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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Housing and Community Services Committee</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>13 March 2003</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Head of Community Services</b>	<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>Stuart Batchelor 5820</b>	<b>DOC:</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Playscheme Review</b>	<b>REF:</b>	
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>	<b>CS07</b>

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### **1.0 Recommendations**

1.1 Members approve the proposed changes to the Councils playscheme provision with effect from this summer.

### **2.0 Purpose of Report**

2.1 To update members of the conclusions and outcome of the review that has been carried out since the last report in October 2002 and consequently request members approval to provide an amended playscheme from this summer.

### **3.0 Detail**

3.1 In October 2002 a report was considered by this Committee which outlined the situation regarding the provision of summer playschemes in the District. The report identified that existing provision no longer met the requirements of either local families or child protection procedures. Consequently the report proposed that a review should be undertaken and proposals submitted on how future playschemes should be provided. The original Committee report is attached as Annexe No 1.

3.2 The review of playschemes has been undertaken and has involved consultation with partners, analysis of evaluation returns from Parish Councils, comparisons with other providers and options appraisal for future provision.

### **Review Findings**

3.3 To summarise that review, it is clear that playschemes are regarded by local authorities and the community as intrinsic services to be provided by Councils. The mode of delivery does differ with a small number of councils funding other providers, but the majority delivering playschemes directly. The majority of these playschemes being formalised using community facilities and having registration procedures for the participants. Many of these playschemes are registered with OFSted and are inspected and operate to specific child protection procedures. The core provision is for 8 to 12 year olds and sports and arts activities are mainly provided.

- 3.4 In reviewing the role of playschemes and discussing the issues with other Council, providers and playscheme staff, it has been clear that there is a need for provision and that it should be safe and manageable. This is important so that parents have confidence that their child is safe, the children have an enjoyable and active experience and staff are safe from physical and verbal abuse.
- 3.5 Consequently it is the recommendation of Officers that there is still a need for directly provided playscheme provision in the District for the immediate future. However it should be targeted at specific communities where there is either no other play provision or issues of deprivation, which require a service to support the development of that community. The proposed provision aims to ensure an effective and safe service and will endeavour to support the local community to develop their own provision in the future.

### **Proposal**

- 3.6 It is proposed to promote two venues in the urban core using community facilities which will offer improved facilities and a more manageable environment. The venues will be the OPRA building in Newhall and the Open Box in Woodville. Each would have a twice daily two-hour playscheme over a two-week period, with a probable maximum of 25 children aged 8 to 12 years. Exact limitations on numbers and opening times will be decided following discussions with OFSted. The provision will be free but pre-registration will be necessary to ensure health and safety processes and manageable numbers. It is hoped that this provision will maintain the Council's aim of free provision and support the need of the community in the District's two most deprived wards.
- 3.7 In terms of rural provision it is intended to continue the Sportsmobile which is pre-booked by Parish Councils and visits recreation grounds for a two-hour session.
- 3.8 By reducing the length and quantity of the urban playschemes, there would be some spare capacity to appoint a part-time co-ordinator to implement the administrative changes that result from Pre registration of youngsters needed to make the Council's playscheme a quality service. That co-ordinator would also provide cover for the playschemes when either extra staffing was required due to emergencies or special activities planned, such as trips and courses.
- 3.9 To improve the quality of the service to the young people and meet health and safety requirements there would be a change in the staffing ratios. There will be three staff at each site and three staff on the mobile scheme. This level of staffing would provide a much better service for both participants and staff than was previously provided.
- 3.10 The length of the training given to the staff will be increased and will include more practical elements on how to deal with disruptive/aggressive behaviour. This training may well be organised in partnership with the Youth Service and will be opened to other providers to support their development.
- 3.11 In terms of activities for older children on the urban parks the Youth Service has agreed to provide activities during the late afternoons following on from a successful trial of this service last year. This will provide activities for the older children for whom traditional playscheme activities are not suitable.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The proposed changes to the playscheme provision will not result in any increase cost or decrease in funding of the service. The reduction in the number of sessions on the urban parks will result in savings that will be used to fund the hire fee for the two venues and the restructured staffing.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 The proposed scheme will provide a safer and more effective playscheme than previously and contribute to the Council's aim of "promoting health and welfare of all sections of the community, including access to leisure and cultural activities".

#### **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 Play provision during school holidays is an important part of the lives of many young people and their parents and the proposed scheme takes note of the provision available in the District and seeks to fill the gaps where there is most community need.

#### **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 This report is the initial step to ensure a quality and safe service is provided by the Council. Playschemes need to be constantly be monitored and reviewed to meet the changing environment and the proposed scheme is a result of that process.

#### **8.0 Background Papers**

- 8.1 Housing and Community Services Committee – 10/10/02

