forest Council  
Gaynor Bradley – Uttlesford District Council  
Geoff Mangan – Epping Forest Schools LDG

## Appendix 2

Letter to:

Cllr Candy (Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Family)  
Mr David Hill (Executive Director of Children Schools and Families),

We are writing to you in your role as Portfolio Holder / Exec Director SCF for Children's Services, to bring to your attention our serious concerns in regard to a range of issues including the commissioning process presently being undertaken by Essex Children's Trust.

The enclosed letter to Theresa Smith, Chair of West Essex Children's Trust Board details these concerns in full and the following information is designed to provide a précis version of this.

Over the last month, lead children's services stakeholders from Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford have been involved in discussions with County colleagues as part of West Essex Children's Trust Board, in regard to future commissioning of Children's Services. Three 'consultation' meetings were organised by Essex during October and a final 'sign -off' meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November. The four main priorities that were 'on the table' for 'consultation' at these meetings were Emotional Health & Well Being, Family Support, Early Years & Youth Activities.

Throughout the process of consultation, our District representatives put forward their views and suggestions to improve children's services across West and many of these focused on locally provided innovative initiatives that have indeed produced excellent results for children and young people at excellent value for money.

We are therefore very concerned to discover that rather than directing key commissioning funding to a local level where there has been a significant amount of success evidenced, the County Council is pursuing an Essex -wide approach to commissioning services for children via a 'closed' preferred partner route.

It is the view of District and Education Leads in West, that given the importance of these services to safeguarding and early intervention & prevention, it is crucial that they are commissioned in a way which will maximise local partnership working, build on any successes to date and provide best value for money.

Apart from the effect that this course of action will have in terms of disenfranchising key local organizations including statutory and voluntary sector, this 'centrally commissioned' approach completely contradicts the Governments' plans for 'Big Society' and 'Place Based Budgeting'.

In addition, we have a further and immediate concern that under the County's 'required savings' of £300m, it is planned to withdraw £7m funding from provision of Integrated Youth Services and Connexions across Essex. This is set alongside a stated proposal on behalf of County to 'improve services and outcomes to children and young people' as part of the County-wide transformation programme. This appears to be a complete contradiction in terms. The potential impact of withdrawing these direct services to young people will likely be an increase in NEET's which in Epping Forest has been well managed (and exceeded targets), and increased anti-social behaviour.

Indeed this proposed withdrawal of IYS funding will further add to problems of recently reduced service provision for young people, including through loss of Performance Reward Grant Funding, Local Priority Fund and other locally commissioned funding.



We therefore believe this to be a very negative and short- sighted move, as potential impact from loss of services for young people and particularly those who do not sit within the Education system are immense.

We understand that a decision on the IYS and Connexions proposals will be taken by Essex County Council on 7<sup>th</sup> December and would therefore be very grateful for your comments in relation to these concerns, prior to this date.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr. Diana Collins – Leader

Cllr. Lesley Wagland – Chair of Children’s Services Task and Finish Panel

# Impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review

- Funding for education has been cut by 15% over the next 3 years
- Funding for health and social care has been cut by 10% over the next 3 years
- Funding for housing and transport has been cut by 5% over the next 3 years
- Funding for leisure and culture has been cut by 5% over the next 3 years

### Following budget cuts:

There are significant challenges for the county in maintaining the quality of services in the face of these cuts. We are committed to ensuring that the county continues to provide a high quality of services to our residents.

