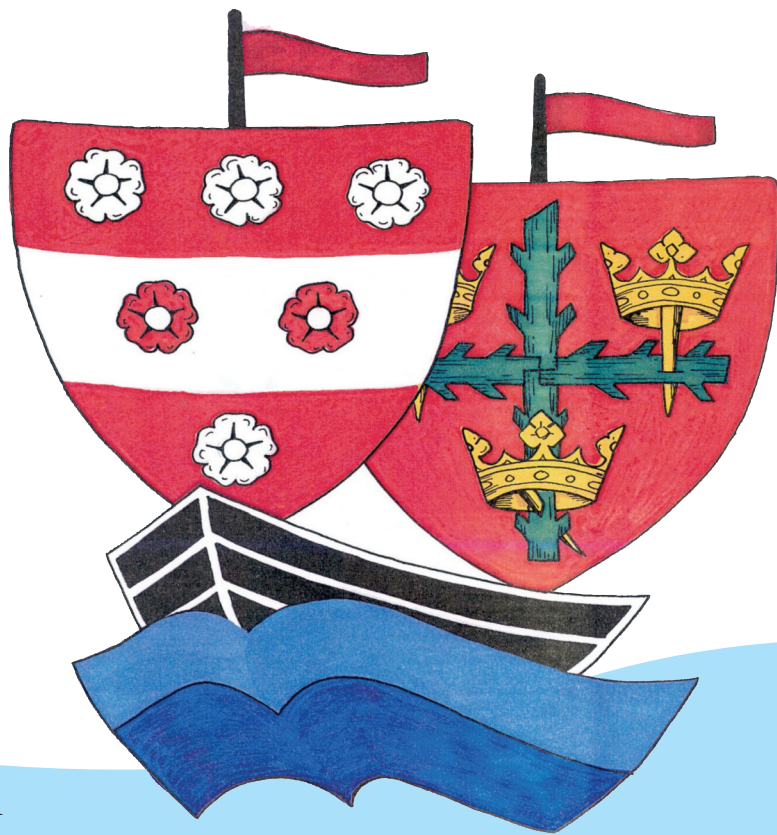# Old Heath Evaluation

This evaluation relates to the area politically known as Harbour ward. However, the Task Group decided that 'Old Heath' was a more fitting name for the area they worked in, as this is the name local people associate with the area.

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Colchester Borough Council

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT

Queries / Comments

This report was produced by Emma West 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 **mandy.jones@colchester.gov.uk**.

Disclaimer

The information in this report was, as far as is known, correct at the date of publication. Colchester Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any error or omission.

Maps

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2. HARBOUR WARD ('OLD HEATH')

Harbour ward is displayed in the map below. Throughout this report, **Harbour is referred to as 'Old Heath'**, as this is the name local people said they associated with this area. This map also shows the four small areas within the ward [1].

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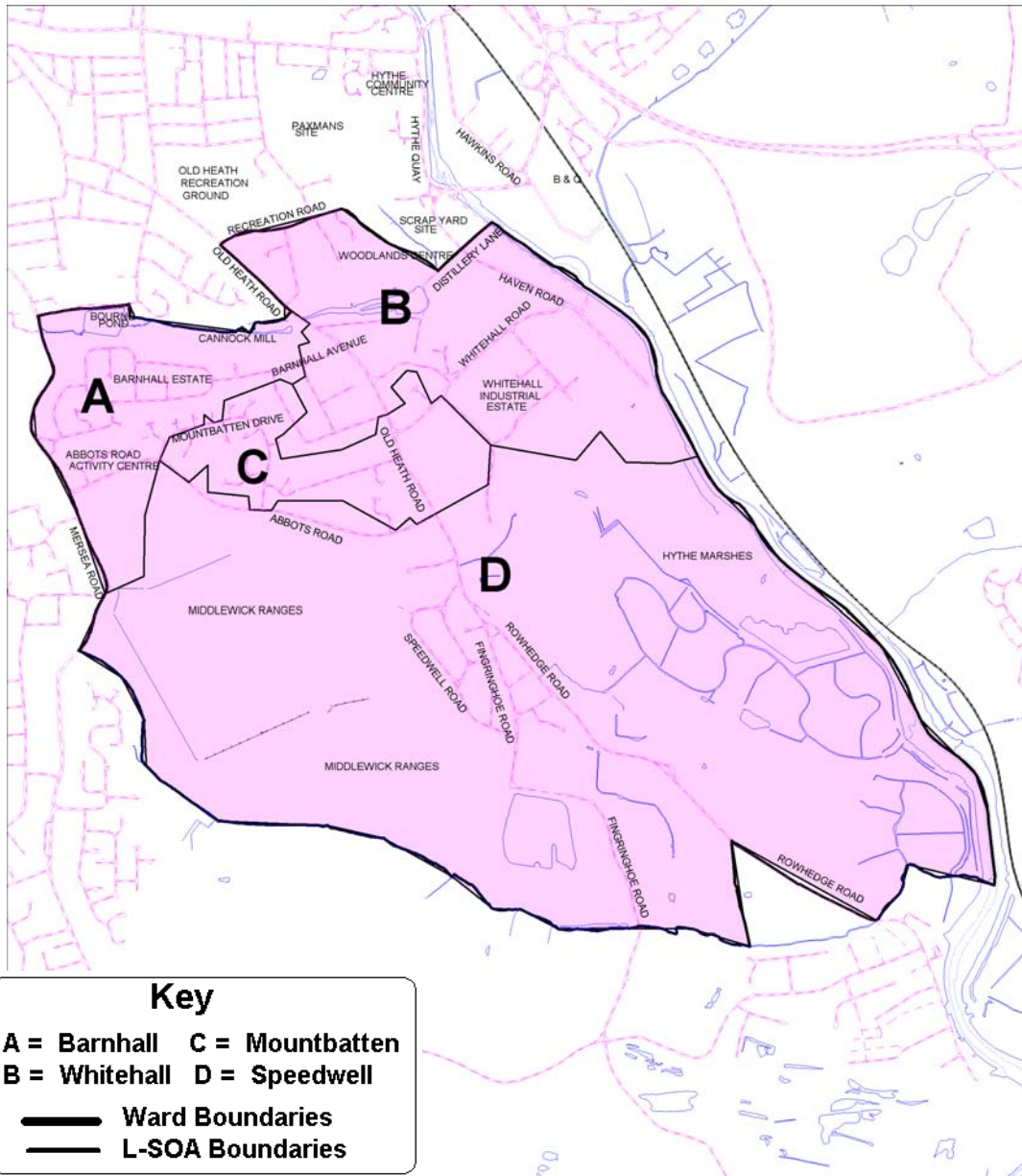
[1] The Office for National Statistics introduced the small areas displayed in this map – officially known as Lower Layer Super Output Areas - in 2004. Small areas have an average population of 1,500 people and each ward in Colchester currently consists of between one and six small areas. There are 104 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.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this research was to assess the effectiveness of Community Development investment in Old Heath.[2] Findings are based on interviews with people working in the area to improve the quality of life, focus groups with young people and police data. [3] Conclusions are organised under the headings of the Community Development team's four-stage plan for capacity building in communities, since the work in Old Heath was designed to follow this plan.

Background to Community Development work in Old Heath

Colchester Borough Council's (CBC) Community Development work in Old Heath began in 2003. Research was undertaken to investigate issues that people who lived and work in those communities felt needed to be tackled. Three main objectives evolved from this research, with the agreement of the newly formed Old Heath task group (June 2003). These objectives were to:

- Create better / more community venues
- Increase activities for young people to divert them from Anti social behaviour
- Increase support for community and voluntary groups

1. Knowledge and understanding of local needs

All interviewees supported the existing task group objectives and indicated that they felt the group should persist with these issues. However, they recognised it was important that the group continually monitored their priorities to accommodate changing circumstances, whilst maintaining their focus to ensure they delivered on existing objectives.

However, a few other issues were identified that may require further investigation, possibly leading to development work in future. These include the needs of other 'vulnerable' groups in the community such as younger children (aged 0-5 years) and older residents; a perceived tension between the 'Speedwell Rd' and Barnhall estates which was seen as a potential barrier to improving quality of life in Old Heath; and consolidating community participation in the area.

2. Partnership building between residents and community leaders

Attendance at Old Heath task group meetings was generally high amongst those interviewed. They tended to express support for the task group and commitment to the Community Development objectives for Old Heath.

The consensus amongst interviewees was that the task group had provided opportunities for networking between professionals and community and voluntary organisations in Old Heath. They felt that the task group had enabled them to establish shared objectives, and this had given them confidence in their ability to make an impact in the community. Interviewees also felt that communication with the local community had improved, but to a

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[2] This evaluation relates to the area politically known as Harbour ward. However, the Task Group decided that 'Old Heath' was a more fitting name for the area they worked in, as this is the name local people associate with the area.

[3] For more information on the methodology, see Section 6 of this report.

lesser degree. Some interviewees were concerned that involvement in community events and activities was confined to a small section of the community and that many residents were unaware of task group's existence.

Although attendance at task group meetings was generally equally divided between residents and professionals, some interviewees expressed frustration at the lack of involvement from residents and were concerned that the current success of the task group was highly dependant on a small group of committed people. The Community Development workers were widely seen as pivotal to the 'smooth running' of the task group.

3. Capacity building of organisational and physical infrastructure

Interviewees were more confident about their ability to bring about a change in relation to creating better / more community meeting places than any other task group objective. Achievements had already been made in meeting this objective, including improvements to the church hall and having facilities built for young people such as a basketball court and BMX track. Interviewees were also reasonably happy with the progression of the community hall project. Although some felt that poor communication and 'internal politics' at Colchester Borough Council had slowed the project down somewhat, the majority of interviewees felt that these difficulties had been handled well. The task group was seen as the force behind the community hall project, and it was felt that achieving this would be very positive for the morale and reputation of the task group.

It was not possible to assess the task group's impact in increasing support for local groups partly due to methodological difficulties in the wording of the interview question. In addition, the chair of the task group said he felt that support was provided, 'indirectly, but not directly'; therefore interviewees may have been unsure of how to answer this question. These issues will need to be addressed in relation to future evaluations.

4. Tackling issues to direct service provision where needed

Perhaps the most salient issue the task group had addressed was, *'Increasing activities for young people to divert them from anti-social behaviour (ASB).* Police data and evidence from interviews and focus groups suggest there was a marked improvement in the levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Old Heath in the past two years. Whilst the input of activities for young people in Old Heath was clearly seen as an improvement for the area, and was seen to have *contributed* to this perceived drop in ASB, several interviewees expressed concern that the youths mostly responsible for causing problems were less likely to get involved in structured activities.

Several interviewees commented that improved communication and joint working between agencies in Old Heath had been an important factor in tackling ASB. The task group was seen as a facilitator in this coordinated approach. However, despite the apparent improvements in the level of ASB in Old Heath, unfortunately it is not possible to conclude that the problems with ASB in this area have been 'solved' as there are areas within Old Heath where ASB still exists. Additionally, it was recognised that agencies in the area needed to continue to be proactive in their strategies to tackle ASB.

