Berechurch Evaluation

Colchester

St. Mary's
New Town
St. Andrew's
Prettygate
Shrub End
Harbour
W
Berechurch
Cherry Tree
East Donyland
Layer de la Haye
Fingringhoe

COLCHESTER

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Colchester Borough Council

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

Queries/Comments

This report was produced by Sarah Hardwick and Mandy Jones in the Project and Research team at Colchester Borough Council. If you have any comments or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Project and Research Team on 01206 282501, or email sarah.hardwick@colchester.gov.uk or mandy.jones@colchester.gov.uk

Disclaimer

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2. BERECHURCH WARD

Berechurch ward is displayed in the map below. The map also shows the six small areas within the ward[1]

Cherry Tree Estate

Key
A = Berechurch North D = Austrailian Estate
B = The Willows   E = Blackheath
C = Monkwick   F = Friday Wood
———— **Ward Boundaries**
———— **L-SOA Boundaries**

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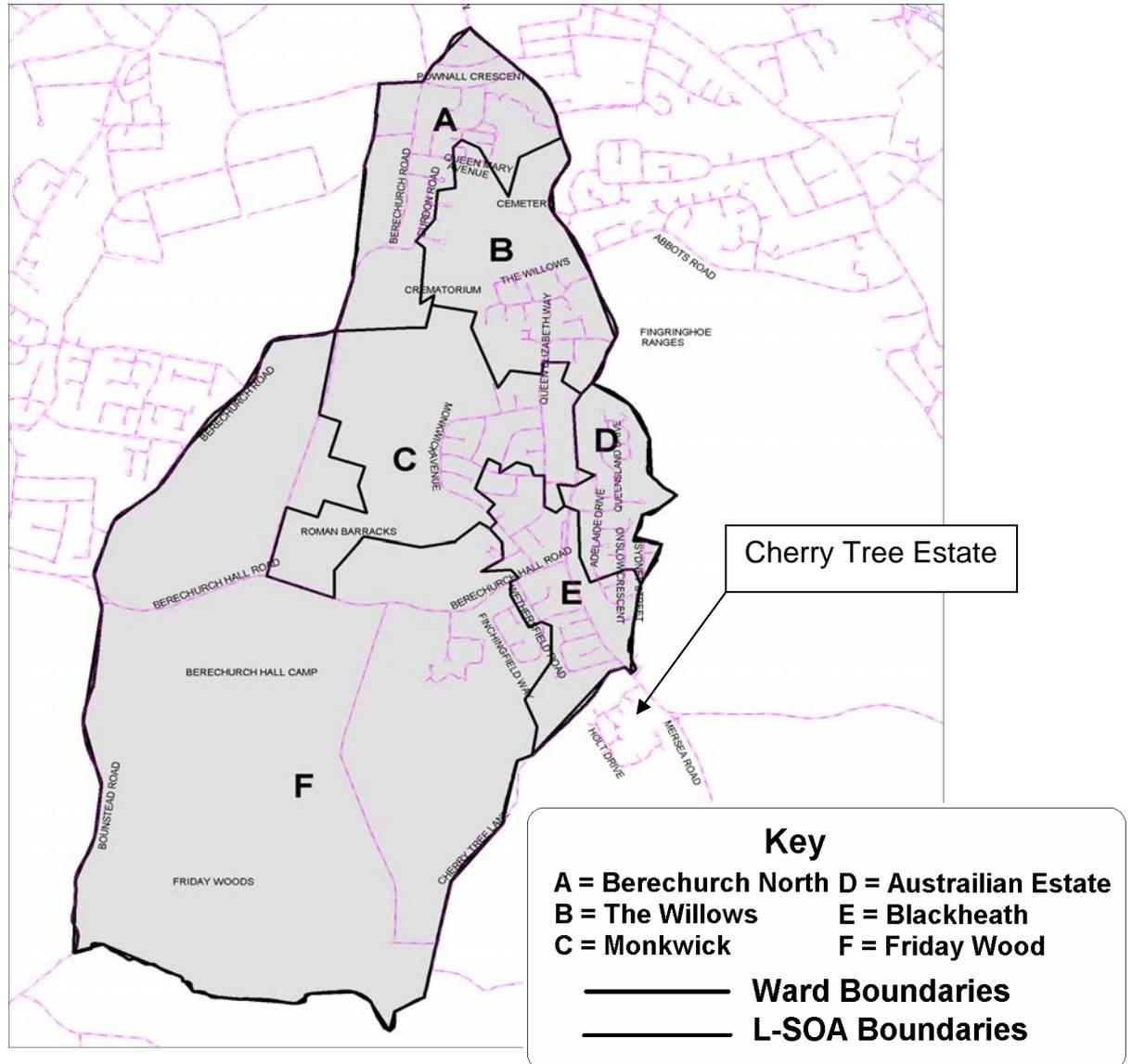
[1] The Office for National Statistics introduced the small areas displayed in this map - officially known as Lower Layer Super Output Areas – in 2004. Small areas have an average population of 1,500 people and each ward in Colchester currently consists of between one and six small areas. There are 104 small areas in Colchester, 863 in Essex and 32,482 in England. The small areas were named with the assistance of the Community Development team to enable easier recognition of the areas to which they relate.
The Cherry Tree Estate has also been incorporated into this research although outside the Berechurch ward boundaries. This community is technically part of East Donyland, however it is in fact physically closer to residential areas of Berechurch.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this research was to assess the effectiveness of Community Development investment in Berechurch. Findings are based on interviews with people working in the area to improve quality of life, focus groups with young people and police data. Findings are organised under the headings of the priorities identified for the area, as described below.

Background to Community Development Work in Berechurch

Colchester Borough Council's (CBC) Community Development work in Berechurch began in 2003. Research was undertaken to investigate issues that people who live and work in those communities felt needed to be tackled. The main priorities which evolved through this research, known as the Berechurch Community Strengths Assessment, were:

- The need to develop a sense of community
- The need to identify and create more suitable community meeting spaces
- The need to increase support for community and voluntary groups
- The need to provide a greater number of facilities for children
- The need to divert young people in the ward from anti-social behaviour

These priorities were subsequently taken on by the newly-formed Berechurch Task Group. The following summarises the research findings.

1 Feelings towards existing priorities

Most interviewees supported the existing task group priorities and indicated that they felt the group should persist with these. There was most support for the priority "to create a sense of community" (closely followed by the need to address anti-social behaviour in the area), and least support for the priority to increase/improve facilities for children. Childrens' services received less support principally because respondents felt there were sufficient pre-school facilities available, and that the issue was with low uptake rather than provision.

2 Evaluation of actions achieved under the following priority headings:

Priority 1: The need to develop a sense of community

As stated, this is the priority for which most support was expressed by interviewees. This is reflected by the concern expressed at some points by interviewees that the community is one which is widespread geographically, and as such difficulties arise in it not being a 'natural' community. It is clear that several different communities exist that are mutually distinct: "*I wonder whether some people in Monkwick are even aware of how far the Berechurch ward stretches and what areas are included within it*" was one interviewees' response. It is as such unsurprising that interviewees saw this as a most important and relevant objective to be addressed.

The findings do indicate a definite move towards increased cohesiveness within the community, displayed by the level of resident participation in the Berechurch Task Group, which is underway, with 38% of attendees also being residents. It is worth noting that 3 of the 12 making up this 38% joined in the three months preceding this

report, indicating a recent increase in resident participation. Interviewees expressed a keenness for this to increase, and a concern that numbers were still not as great as they would like. In particular they mentioned the need to include "hard to reach" members of the residential community on the task group. Young people specifically were mentioned.

Additionally, interviewees predominantly expressed agreement both that community activity in the ward (17 of the 21 interviewees) and resident participation with their community or voluntary group (13 of the 21), had increased since the set-up of the task group. The few that were in less agreement gave reasons such as their group already being well-established in the area, and that as such the promotion of their work locally was independent of the task group.

To date, four main actions have been implemented by the task group and key community members in order to address this priority. They are:

- Two Fundays have been carried out, with another organised for July 2006.
- Eight issues of the local newsletter, the Berechurch Bugle, have been completed and delivered with the help of volunteers and the Berechurch Task Group
- The Monkwick Residents Association (R.O.M.E – Residents of Monkwick Estate) was formed in 2005, supported by the Berechurch Task Group
- A Noticeboard has just been erected on the green in front of Monkwick Health Centre, in February 2006

Interviewees were questioned about the success of the Bugle, the Fundays, and the Monkwick Residents Association (the Noticeboard was not erected at the time of interviews being carried out). All three were met with predominantly positive feedback, with almost 80% of respondents stating that both the fundays and the residents association were either "very successful" or "quite successful".

Indeed, the founder of the Monkwick Residents Association expressed a strong belief in the impact that this has made locally to the community, stating *"in spite of some difficulties and setbacks, I do feel it has very much been a success, not least because there were so many people who seemed to feel that this community simply wouldn't "gel"".* The fact that the group has 35 – 40 members already qualifies these comments. One interviewee commented that the formation of R.O.M.E was in part accountable for the recent increase in members of the Berechurch Task Group.

The Bugle was also met with positive feedback (60% felt that it had been either very or quite successful), although six interviewees felt that they had not seen enough of the Newsletter, and that it required as such wider circulation and a greater wiling amongst volunteers to distribute it.

Priority 2: The need to identify and create more suitable community meeting spaces
Support for this priority was very high amongst interviewees. It was raised independently by interviewees and within the youth focus groups as essential to developing the sense of community further, particularly in view of the current lack of

community focal point. To date, the main actions achieved to address this have been:

- The major project has been the rebuild and refurbishment of the Scout Hut, for which £110,000 has been secured.
- Space has been identified and utilised within existing venues, and a venue list is made and regularly updated by the Community Development Worker

17 of the 21 interviewees stated that their confidence had increased either a little or a lot with regards to addressing this priority, and six of those interviewees mentioned specifically the progression towards completion of the Scout Hut project.

An extended interview with the Scout Leader showed great support for the work of the Community Development Worker at Colchester Borough Council, in particular in helping to secure funding for the project, which she stated had ended at a sum far beyond original expectations: *"originally £10,000 was available. Now a huge amount more is. This has meant the project has been able to grow much more than I ever envisaged."* There was some feeling amongst interviewees that the project could have progressed faster, but most interviewees holding this viewpoint also expressed an understanding of the time that taking forward major projects can take.

Overall, the progression of the project has been perceived as being quite or very successful by five of the six who commented on it (several interviewees felt unable to comment, as they had not been directly involved with the planning of the project).

Ongoing efforts to make further use of existing meeting spaces were also recognised, and specifically the list of available venues produced by the Community Development worker was praised by one interviewee.

Priority 3: The need to increase support for community and voluntary groups
Support for this priority was high amongst interviewees. To date, the following has been achieved to address this:

- The Berechurch Bugle has been used to advertise community and voluntary groups' activities
- The Task Group has been used as a forum to support and assist groups
- A Noticeboard has just been erected for Community and Voluntary groups to share achievements and activities
- The Community Development Workers provide one to one support as and when needed to individuals or groups working in the area

Perhaps the strongest message from the data analysed in this section is the perceived value of the task group in terms of providing networking opportunities (specifically between community and voluntary groups working in the area), and a supportive environment, such that it has aided in meeting personal and group objectives since its set up in December 2003. One interviewee commented: *"the task group has enabled better contacts and networking. Now we are aware of the resources and facilities within the ward. We hear about issues and problems which we can resolve. We can also spread the word about volunteering through the*

group". The consistency of attendance is recognised as enabling this environment; ten interviewees attend all meetings, and a further ten attend most.

The Bugle was recognised as providing useful advertising space; an example given was the provision of advertising for local adult education. Some interviewees expressed again a concern about how wide-reaching the newsletter is, identifying a need for wider circulation.

A huge majority of interviewees (18 of the 21) stated that they felt either a little or a lot more confident about the community's ability to make an impact on this issue since December 2003. In addition, 17 of the 21 interviewees felt more supported in their work since the task group had begun. This in itself suggests very good progress towards achieving this objective.

Priority 4: The need to provide a greater number of facilities for children
As stated, this was the priority for which there was the least support according to interviewees. That said, the majority of respondents (16 of 21) did still state that this objective was either quite or very important.

To date, the main action carried out to address this priority has been the Community Development worker for the area working with the local pre-school group to look at ways to increase uptake. An extended interview with the leader of this pre-school group found this work to have been greatly appreciated by those involved with the group. Partly as an outcome of this, and partly through the natural progression of the group, uptake has increased slightly, but over quite a long time period. Conversely however, one other local pre-school group has had to close, and one further group may need to in the near future should numbers not increase.

Some interviewees however seemed to feel that it was uptake not level of provision that was the issue, perhaps reflected by the reduced support for this as a priority. Opinions were mixed between whether greater advertising is required, or whether there actually are not enough children to meet the level of provision available in the area. One interviewee commented: "*we may have increased awareness through the Task Group, but whether this has been transferred to the local community, I don't know. The facilities are there, and yet uptake remains low*".

The Research and Community Development teams at Colchester Borough Council are going to take this issue forward by carrying out a needs analysis of under 5's in the area.

Priority 5: The need to divert young people in the ward from anti-social behaviour (incorporates detailed analysis of crime and anti-social behaviour data, see Methodology, section 6 for further detail).
Support for this priority was very high amongst interviewees. To date the following has been achieved to address this:

- At the time of producing this report the Monkwick Youth Group had been running for approximately 3 months. The group is made up of

representatives from different agencies working with young people in the area, and is used as a forum to share best practice and reach shared goals.

- United Solutions have been working towards delivering a Youth Shelter in the Monkwick area
- Monkwick Youth Club reopened in January 2006, and now opens three nights a week with about 30 young people attending each evening

Several interviewees were aware of progress towards the youth shelter, and six of the 21 interviewees sited this as a reason for feeling positive about the group's ability to make an impact on anti-social behaviour. Focus group participants alike displayed a gratitude for the youth club reintroduction, and made the link between diversionary activities and a reduction in anti-social behaviour. The value of the Monkwick Youth Group, whilst in its infancy, was enforced through an interview with one of its attendees. Many interviewees however identified a need to work more closely with young people in order that we tackle the issue of anti-social behaviour. Suggestions were put forward regarding what diversionary activities might be appropriate, including courses, trips out, etc (see section 7.3 of the main report). In addition, focus groups and additional research carried out by the East Colchester Childrens University Partnership have highlighted the desire of young people to be involved in the planning stages of such activities.

Responses from interviewees regarding changes to ASB rates were mixed. Five felt that ASB had decreased. Some interviewees commented that they felt "safer" in their community in recent years, however many attributed this to the introduction of PCSOs in the area, as opposed to actions of the task group. Just over 50%, 12 of the 21 interviewees, felt more confident about the community's ability to impact on this issue. Whilst this is a majority, it is a small majority, and perceptions of ASB rates in the ward are still mixed therefore.

ASB rates are higher in Berechurch than for Colchester as a whole, and vary slightly more than for the borough. They show an increase in rates of ASB offences and incidents between the first two years of analysis, but a subsequent decrease between the last two years, such that the overall change over the three year period was negligible. The most common type of incident in the ward is disorder, and within that youth disorder. Statistics indicated Monkwick to be the small area with by far the highest number of incidents and offences of all small areas in Berechurch, although figures indicated a significant downward turn in rates between 2002/2003 and 2004/2005, of almost 20% both for incidents and offences. Whilst there appears to be a downward trend in rates, this must be viewed cautiously as these figures could be seen to be anomalies when viewed over a wider timescale.

It is difficult to state the cause for the apparent reduction in ASB in Monkwick. It may be in part due to the PCSOs, who stated that Monkwick had been one of the areas focused on since their operation in the ward. Given the relatively early stages of the *completed* activities of the task group and agencies in the area to impact on this issue, initiatives need to be further developed to make any inferences between changes in anti-social behaviour and achievements in the area. The completion of the youth shelter will be an area warranting specific further investigation, given the likelihood that it will impact positively on anti-social behaviour in the area.

3 Suggestions of future priorities
When asked what issues should become priorities or objectives in the future for the task group and the Community Development workers to address, five interviewees stated a need to continue with existing objectives. Six stated the lack of participation in the task group by local residents, and felt that any way to increase this would benefit them and their work in the area. Interviewees also identified a need to engage more, consistently and frequently with young people in introducing new diversionary activities for them, and if possible to have a youth forum or subgroup able to feed in to the main task group. One last suggestion was to build on the success of the Monkwick Residents Association model, to introduce more across the small areas, and to link them across the ward to build up a more cohesive community.

4 TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report was to assess the value of community development investment in Berechurch. This incorporates the achievements of the Berechurch task group, which has been the mainstay for a lot of the community development work and investment in the ward, since its set up in December 2003. Also incorporated are a number of activities set up by separate individuals or agencies which, whilst supported by the task group, would not have happened without considerable additional input from these individuals.

Community Development in Berechurch

The Community Development team's investment in Berechurch arose from Colchester Borough Council's Strategic Plan (2000), which set in a high priority on tackling deprivation. Whilst the Council already had a strong track record of community development elsewhere in the borough, the new Strategic Plan was the spur to starting work in Berechurch.

Community Development in Berechurch was initiated through research into community needs and setting up a local task group who agreed upon a clearly defined set of objectives. This evaluation sets out to assess how the Community Development team's input has helped to build the capacity of the 'community' in helping itself. Community is taken in its broadest sense, meaning not only the residents, but people working in statutory, community and business organisations located in Berechurch.

Establishing local need

In 2002 a needs assessment was carried out in Berechurch, which involved interviewing 22 community groups, services and statutory services and more than 200 residents.

The research identified the following main concerns in Berechurch:

- The need to develop a sense of community
- A lack of community meeting spaces and facilities
- A need to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) in young people, and to include them in planning and addressing measures to combat ASB.
- A need to increase support for community and voluntary groups
- Insufficient facilities for children

The Berechurch Task Group first met in December 2003. From the start the group felt the main issues the research had identified were the main priorities, and decided to focus on them.