## Principles of approach

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**EssexWorks.**

For a better quality of life

The Schools, Children and Families strategy for the delivery of excellent services within a constrained budget has been built on the following principles:

- Ensuring the safety of children and young people
- Targeting our resources to those with the greatest need and where we can have greatest impact
- Focusing sharply to narrow the gap in education and wellbeing outcomes
- Equipping parents and carers to manage independently
- Up-skilling the universal workforce to identify and address emotional difficulties early
- Maintaining children and young people at home and in their local community as we know that, in most cases, removing them will dramatically decrease their chances of reaching their true potential
- Aligning resources with partners to secure efficient and effective services

Essex County Council

**A number of proposals have been agreed:**

- Savings achieved across back office functions related to new ways of working
- Re-negotiations on pricing with providers of residential and school places
- Reductions in commissioned services related to Area Based Grant reductions, i.e., Sustainable Travel, School Travel Advisors, School Development projects, Teenage Pregnancy
- Restructure and re-provision of Children's Residential Service
- Transformation and redesign of early years service as part of the preventative strategy
- Review of Integrated Youth Services including Connexions
- Review of Home to School Transport provision to remove the discretionary elements

## Savings overview

Cumulative savings Totals across 3 years		
Yr 1: 11/12	Yr 2: 12/13	Yr 3: 13/14
<b>Children's Services Totals</b>		
£11,124,299	£19,331,470	£25,148,172
<b>Education Totals</b>		
£9,194,030	£18,233,949	£21,021,948
<b>Joint Totals</b>		
<b>£20,318,329</b>	<b>£37,565,419</b>	<b>£46,170,120</b>

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**We are reshaping our services and focussing joint working on sharing resources:**

- Developing community partnerships building capacity to deliver early intervention and prevention services
- Reducing the number of Children that need to be Looked After in particular those in residential care
- Increasing the capacity and availability of in house foster care
- Increasing the use of alternatives to care such as Special Guardianship and Residence Orders and Kinship Care
- Working through the Local Commissioning and Delivery Boards to commission services targeted on agreed priorities emotional wellbeing and parenting
- Reducing our universal offer including Connexions and Youth Services and non targeted elements of Children's Centres

## Reshaping services, sharing resources

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- Redesigning our front line social care and school improvement services focusing on traded, commissioned or third party delivered alternatives
- Development of a local authority and NHS child health and well being commissioning unit aligning resources to commission services for children with disabilities and mental health needs
- Developing the role of Children's Centres as health and wellbeing hubs
- Closer alignment with Adult Services to create a more seamless life long approach that also promotes choice and independence
- Investing in innovation towards a more radical approach to efficiency
- Assessing the impact of change within a strategic commissioning framework and strategy

## Appendix 4

1. What is the Essex Plan for Youth Services provision over the next 3 - 5 years and how does Essex plan to address work previously undertaken by Connexions and IYS Managers

*A. Plans for future youth services are currently being considered and a decision has been taken to re-instate a small part of the Connexions service at a County level.*

2. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMH's) - Will local feedback on success of this service will be taken into serious consideration in future commissioning?

*A. The county wide commissioning of CAMH's was renewed due to the level of staff already employed in roles. Therefore, to make radical changes to this procurement, many people would need to be made redundant. However, if the service is not successful and proof of the success of other locally provided interventions is demonstrated, Essex will certainly consider other commissioning options in the future.*

3. How does Essex expect schools to support vulnerable children and families with the loss of LDG's and family support workers who have been funded through 'pots' that are now not in place.

*A. Some of this funding has now been re-instated and this will enable a structure to remain.*

4. Will Essex will consider commissioning funding to District's or quadrant partnerships in the future.

*A. Yes, this is something that Essex will be considering.*

5. Child Protection - how will 'strategy' and paperwork generate improvements on the ground, with the impending loss in many of the local support mechanisms?