4. TABLE OF CONTENTS

5. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research was to assess the value of Community Development investment in Old Heath.[4]

Community Development in Old Heath

The Community Development team's investment in Old Heath arose from the Council's Strategic Plan (2000), which set 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 Old Heath.

Community Development in Old Heath 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 Old Heath.

Establishing Local Need

In 2002 a Needs Assessment was carried out in Old Heath, which involved interviewing 40 community groups or services and interviewing 200 residents. The aims of this research were to establish a picture of specific local needs and to serve as a catalyst for addressing these needs.

The research identified three main concerns in Old Heath:

- a lack of a sense of community
- anti-social behaviour by young people without enough to positively occupy them
- a lack of community facilities

The Old Heath Task Group started meeting in June 2003. From the start the group felt the main issues the research had identified were indeed the main local priorities. This group had wide involvement from the community, including residents, ward councillors, community leaders such as the Parish Priest and the Headteacher of the ward's school, workers based in the ward such as Health Visitors and council staff from several teams such as Street Wardens and Community Development workers.

Report Structure

The findings are organised under the following four thematic headings:

1. *Building knowledge and understanding of local needs.*

2. *Partnership building between residents and community leaders.*

3. *Capacity building of organisational and physical infrastructure.*

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[4] This evaluation relates to the area politically known as Harbour ward. However, the Task Group decided that 'Old Heath' was a more fitting name for the area they worked in, as this is the name local people associate with the area.

4. *Tackling issues to direct service provision where needed.*

These headings are based on the Community Development team's four-stage plan for capacity building in communities. Since the work in Old Heath was designed to follow this plan, these four headings seemed an appropriate structure for presenting the evaluation findings.

Methodology

Sections One to Three of the evaluation findings are based on the results of interviews with people working in the area to improve the quality of life. Nine interviewees were community workers in Old Heath from the statutory sector, seven were representatives from local community and voluntary groups, and two were residents from Old Heath and were particularly active members of the task group.

Section Four, '*Tackling issues to direct service provision where needed',* assesses the impact that has been made on tackling the issue of anti-social behaviour (ASB). ASB is the specific focus of this section because it is the one task group objective not covered in the first three sections of the report, and is a major issue that agencies in Old Heath have been tackling over the last two years. This looks at how people perceive ASB, as evidenced from the interviews with people working in the area (as discussed above) and focus groups with young people. It also incorporates police data on the numbers of ASB incidents and offences in Old Heath between 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005.

For more on these methodologies, see Section 6 of this report.

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 Old Heath. Interviewees were asked a series of questions relating to Old Heath, and the impact of community development work in the area.

Choice of methodology

This part of the research targeted those involved directly with the community, and therefore relates to relatively few, specific individuals. For this reason, it was considered important that the views of all relevant people were captured. However, many of these individuals tended to be extremely busy with day-to-day work commitments. Given these factors, it was decided that face-to-face interviews would be more effective than a postal survey, where there may be a risk of getting fewer responses.

It was important to ensure that the use of the face-to-face survey did not bias responses, as people are not necessarily as open about their views when interviewed directly as they might be on paper in a postal survey. To address this issue, all interviewees were reassured about the impartiality of the interviewer, and were encouraged to be completely frank and honest about their views. In addition, they were assured that they would not be identified in the final report in relation to any comments that they made, as an individual or as an organisation. However, there were instances where the significance of a particular comment was lost without some contextual information about the interviewee, such as job title or organisation name. Where this is the case, the express permission of the individual concerned was gained before divulging their response and identity in the report.

The interview questions

An interview form was compiled, asking about the activities of the task group. This consisted of a mixture 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. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire.

The interviewees

Interviews were carried out with 18 people that had an interest in the Old Heath area between June and July 2005. The majority of those interviewed were representatives from local community and voluntary groups (seven interviewees) or community workers in Old Heath from the statutory sector (nine interviewees). Additionally, two interviewees were residents from Old Heath who were particularly active members of the task group. See Appendix 2 for a full list of interviewees.

Focus Groups

Two focus group meetings were held in July 2005 to gain the views of young people from Old Heath. They 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. [5]

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. Two focus groups were held to explore a wider range of views and to compare views expressed in the different meetings.

Separate focus groups were held for the Speedwell Road and the Barnhall estate areas as these were felt to be distinctive communities of young people. A number of interviewees had reported tensions between these communities, therefore it was felt that a higher number of young people might attend a separate focus group for their area. In fact, Kitzinger (1995) suggests that bringing people together from the same social groups in focus groups can be quite helpful. Friends and colleagues can relate each other's comments to incidents in their shared daily lives. They may challenge each other on

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

contradictions between what they say and how they actually behave (for example, in response to a said event, 'how about the time when you…?'). [6]

Recruitment of participants

The Community Street Wardens were responsible for recruiting focus group participants. This was particularly helpful since the Community Street Wardens were recognised and trusted in Old Heath, and had pre-established good rapport with local young people. Leaflets were also produced to publicise the events. The Community Street Wardens were given a very general description of the type of people we hoped to recruit - girls and boys aged between 8 and 15, from the Speedwell Road estate areas for one meeting and from Barnhall estate for the other meeting. We were reluctant to be more specific about participants since we were unsure how much interest the meetings were likely to generate.

The Community Street Wardens successfully recruited 19 young people in total to attend the two meetings. The wardens reported that this involved a lot of persuasion on the day (and the promise of burger, chips and fizzy drink!). They found that it was difficult to get young people to commit in advance, which meant we had no indication of numbers and age / gender of participants to expect until the young people arrived on the day.

Attendance

- **Speedwell focus group** : Eight young people from the Speedwell Road estate attended the first focus group on the 19th July. Six participants were girls and two were boys.

- **Barnhall focus group** : 11 young people from the Barnhall estate attended the second focus group on the 21st July. Seven participants at this focus group were boys and four were girls.

All participants were aged between eight and 15 years. With hindsight, it may have been preferable to hold separate meetings for the youngest children, since this is a very broad age range and consequently they differed widely in their views, interests and ways of communicating. However, every effort was made to include and encourage the views of all members.

Starting the focus groups

At the beginning of each focus group session, we introduced ourselves and explained the purpose of the project. Before starting the discussion, the participants were asked to set some basic ground rules about respecting other peoples' views and not interrupting when others were speaking. Participants were promised a copy of the final report when it was complete and were assured that they would not be identified by name.

The discussion started with participants introducing themselves in turn and as an icebreaker telling the group about their hobbies.

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

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 Old Heath over the last two 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'[7]. 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.

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.

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

Supplementary interviews

To overcome these limitations with police data, supplementary interviews on ASB were carried out with the Community Police Officer[8] who had worked in Old Heath for over two years and two Community Street Wardens, who regularly patrol the area. These interviewees had first hand experience in dealing with ASB in Old Heath, and were 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.

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[8] Although the Community Police Officer had recently been assigned to another job within the force, in the absence of a new officer in the area, and in recognition of his experience in working in the Old Heath area, it was felt that his input in this research was invaluable.

7. TASK GROUP SUCCESSES

Since its inception the Task Group has had many successes, but specifically since October 2004:

- **Promoting wider participation by local residents**
    - o Between 50 – 60% of group attendees are residents who live in the ward
    - o Members of the group have attended training organised by the local CVS to develop their skills to participate
    - o Members have gone through the police check system to enable them to organise activities for young people

- **Promoting a sense of community**
    - o The group has designed neighbourhood signs and is currently negotiating with the highways authority about their placement
    - o The group organised a community fun day in September 2005 involving a wide range of local groups and services

- **Tackling anti-social behaviour**
    - o Having consulted with young people, the group has worked with the Council's Street Wardens to install a BMX track for young people on some local open space
    - o The group has completed the planning work for a ½ size basketball court adjacent to the BMX track
    - o The groups has organised art workshops (Feb 2005), DJ workshops (Mar 2005) and Go-karting activities (April 2005) for local young people

- **Building a community facility**
    - o The group is currently negotiating with a local developer and the Council to finalise a deal to build a community hall for the area

8. FINDINGS

The evaluation findings are presented in a four-part structure, based on the Community Development team's plan for capacity building in communities.

8.1. BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL NEED

This section relates to comments from interviewees on the current objectives of the task group. It also highlights further needs and priorities in the local community, as identified by interviewees.

These findings are based on interviews conducted with people working in the area to improve the quality of life for local residents. For more on the methodology, see Section 6.

Task group objectives

All interviewees indicated that they felt the existing task group objectives were important. 'Diverting young people in Old Heath from anti-social behaviour' was the objective that the highest number of interviewees rated as 'Very important' (17 interviewees), followed by 'Working towards providing suitable community meeting places' (16 interviewees).

Further roles / priorities for the task group in future

Interviewees were asked to describe any other roles they felt the task group could take on to support their work in the Old Heath area. Suggestions given include:

Facilitating other projects

Two interviewees thought it would be helpful if the task group took a facilitating role in new projects starting up in the area. For instance, one interviewee suggested that the task group could be very helpful to setting up before / after schools clubs to help with the extended schools agenda. Another interviewee commented that:

'…a young lady I currently work with who is working with teenage parents on the Good Start project in Greenstead is hoping to extend her service to Harbour [otherwise known as the Old Heath area] and Berechurch. To do this she needs to become a registered charity. The task group may be able to support her in exploring this'.

Providing a support network for community and voluntary groups

Finally, one interviewee said they felt that 'the next phase will be to turn the group into a support network for community groups, e.g. Funday Committee and consolidating community participation'.

Consolidating community participation

Some interviewees felt that the task group could be better supported through greater representation from community members. For instance, one interviewee commented that 'I'd like to see more members of the community coming forward, but I think that'll be a gradual process'.

One interviewee felt that few task group members had taken an active role in the group because they lacked confidence in their skills, and that the provision of skills training for task group members should be a priority.

Managing the community hall

One interviewee felt the task group would need to adapt their role when the community hall when building of the community hall is complete, moving into a 'management phase' to ensure that it is efficiently and widely used by community members.

Maintaining Focus

Five interviewees felt that the task should not, or did not need to take on any further roles and were concerned that the task group maintain a focus on their existing objectives. For instance, one interviewee explained that they thought the task group was currently successful because it is concentrating on very specific objectives, such as 'youth work'. This interviewee felt that if the task group were to extend their remit they might 'just end up making lots of promises that they can't keep'. Another interviewee commented that the task group should not take on any further roles because 'I think we've all got enough on our plates at the moment'. However, there was also widespread recognition that the group needed to monitor their objectives to ensure they were relevant and current.