The group had wide involvement from the community, including residents, ward councillors, community leaders such as the Headteachers of both the Junior and Infants Schools, and the governor of the local Secondary school, workers based in the ward such as Health Visitors, Police Community Support Workers, and council staff from the Community Development team.

Report structure

The body of this report is separated into four sections. The first looks at interviewees' perceptions of the five key objectives coming out of the Needs Assessment from 2002 (see above). The following section looks at each of the objectives in turn. Under each objective a description of activities carried out so far since the assessment, in order to address the objective, is given. In addition any relevant observations coming out of the research will be dealt with in turn. Thereafter for each activity or observation an evaluation is given, based on the data collected (for further information please see section 6, Methodology).

These actions incorporate the work of the Task Group, the community development worker for the area, key local residents, and of groups and agencies working in the area such as the United Solutions Group and the Essex Youth Service. This structure was chosen in order to incorporate all achievements made for the community, not just those solely made by the task group.

The third section evaluates the quantitative data governing crime and ASB in the Berechurch ward. The fourth section looks at any future objectives for the task group to take on, as suggested by the interviewees.

6 METHODOLOGY

This report is based on findings from a combination of research methods and sources. These include:

- Interviews with key local people working in the area to improve quality of life
- Focus groups with young people
- Analysis of police data on anti-social behaviour (ASB)

A more detailed description of each of the methods used is given below.

Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with key local people working to improve quality of life in Berechurch. These were essentially those people who have at some point been involved in the Berechurch Task Group, taken from the attendees list provided by the Community Development Workers at Colchester Borough Council. Interviewees were asked a series of questions relating to Berechurch, and the impact of community development work in the area.

Choice of Methodology

At the outset of producing this series of evaluation reports for the four wards that have established Task Groups, it was decided that face-to-face interviews would a more effective method than a postal drop. This method was chosen given the length of the questionnaire and the fact that many of the interviewees are busy individuals with many day-to-day work commitments. Postal drops are known for their low response rate, and this was felt to be a particular risk in view of the busy nature of respondents as mentioned.

Concern was expressed that the face-to-face survey could bias responses, given that respondents are typically reluctant to give less honest responses in a one-on-one situation than if filling out a questionnaire alone. All interviewees were reassured about the impartiality of the interviewer, in the hope that this would encourage them to speak more openly. Respondents were also assured that they would not be named individually within the report, and as such could remain anonymous. This it was hoped would enable interviewees to speak more freely.

The interview questions

The basic structure from the interview was taken from the first in this series of reports, the Old Heath Questionnaire. This was amended slightly to reflect the unique concerns of the Berechurch Task Group, but many of the more generic questions were retained to enable the future comparative evaluation between the wards. The interview asked about the activities of the task group, using a mix of structured, tick box questions, and open-ended 'qualitative' questions. This combination of question types was designed to quantify the number of people that shared a particular view, yet also explore issues in more detail from interviewees' point of view where appropriate. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1.

The interviewees

Interviews were carried out with 21 people that had an interest in the Berechurch area during November and December 2005. The majority of those interviewed were representatives from the statutory sector operating in the area (11) or community and voluntary groups working in the area (six). Additionally two interviewees were residents from Berechurch who were particularly active members of the task group. A further two were ward Councillors in the area. See Appendix 2 for a full list of interviewees.

Supplementary Interviews

Subsequent to the production of the first draft of this evaluation, it was decided that some additional, unstructured interviews should take place. There are a number of activities or initiatives completed by active and non-active members of the Berechurch Task Group, which were not covered (or only covered superficially) in the body of the main interview. This is because the work and planning of these activities, whilst mentioned at the Task Group, were conducted mainly outside of the group. Given that this evaluation is examining *all* community investment in the selected area over the given time period, it was decided that four additional interviews would take place, covering the nature of these specific individual projects. The interviews were with the following individuals, and are referred to in the text as such:

- o The Scout Hut Leader
- o The founder of The Monkwick Residents Association (R.O.M.E – Residents of Monkwick Estate)
- o The founder and leader for the local Pre-School Group
- o One key participant of the newly (at the time of producing this report in running for 3 months) founded Monkwick Youth Group

Focus Groups

One date and location for a focus group was selected, and within the group two sub-groups were formed, each consisting of approximately ten young people. Young people were asked their opinion on recreational opportunities for young people in the area, and whether they felt there had been any improvements over the last two years.

Choice of methodology

Focus groups were the method chosen to consult with young people for a number of reasons. The focus group method is similar to qualitative interviewing, but rather than asking each person to respond to a question in turn, people are encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions, exchange stories and comment on each others' experiences and points of view. This means that it is particularly useful for exploring

people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine, not only what people think, but also how they think and why they think that way.[2]

On a practical level, focus groups are a quick and convenient way to collect data from several people simultaneously. They can be particularly effective for working with young people since, unlike the postal survey, they do not discriminate people on the basis of their reading and writing abilities. This method was also thought to be particularly appropriate since some young people may be unwilling to be interviewed on their own or feel they have nothing to say.

The focus group meetings

The recommended number of participants for an effective focus group is usually between eight to 12 people. It was decided that the focus group would be held at the second meeting of the Monkwick Youth Club (after its reopening in early December 2005), as this was the main point of congregation, outside of school, for young people in the area. This suggestion was made by Essex Youth Workers, who facilitate the youth club. Within previous evaluations Community Street Wardens acted as a contact point for recruiting young people to the focus groups. As the wardens do not patrol the Berechurch area, we had instead to rely on hope that enough young people would turn up on the night! Essex Youth Workers mentioned to the young people the date that someone from the Council would be attending the youth club, so that they had some prior warning of our being there.

As it turned out, on the date of the focus group, approximately 20 young people turned up to the club. Given the high number, it was decided that two sub-groups should be formed, and discussions held in a smaller room, away from the main room where the facilities such as tennis table and pool are held. It was felt that the smaller groups would be more conducive to productive conversation, and the location would be quieter than if it were held within the main hall.

Starting the focus group

At the beginning of each of the sub-group sessions, the Essex Youth Worker introduced the researcher informally, reminding the young people of who they were and why they were there. The details of the project were then explained. Before starting the discussion, the participants were then asked to respect one another's opinions, and not interrupt when others were speaking.

Once the discussion began, there was immediately a lot of conversation and opinions expressed by those involved. The Essex Youth Worker facilitated in controlling the discussion and leading it in the required direction. In general this proved successful, although at times participants needed to be reminded of the groundrules. On reflection, it may have been preferable to take even smaller sub-groups for discussion, as some of the quieter members of the group may have felt unable to express thoughts with such dominant characters present. This said, every effort was made to include and encourage views of the members.

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[2] Jenny Kitzinger, 'Qualitative Research: Introducing focus groups' BMJ 1995; 311:299-302 (29 July)

One line of questioning related to areas that young people congregate in within the ward, when they are "out and about". On reflection this line of question should perhaps have been avoided. Young people tended not to want to speak about this, seeing it as accusatory. In future evaluations this will therefore be omitted.

Police data

Police *Reported* and *Recorded* Crime data for 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 was used in the analysis of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This was used alongside interview and focus group data to evidence the impact made surrounding the issue of ASB in Berechurch over the last three years. A further explanation of the data is provided below.

Police Reported Crime data

Police Reported Crime is a record of *all* incidents and disturbances reported to the police during a given period. This includes reports that are not recognised as *criminal* behaviour. It is a particularly valuable source in analysing ASB since behaviour that is perceived as intimidating, threatening or unpleasant to others in the neighbourhood is not necessarily criminal.

Police Reported Crime data was filtered to include only reports classified as ASB. These included: Disorder, Criminal Damage, Violence, Other Non-Criminal Incidents, Vehicle Related Nuisance, Public Order Offences Other, Sexual Offences, Drugs, Robbery, Abandoned Vehicle (Stolen), Abandoned Vehicle (Wreck), Dangerous Driving and Indecent Exposure

Limitations with Police Reported crime data

Whilst Police Reported Crime data gives a unique perspective on the types of complaints people may have about their neighbourhood, it is important to emphasise that it is not based on independent evidence, but on calls received by the police from members of the public. Therefore, this constitutes residents' *perceptions* of what may be termed anti-social behaviour (ASB). In addition, there may be double counting of incidents included in this data where more than one person has called in about the same incident. Therefore the data and any conclusions drawn from the data must be used with caution.

Police Recorded Crime Data

Police Recorded Crime is those crimes which are recorded by the police and which are notified to the Home Office. All indictable and triable-either-way offences are included together with certain closely associated summary offences. Attempts are also included.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) offences were classified on the basis of offences used in the police report, 'Problem Profile on Anti-Social Behaviour'[3]. This included Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Affray, Arson, Resisting Arrest, Common Assault, Criminal Damage, Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), Public Order Incident (Section 4 and 5) and Robbery.

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[3] *'Problem Profile on Anti-Social Behaviour'*, Intelligence Analysis Team (2004); Colchester Division, Essex Police.

Limitations with Police Recorded Crime data

Police Recorded Crime data is also limited in that it is sensitive to police activities and operations. In other words, fluctuations in the number of offences recorded during any given period might be related, at least in part, to the police priorities at that time. Therefore, although police data is extremely valuable in analysing the extent and types of ASB, the data and any conclusions drawn from the data must be used with caution.

Supplementary interviews

To overcome these limitations with police data, a supplementary interview was carried out with the Police Community Support Officer who had worked in Berechurch for approximately one year, and regularly patrols the area. This Officer had some awareness of the area prior to her being employed as a PCSO, from information colleagues had given her. This interviewee had first hand experience in dealing with ASB in Berechurch, and was therefore considered invaluable to the evaluation.

Consultation with residents

This research did not include consultation with residents to explore whether they felt quality of life had improved since the last survey was carried out in 2003. Due to the fact that the task group has only been in existence since 2003, it was decided that would be best to postpone a survey of residents until some of the improvements demonstrated sustainability. So as not to introduce 'survey fatigue' into the area, it was thought to be more appropriate to carry out a survey in 2008, some five years after the setting up of the task group.

7 FINDINGS

The findings have been organised into the objectives for the area, as sourced from the Berechurch Community Strengths Assessment (see Introduction, section 5, for further details). The exceptions to this are section 7.1 below, which deals initially with interviewees' feelings towards the existing objectives, and section 7.4, which covers interviewees' ideas for future priorities.

7.1 Feelings towards existing priorities
The interviewees were asked what level of importance they would rate the existing objectives set out for the Berechurch Task Group, as sourced from the Berechurch Community Strengths Assessment.
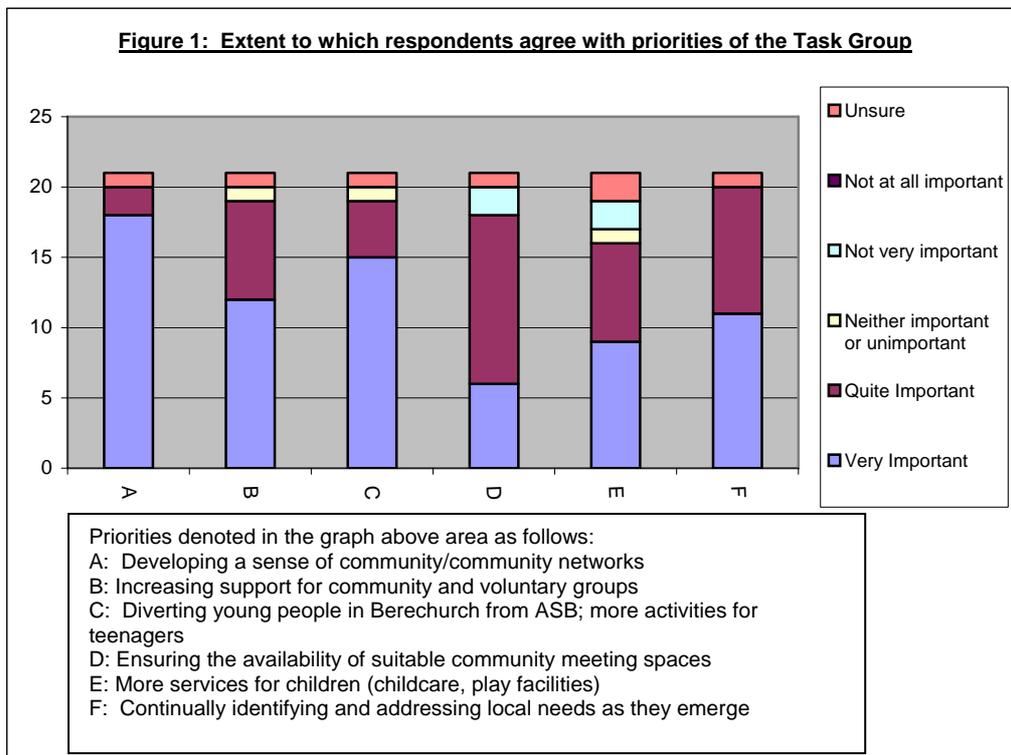
Figure 1 indicates a commitment to priorities from most respondents. Those considered most crucial were A, developing a sense of community/community networks (many considered this objective to underpin the entire working of the task group) and C, diverting young people from anti-social behaviour. Objective E, providing more services for children, received the highest number of responses *not* in agreement of the importance of this as a priority. Two respondents stated "unsure", two "not very important", and one "neither important nor unimportant". Objective D, ensuring the availability of suitable community meeting spaces, also received two answers of "not very important", although had a greater number of respondents in agreement overall.

The two respondents who felt that more services for children were not very important gave the reason that there are sufficient pre-school facilities already available, but that uptake and commitment from parents is low. As such whilst the belief expressed within the original Community Strengths Assessment was that insufficient

pre-school facilities were available, in reality uptake may be the issue. These respondents stated that the task group are already aware of this misconception. The two respondents who stated objective D, ensuring the availability of suitable community meeting spaces, not to be very important gave the following reasons:

"The issue of community spaces came up a couple of years ago when the group started out, since then with the work towards the Scout Hut refurbishment and more activities at the churches, I think we have enough options in the area"

"It doesn't affect me and the work I do in the area, so I don't see it as an important objective".

Those who were unsure or answered "neither important or unimportant" were not regular members of the task group and did not feel they knew enough about the objectives to respond.

7.2 Actions achieved in relation to priorities

7.2.1 Priority 1: To develop a sense of community

One of the key outcomes of the Community Strengths Assessment was the need to develop a sense of community. The household survey carried out as part of the assessment showed that a large number of people in Berechurch felt that they are not part of their community. Additionally very few people were found to be active members of local community groups. It was therefore recommended that support be offered to foster community participation, for example through community events or celebrations.

Community activity, involvement and resident participation in the task group

This section will firstly look at the general community involvement and activity in the area, and how this has altered since December 2003, in order to assess how far developed a sense of community in the area now is. Specific actions to address this objective will be assessed thereafter.

Resident Participation in the Task Group

Resident participation is underway, with around 38% of the groups' attendees also being residents of the ward. It should be recognised that the number of residents in attendance has increased more recently, with 3 of the 12 residents making up this 38% having joined on the last 3 - 4 months.

This is encouraging. Whilst there is no specific target set for numbers of residents involved within the task group, a steady increase has been seen, particularly in the last 3 months. One interviewee commented that they felt resident participation had been spurred on by the influence of the Monkwick Residents Association (R.O.M.E), which could explain this recent increase.

In spite of this apparent positive progression towards community involvement in the task group, a handful of interviewees still seemed to feel that this was a problem.

When asked what barriers might exist to effectively improving quality of life in the area for example, five interviewees stated a lack of representation from residents.

Two interviewees commented that it may be the case that the message needs to be put out to all areas of the ward once again, as there is a widespread lack of awareness of the groups existence, for example:

"The lack of residents in attendance is a problem. Greater advertising of the group needs to be carried out – Lethe Grove, areas like that which may well not be aware of its existence"

This comment highlights that the ward covers a wide area geographically (see also Section 7.4 – other priorities for the group to consider), and this should be borne in mind when considering how far reaching the task group is currently; it may be the case that not all areas are aware of the group.

Two interviewees stated that the lower number of residents in attendance was to some extent inevitable, given the relatively short time for which the group has been in operation. Both stated that the community was "a particularly hard one to reach", reinforcing the feeling that it may take significant time and commitment to gain further input from residents.

One of the interviewees commented on the original ideal that the group's objectives could be transferable to the residents, and they would then run the group with more limited involvement from Colchester Borough Council Community Development Workers. The respondent commented that this was unlikely to become a realistic possibility, unless a significant increase in the numbers of residents attending was seen. The respondent commented that they felt the input of the Council's Community Development Workers was excellent, but queried whether it could be maintained long term.

Several of the members of the task group who are residents of Berechurch are also professionals working in the area. It may be the case that these interviewees perceived a low number of residents in attendance as they were in fact referring to those more "hard to reach" residents in the area, rather than those who run community or voluntary groups in the area. This is however only a suggestion, and should be interpreted tentatively as such.

Community Activity

The majority of interviewees have observed an increase in community activity in Berechurch since the Task Group started meeting; a total of 17 interviewees agreed either strongly or slightly, as displayed in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that there has been more community activity in Berechurch since the Task Group started meeting?

This is encouraging, and indicates progression towards a sense of community, participation and engagement within the area.

