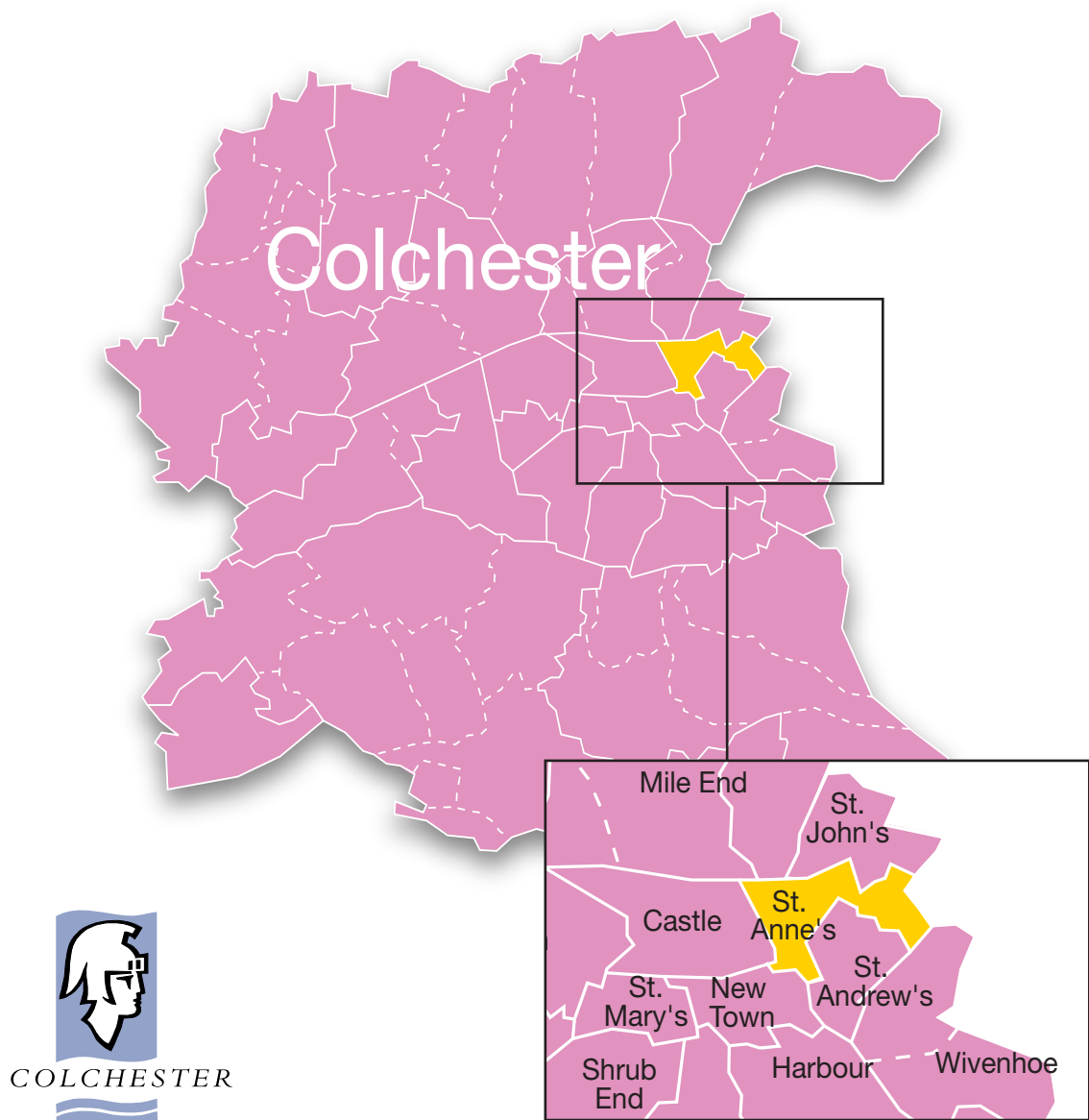


# Discovering Need, Developing Solutions

## St Anne's Ward Community Strengths Assessment



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## **ST ANNE'S WARD COMMUNITY STRENGTHS ASSESSMENT (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)**