*A. Essex has appointed new Quadrant Social Care Managers as opposed to one manager for the whole of Essex, who will be responsible for making improvements to Child Protection procedures and systems. Essex has recently undergone a further Ofsted inspection in respect of this and although the findings have not yet been published, it is good news.*

6. Why do our staff and councillors still have poor experiences of referring concerns to Essex?

*A. We are currently implementing greater resources for Social Care at a local level, which we hope will improve this. This will see the appointment of a Social Care Manager for each Quadrant in Essex, as opposed to a manager for the whole of Essex.*

7. What can be done to improve lines of communication and engage officers and councillors at EFDC in solutions?

*A. The requested 'Guide' and procedures for Councillors that has been suggested will help to address this issue.*

8. How much do we pay foster carers by comparison with neighbouring authorities, particularly Redbridge?

*A. The County goes to outside organisations to provide foster carers and pay the national standard rate. However, a lot of London Boroughs purchase foster carers in Essex so this can end up in a bidding war. It's a balancing act. We need to build good partnership with the*



*providers and ensure that the carers have access to resources for their use. A great many foster carers are not just looking at the financial package but at the overall package (background resources) provided by the authorities. Along with this, money needed to go into preventative work.*

**9.** What low level support is available to help keep families together?

**A.** *Our plans are to improve the level of early intervention for children and families to help prevent problems from escalating and reaching the point where a child is taken into care.*

**10.** How do housing and Essex CC liaise on housing related child support problems?

**A.** *The County try to maintain children and young people at home and in their local community as they know that, in most cases, removing them would dramatically decrease their chances of reaching their true potential. There will also be social workers linked to Housing acting as a link between Housing and Young People on a case by case basis.*

## **6. UPDATING REPORT FROM OFFICERS.**

Officers played the Panel a short DVD on the various events and initiatives that the council put on over the years.

Gill Wallis, the Community Development Officer, then reported on the Council's programme for children and young persons from her team's perspective.

1. Crucial Crew was for year 6s (10 to 11 years old) and held once a year at Gilwell Park where various organisations (West Essex PCT, Essex Police, Essex Fire & Rescue Services, Road Safety Officers etc.) worked with the children on safety scenarios.
2. The Reality Road show was held for older (year 9s) young people. Officers went out to secondary schools, where they gave them more sophisticated messages about drugs and road accidents etc. this was first piloted last year and proved very successful.
3. The Safer Communities Team were also having a campaign called 'Bang out of order' which centred around Halloween and Fireworks night by talking to Primary schools about behaviour and consequences.
4. A Positive Introductions programme was set up to get skate ramps and a synthetic skating rink and then use the 'captive audience' to involve them in work on drugs awareness etc.

All these were funded by the Home Office and not from Council funds.

Other things that Community Development delivers include:

- Play schemes for 5 to 11 year olds are run in the school holidays with funded places for children from disadvantaged families;
- They also have a 'play in the park' Play Ranger initiative that encourages families to use open spaces;
- In conjunction with Country Care, the Green Team initiative is delivered which encourages environmental volunteers for the future; and
- There was also the EFDC Youth Council and Young Citizen of the Year.

The Panel noted that nowadays funding was becoming scarcer, with smaller pots of money being available and more people/organisations applying for it. They decided that it was important to show how EFDC make use of its resources and how it innovates and how well it works with its partners.

Felicity Hall, the Council's Arts Officer, said they were currently raising the profile of the Cripsey Brook, nature reserve. They have an artist working with year 5 primary school children who take them on site to work on various projects. They had made a film and had created and performed a dance performance, all to launch Cripsey Brook.

The Arts section also runs a variety of events throughout the summer including:

- Various family fun days;
- Theatre groups – touring around libraries;
- Animation workshops;
- Films that are taken around to various venues in the district (as there are no cinemas in our district);
- In 2012 they will hold a 4 day film festival; and
- Dance classes for schools.