Resident participation with community or voluntary groups

Interviewees were asked whether they felt that more local residents have been involved in their community or voluntary group since December 2003. Of the 18 who felt that the question applied to them, 13 (approx. 60%) felt that there had been more residents involved, three felt that there had not, and two were unsure, as displayed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Do you agree that there have been more local residents involved in your community or voluntary group since December 2003?
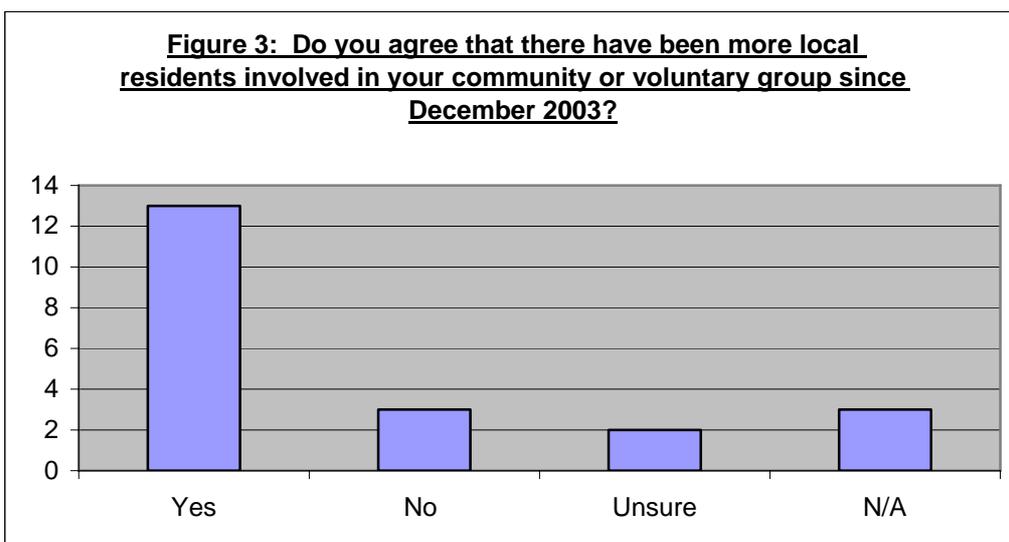
Those interviewees who felt that there had been more residents involved in their community/voluntary group were asked whether they felt that this was connected to the setting up of the task group.

There was quite a variation in responses received. Whilst six interviewees strongly agreed that the increase in involvement was connected to the task group, and three slightly agreed, two neither agreed nor disagreed, one slightly disagreed, and one strongly disagreed (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: To what extent do you agree that this increased involvement is connected to the set up of the Task Group?
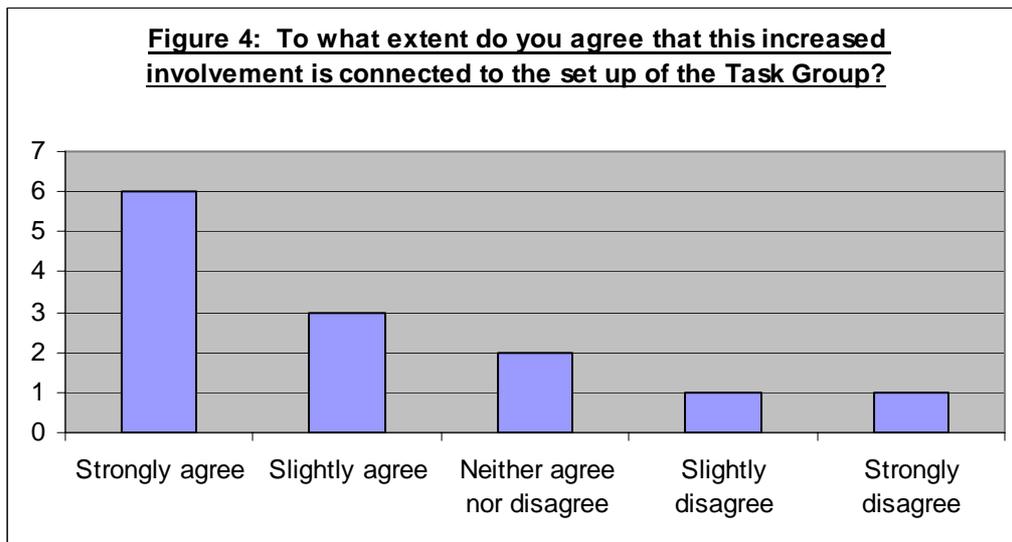
Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed, one gave the reason that they had been advertising for the groups they organise locally in the Berechurch area, and had increased doing so in the last couple of years. They felt that this was quite separate from the work of the task group. The other of these respondents stated similarly that involving residents was a large part of her day to day work, and any successes she had had at doing so in recent times were probably owing to her rather than the group. The interviewee who responded "slightly disagree" gave a very similar reason.

The respondent who strongly disagreed gave the reason that her group was intended to cover a very small area of the ward (confined to one/two streets), and as such more people becoming involved in that group was a result of word of mouth in that area, not the task group.

Specific actions and initiatives

The following section evaluates three of the specific actions of the Berechurch Task Group, and key local residents, to create and encourage a sense of community.

Fundays

The group has organised two Fundays, one in 2004 and one in 2005. The numbers in the past have not been great, estimates are around 500, so in 2005 the group asked for feedback from participants. The group have begun discussions for the

2006 Funday, which is taking this feedback into account, and will therefore include a car boot sale, a sports day and more activities for young people.

Interviewees were asked how successful they felt the Fundays had been, on a scale of very successful to not at all successful, and including unsure on the scale as well (see Figure 5 below). The Funday was perceived as being most successful by interviewees (interviewees were also asked to rate the Berechurch Bugle and the Monkwick Residents Association), with 80% of respondents stating that it was either very successful of quite successful.

Figure 5: Perceived success of Fundays according to interviewees

- ■ Very successful
- ■ Quite successful
- □ Neither successful/unsuccessful
- □ Not vey successful
- ■ Not at all successful
- ■ Unsure
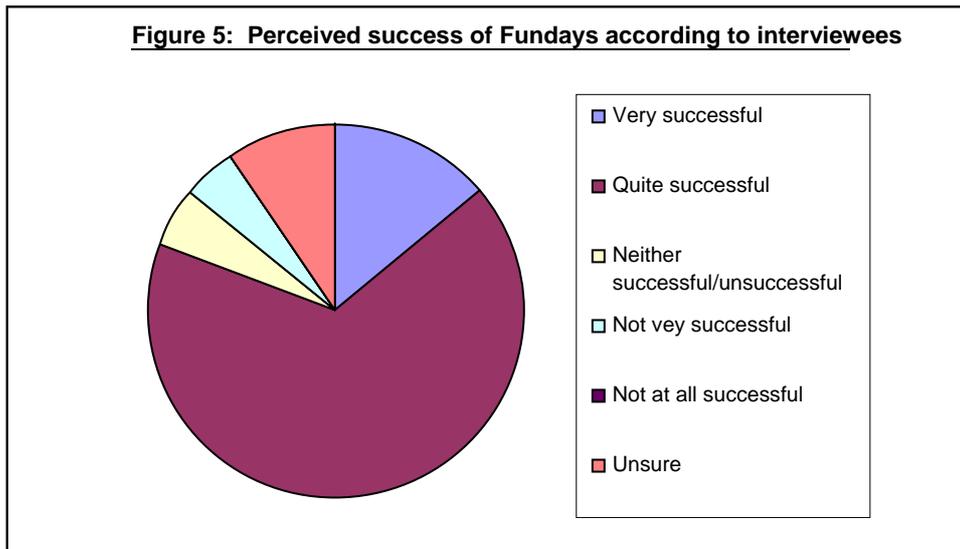
When asked in what way respondents felt the Task Group had helped them to meet their objectives for working in the area, one respondent commented specifically on the value of the Fundays in achieving what they felt to be the underpinning message of the task group, to *"bring the community together".*

This respondent spoke about how the Fundays have enabled the school which they work for to become more involved with the local community, to allow them to have a more supportive, rather than purely educational/statutory, role towards the residents:

"the school was looking to celebrate community activity rather than school activity, and the task group provided the necessary backing and support to make the fundays happen"

Finally, when asked in what way they felt their community or voluntary group had become more involved with the local community, four interviewees cited the joint working which the task group has provided. Of these, two noted that the Fundays specifically had given them greater inroads into the local community; and that they came about through joint working and commitment from the group.

R.O.M.E – Monkwick Residents Association
A local resident has set up, with the assistance and direction of the Task Group, the Monkwick Residents Association (ROME – Residents of Monkwick Estate). This began in April 2005.

Several respondents mentioned throughout the success and value of the Monkwick Residents Association, and one respondent even commented on the potential value of other areas within the ward hosting similar groups. The respondent mentioned that The Willows Estate in particular would benefit from such a group. However, on analysing this data it was discovered that a Residents Association already exists on this estate, and as such the issue could be with awareness and promoting what provision there is in existence, rather than supporting the set-up of new associations. This interviewee went on to suggest that all groups could feed back into the Task Group.

When asked specifically about the success of the Association, very positive feedback was provided by interviewees. Almost 80% of respondents felt that this had been either very or quite successful. Six respondents thought this had been very successful. Of the four who were unsure, this was mainly because interviewees had not been involved or were unaware of the association.

Figure 6: Perceived success of Monkwick Residents Association (R.O.M.E)

- Very Successful
- Quite Successful
- Neither successful/unsuccessful
- Not very successful
- Not at all successful
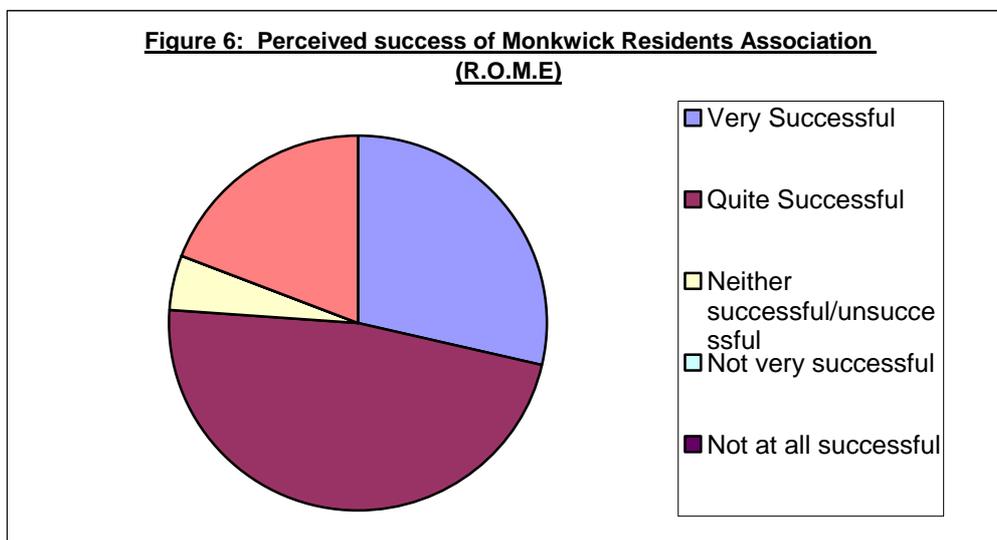
Interview with the founder of Monkwick Residents Association

This supplementary interview was carried out via email, and as such any quotations provided are taken directly from the text forwarded by the interviewee.

The interviewee was questioned as to the growth of the group, and how it has developed since its first meeting in April 2005.   The response showed the group in a very positive light:

"whilst some of the original members have left the area or moved on, in general there has been a steady growth in as much as each (monthly) meeting has yielded one or two new members plus pretty consistent attendance from 'regulars'"

The interviewee went on to state that at the largest meeting to date there were between 25 and 30 attendees, and that the overall number of members was somewhere between 35 and 40.

The meetings tend to tackle similar issues to the task group itself. As an issue of particular local concern, anti-social behaviour and how best to tackle it is discussed at every meeting. "*Alongside this*", the interviewee stated, *"is usually mentioned the Youth initiatives that have been proposed or provided by authorities or other external sources & how these will hopefully help involve our younger people in their community, as well as serving to keep them out of trouble".* Other issues regularly discussed include housing matters, fundraising ideas, forthcoming events relevant to the local community, and *"any recent local accolades".*

When asked how the group has progressed, and whether it can be viewed as a success, the interviewee stated:

"To this end, I do feel that the residents association has been welcomed by the vast majority of those who have become involved. Though I am unlikely to be involved after this year (as I am moving elsewhere), I sincerely hope that it will continue….in spite of some difficulties and set backs, I do very much feel it has been a success, not least because there were so many people who seemed to feel that this community simply wouldn't "gel".

The Berechurch Bugle

The Berechurch Bugle was created to distribute amongst the ward residents, to advertise existing facilities and amenities. Eight issues of the Bugle have been delivered with the help of volunteers from the group. Each issue usually includes articles from: local schools, adult education providers, churches, activities in the Ormiston Centre, details of residents meetings and other news of interest to the local community.

Interviewees were asked to rate the success of three of the completed actions of the task group to date on a scale of very successful to not at all successful, and including unsure on the scale as well. The activity or action seen with the lowest positive responses was the newsletter, the Berechurch Bugle. 13 of the 21 respondents stated that it was either very or quite successful. Whilst this is a majority of just over 60%, 4 interviewees were unsure, and 4 felt that is was neither successful or unsuccessful. Many gave the reason for this being that they had not seen enough of the Bugle, and felt that it did not have sufficiently wide circulation to be deemed a success. One respondent mentioned a lack of willing within the task group of volunteers to distribute the newsletter.

Figure 7: Perceived success of the Berechurch Bugle by interviewees

Legend:
- Very Successful
- Quite Successful
- Neither successful nor unsuccessful
- Not very successful
- Not at all successful
- Unsure
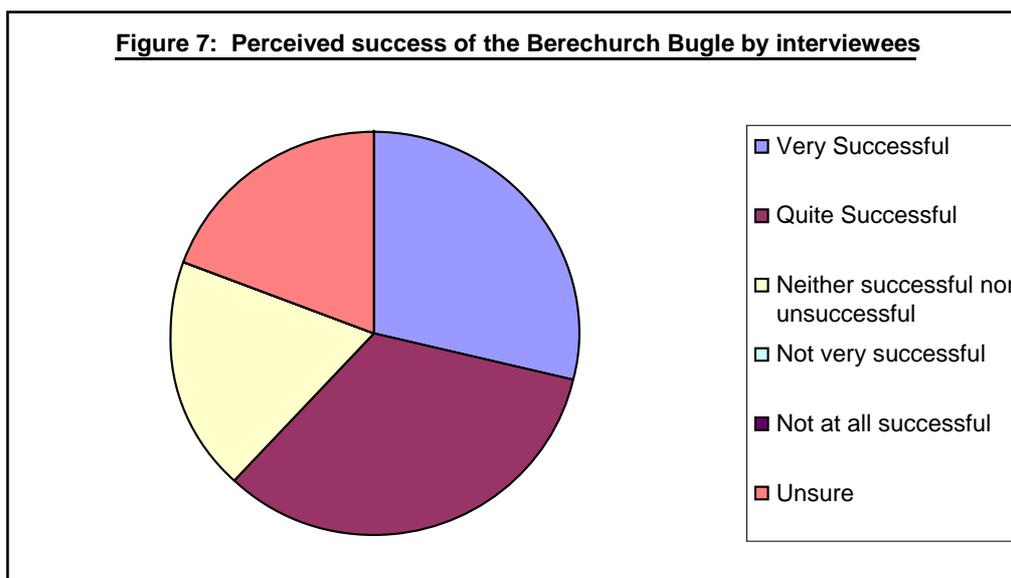
This lack of willing was mentioned elsewhere more generally by respondents; two interviewees commented on the lack of commitment from residents to engage in activities to bring about change, when asked what barriers might exist to improving quality of life in the area. In relation to the newsletter however, the one respondent who commented on this displayed an understanding for the reasons behind it: "*this is not a criticism of the group, it just goes to show how busy those in attendance are*". This interviewee elaborated by saying that a lot of the regular attendees of the group are employed full time in fairly senior roles within statutory or community organisations.

7.2.2 Priority 2: To address a lack of community meeting spaces and facilities

The lack of places for groups to meet was identified as a problem in Berechurch ward. Potential meeting places, it was recommended at the time, need to be explored in Berechurch itself and imaginative use of existing venues could be suggested for groups to use. Groups, it was stated, need to be encouraged to use existing meeting spaces as well as being assisted in finding new community facilities.

Feelings about this as priority

This section will firstly look at the general issue of feelings towards current availability of meeting spaces. Specific actions will be evaluated thereafter.

Support for this priority

As stated in section 7.1, there was widespread support for this priority from interviewees. Indeed, when asked what barriers could exist to the success of community investment and the task group in the area, one respondent stated the lack of a community focal point as currently being a major problem:

"we need a community centre, or at least some kind of focal point. This could be a location for the task group to be held at and information about the group to be disseminated through. Perhaps even a website for the community – the Residents Association is putting one together – the task group should have one as well"

This feeling that there is no central meeting point to the ward was also raised by two participants of the youth focus group, who stated that they had "nowhere to go".

Specific actions and initiatives

This section will look at the specific actions carried out in an attempt to address the issue of community meeting spaces, by the task group, and by relevant local community members.

Scout Hut Alterations

The major project to address this issue has been the changes proposed to the existing Scout Hut. £110,000 has now been secured to rebuild the Scout Hut on Monkwick Avenue. This will mean a meeting space is available during the day for local residents.

As one of the major, leading community projects for the area, the Scout Hut alterations project was selected for analysis and a further discussion of problems and successes within the questionnaire. 20 of the 21 interviewees stated that they were aware of the attempts to improve or increase on existing community meeting spaces. The one respondent who was not aware of this was not a regular member of the task group. Of the 20 who were aware of the project, interestingly only six felt that they had been involved in the process.

Whilst this issue has been discussed at length at the Task Group meetings, it would seem that the majority of interviewees took this question to refer to direct involvement, which would account for the low number claiming to be involved. As such a more detailed interview was carried out with the Beaver Scout Leader, Sue Wickens, who has been heavily involved in the project. It was felt that this extended interview would give a more "close to home" view of the success of the project. Firstly the opinions of the six interviewees who claimed to have been involved will be analysed. They were asked a series of questions aimed at assessing what had been successful within the project and what failings may have occurred so far.