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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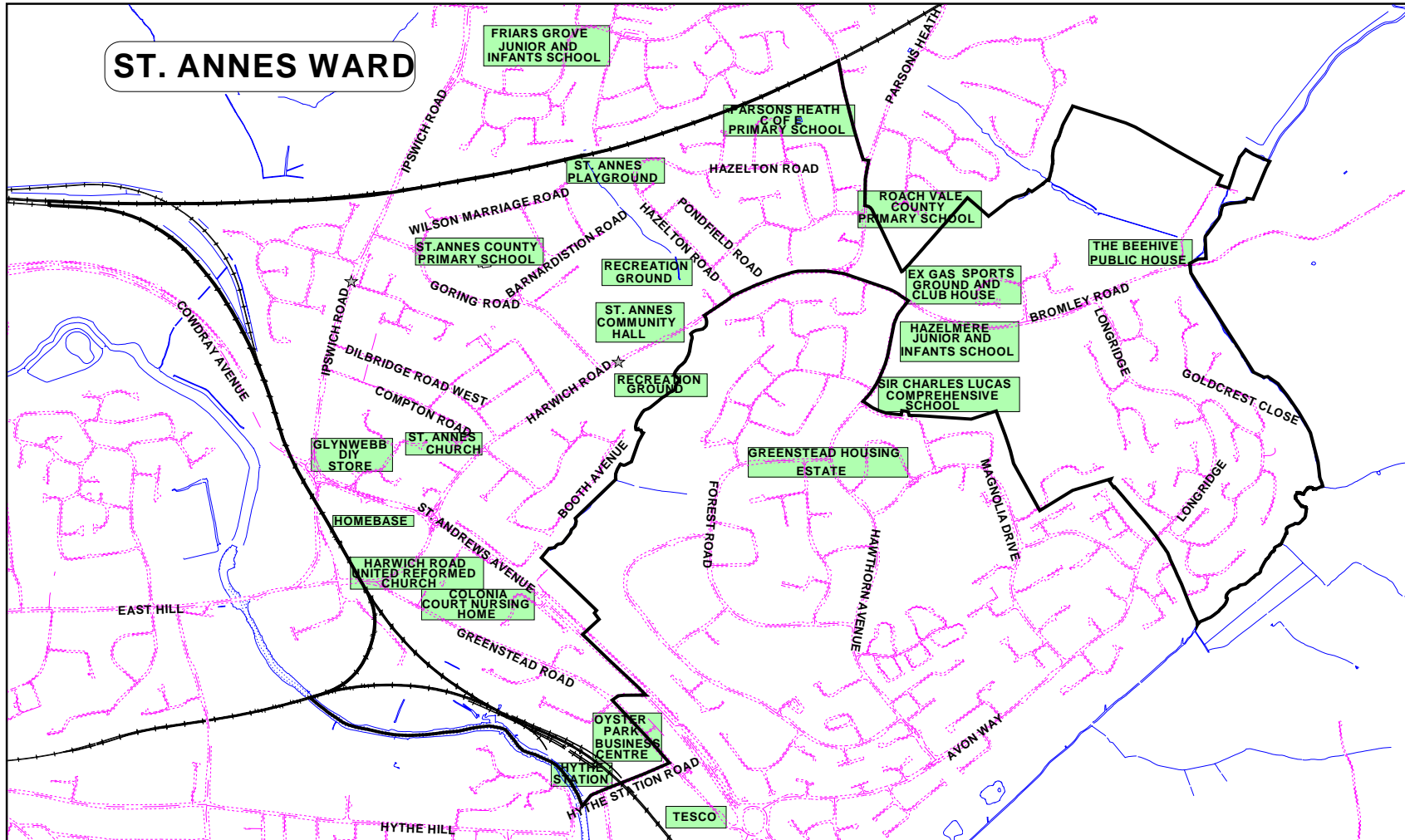
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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

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### **1.1 Background to the research**