Other local needs / concerns

Interviewees were asked to describe any other concerns about the local area that they felt the task group should consider addressing. The following issues were raised:

Exploring needs of other potentially 'vulnerable' groups in the community

Two interviewees felt that the task group should be aware of and explore the needs of other potentially 'vulnerable' groups in the community. For instance, one interviewee commented that:

'I think [the task group's] very much aimed at young people, which I think is very important. But I think we're forgetting there's also an elderly population… and it's also important to think about those aged 3-8 years'

Policing the area

Two interviewees were concerned that the area continued to be effectively policed to manage anti-social behaviour (ASB). The following comments were given on this topic:

'We've lost a very good community policeman [the Community Police Officer for Old Heath]. He's not been replaced yet. In future I think it's very good to have a local policeman who knows about problems in the local area and how to go about addressing them' [9]

'It would be nice if we could see Police Community Support Officer's (PCSO's) in our area. They don't come up the Speedwell Road end' [10]

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[9] The police are currently trying to recruit a community police officer for Harbour to replace the community police officer that worked in the area until June 2005.

[10] The Speedwell Road area is not currently within the remit of the Police Community Safety Officers' remit. However, they do attend incidents in this area on occasions.

Community facilities

Three interviewees felt that the task group should publicise the availability of, and make more use of existing facilities in the area where possible, such as the Community Café, the Abbots Activity Centre and the local school.

Other

'We could do with more housing, but there's nowhere to build it'

'More use could be made of the green areas in the ward. Maybe put some swings and slides up for the kiddies'

'Speeding in Speedwell Road. And the general noise when people leave town in the early hours of the morning'

Potential barriers

Interviewees were asked to state any factors they could think of that might prevent the Old Heath task group improving quality of life. The following issues were discussed.

Lack of Funding

The most common theme was lack of funding, as raised by 10 interviewees. For instance, one interviewee felt that 'competition from neighbouring wards for funding' might be a potential barrier for doing further work in the Old Heath area. Another interviewee said they were concerned that funding might be 'cut off', and said they felt that funding should continue due to the 'years of neglect the area has had'.

Lack of community involvement

Lack of community involvement in the task group activities was another potential barrier that interviewees commonly raised (nine interviewees). For instance, one interviewee gave the following comment:

'The community has got to want things to improve and be willing to participate. I think you can lay on as many Fundays as you like but if it's always the same people attending, it's not necessarily improving the community'

Another interviewee felt there was a lot of 'apathy' in the community, preventing residents from getting involved. Four interviewees felt that the current success of the task group is dependant on a small group of key people that are highly committed and involved in the task group, only a few of whom tended to be residents. One interviewee felt that if these key people were to become 'burnt out' it would be a major problem for the group.

For most interviewees, the Community Development Workers from the council were seen as pivotal to the smooth running of the group. Two interviewees expressed concern that if the council withdrew, the group may run into difficulties. One of these interviewees felt that the group would not have the 'know-how' without council involvement. The other interviewee commented that this would be 'a problem as it's very difficult to make residents take responsibility'.

Another interviewee felt that members of the community not volunteering to take up officer positions on the task group was a problem because this is necessary to make it a registered charity. This interviewee felt that this is linked to the issue of funding, as discussed above, because they felt that being a registered charity would give the task group 'more credibility amongst funders'.

'Red-tape'

Three interviewees felt that 'red-tape' could be a barrier to improving quality of life in the area. For instance, one interviewee felt this has been a barrier to putting on projects. Another interviewee said that because of 'red-tape' it takes 'such a long time to get anything done'.

Rivalry within Old Heath

One interviewee felt that rivalry between the Speedwell Rd area and Barnhall estate was a potential barrier to the success of the group. Closely related to this, another interviewee felt that the focus of the task group tends to be on the Speedwell Rd estate area rather than the whole neighbourhood. These comments suggest a division in the two communities that needs to be taken into account in activities planned by the task group.

Loss of drive and enthusiasm

The comments of two interviewees related to the drive and enthusiasm of the task group. These were:

'If the task group lose sight of its objectives it may become stagnant and lose some of the drive it had in the first place'

'If they say stuff and don't deliver I think people may begin to lose interest'

However, both of these comments were cautionary and do not reflect the reality of the present workings of the task group.

8.2. PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

This section looks at the extent to which the task group has succeeded in building partnerships between residents and community leaders to become involved in community development work. This includes involvement in the task group, and the extent to which the task group has helped interviewees to meet their individual objectives for working in the area. It also looks at community involvement, and communication between various key local agencies and the local community.

As discussed above, the findings reported in this section are based on interviews with people working in the area to improve the quality of life for local residents. More details of the methodology can be viewed in Section 6 of this report.

Awareness of the task group

All 18 interviewees said they had been aware of the task group for at least 12 months or longer.

Figure 1 overleaf shows that when asked how they had heard about the task group, more than one half of all interviewees (11 interviewees) said they had heard about it through Colchester Borough Council (CBC) Community Development workers. Three interviewees said they had heard about it through 'Another representative from local statutory organisations, e.g. police' and two interviewees said it was through 'Another local community / voluntary group'. One of the interviewees chose the 'Other' response, stating that they were 'amongst the founding members' of the Old Heath task group.

Figure1: Majority of interviewees heard about task group through CBC Community Development Workers
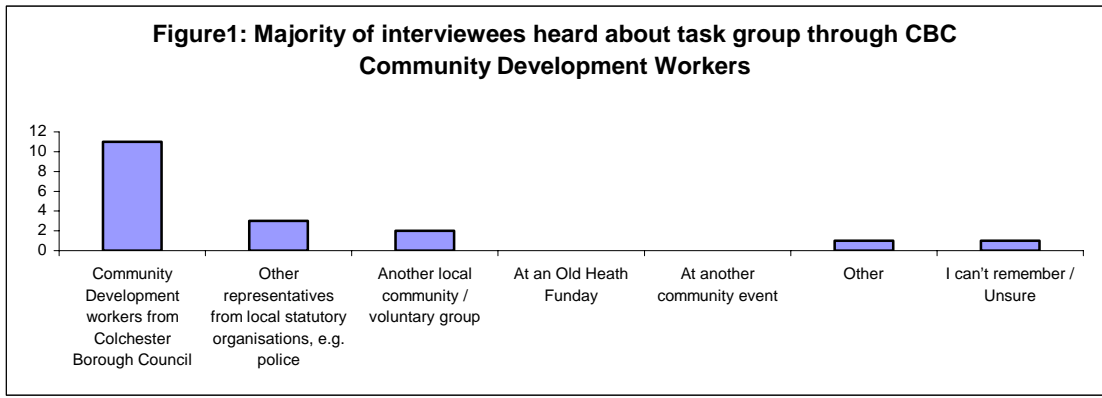
Attendance at task group meetings

Figure 2 shows there were mixed levels of attendance at task group meetings amongst those interviewed. Eight interviewees said they attended all task group meetings, two said they attended most meetings and two said they sometimes attended meetings. Six interviewees said they had never attended task group meetings.

Figure 2: Mixed levels of attendance at task group meetings
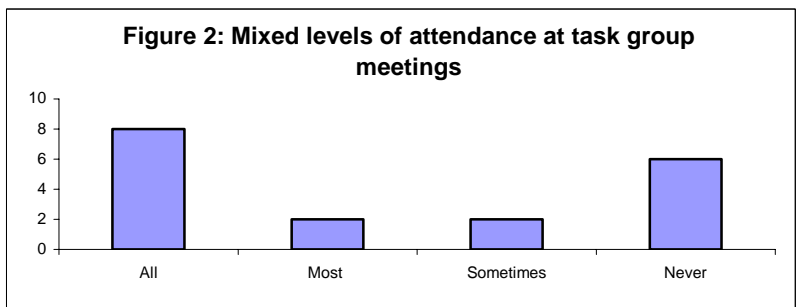
Getting more involved in the task group

Two of the six interviewees that said they had never attended task group meetings also indicated that they were interested in getting more involved in the Old Heath task group. When asked about changes that could be made to meeting arrangements to make it easier to attend, one of these two interviewees suggested that meetings could occasionally be held on their premises (Abbots Activity Centre). They said this would make it easier for them to attend and would also mean that there would be no charge for the use of the venue. Additionally, this interviewee commented that use of this venue for task group meetings, would make the meetings more accessible to elderly residents from the Old Heath area that currently use the Abbots Activity Centre. They also said that the elderly members of the community were more likely to attend meetings if they were held in the daytime.

The second interviewee who was interested in getting more involved in the task group suggested holding the meetings a little later in the evening than they are currently held, for instance, at 6.30pm rather than 6pm. They said this would allow them time to get there after finishing work. It is clearly difficult to find a meeting time to suit all members of the community, however a little variation in meeting times would be welcomed.

This interviewee discussed above also commented that they never received minutes because they did not attend task group meetings. Unfortunately, this meant that they did not know about the dates of upcoming meeting dates and activities of the task group. In fact, receiving the minutes regularly was an issue raised by four separate interviewees. For instance, one interviewee commented that if they missed a meeting they sometimes did not receive the minutes. Again, this was a source of frustration for those concerned since it meant they were not informed about what was going on.

Factors preventing interviewees attending task group meetings

In all instances, reasons given for not attending task group meetings more often related to practical constraints of time and having to prioritise other activities. The following suggestions we made for practical changes that could be made to accommodate various members:

- *Timing of meetings:* this issue came up repeatedly (six interviewees), with various contradictory suggestions for more convenient meeting times. For instance, some preferred slightly later meeting times to allow more time for arriving after finishing work (i.e. meeting at 6.30pm rather than 6pm), whilst others preferred daytime meetings. However, most interviewees acknowledged that it would be difficult to find a meeting time that would suit all task group members and that the task group needed a core membership base to progress its objectives.

- *Venue:* One interviewee suggested that meetings could occasionally be held at the Abbots Activity Centre. They felt this might enable Abbots Activity Centre workers and elderly residents to get involved, and they said there would be no charge for the use of the venue.

- *Receiving minutes:* Some interviewees emphasised the importance of receiving regular minutes, particularly where they were unable to attend meetings. This would keep them informed of the dates of upcoming meeting dates and activities of the task group.

Objectives for working in the area

When asked to describe their objectives for working in the area, responses given varied widely, as would be expected given the range of professional backgrounds that the interviewees represented. Essentially, however, all of those interviewed aimed to improve the quality of life for people in the area and make it a better place to live.

Some examples of the objectives given for working in the area included the following:

> 'We were assigned to the Old Heath area…and our objectives are to improve health in all areas of the community…and to prevent illness where possible'.

> 'To improve quality of life and reduce fear of crime'.

> 'To give a listening ear and help [residents with their problems] when you can'.

> 'To make sure there's something for the kids to keep them off the street'

'Encouraging people who live around here to take a pride in their community and hopefully then in their school'.

'To provide a safe, clean environment for the over 50's and provide a hot meal and social activities and to provide support and companionship'

Helping to meet to objectives

When asked if the task group had helped them to meet their objectives for working in the area, 12 of the 16 interviewees that answered this question said that it had. One interviewee was unsure and the remaining three interviewees said they felt that it had not.

Interviewees were then asked to explain how the task group had helped them meet their objectives for working in the area. The following types of responses were given.

Community hall / community facilities

Working towards providing a community hall or other community facilities was the most common type of response. Seven interviewees said the task group had helped to meet this objective. Other community facilities stated include the BMX track and the 'slow' road signs put in to eliminate speeding.