Effectiveness of Project Planning

Of the six respondents, one felt the planning of the project so far has been "neither effective nor ineffective", two responded "quite effective", and three felt that the effectiveness of the project planning had so far been "very effective".

The respondent who claimed that the planning had been "neither effective nor ineffective" stated that they felt frustrated by the pace at which things were happening.

Things that have gone particularly well so far

Two respondents claimed that they felt the securing of funding for the Scout Hut refurbishments had been a success, and whilst may have taken time to secure, one responded that "*it wouldn't have happened without the hard work of the Community Development Workers at the council*"

One respondent mentioned the making of building arrangements for renovations to the Scout Hut having been a significant success. At the time of writing this report the renovations were just underway.

One respondent stated it was difficult to reference what may have gone well when the project was really still at a relatively early stage.

Problems

Interviewees were asked if they could think of any significant problems encountered within the planning and carrying out of the project.

Two respondents stated that they felt apathy and time constraints on members of the group was a problem. Both felt that there was at times an unwillingness to commit to helping with change from members of the task group. This comment can perhaps be related to the fact that very few interviewees considered themselves to have been actively involved in the project itself, although almost all were aware of it.

One further respondent stated that initially availability of money had been an issue (although the interviewee clarified that the final sum agreed to was substantial). This interviewee also commented on the issue of security that had arisen in terms of the refurbishments. Finally this respondent also mentioned that reaching agreement on the shared use and ownership of the Hut by the community had been problematic, and dragged out over several meetings.

Dealing with problems

There was quite a mixed response to the question of how well the problems have been handled by the group.

Two respondents stated "quite well", one "not very well", and three stated "neither well nor badly".

Of those who stated "neither well nor badly", this was generally not a negative statement, but signified the fact that problems were either not considered significant enough to quantify how they were dealt with, or that problems were not identified. One respondent who stated "neither well nor badly", for example, had given as a problem the apathy and unwillingness of the group to commit to assisting with changes which, they stated, is an ongoing issue to be tackled in relation to all aims of the group.

The respondent who stated that problems were not dealt with very well felt that the group needed a "champion or figurehead" who was able to devote all their time to the cause. The respondent commented that the work of the Community Development Workers had been pivotal in all that had happened so far for the group, but that someone with greater time to contribute to the cause was needed.

Interview with the Scout Leader

As mentioned, an extended interview was carried out with the Scout Leader, who had been heavily involved in the project. She spoke about how the project had first been discussed, initiated by her, approximately two years ago, and since then the extent of the work to be carried out has changed significantly. She spoke very positively of the development of the project, highlighting the increase in funding available as significant in allowing the scope of the project to increase:

"originally £10,000 was available. Now a huge amount more is. This has meant the project has been able to grow to much more than I ever envisaged. Now the whole building is being rebuilt where at first I was only after a bit of a refurb"

She went on to praise both the involvement of the Community Development workers at Colchester Borough Council, and one of the elected members for Berechurch, both of whom had been pivotal in moving the project forward.

She felt that the production of the plans for the rebuild had gone particularly smoothly, and that the project overall had progressed very well so far. When asked if there were any particular problems with developments to date, the interviewee found it difficult to single any out. She stated that initially progress had been a little bit slow, but accounted for this by saying:

"we had to assess estimates from three different builders. That sort of thing takes time. We couldn't have expected all of it to have happened really quickly. I think since the final funding has been secured things have moved particularly quickly, actually"

She also spoke positively and with enthusiasm about the range of options that this new facility is likely to open up to the community:

"now that the building is being completely demolished, and made bigger with small rooms at the side of the main hall, we can host a whole range of facilities. We can have drop-in centres. The building is also going to be rebuilt with toilets, heating and a kitchen – we've never had even basic facilities like this available at the Hut in the past."

The response from this interviewee most involved in the project puts the progress of the Scout Hut rebuild into a very positive light, as does the response of those additional 6 interviewees who felt they were involved, as 5 of these 6 saw the planning of the project so far to have been either quite or very effective.

Room Behind the Catholic Church

A meeting took place between the priest and the Community Development Worker at the Council regarding the availability of the hall at the back of the Catholic Church in 2005. At the time it was agreed that he would check whether the hall could be used for a purpose other than worship. It was agreed that if the answer was yes, he would then need to go to his parishioners and ask their permission. Subsequently, a new priest took over from him, and had been emailed for a response.

It is too early a stage to evaluate the success of this development, but it can be concluded that the Community Development Workers have attempted to use this location as a potential resource.

Venue list to co-ordinate and advertise community venues

A venue list has been compiled to co-ordinate and advertise existing community venues and is regularly updated by the Community Development Worker. St Margarets Hall has been identified as having available space. The Ormiston Centre, Monkwick Clinic and Orchard Baptist Church all have additional space which can be utilised for alternative activities.

Some interviewees acknowledged the efforts made by the Community Development workers to utilise existing meeting spaces; two mentioned this specifically when commenting on their confidence in the community's ability to make an impact on this issue. One stated:

"There have been additional spaces identified. This has helped whilst we are waiting for the Scout Hut refurbishments to be completed"

Also referred to was the value of the list of venues and contacts produced by the community development worker at Colchester Borough Council.

Overall confidence in the ability to impact on this priority

Interviewees were asked the question of whether their confidence in the community's ability to make an impact on the issue of community meeting spaces had increased or decreased since the introduction of the task group and further community investment in the area.

The majority (17) of respondents stated that their confidence had increased a little or a lot since the task group began. One stated that it had stayed the same, one was

unsure, and one felt that it had decreased a little. When asked why they felt more confident of the impact that could be made, six of the 17 respondents stated progress towards the physical improvements to the Scout Hut. Two further interviewees stated that existing facilities, such as the Thomas Lord Audley school, St. Margarets and the Orchard Baptist Church had expanded what room they had to allow for more activities to take place.

7.2.3 Priority 3: To increase support for community and voluntary groups

According to the Community Strengths Assessment, many people felt that although Berechurch had received resources in the past, the community has had minimal support in building the skills and capacity of existing groups. Support of community and voluntary groups in Berechurch should be increased and delivered proactively, it was recommended at the time.

Feelings towards levels of support in place

This section will firstly look at how feelings towards levels of support have changed since the set-up of the task group.

Levels of Support

Interviewees were asked to what extent they felt more supported in the work they did with the local community since the task group started meeting. The results are displayed in Figure 8.

Figure 8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that you feel more supported in your work with the local community since the task group started meeting?
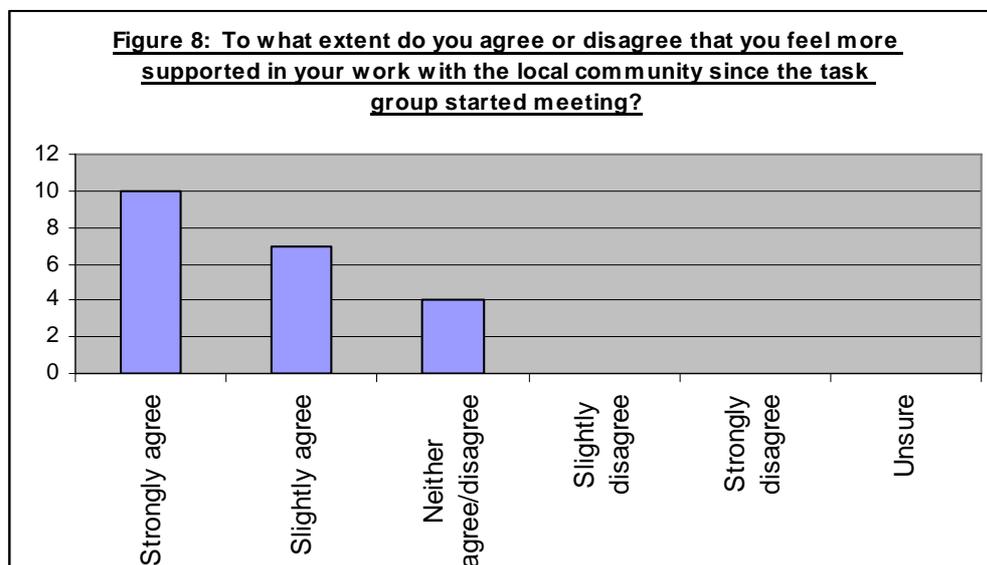
Figure 8 shows that 17 of the 21 interviewees agreed, and of that 17, 10 strongly agreed. Interviewees' perceptions towards level of support have therefore altered over the given time period, with there seeming to be a general increase in the number of individuals within the community feeling supported and assisted in their work in the area.

Further ways support could be given

Interviewees were asked in what ways they felt they could be more supported by the local community. Figure 9 displays the responses.

Figure 9: In what ways do you feel you could be more supported by the local community?
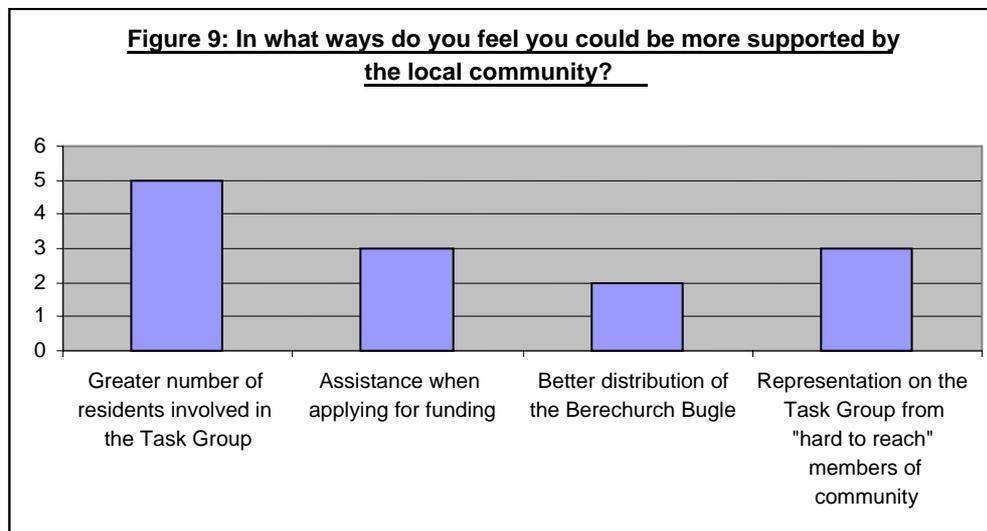
There was quite a range of responses, which reflected many of the points previously made (see Figure 9 above). The most common response, raised by five interviewees, was a desire to feel more supported by having a greater number of residents involved in the group. Three stated the potential benefit of assistance in applying for funding; for example whereby the council could advocate the benefit of funding bids within them. One respondent however stated that the Community Development Workers have done this in the past for them, and were sure they would do it again. Two sited better use of the Berechurch Bugle in advertising opportunities provided in the area, and specifically stated the problems of poor circulation which they felt the group should address.

Three further respondents suggested representation on the group from specific, "hard to reach" members of the community, such as the elderly, and young people.

Specific actions and initiatives

In order to address the issue of support for community and voluntary groups, the following measures have been achieved for the community.

Use of the Berechurch Bugle as advertising space

The Berechurch Bugle has increasingly been used as "advertising space" for local community and voluntary groups. Organisations send through their adverts by a given deadline. Greyfriars Adult Community College, The Learning Shop, and the local pre-school have all used this as advertising space.

Two interviewees, when discussing which task group initiatives had helped them to meet their objectives, mentioned unprompted the value of the task group in advertising the work that they do to other professionals and to local residents.

One respondent gave the example of a pre-school nursery they have recently opened, which the task group supported and advertised through not only communication at the meetings, but through an article in the Berechurch Bugle. However this respondent went on to comment on the subsequent lack of take-up within the pre-school. This could perhaps be related to comments elsewhere about poor distribution of the Bugle, but this suggestion must be viewed tentatively, as the advertisement alone cannot be held accountable for a lack of take-up; other options could be that it may be an issue of the actual numbers of children and young people available for take-up in the area being low, for example, or it may be related to the perceived value of the service being offered/provided.

The second respondent spoke of the value of the group in advertising the courses set up for adult learning in Colchester by their organisation. The respondent commented on how the Community Development workers, and the group, had assisted in this instance by helping with production and distribution of leaflets, to enable a wider audience to be reached.

The value of the task group for networking, co-ordinating and information sharing

The task group itself can be identified as providing support for community and voluntary groups. Specifically, the group has supported the set-up of the Monkwick Residents Association (ROME) and also supports other new groups by letting them know where they can go for help or signposting them to the correct organisations.

Several interviewees have mentioned the supportive nature of the group in terms of communication and making important links with other agencies.

When asked how the task group had helped to meet objectives for example, six interviewees mentioned the improvements to communication and networking that the task group has brought. The interviewees felt that they would not have known certain people in the community and how to contact them if it had not been for the task group:

"the task group has enabled better contacts and networking. Now we are aware of the resources and facilities within the ward. We hear about issues and problems which we can resolve. We can also spread the word about volunteering through the group

"previously I had no knowledge of several of the local organisations. The task group has changed all of that, and I feel more involved as a result"

Two of these respondents mentioned the value of the printed list of names and contact telephone numbers provided at each meeting for attendees.

Several respondents also stated, here and at other stages within the interview, that the consistency with which the regular members of the group attended meetings was significant in maintaining these communication networks. Indeed, of the 21 interviewees, 10 stated that they attend all meetings, a further 10 attend most, and one stated that they sometimes attend.

Improvements in Communication

Figure 10: Extent to which communication (between community groups and other professionals) has improved since Decmber 2003
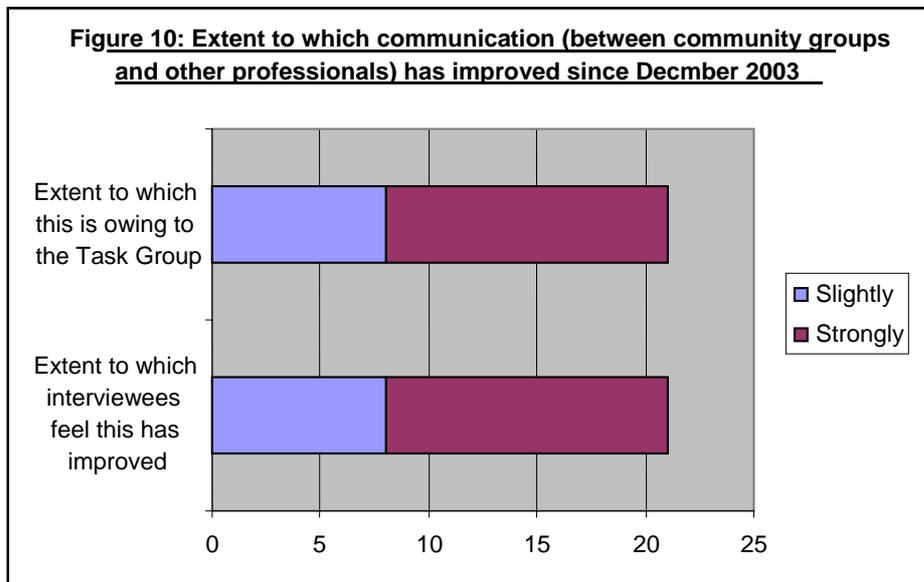
Whilst these positive comments around communication occurred throughout the interviews in response to some of the open questions, interviewees were also asked a direct, closed question regarding the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that communication had improved since December 2003. This question involved asking specifically whether they felt communication had improved between community and voluntary groups and other professionals (e.g. the council) in Berechurch, and to what extent they felt, where they did see improvements, that this was down to the task group (see Figure 10 above).

The response to this question was very encouraging. All interviewees agreed either slightly or strongly that communication had improved, all also agreed either slightly or strongly that this was down to the task group. The majority in both cases strongly agreed.

Community Noticeboard

A noticeboard has recently been erected and will be used by community groups to advertise their activities.

At the time of writing this report, the noticeboard had just been erected, and so its impact on the community cannot at this stage be assessed. Nevertheless, two of the 21 interviewees did comment on the potential impact of this at stages of the interview, once in relation to better opportunities for awareness of activities and their

subsequent uptake, and once in relation to their confidence in the community's ability to make an impact on "developing a sense of community".

One to one support by Community Development Worker

The community development worker at Colchester Borough Council provides one-to-one support where appropriate to individual community and voluntary groups in the area.

A specific example of this is the Community Development worker's work with the Toy Library based in Monkwick to get funding for their summer programme.

When visiting the individual who runs the local "Stay and Play" pre-school in Monkwick (see section 7.2.4), significant support was expressed towards the Community Development Workers in this respect:

"*she (the CD worker) has been brilliant in helping us work towards getting more funding. We find out for definite in May whether we can run the group an extra two times a week over the summer*"

Overall confidence in the community's ability to impact on this issue

Interviewees were questioned as to whether they felt more confident about support being in place for local groups. 18 of the 21 respondents stated that their confidence had increased a little or a lot. Seven of these 18 gave the reason for this as being the support given to the set-up of the Monkwick Residents Association, and the assistance in finding a grant to fund the association which was gained through the task group and specifically the Community Development workers at Colchester Borough Council. In addition, when interviewees were asked whether the Task Group had helped them to meet their goals for working in the area, 19 of the 21 interviewees said that it had.

7.2.4 Priority 4: A need to provide a greater number of facilities for children

Services for younger children, i.e. play and pre-school facilities, was also felt to be an area in need of improvement according to the responses to the household survey and qualitative interviews, within the Community Strengths Assessment. At the time of conducting the research, local people felt that a gap existed in Berechurch in terms of childcare and play facilities. However further analysis has revealed that play facilities do exist, but that there is a lack of take-up. This could be due to residents not knowing of the existence of these amenities.

This section will look at the specific actions and initiatives carried out to address this objective, and then at the interviewees' overall confidence in the community to impact on this issue.

Specific actions and initiatives

In order to achieve the objective of providing more facilities for children, the following actions have been achieved by the task group and key community members.