- 1.1.1 This is the last of four community assessments that the Social and Economic Regeneration Group at Colchester Borough Council are undertaking in local authority wards that have been identified as 'deprived' in the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 (IMD 2000). The completed reports for Harbour, Berechurch and St Andrew's wards are currently available online at [www.colchester.gov.uk](http://www.colchester.gov.uk) (to find these, click on the 'Research and Statistics' link, then 'Community Research'). Alternatively, you may telephone us if you would prefer to receive a paper copy (see Community Development and Research Contacts listed on page 4).
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this report is to increase local knowledge about characteristics and needs in these wards. These needs have been established from consultation with residents about their neighbourhood and community. This is accompanied by analysis from interviews with community and voluntary groups about the strengths and needs of their organisations and interviews about the support that these groups receive.
- 1.1.3 Research has shown that a vibrant community and voluntary sector and increased community involvement can have a significant and positive impact on social exclusion in areas of deprivation. Future community development work will be planned largely around the findings of this research.

### **1.2 Structure of the report**

This report is divided into six main chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction and methodology  
Chapter 2: Executive summary of main findings  
Chapter 3: Recommendations  
Chapter 4: Results of household survey  
Chapter 5: Results of interviews with community and voluntary groups  
Chapter 6: Results of interviews with support organisations

### **1.3 Geography and boundaries used**

- 1.3.1 This report looks at community needs in St Anne's ward. As mentioned above, St Anne's ward was initially selected along with three other wards as the target area for this research on the basis of its score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (ID 2000). This highlighted that St Anne's ward was the second most deprived ward in the borough. Details of the ward boundary can be viewed on the map on page 5.

### **1.4 Methodology**

- 1.4.1 This research involved three separate parts:

- a) A household survey
- b) Interviews with community and voluntary groups
- c) Interviews with support organisations

The details of each of these methods are outlined below.

#### *a) Household survey*

- 1.4.2 A household survey was carried out in Jan/Feb 2004. This involved face to face interviews with over 200 residents in St Anne's. This amounts to a survey of approximately 6.5% of all the households in the ward. This was the standard sample size for each of the four wards where this research was carried out.

- 1.4.3 The survey asked people about their level of involvement in the community. It also explored the issues that they felt needed addressing, in terms of community needs and gaps in the delivery of services to St Anne's. A copy of the survey that was used is included in Appendix 1.

#### *b) Interviews with community and voluntary groups*

- 1.4.4 A total of 11 interviews were conducted with representatives from local community and voluntary groups. These interviews looked at the strengths, levels of organisation and the needs of these groups. A list of the groups interviewed is included in Appendix 2 and a copy of the interview form is included in Appendix 3.

#### *c) Interviews with support organisations*

- 1.4.5.1 A total of 12 interviews were conducted with organisations that provide support to community and voluntary groups in St Anne's to achieve their objectives. These interviews looked at support currently delivered in St Anne's, as well as support available. The list of

organisations interviewed is included in Appendix 2 and a copy of the interview form that was used is contained in Appendix 4.

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## **2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 This summary integrates the findings from each of the methodologies used throughout the research. Methodologies used include a household survey, interviews with community and voluntary groups and interviews with support organisations (see chapter 1 for more detail). Recommendations for tackling each of the issues highlighted in this section of the report are contained in Chapter 3.
- 2.1.2 The main findings that emerged from the research shaped the structure of this chapter. It is organised under the following sections:
- Anti-social behaviour
  - Younger people
  - Leisure, recreation and social activities
  - Funding
  - Local meeting places
  - Building equality
  - Community participation
  - Joint working and support
- 2.1.3 The first three sections - Anti-Social Behaviour, Younger People and Leisure, Recreation and Social Activities are closely linked. For instance, respondents see anti-social behaviour as a problem in the neighbourhood and younger people have been identified as the main cause. Providing better leisure, recreation and social activities in St Anne's are seen as an important step in improving the situation.
- 2.1.4 The next sections, Funding and Resource Issues and Local Meeting Places were identified mostly from the interviews with community and voluntary groups. These relate to the ability of community and voluntary groups in St Anne's to carry out their objectives with the available resources.
- 2.1.5 The last three sections, Building Equality, Community Participation and Joint Working and Support, relate to the ways in which community and voluntary groups try to involve and include people and the extent to which support organisations assist them in doing so.
- 2.1.6 For conciseness and to avoid duplication, this chapter does not contain data. All references to research findings, however, signpost back to from the original text where actual data can be found.