Funding

The second most common type of response related to issues of funding, with four interviewees raising this topic. For instance, the following responses were recorded:

'It wouldn't have been possible to run a lot of the activities we've put on without the funding of the task group'.

'It's helped us with small amounts of funding which has enabled us to put on a children's festival, cycling training and to fund children's whose parents weren't able to afford to send them on a residential trip'.

Providing support

Three interviewees said the task group had helped to provide additional support for their work in the community. These comments are shown below:

'Providing support for the activities we do, whether it be promotional etc'

'It's the vehicle by which we do things. To apply for funding… and a source of volunteers'

'The fact we get the support of council officers has helped us and we now feel we're making real progress'

Joint working

Another common theme was that the task group had brought about joint working in the community; a topic discussed by three interviewees. For instance, one interviewee said, 'It's all about networking for us. It's helped with that'. Other related comments include:

'… meeting people that can put me in touch with others that can help us meet our objectives'

'The coming together of the task group means the bringing together of people from various backgrounds and gives us the clout and force to make an impact in the community'

'The task group has been an effective vehicle, but I think the drive would have been there anyway due to the specific individuals from the community that are involved'

Communicating with residents

Three interviewees said the task group had helped them to communicate with residents about local issues. For instance, one interviewee said the task group had helped to 'make us aware of issues from residents point of view'. Another interviewee commented that the task group is an, 'opportunity to discuss any problems [residents] might be experiencing'.

Activities

Three interviewees said the task group had helped them to meet their objectives of tackling ASB and helping vulnerable young people by organising activities in the area. For instance in starting the Fundays and organising 'a lot of things…to keep the kids occupied'.

Comments received included references to the co-ordinating impact of the task group in the area. For instance one interviewee commented that the task group had 'brought the community together' through the Fundays. They said that this helped to meet their initial aim for working in the area, which was to 'improve the community atmosphere because nobody knew each other in that community'.

Another interviewee said the activities organised through the task group had been 'instrumental in eliminating problems in the area'. This interviewee said that until recently the police were getting 10 calls a day [about nuisance behaviour], now it's just around one or two.

People who felt task group had not helped to meet objectives

Three interviewees said the task group had not helped them to meet their objectives for working in the area. However, the explanations given related to clashes in objectives rather than failings within the task group process. The following explanations for these responses were given:

'We tend to work towards very specific campaigns as a group, and there haven't really been any major issues that we've had to address recently. But I feel it's very important we have a presence at [task group] meetings'.

'We hope to achieve the objective of making <the organisation> the centre of the community through the task group and we don't feel that has been achieved yet. But it has enabled us to make networks e.g. with health visitors and other members of the community'. [11]

Increased involvement

Interviewees were asked if they felt the community / voluntary group they work with had become more involved with the local community since June 2003. Figure 3

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[11] This comment has been edited to prevent disclosing the identity of the interviewee.

shows that of the nine interviewees that felt this question was relevant to them, seven said they strongly agreed.

Figure 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the community group you work with has become more involved with the local community since June 2003?
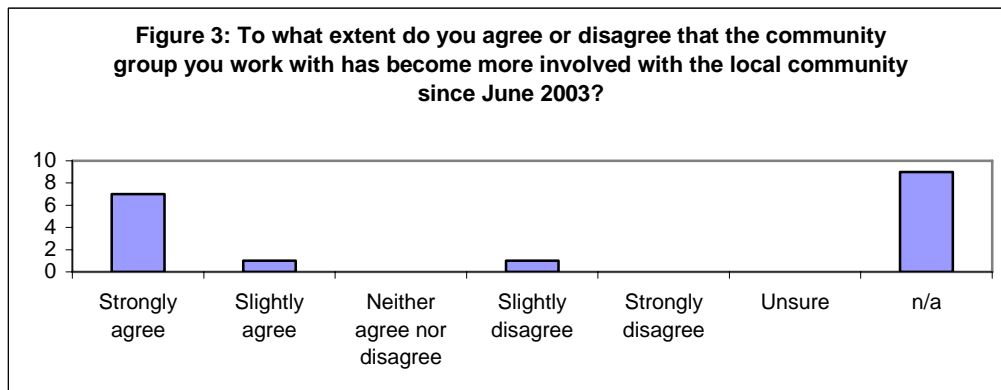
Some of the explanations of how these interviewees felt more involved with the community include:

'There are more community projects. More contacts with the community about what they'd like to see'

'Just links that have been made with the local community. The people involved in the task group, councillors and local residents. We involved the residents when we set the portable flood-lights up for the football to make sure they were ok with it as otherwise we knew we'd get lots of complaints'

'We have a pre-school, a parent toddler group, were involved with the Fundays. We're involved with the church more and local businesses'

Just one interviewee said they disagreed either slightly or strongly that the community / voluntary group they work with had become more involved in the local community since June 2003. This interviewee said they felt that:

'Those in our neighbourhood with a brain seem more interested in looking after themselves than anyone else. I give up time I could be spending with my own kids and it seems to benefit those that can't be bothered'.

Involving residents

Interviewees were then asked if they felt there had been more local residents involved in their community or voluntary group since June 2003. Figure 4 shows that five of the nine interviewees who felt that this question was applicable to them agreed that there were more local residents involved in their group. Three interviewees said they felt that there were not more local residents involved in their group.

Figure 4: Do you feel there have been more local residents involved in your community / voluntary group since June 2003?
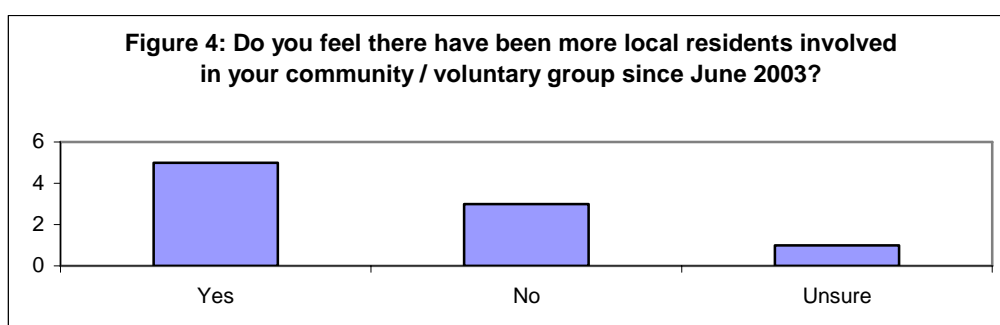
Task group's role in involving community

Those interviewees who felt that there had been increased involvement with the local community and / or more local residents involved in their community / voluntary group were asked whether they felt that this was connected to the setting up of the task group (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 shows that of the eight interviewees who said they felt the group they worked with had become more involved with the local community since June 2003, five said they agreed that this was connected to the setting up of the Old Heath task group. In contrast, one interviewee said they disagreed strongly with this statement.

Figure 5 also shows that of the five interviewees who felt there had been an increase in the number of residents involved in their community / voluntary group, three interviewees said they strongly agreed. In contrast, two interviewees said they disagreed slightly.

Figure 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree that this increased involvement is connected to the setting up of the task group?

	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Local community	3	2	2		1	
Community / voluntary group	3			2		
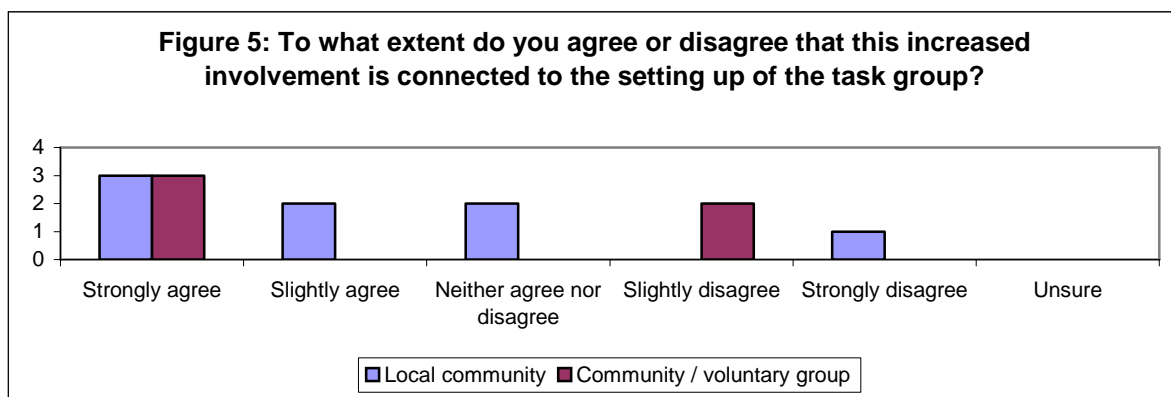
When asked if they could think of any other factors that may have caused this perceived increase in community participation, five interviewees said they felt it was due to the task group collectively, or due to particular members of the task group. Examples of comments given are as follows:

'The task group have motivated the community. I think Father Richard has played a huge role, as he's so community focused and enthusiastic. To be honest, everyone from the task group seem so committed to what they're doing'

'The task group has opened a lot of doors and given us access to people we didn't even realise existed'

'Father Richard. He's a very motivating and enthusiastic, approachable person. But a lot of his activities centre on the church. A lot of people won't go near a church so the community hall will be good'

'It's the pre-school and the parent / toddler group we put on, and the Health Visitors. Also links with the church and former pupils'

Community activity

When asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed that there had been more community activity in Old Heath since the task group started meeting in June 2003, most interviewees agreed. Figure 6 shows that 11 interviewees said they agreed strongly that there had been more community activity in the area, and six interviewees said they agreed slightly. The one interviewee that said they were

unsure explained that this is because they had not worked in the Old Heath area for some time and therefore was not able to answer the question.

Figure 6: Most interviewees felt there had been more community activity in Old Heath since task group started meeting
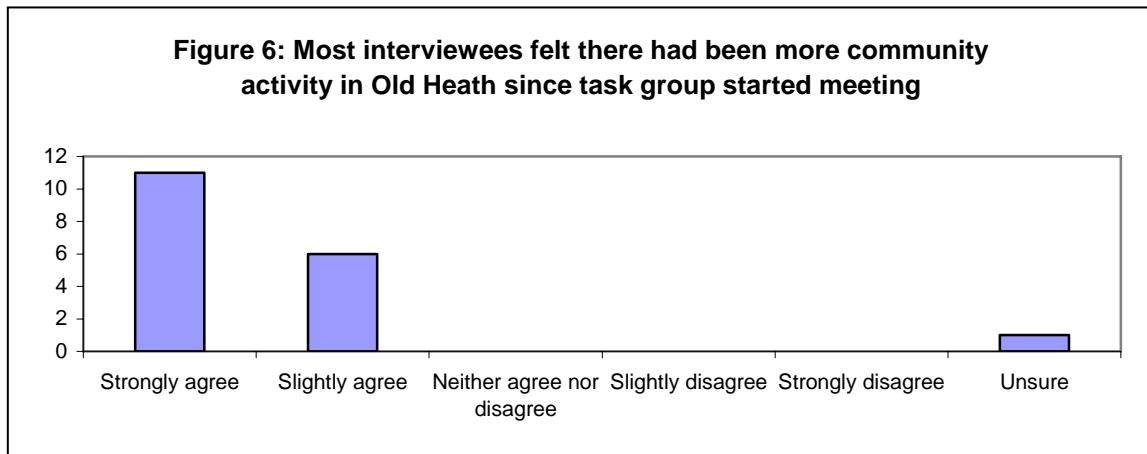
Figure 7 shows the responses given when interviewees were asked how successful or unsuccessful they felt individual activities were that had been organised and held in Old Heath.