Local "Stay and Play" pre-school at St. Margarets Church Hall

There is a local pre-school group held at St. Margarets Church Hall (previously held at the nursery at Monkwick Infants School). The Community Development Worker for the area has recently been working alongside the individual running the group, in order to look at ways to increase uptake.

Interview with the leader of the local "Stay and Play" group

An extended discussion was carried out with the two individuals leading and having founded the Stay and Play group, as the group was not included within the main questionnaire (it was felt not to be widely applicable to interviewees).

The group is based around the idea of the parents or carers accompanying their children to the group, and staying for the duration, interacting with them, other parents and children. It has been based at the Church Hall for approximately 3 years, prior to which it was held at the Infants School.

When discussing the growth of the group, both the leader and the founder of the group felt that improvements had been made, mainly through word of mouth, to the number of people in attendance over recent years.

"*we have 16 families who are in regular attendance. There are more than this registered. When we first moved from the school we had real problems with uptake, but this has evened out now. I think at the moment though uptake is mainly through word of mouth*"

When discussing how uptake could be increased, the interviewee leading the group mentioned how the Community Development Worker at Colchester Borough Council had been working alongside them on advertising strategies:

"*we've been working [with the Community Development Worker], whos been great, on a poster and leaflet campaign for Springlands nursery as well as the Monkwick Stay and Play. We're hoping that will increase uptake and awareness about whats available.*"

When asked about how the group is likely to develop in view of this, the interviewee commented:

"as the group has a strong core attendance, should more families join, they are likely to be quickly welcomed in. The group just recently has started to really gel, such that when new families arrive, they are immediately welcomed in rather than feeling like outsiders. This has probably really only happened just in the last few sessions, though"

This last comment, whilst accountable to the playgroup itself rather than any specific actions of Colchester Borough Council, the task group or any other agency, nevertheless reflects what has been seen elsewhere: that there is just beginning to be a breakdown of barriers and a sense of community in the area. Whereas interviewees have mentioned that Berechurch (in part owing to its nature as being so geographically widespread) is a "particularly hard community to reach" (see section 7.4, and 7.2.1), it appears to be starting to change. See also response from the founder of the Monkwick Residents Association, who states that "*people never thought this community would 'gel'*" (section 7.2.1).

However, a recent event mentioned by two interviewees reflects the need to maintain some focus on this priority: The Dolphins, a local pre-school group held at The Ormiston Centre, was forced to close in 2005 through lack of uptake. One interviewee commented:

"The Dolphins has had to close through lack of take-up. This could happen to other groups in the area, its really important that we make people aware whats out there…but, if people really want to send their kids to groups outside the area, they will"

Furthermore, one interviewee went on to state the possibility of their pre-school group having to shut down:

"There is a huge divide between the Cherry Tree Estate and the rest of the Berechurch ward. This has become evident through the nursery we've opened in the estate – no-one in Berechurch knows about it. Attendance is low, and it may need to close, if the situation doesn't improve. Children aren't being brought up to mix with other young people in the area, which affects community spirit"

This segregation between communities indicates an unwillingness to mix, both from young people and from parents too, who are perhaps sending their children to nurseries outside of Berechurch. This quotation in particular points to the need for a maintained focus on promoting existing facilities in the area, and indeed to building the community spirit that will encourage residents to use the amenities local to them. It should be noted however, that the Berechurch Bugle has already been used to advertise the Cherry Tree Nursery. One interviewee did raise the possibility that there simply aren't as many children of pre-school age in the area as people think

there are; such that there are not enough to meet the current level of provision anyway:

"we focus on the issue of provision, but are we really sure the kids are out there? I'm not convinced they are"

In order to get a better idea of whether this is the case, or whether it is a problem with take-up, a needs analysis of the numbers of under 5's in the area is to be undertaken by the Council's research team and the Community Development workers.

Overall confidence in the community's ability to impact on this issue

Interviewees were questioned as to whether they felt more confident about the community's ability to improve or increase services for children. A total of 13 interviewees felt that services for children had improved either a lot or a little. A further six felt they had stayed the same, and two were unsure. Of those who stated their confidence had stayed the same, three gave the reason that the number of facilities or services there was not the issue, nor was the quality; rather that the problem was with the lack of uptake. One interviewee commented:

"*we may have increased awareness through the task group, but whether this has been transferred to the local community, I don't know. The facilities are there, and so are the kids apparently, and yet uptake remains low"*

7.2.5 Priority 5: The need to divert young people in Berechurch from anti-social behaviour.

The Community Strengths Assessment highlighted, both from the qualitative interviews carried out and the household survey, that anti-social behaviour of young people urgently needs to be addressed in Berechurch. It recommended that more work needed to be focussed on integrating young people into the current activities in Berechurch, as well as looking at providing community and leisure facilities for young people in the ward.

This objective has been dealt with last, as it is at this point that the extensive analysis of police crime figures will be brought in to support findings. Firstly this section will look at what achievements have been made in relation to this recommendation, as with the other objectives, and section **7.3** will begin to look at whether crime levels have actually altered over the time period, using both the crime data, and analysis from the interviews and focus groups.

Specific actions and initiatives

The following has been achieved in the area by the task group and key local community members and agencies in order to address the objective of diverting young people from anti-social behaviour.

Essex Youth Service

A partnership between Essex Youth Service, EDF and Colchester Borough Council has resulted in the Youth Club opening on 30th January 2006. It is open 3 nights a week with about 30 young people attending each evening. There is also a Duke Of Edinburgh's scheme running out of the centre on Thursday afternoons.

The youth club was reopened shortly after the interviews were carried out, and as such interviewees were not questioned about the success of this initiative. To date, according to Essex Youth Service, the numbers attending have been steadily increasing, with most recent estimates being between 25 and 35 young people attending each session.

The focus groups with young people (See section 6 for more detail on this research method) were held at the second date of the re-established youth club. As such, some questions and discussion around the value of the club to the young people was included within the group.

When the first focus group was started, a discussion about changes in ASB over time was introduced. Participants from the two focus groups initially seemed to indicate that opportunities for young people have got worse in recent times, conveying quite negative feelings about what options are available for them. All felt that things had been bad for a while, but that things have worsened lately. However, when asked specifically about the re-opening of the youth club (the group was held at the second session of the re-opened Monkwick Youth Club, see Methodology, section 6), several respondents stated that the re-emergence of the club has helped, and most admitted that without it they may be "out causing trouble". When asked if they felt that more activities such as the club helped to prevent them from pursuing anti-social behaviour, participants agreed, stating that they would like to see more activities in their area.

With regards to the negativity demonstrated by the young people, it is worth considering the possibility that they may feel wary of adult intervention because of lack of tangible outcomes of consultation to date. Whilst the plans for the youth shelter have progressed as an outcome of early consultation carried out by the Community Development Workers, the Youth Shelter is not yet quite complete. This negativity is likely to lessen over time as the youth shelter project is completed and young people feel more involved in and positive about project planning; indeed, throughout the course of the focus group alone negativity lessened when activities such as the youth club were brought up.

United Solutions Group

The United Solutions group was set up in September 2003 with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour in the Monkwick area. At the time, feedback from the police was that young people were saying anti-social behaviour primarily was occurring because they had nothing to do. Consultation took place with young people to ask what kinds of facilities they would like to be provided. The youth shelter came out highest on the list, and as a result since then the group has been working towards delivering this. However, the process has stalled at present (April 2006) due to resident opposition to the location for the shelter. Two members of the group are currently looking at two alternative sites. A report will then be made to the next public meeting based on these alternatives.

Some mention of the Youth Shelter was made by the interviewees. Interviewees were questioned, for example, as to whether they felt more confident about making an impact on the issue of anti-social behaviour in the area. 12 of the 21 respondents felt that their confidence had increased a little or lot with regards to diverting young people from anti-social behaviour. Whilst this is only just over 50% of the total respondents, eight of these 12 stated the progress towards the Youth Shelter as the reason why they felt increased confidence.

Incidentally, it is worth noting that of the 9 respondents who did not feel any more confident about the ability to impact on anti-social behaviour, several stated that this was simply because it was "very difficult to quantify this kind of change". Many commented that impacting on this kind of issue needs consistent effort through a variety of means, over an extended timescale, before change will be apparent.

Monkwick Youth Group

Monkwick Youth Group has recently been set up, and is made up of representatives from:

- Essex Youth Service
- Connections
- TLA (Thomas Lord Audley) School
- CBC
- CUCST
- YMCA

At the time of writing this report, the youth group had only been in operation for three months. One of the principal objectives of the group is to encourage more agencies into the school (Thomas Lord Audley), in order to promote their work for young people, to young people. The group have been working on a number of projects since its set up. This includes the need to attract volunteers to "cover" and take responsibility for the youth centre, the need to enable the Ormiston Centre to provide a greater number of projects, the setting up of a youth committee, setting up a

summer programme of activities for young people, and arranging for lighting on the pathway leading to the forthcoming youth shelter.

Interview with regular attendee of Monkwick Youth Group

Given that this has only recently been set up, interviewees were not questioned on the success of this initiative. Indeed, had they been, it may have been the case that many interviewees would not have felt able to respond to this, as this group is made up principally of professionals working with young people. As such, instead an informal discussion was had with one of the principal attendees of the group.

The interviewee stated that the group had in her opinion proved to be a great success so far, providing a forum for sharing information and best practice:

"*The group is managing to get things done, and also sometimes its just really useful to have all the experts on these issues together in the same room at the same time*"

When asked whether there were any specific teething problems or difficulties in the set up and progression of the group, the interviewee found it difficult to site anything in particular, but commented that the group is at an early stage, and as such it is perhaps too soon to be evaluating its progress fully.

7.3 Change in ASB in Berechurch since community investment in the area

This section assesses the task group's impact on tackling the prominent issue of anti-social behaviour in Berechurch, as identified through the Berechurch Community Strengths Assessment.

A combination of qualitative data from the focus groups with young people (see Methodology, section 6) and the interviews assessed throughout this report, alongside quantitative data from crime statistics for the area over recent years, will be looked at to assess how well this objective has been met.

Improvement in level of ASB in 'Berechurch'

There was a mixed response from interviewees and focus group participants with regards to whether levels of ASB have improved over recent times. Some interviewees saw definite improvements, and felt "safer" within their community over recent years, many referencing the increased police presence (introduction of Police Community Support Officers to the area) as a reason. Young people involved in the focus groups seemed initially more negative, several claiming that if anything ASB has worsened. Several did display optimism however, with regards the re-opening of Monkwick Youth Club. Police statistics show an equally ambiguous picture, with ASB increasing between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004, but showing a subsequent reduction between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. The following analysis looks at this in greater detail, in order to find patterns amongst the mixed messages.

Perceptions from young peoples' focus groups

Whilst initially appearing negative about opportunities in the Berechurch area, as stated previously, young people at the focus groups did however strongly support the Youth Club, and made a clear link between the importance of diversionary activities such as the club in reducing anti-social behaviour. They went on to suggest a number of additional diversionary activities which they felt would be a more attractive option to them than "being out causing trouble", see later on in this section, "Diversionary Activities".

Participants were then asked about the introduction of Police Community Support Officers in the area, and whether their presence had made any impact on ASB. Participants seemed relatively unphased by the introduction of the PCSOs, stating that this had had little effect on their desire to be out "wandering the streets" most evenings. Two participants raised the issue that they had "nowhere to go", and that they needed some kind of central meeting point. This they felt would help prevent them from being out and about within the residential areas of the ward.

When the question was raised, participants were reluctant to pin-point where exactly they congregate when they are out and about. The point was made by the Essex Youth Service worker facilitating the focus group that there had been difficulties in locating exactly where they do spend their time; Police Community Support Officers and Youth Workers have looked for them when out in the area, but were unable to find them! After some further discussion participants commented that they were often "hanging around by the shops". Queen Elizabeth Way in Monkwick has a run of about four small shops/businesses, alongside Monkwick Clinic. On further questioning, one of the young participants conceded that this was the area they were referring to.   Two participants commented on "the wooded area" which exists behind Monkwick Avenue, which they stated had recently been cut down. This has been an area they had used just to "hang around in", but now were unable to, highlighting the problem of a lack of places for young people to congregate.

It was however difficult to keep this line of questioning from sounding accusatory, and for this reason it appeared that there was reluctance to expand on this from the young people participating (see Section 6, Methodology, for discussion of how to resolve this issue in future evaluations).

Perceptions from Interviewees

Few interviewees passed comment on whether they felt ASB had decreased over recent years, and indeed, only 12 of the 21 respondents felt more confident of the community's ability to make an impact on this issue. This would imply that interviewees feel there is still a lot to be done to address ASB in Berechurch.

This said, seven respondents did make some additional comments on how anti-social behaviour has altered over the course of the task group. Of these seven, five stated that they felt incidents of ASB have decreased in recent times. This could support the data given later on, which shows an initial increase in the ward in ASB over the time period, followed by an apparent decline. This is not to suggest a causal link between the two; but it is however a possibility that the two support one another. The following are examples of comments made:

"I feel more confident in the community's ability to make an impact on diverting young people from asb because of the increased presence of community support officers in the ward"

"The police presence which started up in the area about 2 years ago has had a big impact. There used to be kids on their motorbikes all around the (willows) estate. That's almost totally stopped"

"quality of life in the area has improved a little, but that's mainly attributable to the Police Community Support Officers, not to the task group. Also local change – like there used to be a newsagents alongside the Monkwick Clinic – the owners have now been evicted, and since that happened, the numbers of kids hanging around there has reduced."

"the presence of the PCSOs has had an impact on quality of life in the area – if not actual, certainly the perception of safety in the area has increased"

As indicated in the above quotations, these respondents felt the presence of Police Community Support Officers in the ward to be most attributable for any apparent decrease. The third of the above comments can be cross-referenced with analysis from focus groups that youth presence exists by the shops on Queen Elizabeth Way in Monkwick. According to this interviewee, this visible presence has decreased in recent times.

However, two of the respondents who offered further comment stated that they felt things had got worse in recent times. One stated that the problem was still rife, and needed further investigation and addressing. The other interviewee stated that the problem of making promises to young people, and subsequently delays to delivery occurring (which the interviewee felt was an accurate description of how the task group was currently operating), could lead to frustration and ultimately a greater level of youth disorder.

Issues with perceptions and interpretations made from interviews

When assessing the information provided by interviewees on the subject of ASB, it is worth noting the comments of the Police Community Support Officer in the supplementary interview. Within the interview, the Officer discussed the issue of perceptions (see also text box, page 44), and how "youth disorder" can sometimes be reported, for example, when there is a presence of young people in an area, but where there may not in fact be a disturbance or offence being committed. In these situations, the PCSOs at times find themselves under pressure to move young people on, when there may not in fact an offence being committed. This may in part account for the diverse range of opinions given from interviewees on whether ASB is increasing, decreasing, or remaining static.

On the occasions where it is required for the PCSOs to move people on, this in itself can present an issue:

"sometimes we try to move people on, but when they ask as where to, I know they've got a point as there aren't that many facilities for teenagers in the area. A community centre or some kind of focal point would really help"

On further discussion, the "wooded area" referred to in the focus groups was brought up. This was an area where young people had previously at times congregated,

sometimes causing disturbance, but often not. The wood has since been thinned down and has as such decreased the number of places, outside of residential roads, where young people can spend time.

It was felt the Youth Shelter plans which were well underway at the time of undertaking the research for this report would aid the situation of youth disturbance in the area, by providing a much-needed refuge. However at the time of reporting on these findings, the location plans for the development had been out to consultation with approximately 30 residents in the area. The outcome of this was a complaint from almost every resident consulted, and as such discussions around location are still ongoing (see page 39).

This latest development gives credence to the possibility that some tension exists between young people and other members of the community. This could draw into question again the interview responses, and indeed the police incident data/reported crime numbers, which are based on local perceptions. As suggested elsewhere, greater engagement with young people may be necessary in order to address some of the tensions suggested here.

Police Data

Police data indicates fluctuations in ASB over recent years

The following analysis covers anti social behaviour statistics over financial years 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. It is important to note that any observations or interpretations made on the basis of this data must be viewed in context of the timescale for analysis, and that any figures interpreted could be anomalies when viewed over a wider timescale. Interpretations from this section should also be made with caution, given that observations made are to an extent subjective.
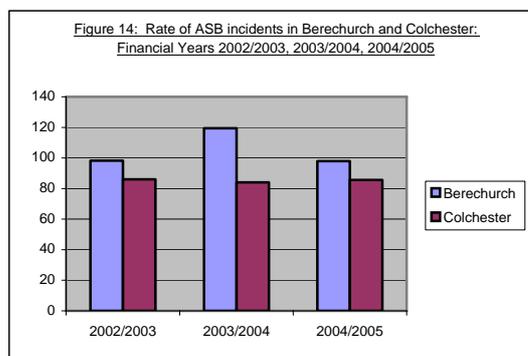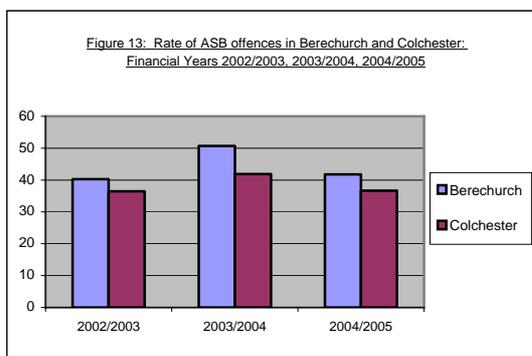
Source: Figure 13: Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System. **Figure 14:** Police Reported Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System.

Notes: 1. ASB incidents include: Disorder, Criminal Damage, Violence, Other Non-Criminal Incidents, Vehicle Related Nuisance, Public Order Offences Other, Sexual Offences, Drugs, Robbery, Abandoned Vehicle (Stolen), Abandoned Vehicle (Wreck), Dangerous Driving and Indecent Exposure. **2.** ASB offences include: Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Affray, Arson, Resisting Arrest, Common Assault, Criminal Damage, Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), Public Order Incident (Section 4 and 5) and Robbery.