## **2.2 Anti-social behaviour**

- 2.2.1 Anti-social behaviour was seen as a problem for people in St Anne's. This was the most common type of issue that people said they had taken practical action to address. More specifically, the issues that they said they had addressed included noise, vandalism, racial harassment and people causing a general nuisance (see Section 4.6.5). Many people also commented on the disruptive / abusive behaviour of younger people in the neighbourhood (see Section 2.3 for more detail about this aspect of the issue).
- 2.2.2 Anti-social behaviour was also the issue most commonly rated as a problem after litter and rubbish, and vandalism and graffiti (although these issues may all be described as forms of anti-social behaviour) (see Section 4.15.2).
- 2.2.3 It is relevant to note that anti-social behaviour was recognised as a problem in a previous consultation in St Anne's. The St Anne's Participatory Consultation (2000), which led to the formation of St Anne's Forum, revealed that anti-social behaviour was a priority issue. In response, Essex Police have been working with St Anne's Forum to identify areas where anti-social behaviour is more common, supporting local community and voluntary groups to tackle anti-social behaviour and increasing the confidence of local people to report incidents as they occur.

## **2.3 Younger people**

- 2.3.1 The needs and behaviour of younger people were a recurrent theme throughout the research process and closely connected to the issue of anti-social behaviour discussed above.
- 2.3.2 Problems relating to younger people were the second most common type of issue that people in St Anne's said they had taken practical action to address. Some examples of the types of issues surrounding younger people that were raised included noise, crime, playing football in the street and younger people having nowhere to play (see Section 4.6.6).
- 2.3.3 Improving the facilities for younger people was seen as the second priority of all the services listed (see Section 4.13.2).
- 2.3.4 Activities for children and teenagers were the most common type of suggestion that people gave when asked to give ideas for additional groups that they would welcome within their community. More specifically, these included Brownies, Guides, Scouts, Cubs and general sports activities for children (see Section 4.9.1).



- 2.3.5 Similarly, events / services for younger people were the most common suggestion given for things people would like to see in the new Community Centre. Over one quarter of the people specified that services needed to be geared at children and only slightly fewer said they should target teenagers. Examples of the types of suggestions that people gave include 'holiday activities', 'seasonal entertainment for children', '[something for] kids and youth to get them off the street', 'job training for younger people who have never worked', 'a youth club' and a 'kids disco' (see Section 4.11.3).
- 2.3.6 As noted above, anti-social behaviour in St Anne's has been highlighted through previous consultation as a priority issue (see Section 2.2.3). The St Anne's Participatory Consultation (2000) found that anti-social behaviour and abusive behaviour on the streets of St Anne's were closely connected to the lack of facilities for children and teenagers. In direct response to this issue, St Anne's Forum organised a two week event providing activities for younger people in St Anne's during the summer holidays (Summer 2003), and a 10 week DJ workshop programme for younger people in 2004.
- 2.3.7 Another popular request was for services and activities for younger children and mothers. Suggestions included mother and toddlers groups, coffee mornings for young mums, 'small children interaction', crèches and play-schools (see Section 4.11.7). Activities for young children may be more of a pressing need for some people since Sure Start targets its work with people in a specific geographical area within St Anne's.

## **2.4 Leisure, recreation and social activities**

- 2.4.1 Leisure and recreation services also emerged as priorities for local people. Almost one third of people interviewed in the household survey rated local leisure and recreation activities as poor or very poor (see Section 4.12.5).
- 2.4.2 Social events were the most common popular response, after activities for younger people (as discussed in Section 2.3.5 above) when asked to give suggestions for services or events that they would like to see in the new Community Centre. A particularly popular suggestion within this category was Bingo. Other suggestions included tea dances, coffee mornings, community events to bring young and old people together, quizzes and a young wives group. Sports / keep fit / dancing were also common requests (see Sections 4.11.4, 4.11.6).
- 2.4.3 Activities for older people were another popular request when asked about services and events that would be welcomed in the new community centre. More specifically, these included lunches for

elderly people, coffee mornings, keep-fit for people over 50, and general occasions for social gatherings (see Section 4.11.5).