Success of the Funday

Overall, the Funday was perceived as successful by the highest number of interviewees. All 18 interviewees said they felt this was either 'Very successful' (11 interviewees) or 'Quite successful' (seven interviewees).

Success of 'Football in the Community'

'Football in the Community' was also rated as being highly successful. 16 interviewees felt that this was 'Very successful' and one interviewee felt that it was 'Quite Successful'.

Figure 7: Perceived success of activities
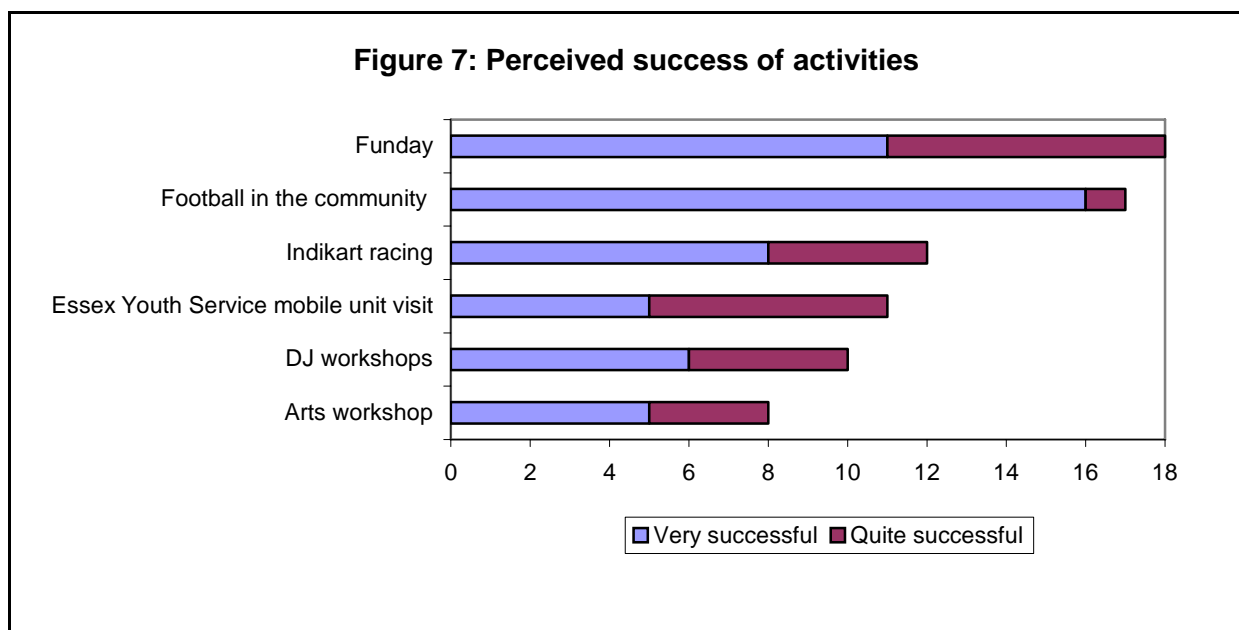
Communication

Interviewees were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that communication had improved since June 2003. This question was asked in two parts; interviewees were asked whether they felt communication had improved between community and voluntary groups and other professionals (e.g. the council) in Old Heath, and whether they felt communication between local agencies and the community had improved. 17 interviewees answered this question.

Figure 8 shows that the majority of interviewees felt communication between community groups and other professionals in the area had improved in the last two years. 12 interviewees said they agreed strongly that it had improved and four said they agreed slightly.

Additionally, Figure 8 shows that the majority of interviewees also felt communication between local agencies and the community had improved, but to a slightly lesser degree. Eight interviewees said they agreed strongly and six interviewees said they agreed slightly that it had improved since June 2003.

Figure 8: Interviewees that felt communication in Old Heath had improved since June 2003
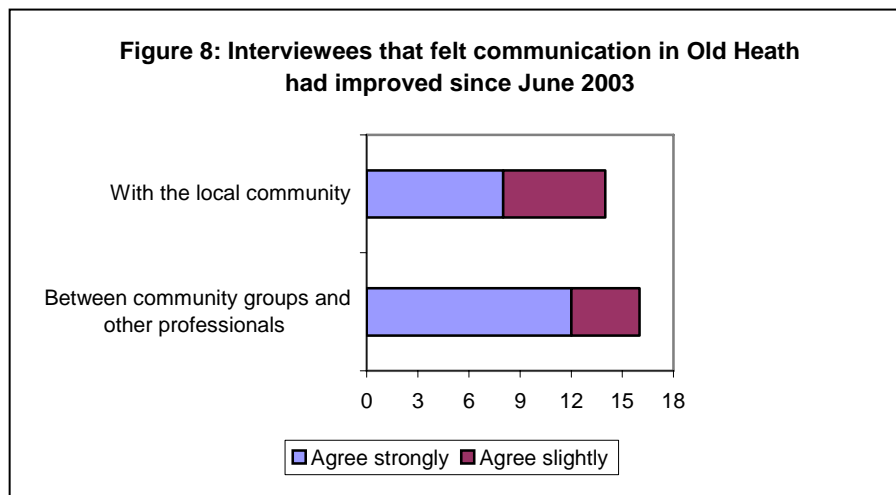
Task group and communication

Figure 9 shows that when asked whether they felt this perceived improvement in communication was due to the task group, the majority of interviewees agreed strongly in relation to communication between community groups and other professionals (11 interviewees). Not surprisingly, fewer interviewees agreed strongly that the task group was responsible for improved communication between local agencies and the community (5 interviewees).

Two interviewees said they slightly disagreed and another interviewee said they neither agreed nor disagreed that the improved communication between community groups and other professionals in the area was due to the task group. These three interviewees all explained that they felt the improved communication was due to the motivation and hard work of a few key members of the community, and that these individuals would be likely to have the same impact, with or without the presence of the task group.

The strongest feeling overall was that the task group had improved communication between professionals and groups in the area.

Figure 9: Do you think improved communication is due to Task Group?
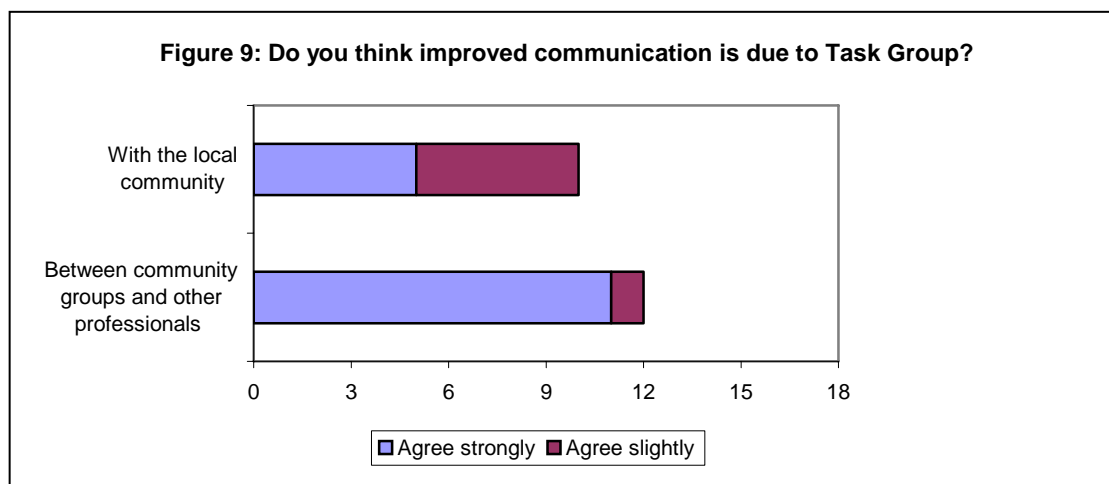
Another interviewee commented that if residents would bring any problems to task group meetings, 'I can hopefully deal with them'. However, several interviewees commented that they felt many residents were not aware of the task group. For instance, one of these interviewees said 'I think it [the task group] probably suffers, if it suffers at all, by not being as well known in the community as it could be'. One interviewee suggested placing a promotional notice board in the community, which may 'help us develop a more public image or corporate identity'. Another interviewee felt that setting up smaller localised residents associations within Old Heath feedback to the task group through one or two members might be one solution for getting residents more involved.

8.3. CAPACITY BUILDING OF ORGANISATIONAL AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

This section looks at the extent to which the task group met its objectives of working in partnership with the community to build the organisational and physical infrastructure needed in Old Heath. More specifically, the task group objectives that related to his part of the community development plan were to create better / more community meeting places and to increase support for community and voluntary groups.

Again, this analysis is based on findings from interviews with people working in the area to improve the quality of life for local residents.

Creating better / more local meeting places

As expected, when asked if they were aware that the task group were working towards creating better / more community meeting places, 16 interviewees said that they were aware of this. The two interviewees that said they were not aware of this project were not actively involved in the task group.

11 interviewees said they had been involved in this project for creating better / more community meeting places. When asked in what way they had been involved, four interviewees said they had been involved as members of the community hall sub-group, four had been involved more generally as members of the task group and three said they had been involved through 'Other' means. These 'Other' comments

included, 'I'm the treasurer of the group, so I'm actively involved in all of it, in designing the hall, providing a meeting place, etc', 'In planning', and 'I've been asked about various bits and pieces along the way'.

Confidence in making an impact on this issue

Creating better / more community meeting places was the objective about which the highest number of interviewees said their confidence had increased. Nine interviewees said their confidence in the communities ability to make an impact on this issue had 'Increased a lot' and six said their confidence had 'Increased a little'.

None of the three interviewees that said their confidence in the community's ability to have an impact on this issue had 'Stayed the same' or were 'Unsure' were actively involved in the task group. They were unsure of the task group's activities around this issue. For instance, one of these interviewees stated that they were not aware that the task group had obtained funding for a community centre.

This suggests that morale and confidence in the ability to exact change in relation to community facilities is good in the task group. The fact that three interviewees felt their confidence in the community's ability to have an impact on this issue had stayed the same or that they were unsure suggests that they were unaware of what was happening in relation to community facilities. This could be due to the fact that the project is in its infancy and awareness will increase as the facilities are developed further. However, it could indicate that more needs to be done in raising awareness of the project amongst professionals and community members who are not active in the task group.