James Warwick, the Sport Development Officer, informed the Panel of three projects coming up. They were:

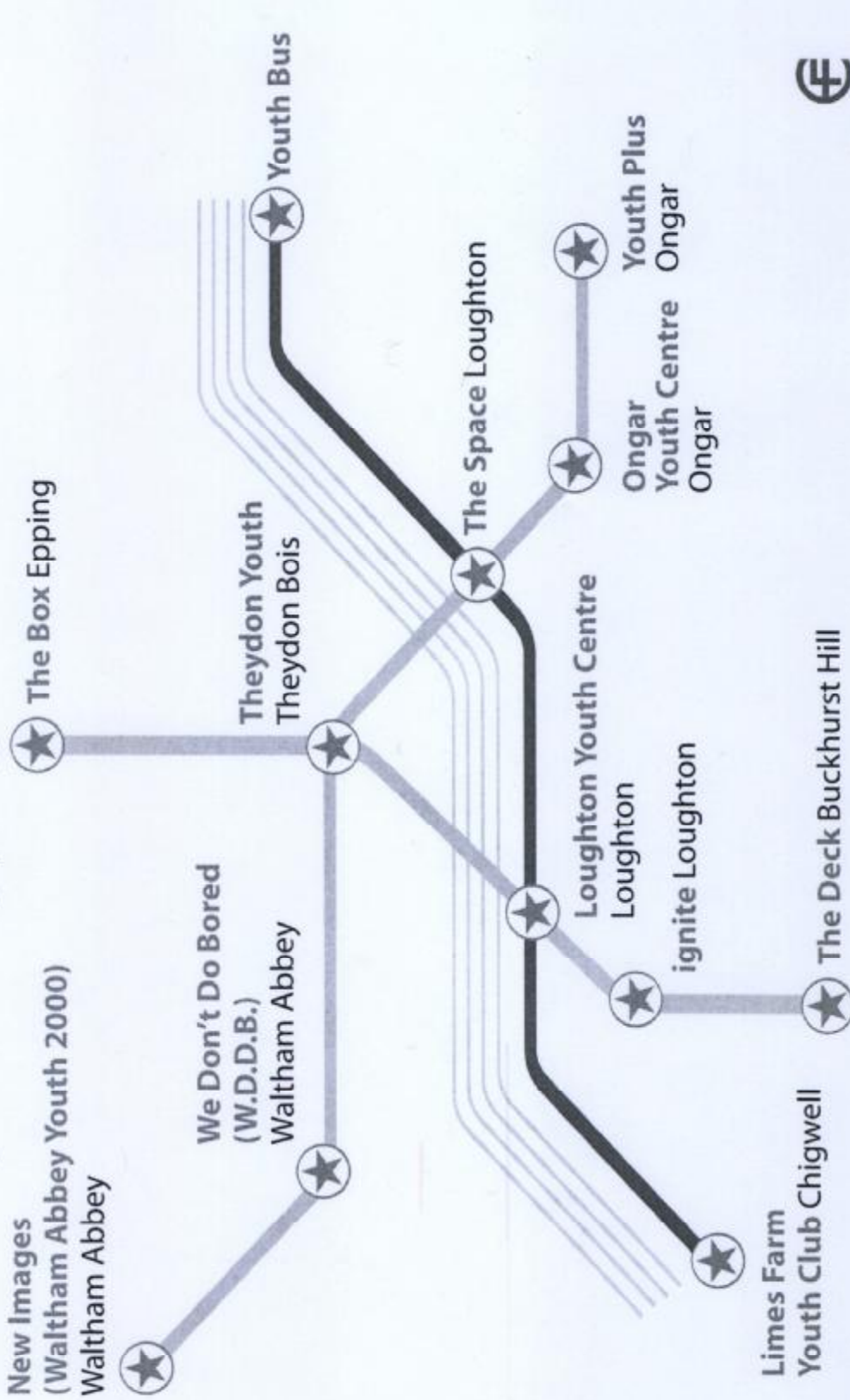
- Healthy Living Festival coming up in January 2011 in Ongar then Debden. This was six weeks of activities, courses and classes on food and cooking and also looking to have various sports classes;
- To re-launch the 'Body Care' for primary schools, targeting year 6 pupils, focusing on sports, fitness, biology, and healthy eating. They were looking to replace MEND with this 'Body Care' project. They would be working with the Thomas Willingale School and Shelly Primary School and would have allotments installed at both schools and organise an 'inter-generational' day of activities;
- 2012 Olympic project – working with local sport clubs to provide 4 to 6 weeks taster sessions for young people. They were looking for funding for this at present.