2.4.4 This is important since St Anne's has a high number of older people in its population. According to the 2001 Census, St Anne's had 1189 people aged over 65, ranking the seventh highest of all 27 wards in Colchester.

2.4.5 Another type of activity that many people suggested for the new community centre was fundraising for charity. More specific events that were proposed included 'jumble sales' and 'bring and buy sales' (see Section 4.11.8).

## **2.5 Funding**

2.5.1 Funding was rated as the most common problem facing community and voluntary groups in St Anne's. Just two of the 11 groups that were interviewed said funding was not a problem and almost half of the groups interviewed rated this as a serious problem (see Section 5.3.2).

2.5.2 Over half of the groups interviewed had sought funding advice on at least one occasion over the past three years. The majority had approached an officer from Colchester Borough Council for this advice (see Section 5.4.6).

2.5.3 Funding levels for groups in St Anne's were fairly mixed. Whilst almost one quarter of groups said that they received funding of £100,000 and over in the previous year, the same proportion again said they received less than £1,000 (see Section 5.4.4).

2.5.4 Interviews with support organisations revealed that five of the six organisations interviewed that provide funding to groups in Colchester said they funded at least one community or voluntary group in St Anne's at the time of completing the questionnaire (see Section 6.3.1).

## **2.6 Resource issues and local meeting places**

2.6.1 Of all the resources and equipment listed, meeting space was most widely perceived as a problem for community and voluntary groups in St Anne's. Just under half of the groups interviewed said that this was at least an occasional problem (see Section 5.4.12).

2.6.2 Over one third of people that were interviewed for the household survey felt that local meeting places were poor or very poor (see Section 4.12.4).

- 2.6.3 It is perhaps worth mentioning that St Anne's Forum have secured funding for a new community centre in St Anne's, which is due to open in 2005. The availability of this community resource may alleviate some of these problems.
- 2.6.4 Although groups generally appeared to be well resourced, use of a printer was a 'significant problem' for some of the groups interviewed (see Section 5.4.11).

## **2.7 Building equality**

- 2.7.1 The groups interviewed appeared very confident about their ability to deal with equal opportunities issues. All 11 groups interviewed agreed (strongly or slightly) that they had the skills or experiences necessary to deal with equal opportunities issues (see Chart 22).
- 2.7.2 Nearly one half of the groups interviewed said they had been involved in some kind of an activity for challenging discrimination within their community, for example, through awareness raising events (see Section 5.6.3).
- 2.7.3 Just three of the groups interviewed said they had neither a written equal opportunities policy nor a statement of equality within their constitution. Two of these groups said they would be interested in receiving help to develop these (see Section 5.6.1).
- 2.7.4 Language barriers in communicating with the local community and access to childcare for members to access activities were rated the least problematic of all issues listed. Over one half of the groups interviewed said that language barriers were no problem. Similarly, over one half of groups said that child-care was no problem. However, this does not necessarily mean that these access issues are not problems for people in St Anne's. Further examination would be needed to examine the possible existence and then the extent of any of these access issues (see Section 5.3.5 - 5.3.8).
- 2.7.5 Interviews with the support organisations revealed that support is available to community and voluntary groups in St Anne's in promoting diversity. For example, St Anne's has a Community Development worker who is able to offer advice and support to groups on these issues, but this tends to be delivered to groups as issues arise (see Section 6.5.1).
- 2.7.6 However, less than one half of the community and voluntary groups interviewed said that they had received support for their work on equal opportunities. Over one half of all groups interviewed said they would not know where to get advice on equal opportunities issues should they need it (see Section 5.6.4).

- 2.7.7 As mentioned above, the majority of groups interviewed felt that they had the necessary skills and experience to deal with equal opportunities issues and many people felt that language barriers were not an issue (see Section 5.3.7). This could reflect reality, or it could reflect a lack of awareness on the part of community and voluntary groups in St Anne's in addressing issues of diversity and equality of opportunity. Further investigation would be needed to determine whether this was the case.