Why confidence had increased

When asked why their confidence in the community's ability to make an impact on the availability of community meeting places had increased, seven interviewees attributed it to the prospect of the new community hall that had been promised to the area. Some other examples of the comments are shown below:

'We now hire our building out once or twice a month the national blood service. This is helping the community to donate blood'

'The health visitors now use the school. But this also comes down to money and whether we can afford to let our facilities to groups that can't afford to pay rent'

One of the interviewees that said their confidence had 'Increased a little' explained that they were concerned that there were still two separate communities in the ward, which meant 'you have the issue of where it will go that will suit both areas'.

Creating better community facilities – task group process

The following analysis on the project for creating better / more community meeting places is based on questions that were asked only to these 11 interviewees who said they had been involved in the project in some way. It was thought that these interviewees would be better informed about how this project had progressed than interviewees who said they had not been involved.

Effectiveness of project planning

When asked how effective they felt the planning of this project had been so far, Figure 10 shows that all 11 interviewees that said they had been involved felt the

project had been either 'Quite effective' (four interviewees) or 'Very effective' (seven interviewees).
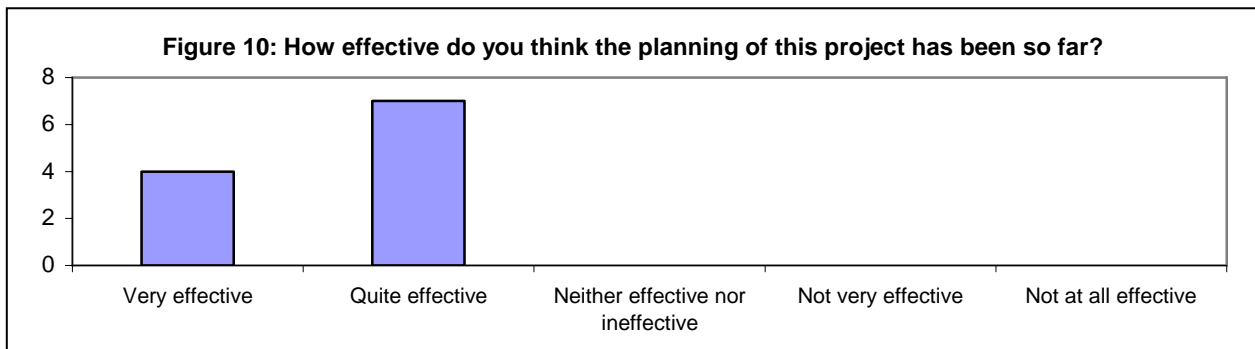
Figure 10: How effective do you think the planning of this project has been so far?

When asked how well they felt the project had progressed so far, Figure 11 shows that 'Quite well' was the most common response (six interviewees). Four interviewees felt that it had progressed 'Very well'.
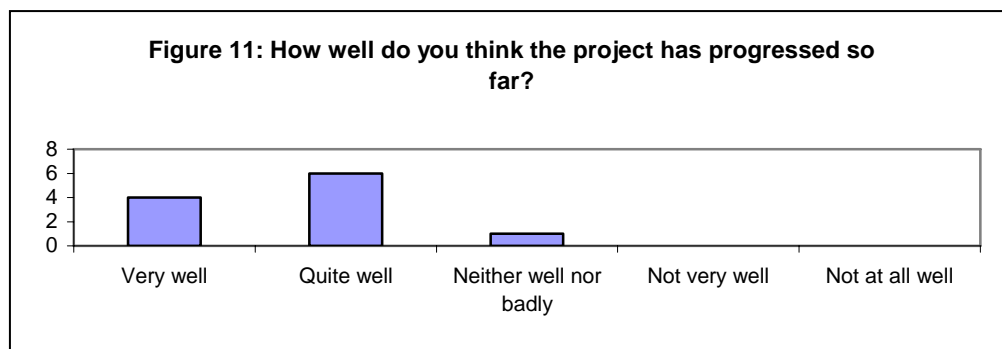
Figure 11: How well do you think the project has progressed so far?

Things that have gone particularly well so far

At the time of interviewing, the task group had recently found developers that had agreed to build the new community hall. Five interviewees made reference to this when asked if they could think of anything that had gone particularly well so far in this project of providing more / better community meeting places. Closely related to this, other achievements interviewees commented on include attracting the funding and finding land on which to build the community hall.

Other comments on things that had gone well in the project include:

'Everything. A couple of years ago we were scratching our heads about what could be done, but all of a sudden its come about'

'The perseverance of the group every time we meet a barrier or a hurdle'

'We're a lot further forward than we were and I'm certain it wouldn't have happened without the task group. It's becoming a reality'

Problems

When asked if they could think of any significant problems that had been encountered so far in the project of providing more / better meeting places, the type of issue that came up most frequently related to gaining council planning approval for the new community centre (four interviewees). For instance, one interviewee commented that they felt 'internal politics at Colchester Borough Council' had resulted in the loss of potential developers, and that this had slowed the project down considerably.

Perhaps closely connected this issue with the council, two interviewees commented that 'red tape' had slowed progress down.

Other comments include:

'The downturn in the housing market has affected developers willingness to fund a joint project'

'There was quite a bit of apathy, people thought it would never happen. People won't believe it till they see the building'

'Residents views around the area where it'll be. It's been so long since they had anything on that land I think there could be contention. But I think they'll consult first'

Dealing with problems

Figure 12 shows that the majority of interviewees said they felt that these problems had been handled either very well (three interviewees) or reasonably well (five interviewees). Two interviewees said this question was not applicable to them, and the remaining interviewee said they were unsure.

Figure 12: How well do you think these problems have been handled?
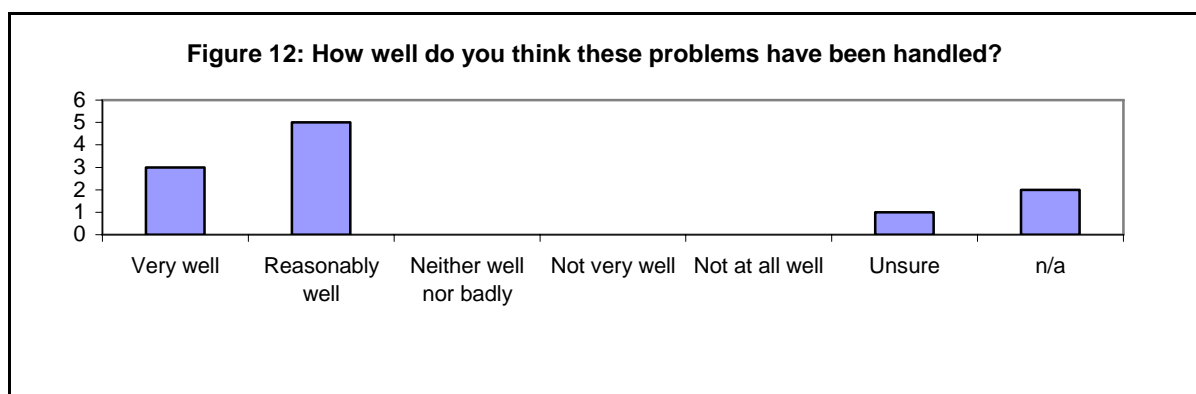
=Denominator: Interviewees that said they had been involved in the project of creating better / more local meeting places (11 interviewees).

When asked for suggestions about how these problems could have been better handled, two interviewees felt communication within the council could improve. For instance, one interviewee commented that:

'Perhaps whoever is responsible for communication could have made us aware of the issue in the tendering process. But I think that's just the way bureaucracy works so I'm not pointing the blame at anyone'

Frustration was expressed at how slow the process had been. For instance, one interviewee commented that:

'…I think we could have moved quicker, but I don't think that's down to any lack of enthusiasm of individuals, it's just the rigmarole of things that have to be done'

Finally, one interviewee felt that residents could have been involved sooner in the planning process. This interviewee commented that, 'we could have gone out to residents in the early stages, but we've learnt from this.'

Increasing support for local groups

Relatively few interviewees said their confidence in the community's ability to offer support to local groups had increased in the last two years (seven interviewees). Five interviewees said their confidence in this issue had stayed the same and six said they were unsure of how to answer the question.

There are several potential reasons interviewees may have been unsure of how they should answer this question. The meaning of 'support' is slightly ambiguous, and as a result people may read different meaning into the question. Secondly, the chair of the task group said he did not feel that providing support for local groups was the role of the task group. He felt that the task group might do this 'indirectly, but not directly'. In addition, four interviewees said they did not know of any other local groups, which meant they were unsure of how to answer the question. The wording of this question may need to be addressed in relation to future evaluations.

Feeling more supported

Figure 13 shows that when asked to what extent they felt more supported in the work they did with the local community since the task group started meeting, a significant majority of interviewees said they agreed strongly or slightly (11 interviewees). One interviewee said they slightly disagreed and two said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 13: 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?
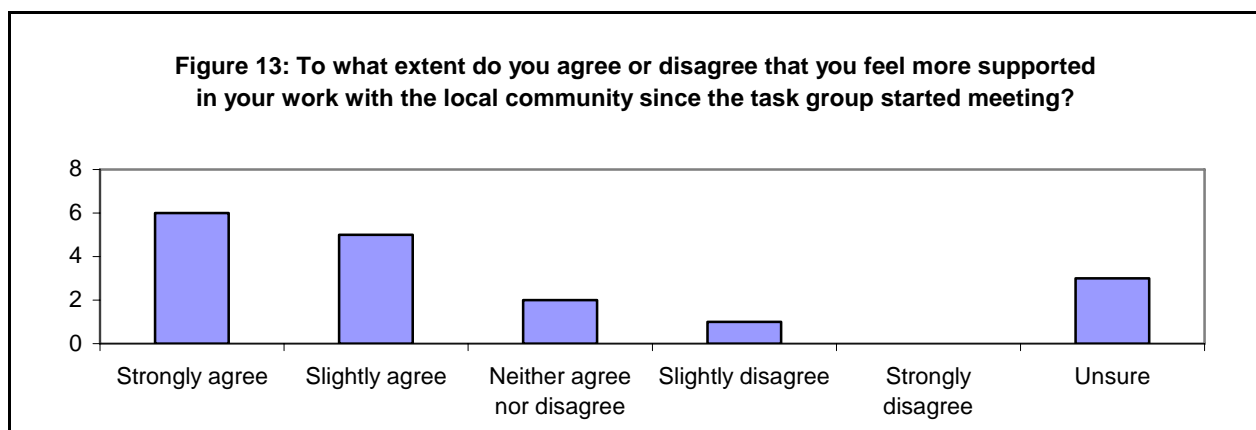
When asked if they felt there were any other ways in which they felt they could be more supported in their work with the local community, six interviewees said they did not need any further support from the task group. Some examples of the responses given include:

'I'm sure if we approached the task group with a problem they would help us. Or if we were setting up a project it may be relevant. But it's detached street work we do'

'I think the task force is the ideal forum to solve problems. It's like a community association except that it has the support of council officers, so we're working together'

'Everything runs smoothly. I think we've come a long way since the group first formed'

'They've supported us very well in anything we've done, not putting up any barriers'

8.4. TACKLING ISSUES TO DIRECT SERVICE PROVISION WHERE NEEDED

This section assesses the task group's impact on tackling the salient issues in Old Heath, as identified through the Harbour Community Assessment. Two of the three task group objectives are discussed in Section Three above (i.e. Creating better / more community venues, and Increasing support for community and voluntary groups). Therefore, this section looks specifically at the extent to which the task group has met the objective of, 'Increasing activities for young people to divert them from anti-social behaviour (ASB).