Berechurch as a whole

The previous two figures indicate that, both for reported and recorded ASB, rates for Berechurch are greater than that for Colchester as a whole across all three years. The graphs both indicate a significant increase in 2003/2004, followed by a decrease to almost the same rates in 2004/2005 as 2002/2003, as described:

Recorded crime/offences: Between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004 offence rates in Berechurch increased by 25% from 40.3 per 1000 to 50.7 per 1000. Subsequently between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, rates decreased by 18% back to 41.8 ASB offences per 1000 offences. Over the three years therefore the overall change is a 6% *increase.*

Reported crime/incidents: Over the three financial years a similar pattern was observed for incidents as has been for offences. In Berechurch in 2002/2003 a rate of 98.3 per 1000 incidents was recorded for anti-social behaviour. In 2003/2004 this increased to 119.5 per 1000, and fell again by 18% in 2004/2005 to 98. As such, for incidents, the net or overall change amounts to a 4% *decrease* in incidents over the studied time period.

Limitations with police data

Whilst police data adds another interesting dimension to this analysis of anti-social behaviour (ASB), it is important to be aware that there are limitations associated with police data. For instance, **Police Reported Crime** data gives a unique perspective on the types of complaints people may have about their neighbourhood. However, as such this data is not based on independent evidence, but on calls received by the police from members of the public. So it is based on residents' *perceptions* of what may be termed anti-social behaviour (ASB), and for this reason is not based on independent or *objective* evidence. As a result of this, some areas/roads may be shown as having high incident numbers, but may not show up as significantly within recorded crime data; these areas may have high perceived crime, but low numbers in reality.

Police Recorded Crime data is slightly more reliable in the sense that it is based on the number of offences, and is therefore based on evidence. However, this data is also limited in that it is sensitive to police activities and operations. In other words, fluctuations in the number of offences recorded during any given time period might be related, at least in part, to the police priorities at that time.

Therefore, although police data is extremely valuable in analysing the extent and types of ASB in Berechurch, the data and any conclusions drawn from the data must be used with caution.

ASB problem areas

Small area analysis

The following section will assess how the rates of incidents and offences vary by small area[4] within the ward.

Figure 15: Rate of ASB incidents in small areas of Berechurch (2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005)

Figure 16: Rate of ASB Offences in small areas of Berechurch (2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005)
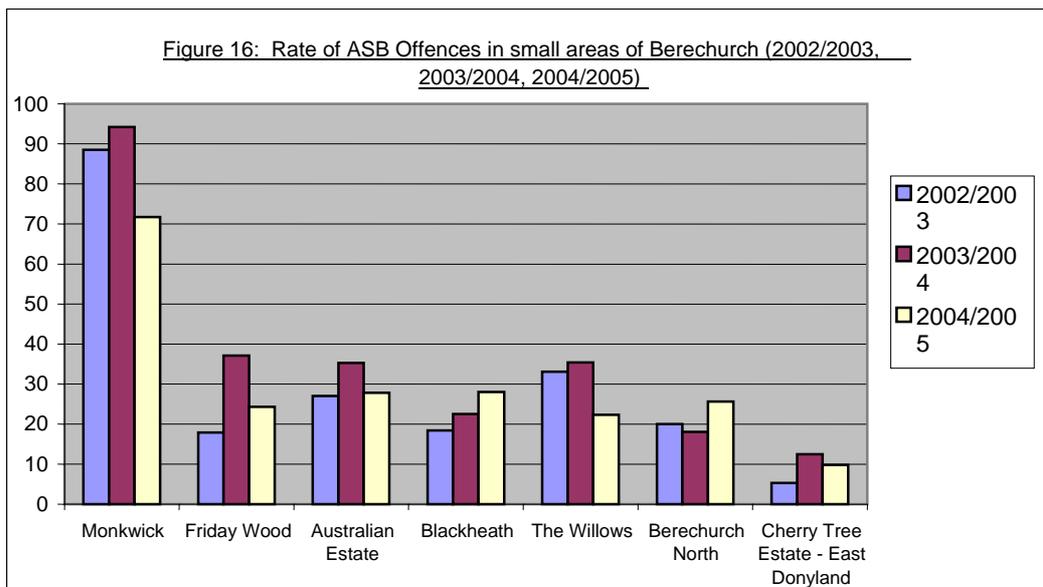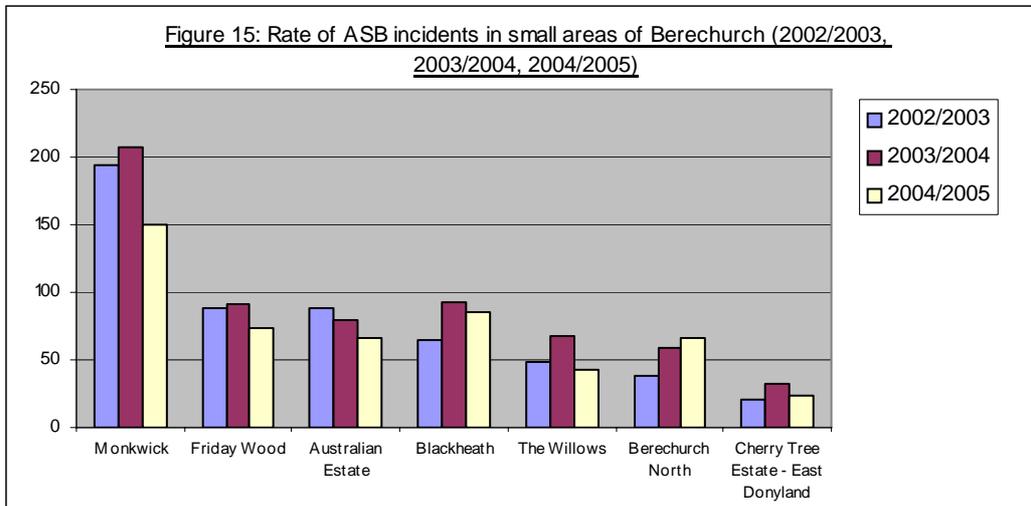
Source: Figure 15: Police Reported Crime, Essex Police Headquarters and the Crime Recording System. **Figure 16**: Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarters and the Crime Recording System. **Notes: 1.** Crimes recorded under Mersea Rd are not included in this chart since this road runs across five of the six small areas in Berechurch Ward. These offences could not be classified into small areas because postcodes were not recorded. **2.** Any crimes categorised under the Berechurch beat code (E13J) where the road name recorded was outside of Berechurch are not included.

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[4] These small areas are an Office for National Statistics (ONS) sub-ward geography otherwise known as Lower Layer Super Output Areas. These have been named with the assistance of Colchester Borough Council Community Development Workers for easier identification of the neighbourhoods they refer to. For a map of these areas, see section 2 of this report.

Whilst focus group participants were reluctant to pinpoint their whereabouts when they might be "out causing trouble", the shops on Monkwick Estate did emerge as one of the locations they spent time at. In addition one interviewee commented on their presence at this location. Throughout this report, comments on the need for a "wider geographical focus" for the task group have emerged, several people having stated that the focus is very much on the Monkwick area. The following analysis looks at the data by small areas[4], and starts by focusing on Monkwick, where it does appear that much of the activity is taking place.

Monkwick

Berechurch ward is split into six small areas, as identified in the map on page 2 and Figures 18 and 19.   Cherry Tree Estate is also included within the small area analysis[5] Monkwick has by far the highest rate of anti-social behaviour of all small areas. In 2004/2005, for example, Monkwick had a rate of 149.7 ASB incidents per 1,000, with the small area coming nearest to this figure being Blackheath, which had a rate of 85.4 per 1000 in the same year.

Monkwick displays the same pattern observed, both for incidents and offences, as for the ward as a whole, i.e. an increase in ASB numbers between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004, followed by a decrease between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. Encouragingly however, the decrease in ASB numbers between 03/04 and 04/05 seems to be more significant than was displayed for the ward as a whole, with the net change across all years being a decrease in numbers. This is described as follows:

- **Net change in ASB, Monkwick, incidents/reported crime**
Between 2002/2003 and 2004/2005, the rate of reported crime has shown an overall decrease from 194.7 per 1000 to 149.7 per 1000, a 23% net or total *decrease* compared with the 2002/2003 rate.

- **Net change in ASB, Monkwick, offences/recorded crime**
The overall change between 2002/2003 and 2004/2005 for offences in Monkwick is again a decrease, from 88.5 to 71.7, an overall 19% *decrease.*

In order to view whether the decline in ASB offences and incidents is significant, figures 15 and 16 display the decline for Monkwick alongside the pattern for Berechurch ward and for the borough as a whole. The decline for Monkwick is much greater than that for Berechurch and Colchester, indicating a significant reduction in ASB rates. However this large difference over the given time period could indicate that this area is subject to major fluctuations, whereas Colchester and Berechurch's

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[5] These small areas are an Office for National Statistics (ONS) sub-ward geography otherwise known as Lower Layer Super Output Areas. These have been named with the assistance of Colchester Borough Council Community Development Officers for easier identification of the neighbourhoods they refer to. For a map of these areas, see section 2 of this report.

rates are more static (and perhaps as such give a truer representation over a short time period), and for this reason we should not interpret too significantly from this apparent decline.

Figure 17: ASB incidents rate comparison: Monkwick, Berechurch and Colchester

Figure 18: ASB offences rate comparison: Monkwick, Berechurch and Colchester
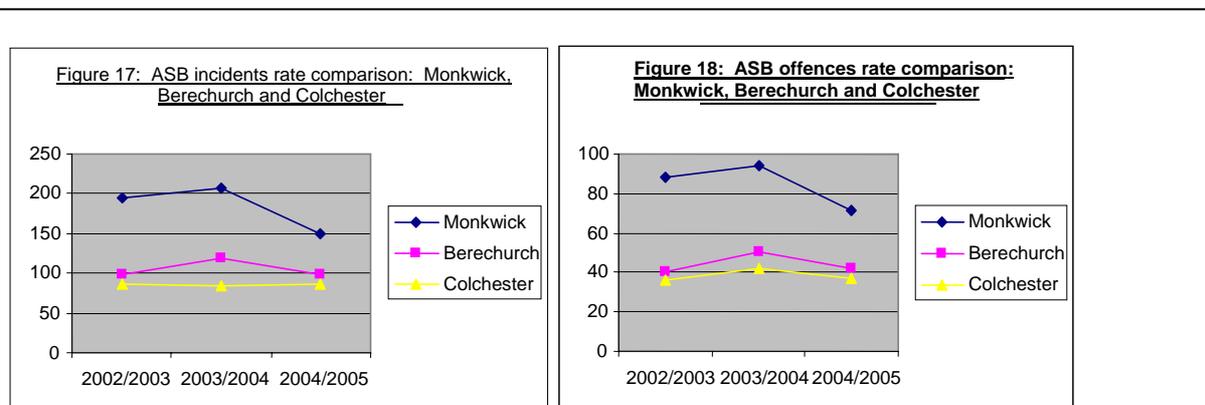
Source: Figure 17: Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and Crime Recording System.
Figure 18: Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System.

Notes: 1. ASB incidents include: Disorder, Criminal Damage, Violence, Other Non-Criminal Incidents, Vehicle Related Nuisance, Public Order Offences Other, Sexual Offences, Drugs, Robbery, Abandoned Vehicle (Stolen), Abandoned Vehicle (Wreck), Dangerous Driving and Indecent Exposure. **2.** ASB offences include: Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Affray, Arson, Resisting Arrest, Common Assault, Criminal Damage, Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), Public Order Incident (Section 4 and 5) and Robbery.

Other small area analysis

In almost all of the small areas there is a slight decline in ASB incident rates between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. The only exception to this is Berechurch North, which has seen a slight increase in the rate of ASB incidents between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. Similarly for ASB offences, there is a decline in numbers of offences for all small areas between this time period, except for Berechurch North and Blackheath, which have seen the opposite occurring.

The Cherry Tree Estate does however show significantly lower rates than the other small areas both for incidents and offences.

It is worth noting that, whilst Berechuch North is marginally more deprived than Monkwick (according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004), the number of offences and incidents occurring in Monkwick is much higher than in Berechurch North. Research suggests that ASB tends to be more common in areas where deprivation is more widespread, [6] and as such this is surprising. The difference in crime numbers between these two small areas is understandable however when viewed in the context of all domains making up the index of multiple deprivation. The index is made up of seven domains, of which crime is only one. As such it would be

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[6] Home Office analysis for Social Exclusion Unit (1999) cited on p21 National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal – Report for Policy Action Team 8: Anti-Social Behaviour (March 2000)

unwise to interpret too significantly from the difference between these two SOAs, as the actual influence which crime numbers have over an SOA's ranking in the index is not hugely significant.

Berechurch North does remain a small area of interest however, given as mentioned that it is the only small area showing an increase in rates of both incidents and offences over the given time period.

Problematic Roads

Figures 19 and 20 show the top ten roads for ASB incidents and offences in Berechurch in 2004/2005.

Figure 19 and 20: Top 10 roads for ASB in Berechurch (2004/2005)

ASB incidents (Source 1)

MERSEA ROAD	109
MONKWICK AVENUE	73
QUEEN ELIZABETH AVENUE	73
BARDFIELD ROAD	26
ONSLOW CRESCENT	26
PRINCE CHARLES ROAD	26
WETHERSFIELD ROAD	26
BERECHURCH HALL ROAD	25
HOLT DRIVE	25
POWNALL CRESCENT	23

ASB offences (Source 2)

MERSEA ROAD	53
MONKWICK AVENUE	36
QUEEN ELIZABETH WAY	33
SCHOOL ROAD	14
BERECHURCH HALL ROAD	12
ONSLOW CRESCENT	12
PRINCE CHARLES ROAD	12
HOLT DRIVE	11
POWNALL CRESCENT	11
THE WILLOWS	11

Key

	Berechurch North
	The Willows
	Monkwick
	Australia Estate
	Blackheath
	Friday Wood
	Cherry Tree Estate - Rowhedge
	Across Several SOAs
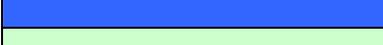
Sources: 1. Police Reported Crime, Essex Police Headquarter statistics and the Crime Recording System. **2.** Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System.
Notes: It was not possible to specify a small area for some roads as they are situated across more than one small area.

Unsurprisingly in view of the small areas analysis, three of the four top ten roads for incidents are in Monkwick. For offences, four exist within the top 10. The road which appears within offences and not incidents is School Road. As mentioned previously, reported crime data reflects perceptions of ASB, as it is based on the number of complaints received from the public. Given that School Road is a non-residential road in Monkwick (the three main schools in the area – Monkwick Junior, Monkwick Infants, and Thomas Lord Audley exist along this road), it is possible that this road did not appear within incidents as people in the area may not be aware of/may not directly witness crimes being committed along this road.

Also of note is that two roads within Blackheath exist within the top ten most frequently occurring incidents, whereas they do not appear within the top ten offences. It may be the case therefore that Blackheath has a high fear or perception of crime, whereas in reality the reported calls have not warranted further investigation.

These suggestions are simply that however, and would require further investigation in order to ascertain whether there is any truth in the statements made.

The remaining small areas all have one road in the top ten each, both for Incidents and Offences, with the exceptions of The Willows (does not feature in the top ten for incidents), and Blackheath (as mentioned, does not feature in the top ten for offences). This reflects the findings in Figures 13 and 14, which have shown that similar rates of incidents and offences have occurred in six of the seven small areas, with just Monkwick showing significantly higher rates than the others.

It is perhaps the case however that all main thoroughfares sometimes attract more calls for police, and this should be considered when interpreting the above.

Problem road – Monkwick Avenue
Of all the roads within the top ten for incidents and offences, Monkwick Avenue came out as the highest scoring road for both. Encouragingly, for incidents, the number decreased over the three year period, from 110 in 2002/2003 to 73 in 2004/2005. For offences, there was also an overall decrease, although the pattern of increase was apparent between 2002/2003 and 2003/2004. The overall decrease was small however, from 38 in 2002/2003, to 36 in 2004/2005, indicating that this area is still experiencing problems.

Figure 21: Total Number of ASB Incidents, Monkwick Avenue: Reported Crime

Figure 22:Total Number of ASB Offences, Monkwick Avenue: Recorded Crime
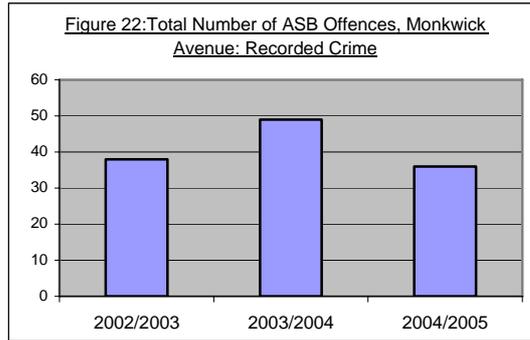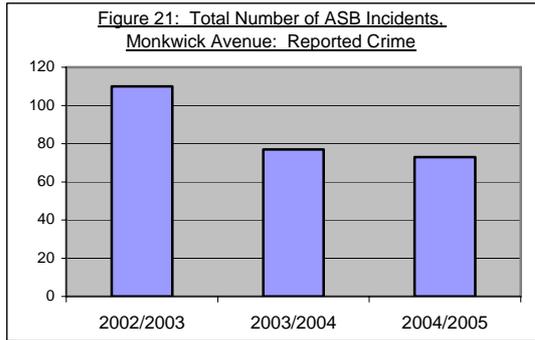
Source: Figure 21: Police Reported Crime, Essex Police Headquarters and the Crime Recording System. **Figure 22**: Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarters and the Crime Recording System.