## **2.8 Community participation**

- 2.8.1 The vast majority of people said they had not taken practical action in an attempt to resolve an issue that affected their community in the last two years (see Section 4.6.1).
- 2.8.2 Almost one quarter of groups said that recruiting and retaining volunteers was a significant problem (see Section 5.3.3).
- 2.8.3 Just 10 of all 224 people interviewed for the household survey had come into contact with any of the local groups listed as a volunteer (see Section 4.8.4).
- 2.8.4 However, over one quarter of people said they would be willing to get more involved in local groups. Over half of all people interviewed said that lack of time prevented them from getting involved in local groups (see Sections 4.10.1 - 4.10.3).

## **2.9 Joint working and support**

- 2.9.1 Community and voluntary groups in St Anne's generally seemed well connected and supported by the support organisations that were interviewed. For instance, as mentioned above, five of the six support organisations that offer funding to groups in Colchester funded groups in St Anne's at the time of completing questionnaire. Additionally, ten support organisations said they offered staff time to community and voluntary groups in St Anne's. All eight of the support organisations that said they could provide information to community and voluntary groups in Colchester currently do so in St Anne's (see Section 6.2.4).
- 2.9.2 More than half of the community and voluntary groups interviewed had been involved in joint working with the local Council over the previous year (see Sections 5.7.6).
- 2.9.3 Less than half said they had been involved in joint working with other statutory agencies and less than half were members of formal networks (see Sections 5.7.6, 5.7.7). There were however, very few suggestions for how local networks could be improved.

- 2.9.4 More than half of the groups interviewed said they would be interested in support to identify their training needs (see Section 5.5.4).
- 2.9.5 As discussed in Section 2.7.3 above, two of the three community and voluntary groups in St Anne's that said they had neither an equal opportunities policy nor a statement of equality within their constitution said they would be interested in receiving help to develop their practices (see Section 5.6.1).
- 2.9.6 On a similar note, as discussed in Section 2.7.6, over half of the groups interviewed said they would not know where to get advice on equal opportunities should they need it (see Section 5.6.4).

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### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Below is a short list of recommendations that have been proposed in the light of findings about local needs that emerged from this research. These recommendations are organised under the same thematic section headings as the Executive Summary (see Chapter 2). Each issue is briefly documented along with suggested recommendations as to how they might be tackled. These recommendations are intended as a starting point to instigate further community action and are by no means an exhaustive list.

#### 3.2 Anti-social behaviour

- 3.2.1 Anti-social behaviour was widely perceived as a problem in St Anne's. In fact, this issue has already been recognised by the St Anne's Forum.
- 3.2.2 **Recommendation 1:** Encourage reporting of persistent problems to United Solutions.
- 3.2.3 **Recommendation 2:** Liase with United Solutions to glean good practice that can be applied to St Anne's.
- 3.2.4 **Recommendation 3:** Support colleagues in Essex Police, Colchester Borough Council, Colchester Borough Homes, and Housing Associations to promote the use of new resources to combat anti-social behaviour such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.
- 3.2.5 **Recommendation 4:** Work with Colchester Neighbourhood Watch to launch a watch scheme for St Anne's estate
- 3.2.6 **Recommendation 5:** Organise a 'Safer St Anne's' event with the St Anne's Forum, Essex Police and other stakeholders to identify opportunities for improving services to tackle anti-social behaviour.

#### 3.3 Younger people

- 3.3.1 Needs of younger people was a prominent theme emerging from this research. In connection with the issue discussed above, younger people were closely associated with anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood. People in St Anne's were keen to provide activities

for younger people and create opportunities for them to be positively involved in the community.

3.3.2 Many events / services for younger people were given when asked for ideas for services / events for the new community centre. Another popular request was for services for younger children and mothers.

3.3.3 **Recommendation 6:** Map services for younger people currently available in St Anne's (and St Andrew's) and feed this information into the 'Safer St Anne's' event.

3.3.4 **Recommendation 7:** Ensure that the suggested activities for younger people, and children and mothers that were proposed for the new community centre are considered when the centre opens. Sure Start may be able to provide particular expertise in developing services for younger children and their families.