This section identifies the activities that were organised for young people in the area, and uses interview data to discuss the impact that interviewees felt these activities and other strategies have had on ASB. In addition, police data is utilised to identify possible changes in the level of ASB and highlight particular problem areas in Old Heath.

Improvement in level of ASB in 'Old Heath'

The general consensus from interviewees and focus group participants was that there had been a marked improvement in the levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the 'Old Heath' area in the past two years. This perceived improvement was also confirmed through analysis of police data and supplementary interviews with the Community Police Officer for Old Heath, and Community Street Wardens who regularly patrol the area. These findings are discussed further below.

Perceptions of young people on ASB

Young people from the Barnhall and Speedwell areas that participated in the focus groups generally said they felt there was less ASB in their communities compared to two years ago. For instance, when asked generally whether they thought anything in the area had improved in the last couple of years, one boy from the Barnhall focus group said 'there's hardly any fights now'. Another participant from Barnhall commented that, '…you used to see lots of people hanging around the shops [on Stalin Road]'.

Similarly, there was a consensus in the Speedwell focus group there had been an improvement in the level of ASB in the area, and that, '[ASB] used to be much worse'. One participant commented that ASB had improved because, 'there's been people coming in', organising activities for young people and policing the area. Participants agreed that when they had things to do it kept them out of trouble, as one participant remarked, '…because there's something to do rather than vandalising stuff'. However, one comment highlighted the evidence of vandalism: '[there is] lots of spray-paint on the garages and all that'. This was seen as evidence ASB that has existed, or still exists in the area.

After further discussion participants concluded that although there had been improvements, as expected, they did not feel that ASB had been eradicated from their community altogether. For instance, there was some discussion in relation to the example given above, about a reduction in the levels of young people that 'hang around' outside the shops on Stalin Road. Participants pointed out that some young people still congregated in this area, but that there seemed to be fewer people than there used to be. Another participant commented that the congregation point for teenagers had moved from the shops to other parts of Old Heath, such as 'the

Wick'.[12] One participant commented that people meeting in this area tended to, 'smash bottles on the floor and just hang around'. Another participant felt that there were a few individuals that should be banned from the neighbourhood because they liked to cause trouble and bully others.

Perceptions of interviewees on ASB

Similarly, seven of the 10 interviewees that commented on this issue said they thought there had been an improvement in the level of ASB in the area. For instance, one interviewee said that they felt the level of ASB had 'dropped dramatically' in the last two years. This interviewee, a local resident, commented that:

> '…there was a time when <name> and I spent most of our evenings stopping ASB amongst youths and catching culprits that were starting fires on the ranges. This year we've had a few problems with fires, but ASB on the estate has dropped right down to about zero'. [13]

Another interviewee said that when they initially started working in the area three years ago they 'heard lots of reports of ASB on the grapevine' through clients. This interviewee commented that they had tended to see less trouble and heard fewer stories about ASB in the neighbourhood. Similarly, another interviewee from the Barnhall area noted that 'there's less graffiti and no cars seem to have been burnt out for ages'. They took this as an indication that ASB was less of a problem than it had been in the past.

Finally, another interviewee felt that, 'the community would have to answer the question themselves of whether they feel safer, but my perception is they talk more freely to us, which would indicate they feel less intimidated'.

Sporadic incidents

Three interviewees, however, said that they found it difficult to comment on the level of ASB as incidents had tended to be sporadic rather than static. For instance, one interviewee commented that 'it happens in fits and starts'. Similarly, another interviewee explained that, '…it's not happening every night. You get a flare up every now and again for a short period of time'.

Views of Community Police Officer [14] and Community Street Wardens

Supplementary interviews were conducted, specifically on the topic of ASB, with the Community Police Officer who had worked in Old Heath for over two years and two Community Street Wardens, who regularly patrol this area.

Each of these interviewees, who had first hand experience in dealing with ASB in Old Heath, felt that the problems were less severe than they had been two years previously. For instance, one of the two Street Wardens that were interviewed said they felt the problems in this area had 'gone quiet for a while'. The other Street Warden agreed, and commented that 'I don't think it's that bad anymore'. Similarly,

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[12] The area known as 'the Wick' is Middlewick Ranges on the corner of Abbots Road and Mersea Road in Harbour ward.
[13] Names of individuals and organisations have been omitted to prevent disclosing the identity of individuals.
[14] Although the Community Police Officer had recently been assigned to another job within the force, in the absence of a new officer in the area, and in recognition of his experience in working in the Old Heath area, it was felt that his input in this research was invaluable.

the Community Police Officer commented that, '…we are now receiving one or two calls about problem-youths a week rather than one or two a night'. He commented that Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights had been particularly problematic two and a half years ago when he started working in the area. Many calls that they received at this time involved drunken youths intimidating elderly residents, in the Stalin Road area mainly. He also commented that there had also been ongoing problems with neighbourhood disputes in the Speedwell Road estate. The police were being called in to deal with these disputes on a daily basis when he started working in the area.

As expected however, the Community Police Officer said he felt it was not possible to say the problems with ASB in the area had been 'solved'. He felt that ASB is cyclical, and tends to emerge as a large group of youths reach the age of approximately 14 years. He felt that agencies in the area needed to continue to be proactive in order to prevent this from happening in the future.

Police data confirms downward trend in ASB in Harbour

Indeed, police data appears to confirm this perception that anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the 'Old Heath' area (Harbour ward) [15] was generally on the decrease in the last two years, as shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15 below.

Figure 14: Rate of ASB incidents in Harbour and Colchester (2004/2005)

Figure 15: Rate of ASB offences in Harbour and Colchester (2004/2005)

Source: Figure 14: Police Reported Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System. **Figure 15:** 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.

According to Police *Reported* Crime data, reports of ASB incidences in Harbour fell by approximately 5% each year from 2002/2003. Figure x shows that there were 108 reports of ASB incidents per 1,000 in the population in Harbour in 2004/2005, compared to 121 per 1,000 in the population in 2002/2003, and 114 per 1,000 in the population in 2003/2004. However, despite the falling level of reports of ASB in Harbour, Figure x also shows that Harbour's rate of ASB incidents in 2004/2005 was still above that of Colchester (92 per 1,000 in the population).

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[15] The local task group has chosen to refer to their neighbourhood as 'Old Heath' rather than Harbour because they felt that this name was more meaningful to local people. However, since the police data officially refers to Harbour ward, 'Harbour' is the name used in this section to refer to the same geography.

Police *Recorded* Crime data reveals that there were also fewer ASB offences recorded in Harbour during 2004/2005 compared to previous years. Harbour's rate of ASB offences fell by 10% overall between 2002/2003 and 2004/2005. Harbour had a rate of 32 ASB offences per 1,000 in the population in 2004/2005, compared to 42 per 1,000 in the population in 2002/2003. Indeed, Harbour's rate of ASB offences was below the Colchester average for the first time in three years in 2004/2005, at a rate of 32 ASB offences per 1,000 in the population, compared to a rate of 37 per 1,000 in the population in Colchester.

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.

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 period might be related, at least in part, to the police priorities at that time. For instance, the Community Police Officer for this area commented that, due to the extent of problems with ASB that had occurred in the ward, they had taken a particularly 'hard-line stance' in dealing with perceived troublemakers in Harbour during 2003/2004. This included carrying out several successful prosecutions against those that were perceived to be 'ring leaders' for causing trouble in the area. Whilst this approach to dealing with ASB may be indicative of the extent of the problems that existed in this area, it could account for a higher number of ASB offences recorded in the area during 2003/2004.

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

ASB problem areas

Comparison across small areas of Harbour

According to Police *Reported* Crime and Police *Recorded* Crime data, the Barnhall and Speedwell areas of Harbour ward appear to have be more problematic for anti-social behaviour (ASB) than the Mountbatten or Whitehall areas in 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. [16] The levels of ASB in these areas are discussed further below.

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[16] These small areas are an Office for National Statistics (ONS) sub-ward geography otherwise known as Lower Layer Super Output Areas. These areas have been named with the assistance of

Figure 16: Rates of ASB incidents in small areas of Harbour (2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005)
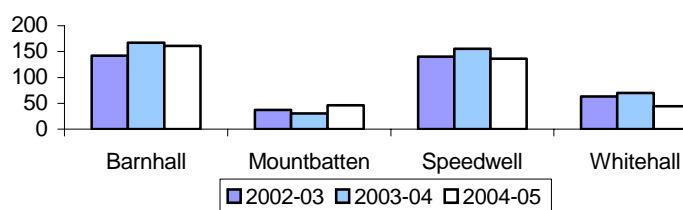
Figure 17: Rate of ASB offences in small areas of Harbour (2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005)
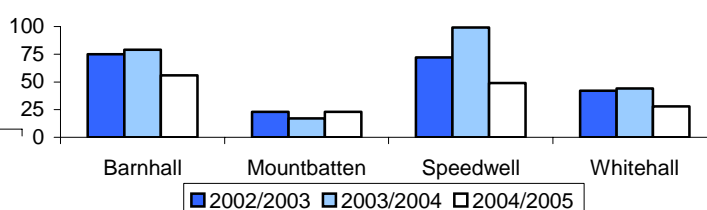
Source: **Figure 16:** Police Reported Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System. **Figure 17:** Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System.

Notes: 1. Crimes recorded under Old Heath Rd are not included in this chart since this road runs across three of the four small areas in Harbour and one small area of New Town. These offences could not be classified into small areas because postcodes were not recorded. **2.** Any crimes categorised under the Harbour beat code (E13H) where the road name recorded was located outside of Harbour ward are not included.

Barnhall and Speedwell

Figure 16 shows that Barnhall had the highest rate of ASB incidents of all four small areas of the ward in all three years displayed, followed by Speedwell. For instance, 161 ASB incidents per 1,000 in the population were reported in Barnhall in 2004/2005. The rate of ASB incidents in Speedwell was only slightly lower, at 136 per 1,000 in the population. However, the level of ASB incidents reported in Mountbatten and Whitehall were both significantly lower, at 46 and 44 per 1,000 in the population, respectively.

Similarly, Figure 17 shows that the ASB offences in Barnhall and Speedwell were substantially higher than Mountbatten and Whitehall in all three years displayed. In 2004/2005, 56 ASB offences per 1,000 in the population were recorded in Barnhall, and 49 ASB offences per 1,000 in the population were recorded in Speedwell. In contrast, there were just 28 ASB offences per 1,000 in the population in Whitehall, and 23 per 1,000 in the population in MountbattenRise in ASB in Speedwell (2003/2004)

Interestingly, Speedwell had the highest rate of ASB offences of all four small areas in Harbour in 2003/2004, of any of the three years analysed (2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005). At a rate of 99 ASB offences per 1,000 in the population, this was well above the Colchester average (42 per 1,000 in the population). However, the level of ASB in this area fell substantially in the following year, to 49 per 1,000 in the population. This represents a fall of approximately 50%.