Notes: 1. ASB incidents include: Disorder, Criminal Damage, Violence, Other Non-Criminal Incidents, Vehicle Related Nuisance, Public Order Offences Other, Sexual Offences, Drugs, Robbery, Abandoned Vehicle (Stolen), Abandoned Vehicle (Wreck), Dangerous Driving and Indecent Exposure. **2.** ASB offences include: Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Affray, Arson, Resisting Arrest, Common Assault, Criminal Damage, Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), Public Order Incident (Section 4 and 5) and Robbery.

Ministry of Defence Data

It was proposed that The Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) may have been called out to additional incidents to those analysed so far, such that the data analysed to this point may be misleading. The MDP police all MOD land and property but carry out additional counter-terrorism patrols of the entire area of Berechurch, due to its proximity to MOD Land. However the MDP's main areas of policing within the Berechurch ward confines are: Roman Barracks, Berechurch Hall Camp and Friday Woods.

Data of all incidents within the confines of the Berechurch ward was provided by the MDP, and came to a total of 304 incidents between the financial years of 2002/2003 – 2004/2005 inclusive. Those that could be classified as anti-social behaviour came to a total of between 100 and 150, depending on subjective interpretation of the descriptions given. It was felt that given the relatively low total of 100 –150, and the fact these were dispersed across the whole of the ward (much of which occurred on army land), relatively little could be interpreted from these numbers. This data has therefore not been analysed any further.

Types of ASB in Berechurch

The distribution of ASB Offences in Berechurch in 2002/2003 – 2004//2005 is displayed in Figure 23.

Figure 23: ASB offence types, 2002/2003 – 2004/2005

- 3% Public Order Incident
- 2% Arson
- 2% GBH
- 1% Robbery
- 1% Resisting Arrest
- 7% Common Assault
- 22% ABH
- 62% Criminal **Damage**

Source: Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System.

Notes: 1. Crimes Recorded under Mersea Road are not included in this chart since this road runs across more than one of the small areas in Berechurch. These offences could not be classified into small areas because post codes were not recorded. 2. Any crimes categorised under the Berechurch beat code (E13K) where the road name recorded was located outside of Berechurch waqrd are not included.

Criminal Damage comes out as by far the most common ASB offence type within the ward, taking up approximately 61% of the total overall offences in Berechurch. Comparing this directly with the only other evaluation of this kind (at the time of writing this report), the Harbour Evaluation[7], this seems to be fairly typical: in Harbour Criminal Damage took up 55% of the total offences over the same time period.   This is taken from Police Recorded Crime Data.

Figure 24 indicates the distribution of ASB incidents in Berechurch in 2002/2003 – 2004/2005

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[7] The Harbour (or Old Heath) Evaluation was the first of the four Community Strengths Evaluations to be completed, and is available at the contact details given on page 2.

Figure 24: ASB incident types, 2002/2003 – 2004/2005

1% Other non criminal incidents

1% Sexual Offences

4% Vehicle Related Nuisance

12% Violence

22% Criminal Damage

1% Robbery

1% Public Order Offences

0% Drugs

58% Disorder

Source: Police Reported Crime for Berechurch ward, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System
Notes: The following categories were devised using the data indicated: **Disturbance in public places:** Assualt, Civil disputes, Disturbance, Fight. **Other disorder/nuisance:** Accidental damage, Air weapon, Criminal Damage, Fire, Fireworks, Harrassment, Nuisance, Threats and Trespass. **Domestic Incident**: Domestic (Violent), and Domestic (Non Violent). **Other:** Advice required, Concern, Info, Licensing, Mental Health, Required police, and Suspect premises. **Phone calls**: Abandoned 999 calls, Hoax calls, Nuisance calls, Silent 999 calls, and Other telephone calls. **Hate crime**: Homophobic and Racial incidents.

Figure 24 above shows that disorder was by far the most common incident in Berechurch in 2004/2005. Again, as a comparator to view whether this is typical or not, this graph was looked at alongside similar data given in the Old Heath report. Old Heath also experienced a majority of incidents in the disorder category; a similar 62% as compared with the 58% for Berechurch displayed above. The next most common type of incident was criminal damage, taking up 22% of all incident types in the ward.

Figure 25 shows incidents of disorder in Berechurch by type in financial year 2004/2005.

Figure 25: Incidents of Disorder in Berechurch 2004/2005

Source: Police Reported Crime for Berechurch ward, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System
Notes: The following categories were devised using the data indicated: **Disturbance in public places:** Assualt, Civil disputes, Disturbance, Fight. **Other disorder/nuisance:** Accidental damage, Air weapon, Criminal Damage, Fire, Fireworks, Harrassment, Nuisance, Threats and Trespass. **Domestic Incident**: Domestic (Violent), and Domestic (Non Violent). **Other:** Advice required, Concern, Info, Licensing, Mental Health, Required police, and Suspect premises. **Phone calls**: Abandoned 999 calls, Hoax calls, Nuisance calls, Silent 999 calls, and Other telephone calls. **Hate crime**: Homophobic and Racial incidents.

Figure 25 above shows that youth disorder/nuisance comes out as by far the most common form of disorder, with more than double the number of incidents occurring in this category as compared to the second most commonly occurring incident, disturbance in a public place. This helps in confirming the importance of addressing youth needs, particularly in terms of creating diversionary activities, as addressed in the Community Strengths Assessment and the Task Group thereafter.

Diversionary Activities
Given the mixed message regarding whether ASB is increasing or decreasing, this section will look at some of the ideas raised regarding what more could be done.

Focus Group Participants' response
Participants were keen to state what might have further impact in the area; essentially giving a range of ideas as to what they might see as preferential to be "out causing trouble". Several were aware of the trips out, such as Indikart racing, and were keen to have similar events held in the area. Another popular suggestion was paintballing. Several went on to suggest after school activities such as dance and drama classes, boxing this was particularly popular, with 4 of the male participants independently suggesting this), and finally DJ workshops.

Options for diversionary activities – East Colchester Childrens University Partnership

To supplement the ideas given by the young people at the focus groups for Diversionary Activities, it is worth noting some additional research carried out by the East Colchester Childrens University Partnership.

On 18th Feb 2005, students from Thomas Lord Audley School, as well as Old Heath Primary, Willow Brook Primary and Sir Charles Lucas Arts College, participated in a morning of activities, giving their views on what activities they would most like to see in the area.

DJ workshops and dance and drama came up again, as they had done at the focus groups. Additional activities were suggested, such as hairdressing, fashion, art, and radio.[8]

Of interest were the comments received when students were asked how they could be encouraged to be involved with the activities. There was a real emphasis on keeping activities from being competitive, making them for all abilities and making everybody welcome. These ideas reflect one of the themes brought out of the focus group, in which some of the young people stated a desire to mix more with young people from other small areas within the ward, and other wards within the borough.

Interviewees' response

Interviewees were asked if they could think of any other activities that might be effective in diverting young people from anti-social behaviour. The results are displayed in Figure 26.

Figure 26: Diversionary activities suggested by Interviewees

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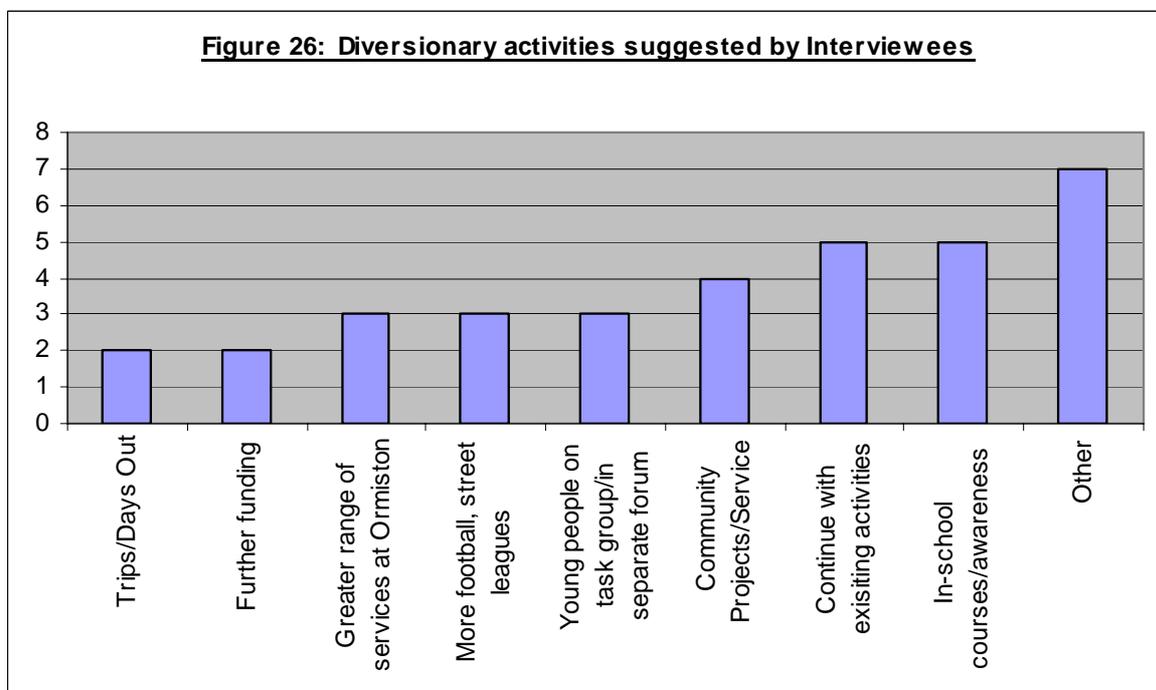
[8] For a full list of the activities suggested contact the Research Group at Colchester Borough Council at the contact details outlined on page 1.

In-school awareness/courses

Five interviewees mentioned the need for in-school courses or awareness classes about various topics. Suggestions included bike maintenance/safety and drug awareness. There was a real emphasis from respondents that these courses be run by someone credible to young people; someone of a similar age group for example. Two respondents also mentioned the requirement for these courses being held in an appropriate environment: "*we should be trying to reach them in their own environment. Perhaps the school, or even somewhere that they have greater ownership over, like the youth club. They shouldn't have to adapt to our way of doing things*"

Continue with existing activities

Five respondents stated the need to continue with existing activities. Several mentioned progress towards the Youth Shelter, and the need to focus on this before identifying new priorities.

Community Projects/Services

Four respondents stated community projects or services as a means of diverting young people. Some referred to this in terms of applying penalties for acts carried out, specifically graffiti and washing off any carried out in the area. Another referred to this more in terms of getting involved with the Task Group, the Fundays and other community activities "*by involving young people in the community they earn respect from their peers*". This respondent felt that this was one means whereby young people can attempt to address the way they may be viewed by others.

Trips/Days Out

Two respondents referenced the trips/days out that have been carried out in other areas of the borough and suggested that something similar be done for young people in Berechurch.

Football, Street Leagues

Three interviewees mentioned the need for a greater number of football activities, particularly the street leagues. This would also, one respondent commented, encourage young people to mix with other young people from across the borough. Football came out as the second most popular suggestion, after the Youth Shelter, from the research carried out by Community Development Workers at Colchester Borough Council.

Greater range of services at The Ormiston

Three respondents commented on the need for a wider range of services to become available at The Ormiston Centre, particularly in view of the fact that there is very little available for the teenage market at The Ormiston. This was echoed by one

participant at the focus group who stated *"there might be stuff available at the ormiston, but its not very well advertised, we don't find out about it. I used it when I was younger but less so now".*

Other

Seven interviewees made other suggestions. One stated dance and drama lessons, as had been mentioned previously at the focus groups. Others included:

Parenting Courses

One respondent went into detail about the possibility of some kind of parenting course being set up in the area. The difficulty with this, she stated, would be ensuring that people felt comfortable to go, and that there was no stigma attached to attending. She suggested the inclusion within such a programme of a "baby massage course". This has already been carried out in the Highwoods area, and is a programme which is described as *"Emotionally it promotes bonding enhancing relationships. Massage teaches the baby that they are loved and valued and improves communication. Many previous attendees have felt that massage has increased their confidence in handling their children."*[9]

Youth Parliament specific to the area

One interviewee discussed the possibility of a Youth Parliament specific to the area, held on neutral ground, well planned and facilitated to ensure young people connect with and respect one another.

Homestart

One interviewee talked about the organisation Homestart, which deals with families in crisis. It can be set up to deal with specific areas, if the funding is available. Volunteers are usually people who have been through a similar kind of issue.

Scooter Rally

One stated a Scooter Rally in the area, with incentives such as cash or vouchers for hair/make up etc.

7.4 Further roles and priorities for the group to consider

Interviewees were asked whether they had any other concerns about the local area that they felt the task group should consider addressing. This has been dealt with last in order to provide ideas for future priorities to be addressed. The following themes emerged, as displayed in Figure 27.

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[9] This was taken from the Colchester Primary Care Trust website, which details the course set up in Highwoods, Colchester http://www.colchester-pct.nhs.uk/content.asp?page_id=135

Figure 27: Further roles and priorities for the group to consider

A bar chart titled "Figure 27: Further roles and priorities for the group to consider" with a y-axis from 0 to 7. The categories and their values are:
- Continue with existing priorities: 3
- Wider community engagement: 6
- Greater engagement with young people: 4
- Funding: 2
- Specific Local Issues: 1
- More Residents Associations: 1
- Supprting Local groups: 1

Continue with current priorities

Three respondents, whether identifying additional priorities for the future or not, indicated a need to complete existing projects before putting forward new ones. A concern was expressed regarding raising expectations, as was the need to maintain realistic timescales for delivery.

Wider community engagement and a more geographically widespread focus to the group

Six respondents made direct comments around the need to reach a wider cross-section of the residential community of Berechurch. Several more respondents made reference to the problem of too few community members being involved in the group, both at this stage and throughout the interview. Of these six three made the specific point that the task group appears to be very focused on Monkwick, whereby marginalizing the other small areas of the ward. Comments included:

"*The focus needs to be extended to wider parts of Berechurch - the groups work seems to be quite confined to the Monkwick area. I wonder whether some people in Monkwick are even aware of how far the Berechurch ward stretches and which areas are included within it*"

"*The community are far from being connected and cohesive. This must be addressed.* "
"*We need to address the lack of diversity in people attending the group. It's really focused on Monkwick. But how you make the group more wide-reaching, when you're faced with apathy, I don't know.*"

"*The task group is not wholly effective as its not as wide-reaching as it could be. To address this we need to visit residents in their own environment rather than attempting to persuade them into what is possibly an intimidating atmosphere for some.*"

The comments highlight the point, which also arose in relation to engaging with young people, that there is a real need to contact people in their own environment. Some respondents commented throughout that Berechurch "is a particularly difficult community to reach", and as such some felt that engagement may only be possible through a means of direct contact rather than relying on individuals coming to the group of their own accord.

Greater engagement with young people

Four interviewees talked about the need to engage more effectively and consistently with young people, in order that we provide appropriate activities and opportunities. Some of the comments included:

"*Could we get young people attending the group?*"

"*We need greater representation on the group with those directly involved with youth groups such as guides, pre-school, so that they can feed a message back directly to children, who in turn can inform their parents*"

"*A more co-ordinated approach to youth activities is needed, encompassing other areas of the borough, to allow young people to mix more effectively. The Colchester United street football that's happened in the past needs to be re-introduced. Other activities outside of the youth club must be promoted, as not all kids will be interested in attending this kind of club*"

"*Further work needs to be done to redirect young people from anti-social behaviour. There are a lot of ongoing projects but do we really know what young people want?*"

The possibility of young people attending the group was raised by one respondent here. A second respondent suggested a greater number of representatives from youth activities attend the group. Although Essex Youth Services already attend, the interviewee suggests that those who run informal groups, guides, etc., could come to the group in order to increase important links between the agencies attending the group and the young people in the area. One respondent also raised the idea of a separate "youth forum", which would need to be seen to be credible to young people; held within an environment in which they were comfortable, and given a format which was not seen to be too formal or official (in the words of the respondent, "geeky") by potential members.

One of these four qualified the need for greater input from young people, by stating that the group was "out of touch" with what young people really wanted from their area. The example was given of free martial arts provision within the Thomas Lord Audley secondary school, which was met with zero take-up. It should be noted here however that research was carried out in 2005 by Community Development Workers at Colchester Borough Council with young people attending the Thomas Lord Audley school, in order to assess what young people most want in the area. The Youth Shelter which is currently being planned was the outcome of this research (being the most popular suggestion).

Accessing funding more effectively

Two respondents felt that not enough funding was being directed towards Berechurch, and one of the two stated this in relation to Berechurch's score according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. Whilst the ward is one of the four most deprived in the borough, it was in fact far less deprived than the other three wards falling into this category. This respondent expressed frustration in this being reflected in the amount of funding directed towards the area.

"Greater funding needs to be concentrated into the area. We tend to receive an unfair/insufficient proportion of funding in Berechurch"

Other priorities

These suggestions were made by a minority of interviewees, with one or two individuals suggesting each of the following.

Addressing specific local issues and advocating priorities to other departments

One respondent felt that the objectives of the task group were sometimes perhaps too broad, and that smaller, specific achievements for the community might have a greater impact in the short-term than some of the longer-term projects.

"Youth drinking and vandalism tends to be concentrated in specific areas, and "problem" alleyways and backroutes. We need greater support from police and from other departments in the council in focusing on these areas and taking our complaints seriously. Some of these areas are major safety issues, where insufficient lighting prevents people from using what might otherwise be a useful pedestrian route. Perhaps members of the task group could help residents by advocating these specific needs to the relevant people at the council."

The comments of this respondent suggest a wider need within the Council for greater cross-departmental communication and partnership working.

More Residents Associations, with a linking member representing all (to the Task Group)

Several respondents mentioned throughout the success and value of the recently incepted Monkwick Residents Association (R.O.M.E – Residents of Monkwick Estate), and one respondent at this stage commented on the potential value of other areas within the ward hosting similar groups. The respondent mentioned that The Willows Estate in particular would benefit from such a group. The task group could examine ways to promote such a possibility, and support the work of the associations. This interviewee went on to suggest that all groups could feed back into the Task Group.