They were also:

- Holding a free style football competition, the prize being a 6 month contract with Tottenham Hotspur FC;
- And a 'Health Works' project which started in mid November. They had secured £80 thousand funding from Harlow Health Centre Plus. It was aimed at 11 to 19 year olds, focusing on sexual health, drugs and obesity. If successful they would run it again in the future.

Julie Chandler, Assistant Director Community Services, updated the Panel on Essex County Council's children services who had received an unfavourable Ofsted report. They had set up various trust boards and commissioned new services in October 2009 and were assessed again in summer 2010 by Ofsted who thought that they had not improved very much since the last inspection. They have since set up a new organisation, the "West Essex Local Children's Commissioning Board" with a new structure designed to change things. They were also looking into commissioning third parties to provide for adolescent and mental health services. At a recent meeting they had made it clear that only £100k was to be made available to our district for all current children services. Officers voiced their concerns about this and are in top level negotiations with ECC at present and will report the outcome to Cabinet.

# Youth Projects in Epping Forest 2010



**EFYC** Epping Forest Youth Council



# Youth Projects in Epping Forest 2010

## ★ The Deck - Buckhurst Hill

The Bridge, 29 Princes Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5EE  
Telephone: 0208 505 5001 [www.thebridge-buckhursthill.org.uk](http://www.thebridge-buckhursthill.org.uk)

## ★ Limes Farm Youth Club - Chigwell

The Community Cabin  
Limes Avenue, Chigwell, Essex IG7 5LT [www.essexlife.org](http://www.essexlife.org)

## ★ The Box - Epping

134 High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4AG  
Telephone: 01992 577 300 [www.theboxepping.org.uk](http://www.theboxepping.org.uk)

## ★ Loughton Youth Centre - Loughton

Loughton Centre for Young People  
106 Borders Lane, Loughton, Essex IG10 3SB  
Telephone: 0208 502 8850 [www.essexlife.org](http://www.essexlife.org)

## ★ ignite - Loughton

The ignite centre, 201 High Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 1BB  
Telephone: 0208 508 6172 [www.igniteyouth.co.uk](http://www.igniteyouth.co.uk)

## ★ The Space - Loughton

Loughton Youth Project  
Loughton Library, Traps Hill, Loughton IG10 1HD  
Telephone: 0208 532 1911 [www.loughtonyouthproject.com](http://www.loughtonyouthproject.com)

## ★ Ongar Youth Centre - Ongar

The Gables, Fyfield Road, Ongar, Essex CM5 0GA  
Telephone: 01277 365 208 - 01992 565 137 [www.essexlife.org](http://www.essexlife.org)

## ★ Youth Plus - Ongar

A project for young people (14 - 25 years) with learning disabilities  
Ongar Youth Centre, The Gables, Fyfield Road, Ongar CM5 0GA  
Telephone: 01277 363 307 [www.youthplus.net](http://www.youthplus.net)

## ★ Theydon Youth - Theydon Bois

Theydon Bois Community & Youth Centre (local residents only)  
Loughton Lane, Theydon Bois, Epping, Essex CM16 7JY  
Telephone: 01992 815 982 [www.theydon.org.uk](http://www.theydon.org.uk)

## ★ New Images - Waltham Abbey

Waltham Abbey Youth 2000  
154 Brooker Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1JH  
Telephone: 01992 763 953 [www.way2000.org.uk](http://www.way2000.org.uk)

## ★ We Don't Do Bored (WDDB) - Waltham Abbey

Ninefields Estate, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 3EL  
Telephone: 01992 564 556

## ★ Youth Bus

Mobile youth project for 13 - 19 years  
Telephone: 01279 404464

**EFYC** Epping Forest Youth Council



Epping Forest  
District Council