

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 6 October 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor James, in the Chair.

Councillor Ball, Vice-Chair.

Councillors Browne, McDonald, Thompson, Viney (substitute for Councillor Ricketts) and Wildy.

Co-opted Representative: Jake Paget.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Nicholson and Ricketts.

Also in attendance: Councillors Lowry and Smith, Veronica Small, Manager, Budshead Trust, Alderman Simmonds, Chairman, Budshead Trust, Father Smith, Treasurer, Budshead Trust, Carole Henwood, Principal Advisor, Services for Children and Young People (Neighbourhood and Informal Learning), Dave Haq, Senior Youth Officer, Councillor Mrs. Watkins, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, PC Pen-Collings, Ernesettle Neighbourhood Beat Manager, Chris Trevitt, Head of Capital and Assets, Giles Perritt, Lead Officer, Judith Shore, Democratic and Members' Support Manager, and Katey Johns, Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 2 p.m. and finished at 5.10 p.m.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made in accordance with the Code of Conduct –

Name	Minute	Reason	Interest
Councillor Wildy	45	Trustee of Keyham Community Partnership Chair of Mount Wise Trust	Personal

44. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

45. **COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - BUDSHEAD TRUST**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board noted the documentation which had been submitted in regard to the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA). The Chair drew Members' attention to the procedures for the meeting and reminded them that, having heard from the witnesses and debated the matter, they could come to only one of the following conclusions –

- Write a report setting out their findings and recommendations to Cabinet/a partner organisation as appropriate
- Decide that the CCfA matter is complex that needs further investigation and refer the matter to another body for more detailed scrutiny (refer it to the appropriate scrutiny panel or set up a task and finish group)
- Decide not to take any action

The Board then went on to hear from the witnesses scheduled to the effect that –

- (i) the Budshead Trust was a well-established community organisation which delivered youth projects in the north of the City which, although had a proven track record of successfully securing capital, had struggled to secure core funding and was now at risk of closure;
- (ii) in addition to delivering youth projects, the Trust had taken over two disused buildings from Plymouth City Council and brought them back into community use as an internet café, homework support club, youth club, drop-in centre, and a venue for councillor ward surgeries and police meetings;
- (iii) whilst the majority of the Trust's staff worked on a voluntary basis, £30,000 of core funding was required to cover the costs of a small admin team (including the Manager), paper and printing, rent (albeit peppercorn), utilities bills, insurance etc.;
- (iv) the majority of the Trusts' work focussed on drug and alcohol misuse, however, other unrelated projects were undertaken, one of which had involved working with young ladies in the area around teenage pregnancy;
- (v) if the Trust were to cease its operations there would be no provision of youth facilities in this area of the City;
- (vi) in order to try and save money, the Trust had cut back on its hours of operation since June. Evidence provided by the Police indicated that crime in the area had increased as a direct result and that 75 percent of that crime had been carried out by those within the ages of nine to 17;
- (vii) over £41,000 of funding had been made available to the Budshead Trust over the last three years from the Children's Services budget. Additional support had also been offered via the services of the Extended School's Co-ordinator who was qualified in submitting bids

for fund raising and had been successful in pulling in £300,000 worth of funding this year;

- (viii) whilst the Trust had made numerous applications for funding to various organisations, including the Primary Care Trust, it was unable to apply to the larger consortia due to its size and budget not meeting the relevant criteria;
- (ix) the neighbourhood profile for Honicknowle supported the need for a youth facility of this type in the area given that –
 - it had a higher number of residents aged 1-14 compared to the City average
 - it was demonstrating poor levels of educational attainment
 - it had high levels of antisocial behaviour
- (x) the social and financial benefits of the services provided by the Budshead Trust were shared by not only the City Council but the Police and health partners and had to far outweigh the cost of not being provided;
- (xi) four years ago the Trust had had reserves totalling £60,000. However, it had been using its reserves to support its core functions and was no longer able to do so;
- (xii) if core funding was not secured, the projects for which funding had successfully been bid could not continue and the money would have to be returned;
- (xiii) the Trust had incurred a £10,000 tax liability as a result of employing three members of staff who had claimed to be self-employed. Subsequent investigations had found this not to be the case;
- (xiv) the Police supported and commended the work of the Budshead Trust, working closely with them on various projects and community events, even funding one particular project to the sum of £2,000. Concern was expressed that the increase in crime would continue to escalate should the work of the Trust cease;
- (xv) the Trust hoped that by accumulating an asset base it would be able to generate an income and thereby become self funding. Negotiations with the Council's Head of Capital and Assets over temporary use of the disused University sports facilities had so far proven to be fruitless due to concerns about the site having been identified as a possible location for a waste to energy facility and the associated financial risks involved in reintroducing this site as a sports facility (even on a temporary basis).

The Board recognised that the Budshead Trust worked hard to provide an excellent service within the community. Members acknowledged that the cessation of this

service would leave a gap which could result in an increase in crime and antisocial behaviour. However, the Board was mindful that other areas of the voluntary sector would be watching to see the outcome of this particular call for action and did not want to set a precedent to open the floodgates for similar bids for financial assistance. In view of its concerns over the Trust's governance arrangements, its ability to secure core funding and how it was going to continue to manage in the longer term, it therefore recommended to Cabinet that –

- (1) Phil Mitchell, as the Localities Manager, for the north-west of the City is urgently requested to take the strategic lead in working with high-level partner representatives to identify ways of supporting the Budshead Trust to enable, in the first instance, identification of core funding to deliver its current projects and then, in the longer term, to examine –
 - the Trust's governance arrangements
 - potential future funding opportunities

A report on how this is progressing with timescales be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board;

- (2) the Trust takes up the Council's offer of assistance in preparing future funding bids and Officers contact the University on behalf of the Trust to see if it can offer similar support;
- (3) officers approach the University about undertaking a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the benefit of the work undertaken by the Trust and compare it to the cost of dealing with the problems that could arise in the neighbourhood should the Trust cease operating;
- (4) subject to the Community Grant Scheme criteria being met, the Honicknowle ward councillors be encouraged to donate their allocation to the Trust as a short-term funding solution;
- (5) the Council's Head of Capital and Assets is asked to investigate further the possibility of the Trust taking a temporary lease of the disused University sports facilities to help them generate income;
- (6) enquiries are made concerning a potential reduction in premises rental costs to the Budshead Trust.

(Councillor Wildy declared a personal interest in respect of the above item).

46. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.