Supporting local businesses

One respondent talked about the lack of use by residents of local businesses and amenities, and how this has a detrimental effect on community spirit:

"We need more adult education to ensure people understand the importance of sending their children to the local pre-school provision. It's the same for local shops – if people are going out of the area they're just not supporting the local community"

Appendices

……………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Appendix 1: BERECHURCH INTERVIEW

We are hoping you will help the council's community development team by completing this survey. The responses you give us will help us to evaluate our role in the community development work carried out in the Berechurch area. It will also be used to identify further needs in the community.

Please be assured that anything you tell us will be completely confidential. You will not be identified as an individual or organisation in relation to anything you tell us.

The Berechurch ward comprises the areas of Friday Woods, Blackheath, Monkwick, Australian Estate and The Willows. The study has also incorporated the Cherry Tree Estate in the neighbouring ward of East Donyland. Please see the map on page 16 for further details.

Please read each question carefully and complete as directed.

Name of person completing form:

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Are you a resident of Berechurch? How long have you been living in the area?

……………………………………………………………………………………………..

Are you a member of a community/voluntary group working in Berechurch/Monkwick (such as residents association, church, school)? How long have you been a part of this group?   What role do you have in the group?

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

Community / voluntary group name:

 ....……………

Do you work in the area? If so how long have you been working in the area?

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

Do you work for a statutory organization (eg. a school, police)?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Contact telephone number:

....………………..

Email Address:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

INVOLVEMENT IN BERECHURCH TASK GROUP

Background to the task group

The Berechurch task group started meeting in December 2003 to explore solutions to local needs identified through community research. Members of the task group include residents, councillors, police officers, council officers, workers and Headteachers within the local schools.

1. Were you aware of the Berechurch task group before today? *(please tick)*

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

2. When did you first hear about the Berechurch task group?

Today	
In the last month	
In the last one to three months ago	
In the last three to six months	
In the last six to 12 months	
In the last 12 months or more	

3. How did you, or your community / voluntary group, first find out about the Berechurch task group? *Was it through…? (please tick just one response)*

Community Development workers from Colchester Borough Council	
Other representatives from local statutory organisations, e.g. police, schools	
Another local community / voluntary group	
At a Berechurch Funday	
At another community event (please state) ……………………………………………………………………………………………	
Other *(please describe)* ……………………………………………………………………………………………	
I can't remember / Unsure	
None of the above, I wasn't aware of the task group until now	

4. How regularly, if at all, do you or someone else from your group attend Berechurch task group meetings? *I / someone from my group … (please tick)*

Attend all meetings	
Attend most meetings	
Sometimes attend meetings	
Rarely attend meetings	
Never attend meetings	

5. Would you or someone else from your group or organisation be willing to get more involved in the Berechurch task group? (please tick)

Yes	
No	
Unsure	
N/A, we attend all / most meetings	

6. Which, if any, of the following issues prevent you or someone else from your group from attending Berechurch task group meetings more often?

(please tick all responses you think are applicable)

Lack of time	
I'm not usually available at the time when meetings are held	
I don't feel that the meetings are applicable to me / my group	
I feel that very little positive action results from the meetings	
The people already there would not welcome me	
I don't know where to go or who to talk to	
I don't know enough about the task group and what they do	
I do not feel that it is an effective task group	
Other *(please explain)* ……………………………………………………………………	
None of the above, I / someone from my group attend all or most meetings	

7. If there are any changes to meeting arrangements you can think of that might make it easier for you or someone else from your community / voluntary group to attend task group meetings, please tell us about these (for instance holding meetings at a different time of day, help with child care, etc.):

(please describe)

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. What are your main objectives for working in the Berechurch area?

65

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……………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Has the task group helped you to meet any of your objectives for working in the Berechurch area? *(please tick)*

Yes	
No	
Unsure	
N/A	

10. If yes, please explain how the task group has helped you to meet these objectives.

………

………

………

………

………

TASK GROUP OBJECTIVES

Please answer the following questions according to your current knowledge of needs and concerns in the Berechurch area, even if you were not aware of the Berechurch Task group before today.

11. To what extent would you describe each of the following as important concerns for the Berechurch task group to address?

(please tick just one response for each item)

	Very important	Quite important	Neither important nor unimportant	Not very important	Not at all important	Unsure
a) Developing a "sense of community"/community networks						
b) Increasing support for community and voluntary groups						
c) Diverting young people in Berechurch from anti-social behaviour; more activities for teenagers						
d) Ensuring the availability of suitable community meeting spaces						
e) More services for children (childcare, play facilities)						
f) Continually identifying and addressing local needs as they emerge						
g) Other [please state] ………………………………						

12. If you find this not very important or not at all important, please explain why: *(if not applicable, please indicate by ticking the space provided)*

	Why?	N/A
a) Developing a "sense of community"/community networks		
b) Increasing support for community and voluntary groups		
c) Diverting young people in Berechurch from anti-social behaviour; more activities for teenagers		
d) Ensuring the availability of suitable community meeting spaces		
e) More services for children (childcare, play		

facilities)		
f) Continually identifying and addressing local needs as they emerge		68
g) Other [please state] ……………………………		

13. If you have any other concerns about the local area that you feel the Berechurch task group should consider addressing, please describe these and why you feel that the task group should address these.

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Please answer question 14 even if you were not aware of the task group before today

14. Has your confidence in the community's ability to make an impact on each of these issues in the Berechurch area increased or decreased since December 2003 (which is when the task group started meeting, or since you have been involved)? Why is this?
(please tick one response for each item and explain your answer in the space provided)

	Increased a lot	Increased a little	Stayed the same	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot	Unsure
a) Creating better / more community meeting places						
Why?	....					

	Increased a lot	Increased a little	Stayed the same	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot	Unsure
b) Diverting young people from anti-social behaviour						
Why?	....					

	Increased a lot	Increased a little	Stayed the same	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot	Unsure
c) Increasing support for local groups						
Why?	....					

	Increased a lot	Increased a little	Stayed the same	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot	Unsure
d) Improving services for children						
Why?	....					

	Increased a lot	Increased a little	Stayed the same	Decreased a little	Decreased a lot	Unsure
e) Other [please state]						

Why?	....
	....

TASK GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS

Please answer question 18 only if you were aware of the Berechurch task group before today.

15. What achievements, if any, can you think of that the Berechurch task group has made since it started meeting in December 2003?
(please describe in the space provided)

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Improving quality of life

Please answer questions 19-21 even if you were not aware of the Berechurch task group before today.

16. One objective for the Berechurch task group is to improve the quality of life for people living in the Berechurch area. Do you feel quality of life has… since December 2003?

Improved a lot	
Improved a little	
Neither improved nor worsened	
Worsened a little	
Worsened a lot	
Unsure	

If you feel that quality of life has improved a little or a lot

17. In what way, if at all, do you think the Berechurch task group has helped to improve quality of life for people in the Berechurch area?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………

18. Can you think of any factors that may prevent the Berechurch task group from significantly improving quality of life for people in the Berechurch area?
These may be internal factors (e.g. relating to the effectiveness of the task group), or external factors (i.e. wider issues relating to the community).

……

……

……..

……

19. What do you feel the Berechurch task group could do to further improve quality of life for people living in the area? (please describe in the space provided)

……

……

……..

……..

Communication

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree that communication between community and voluntary groups and other professionals (e.g. the council) in Berechurch has improved since December 2003 (which is when the Berechurch task group started meeting)? (please tick)

Strongly agree	
Slightly agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Slightly disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Unsure	

21. If you agree strongly or slightly, to what extent do you feel that the improved communication is due to the task group? (please tick)

Strongly agree	
Slightly agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Slightly disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Unsure	
N/A	

Community Meeting Places

22. Were you aware that the Berechurch task group are working towards creating better / more local meeting places? *(please tick)*

Yes		**Please continue to question 23**
No		**Please go to question 31**
Unsure		**Please go to question 31**

23. Have you been involved in this project in any way? *(please tick)*

Yes		**Please continue to question 24**
No		**Please go to question 31**

24. In what way have you been / are you involved in this project?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

25. How effective do you think the planning of this project has been so far? *(please tick)*

Very effective	
Quite effective	
Neither effective nor ineffective	
Not very effective	
Not at all effective	
Unsure	

26. How well do you feel that this project has progressed so far? *(please tick)*

Very well	
Reasonably well	
Neither well nor badly	
Not very well	
Not at all well	
Unsure	

27. Can you think of anything that has gone particularly well so far in this project? If so, please describe these below:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

28. Can you think of any significant problems that have been encountered so far in this project? If so, please describe these below:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

29. How well do you think these problems have been handled? *(please tick)*

Very well	
Quite well	
Neither well nor badly	
Not very well	
Not at all well	
Unsure	
N/A	

30. Can you think of any way in which these problems could have been handled better? *If yes, please describe below:*

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Community Activity

31. To what extent do you agree or disagree that there has been more community activity in Berechurch since the task group started meeting in December 2003? *N.B. By community activity we mean local people coming together to develop initiatives as well as partnerships with other organisations to make a positive change in their local community. (please tick)*

Strongly agree	
Slightly agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Slightly disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Unsure	

32. How successful or unsuccessful do you feel that the following activities/initiatives have been? *(please tick one response for each activity)*

	Very successful	Quite successful	Neither successful / unsuccessful	Not very successful	Not at all successful	Unsure
Funday						
Berechurch Newsletter						
Set up of the Monkwick Residents Association (ROME)						

33. How successful do you think *progress* towards the following achievements for the Berechurch community has been? *Where 1 is not successful and 7 is very successful*

Community Meeting Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Youth Centre/Youth Shelter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Diversionary Activities for young people – e.g. YMCA outreach service, football/sports)							
Essex Early Years work – promoting existing facilities to increase pre-school take-up	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Addressing Health Needs (smoking; stress; physical activity; dietary balance)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

34. Where you have scored between 1 and 3, indicating a lack of success, what do you consider the reasons for this to have been? Can you suggest any potential solutions to the problems?

……
……
……
……
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……

35. If further funding were available for activities in the community, how would you prioritise each of the following (either investment in repeating activities already carried out, such as Fundays, or further investment in new activities/initiatives)? *Please give each activity a unique rating from 1 to 7, where 1 means that you would most like to see this particular activity repeated/further investment made in it, and7 means that you would least like to see this repeated/invested in further.*

Funday	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Restoration/expansion of existing meeting spaces	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Youth Centre/Youth Shelter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Diversionary Activities for young people – e.g. YMCA outreach service, football/sports	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Essex Early Years work – promotional existing facilities to increase pre-school take-up	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Addressing Health Needs (smoking; stress; physical activity; dietary balance)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (please state)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Diverting Young People From Anti-Social Behaviour

36. Can you think of any other activities the Berechurch task group could organise that may be effective in diverting young people from anti-social behaviour?

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

INVOLVEMENT WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

37. To what extent would you agree or disagree that the community / voluntary group/organisation you work with has become more involved with the local community since December 2003 (which is when the task group started meeting)? *(please tick)*

Strongly agree	
Slightly agree	
Neither agree/nor disagree	
Slightly disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Unsure	

For those that Strongly agree or Slightly agree

38. In what way? *(please describe in the space provided)*

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

39. To what extent would you agree or disagree that this increased involvement with the local community is connected to the setting up of the Berechurch task group? *(please tick)*

Strongly agree	
Slightly agree	
Neither agree/nor disagree	
Slightly disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Unsure	

40. Do you think there have been more local residents involved in your community / voluntary group/organisation since December 2003 (which is when the task group started meeting)? *(please tick)*

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

For those that Strongly agree or Slightly agree

41. To what extent would you agree or disagree that this increase in the number of local residents involved in your community / voluntary group/organisation is connected to the setting up of the Berechurch task group? *(please tick)*

Strongly agree	
Slightly agree	
Neither agree/nor disagree	
Slightly disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Unsure	

42. What else do you think might have caused this increase in local participation? *(please describe)*

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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SUPPORT

43. Over the last year, has your community / voluntary group had any of the following types of outside advice? *(please tick all that apply)*

Management issues	
Funding advice	
Managing money	
If other help, please specify where from: (e.g. advice on organising events) ……………………………………………………..	

44. Over the last year has your community / voluntary group needed outside advice about any of the following issues but not been able to get it? *(please tick all that apply)*

Management issues	
Funding advice	
Managing money	
If other help, please specify where from: (e.g. advice on organising events) ……………………………………………………..	

45. If yes, why was this? *(please describe)*

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Ask all

46. To what extent do you agree or disagree that you feel more supported in your work with the local community since the Berechurch task group started meeting? *(please tick)*

Strongly agree	
Slightly agree	
Neither agree/nor disagree	
Slightly disagree	
Strongly disagree	
Unsure	

47. Please indicate how effective the Berechurch task group is in carrying out the following roles. *(Please circle one number for each role on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1=Not effective at all and 10=Highly effective)*

Exchange of information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Co-ordination of activities in the area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Exchange of skills and learning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Giving support and confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Representing members in consultation / partnership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Developing a common purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

48. Are there any other ways in which you feel you could be more supported?

(please describe)

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………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

49. Please describe any other roles you think the Berechurch task group could have to support the work of your group / your work in the area.

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………………………………………………………………………………………………

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BERECHURCH WARD
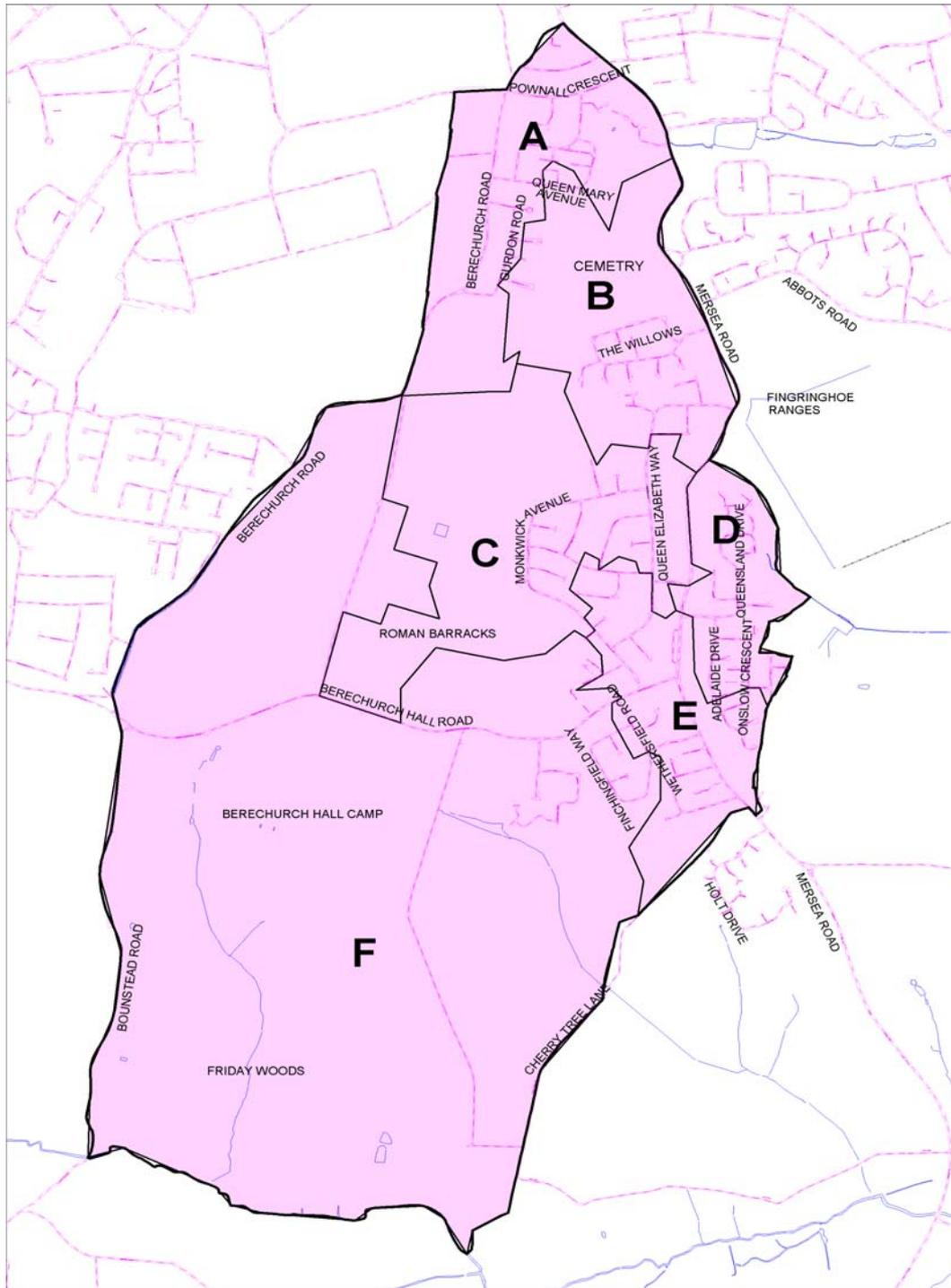
Key

A = Berechurch North   D = Austrailian Estate
B = The Willows   E = Blackheath
C = Monkwick   F = Friday Wood

——————— Ward Boundaries
——————— L-SOA Boundaries

Appendix 2

People from each the following community / voluntary groups or statutory sector representatives were interviewed:

- The Ormiston Centre
- Orchards Church
- Thomas Lord Audley school
- Essex Youth Services
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Monkwick Residents Association
- Monkwick Junior School
- Colchester Borough Homes
- Springlands Nursery
- Monkwick Infants School
- The Learning Shop
- Essex Police – Police Community Support Officers, Neighbourhood Policing Team for Berechurch and Harbour wards
- Greyfriars Adult Community College
- St. Margarets Church
- Monkwick Health Clinic Health Visitors
- Colchester Borough Council – Community Initiatives
- Local ward councillors
- Other representatives from the Berechurch Task Group