### **3.4 Leisure, recreation and social activities**

3.4.1 Leisure, recreation and social activities emerged as priorities for local people. A vast range of events was suggested when asked for ideas for activities for the new community centre. Activities for older people were a common request, which may be especially important in St Anne's since it has a high number of older people in the population.

3.4.2 **Recommendation 8:** In connection with recommendation 6, ensure that the suggested leisure, recreation and social activities for the new St Anne's Community Centre are considered, particularly those that are geared to specific groups of people i.e. older people and younger people.

3.4.3 **Recommendation 9:** Encourage voluntary and community groups as well as statutory services to use the centre to deliver such services.

### **3.5 Funding**

3.5.1 Funding was seen as a significant problem for many groups in St Anne's. It is not clear why such a large proportion of groups felt that funding was a problem since levels of funding for groups in this area is generally relatively high.

3.5.2 **Recommendation 10:** Support the Colchester Community Voluntary Service (CCVS) outreach project to target community groups in St Anne's for funding and training advice.

### **3.6 Resource issues and local meeting places**

- 3.6.1 Access to local meeting places was rated as the most problematic for groups of all the resources listed. A number of groups had low levels of satisfaction with the premises they used.
- 3.6.2 It is important to note that the St Anne's Forum have secured funding for a new Community Centre in St Anne's which is due to open in 2005. The extent to which the timing of this research may have impacted upon these findings is not clear. It is hoped that the recent availability of this facility may alleviate some of these problems.
- 3.6.3 **Recommendation 11:** Work with the steering committee for the new community centre to build a strong managerial team.
- 3.6.4 **Recommendation 12:** Support the management committee for the new community centre to ensure that when the new St Anne's Community Centre opens it meets the needs of individuals and groups in the area while adopting a sustainable business plan.
- 3.6.5 **Recommendation 13:** Encourage local community and voluntary groups to use the centre.
- 3.6.6 **Recommendation 14:** In connection with recommendations 6 and 7, ensure that suggested recreational and social activities are considered for the new community centre when it opens.
- 3.6.7 **Recommendation 15:** Use the new community centre – when it opens – to make equipment and resources (such as computers and printers) available to community and voluntary groups. In the meantime, make equipment available from the resource centre.

### **3.7 Building equality**

- 3.7.1 Community and voluntary groups appeared fairly confident that they had the skills and experiences necessary to deal with equal opportunities issues. Although the majority of groups conveyed commitment and concern about these issues, very few showed signs of implementing equal opportunities in any systematic way or addressing issues proactively.
- 3.7.2 Support is available for community and voluntary groups in building equality and most groups appeared to be satisfied with the support available for dealing with issues of diversity as they arose.
- 3.7.3 Although the majority of groups in St Anne's said that they had an equal opportunities policy or a statement of equality within their constitution, a handful of groups said that they had neither of these and said they were interested in receiving help to develop these.



3.7.4 **Recommendation 16:** Ensure that the Community Development Workers continue to remain abreast of trends and legislation pertaining to diversity and equality of opportunity.

3.7.5 **Recommendation 17:** Support community and voluntary groups to develop equal opportunities policies (particularly where they do not have one) to strengthen their organisations. Continue to support community and voluntary groups in responding to issues of diversity and equality of opportunity as they arise.

### **3.8 Community participation**

3.8.1 A small segment of people in the neighbourhood feel that they are less integrated in community life.

3.8.2 Recruiting and retaining volunteers was a common problem for groups in St Anne's. Very few of the people interviewed had come into contact with any local community and voluntary groups as a volunteer. However, more than one quarter of the people interviewed said they would be willing to get more involved in local groups.

3.8.3 **Recommendation 18:** Work with the St Anne's Forum to publicise community activity in St Anne's more effectively.

3.8.4 **Recommendation 19:** Work with local residents and the Federation of Residents' Associations to launch a Residents' Association for St Anne's.

### **3.9 Joint working and support**

3.9.1 Community and voluntary groups in St Anne's generally seem well supported and networks between community and voluntary groups and statutory organisations in this area appear to be relatively strong.

3.9.2 **Recommendation 20:** Continue to support the St Anne's Forum to provide an opportunity for agencies to share information, exchange good practice and plan joint working.