It is important to emphasise that police data does have certain limitations, as noted in Section 7 of this report. This fluctuation in the number of offences recorded may be related, at least in part, to the police approach for tackling ASB in this area at this time. The Community Police Officer for this area commented that, due to the ongoing problems that had occurred in this area, they took a particularly 'hard-line stance' for dealing with ASB in Speedwell during 2003/2004, carrying out several successful prosecutions against the 'ring leaders' of neighbourhood nuisance.

Colchester Borough Council Community Development Officers for easier identification of the neighbourhoods that they refer to. For a map of these areas, see Section 2 of this report.

However, unprompted comments in the supplementary interviews with the Community Street Wardens suggest that there is indeed a perceived improvement in the level of ASB in these areas. For instance, the Community Street Wardens commented that the Foresight Road and Cheveling Road areas of Speedwell were highly problematic about a year ago, but that both of these areas have now 'gone quiet for a while'.

Rise in ASB in Mountbatten (2004/2005)

Police data revealed that Mountbatten differed from other small areas of Harbour, in that it was the only area where the number of ASB offences and incidents increased between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005, albeit by just five offences per 1,000 in the population for Police Recorded Crime data, and 16 incidents per 1,000 in the population for Police Reported Crime data.

It is not possible to draw any definite conclusions about the Mountbatten area from this, since the numbers of ASB offences in this area are relatively few and the data relates to a short time period. However, this may reflect the concerns of some interviewees, who were concerned that the problems with ASB had not been solved, but that trouble-makers were being moved on to other areas.

Comparison across roads in Harbour

Figure 18 shows the top 10 roads for ASB incidents and ASB offences in Harbour during 2004/2005 according to police data.

Figure 18: Top 10 roads for ASB in Harbour (2004/2005)

ASB incidents (Source 1)

Rank	Road name	2004/05 total
1	Stalin Rd	75
2	Old Heath Rd	63
3	Speedwell Rd	59
4	Cheveling Rd	32
5	Fingringhoe Rd	26
6	Foresight Rd	25
7	Mulberry Ave	23
8	Wick Rd	21
9	Abbots Rd	20
10	Roosevelt Way	20

ASB offences (Source 2)

Rank	Road name	2004/05 total
1	Old Heath Road	33
2	Stalin Road	20
3	Speedwell Road	10
4	Fingringhoe Road	9
5	Abbots Road	8
6	Montgomery Close	8
7	Cheveling Road	8
8	Wick Road	6
9	Foresight Road	6
10	Haven Road	4
10	Mulberry Avenue	4
10	Rowhedge Road	4

Key *(area road is located in)*

Barnhall area
Mountbatten area
Speedwell area
Whitehall area
Across more than one area

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.

Most problematic roads for ASB by small area

Figure 18 shows that the Speedwell area had the highest number of roads that ranked amongst the top 10 in Harbour for ASB incidents *and* ASB offences in 2004/2005. Four roads in Speedwell were amongst the top 10 in Harbour for ASB incidents, and six were amongst the top 10 for ASB offences. Three roads in Barnhall were amongst the top 10 for ASB offences and incidents.

In contrast, none of the top 10 roads were located in the Mountbatten or Whitehall areas of Harbour.

However, it is important to note that it was not possible to classify Old Heath Road, Abbots Road or Fingringhoe Road by small area, since all of these roads are located in more than one small area of the ward.

Most problematic roads

Although Barnhall had slightly fewer roads that were amongst the top 10 for ASB compared to Speedwell, the road with the highest number of ASB incidents, of all roads in Harbour, was located in Barnhall. This was Stalin Road, which had 75 incidents reported. Stalin Road also had the second highest number of ASB offences (20 offences) of all roads in the ward.

Old Heath Road and Speedwell Road also ranked within the top three roads in Harbour for ASB incidents and ASB offences in 2004/2005.

ASB and Deprivation

It is not surprising that ASB in Harbour appears to be mostly concentrated in the Barnhall and Speedwell areas, since these are also the most deprived areas of the ward. Research suggests that ASB tends to be more common in areas where deprivation is more widespread. [17] According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2004), Barnhall and Speedwell were amongst the 11-20% most deprived small areas in England. In contrast, Mountbatten and Whitehall were relatively affluent, situated amongst the 41-50% least deprived small areas in England.

Displacement of 'trouble-makers'

Although there appears to be marked improvements in the levels of ASB in some areas of the ward and in Harbour overall, the Community Police Officer pointed out that, 'unfortunately, it is not possible to say the problems in the area are solved'. For instance, some interviewees expressed concern that although youths may have been policed out of one area, the same people may have started congregating in another area, such as the Recreation Ground in New Town ward.

Similarly, the Community Street Wardens said they had often been able to move young people on from one area where they had received complaints without too many problems. They felt this had been achieved through developing rapport with the young people concerned. However, they were also conscious that moving young people on in this way was only a short-term solution and could actually move the problem elsewhere.

As discussed above, it is interesting that Mountbatten was the only small area in Harbour where the numbers of ASB offences and incidents increased between 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. It is not possible to draw any definite conclusions about this due to the small numbers of ASB offences in this area and the short time period to which this data relates. However, this may reflect these concerns that increased policing of ASB may simply lead to displacing the activities into other local areas.

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[17] 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).

Problem areas for ASB according to interviews and focus groups

'The Wick' [18]

Young people from the Barnhall and Speedwell focus groups commented that the area known as 'the Wick' tended to be a well-known trouble spot for incidences of ASB. One participant said that there is an old train station at 'the Wick' that tends to be used as a meeting place for young people after school and at weekends. One participant commented that these people intimidated them, and that they tended to be 'bullies'. Another participant commented that the last time he had been there he was threatened with a knife.

Other participants agreed that 'the Wick' tended to attract vandalism. One participant observed that, 'there's loads of broken glass so it's dangerous for kids to go down there'. Others commented on people lighting fires and riding motorcycles on the Wick. In addition, one participant felt that, 'there's also dogs there, vicious ones and they let them off the leads sometimes'. Participants widely agreed that although they wanted to use 'the Wick', they did not like going because it did not feel safe.

The people causing these problems at 'the Wick' were described as 'drunks' who, 'start to hit and make fights', and were thought to be older than most participants from either of the focus groups. Participants estimated that the 'trouble-makers' ranged between 15 and 21 years of age. However, when asked whether providing things for young people to do in other areas would mean that they would not have to go to 'the Wick' at all, the consensus was that they would still want to go there. For instance, one participant commented that people like themselves, 'with nothing to do but don't vandalise or nothing…like to build dens over there and stuff'. Others said they liked to go to 'the Wick' to ride their bikes, and another participant commented that, 'I have to go there to walk my two dogs'. One participant said that whilst they would still go to the Wick, 'I just try to stay away and not get involved or anything'.

The Community Street Wardens also described 'the Wick' as an area that tended to attract ASB. For instance, they also commented on the issue of young people starting fires on 'the Wick', a longstanding problem experienced in this area. They commented that they had heard about a fire that had been started on the day they were interviewed. Another issue on 'the Wick' is with kids riding recklessly on scooters and mopeds, without helmets. One Community Street Warden commented that, on one such occasion, '…we've been involved in a near miss – they came flying out of the wick onto Speedwell Road and nearly hit us'.

Police data does not include offences occurring at 'the Wick' since this is Ministry of Defence (MOD) land and is therefore policed by the MOD. For this reason, MOD police data was consulted in relation to 'the Wick'. This showed that the most common types of incidents attended in this area by MOD police between 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005 were fires (68 incidents) and nuisance children / nuisance youths (47 incidents). This supports the comments of focus group participants and interviewees regarding the types of problems occurring in this area.

The area around the shops on Stalin Road

Focus group participants described the area outside the shops on Stalin Road as a congregation point for young people who demonstrate anti-social behaviour.

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[18] The area known as 'the Wick' is Middlewick Ranges on the corner of Abbots Road and Mersea Road in Harbour ward.

However, as discussed above, there were mixed views in relation to the level of ASB in this area, with some participants commenting that they felt fewer people tended to gather in this area 'nowadays'.

However, despite these perceived improvements in the level of ASB, Stalin Road had the highest number of ASB incidents and the second highest number of ASB offences of all roads in Harbour in 2004/2005, as discussed above. Furthermore, Figures 19 and 20 show that Police Recorded Crime and Police Reported Crime in Stalin Road increased progressively throughout 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005.

Figure 19: ASB incidents in Stalin Road, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005

Figure 20: ASB offences in Stalin Road, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005

Source: Figure 19: Police Reported Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System. **Figure 20:** 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.

Figure 19 shows that 37 ASB incidents were reported in Stalin Road in 2002/2003 compared to 75 in 2004/2005. This amounts to an increase of more than 100% overall. Similarly, Figure 20 shows that the number of ASB offences in Stalin Road increased from 13 in 2002/2003 to 20 in 2004/2005, representing an increase of over 50%.

However, as noted in Section 7 of this report, there are limitations associated with police data. In this instance, the increased number of ASB incidents reported to the police may be a result of higher expectations. The Community Police Officer commented that when residents see the police successfully intervening in an area, this sometimes results in increased reports of more minor incidents of ASB. Consequently, although the number of ASB reports in the area may have increased, people may actually feel safer. For this reason it is important to take interview and focus group data into account, as well as police data.

Ladbrook Drive (Location of Abbots Activity Centre)

One interviewee felt that ASB had worsened in the Ladbrook Drive area of the ward. This interviewee said that they were unable to comment on the level of ASB in Old Heath as a whole since they did not live in the area. However, this interviewee said they were very familiar with the Ladbrook Drive area through working in the Abbots Activity Centre.

This interviewee gave an example of an incident where someone had climbed in through the window of an elderly resident's home to take £50. They also commented that, 'someone was stabbed around here. Another was hit on the head with a bottle'. In addition, this interviewee commented that, '[young people] all seem to congregate

around here, I see their litter and empty beer cans when I come to work in the morning'.

The physical layout of the area was perceived to contribute to the problems in the area. This interviewee commented that, 'there are so many alley ways where they can run around and hide', consequently making some of the older people in the area feel vulnerable. This interviewee also felt that ASB in this area had risen due to the tenants housed in council properties in the area. They felt that 'anti-social people' are being place in the same buildings as the elderly residents.

Analysis of police data for the types of offences and incidents that were classified as ASB [19] suggests that Ladbrook Road was *not* one of the most problematic areas for ASB in Harbour. However, analysis of *All* Recorded Crime (as opposed to just offences classified as anti-social behaviour) reveals that there was indeed a steep increase in the number of offences recorded in Ladbrook Drive in 2003/2004 (Figure 21).

Figure 21: All Recorded Crime in Ladbrook Drive, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005

Figure 22: Types of offences in Ladbrook Drive, 2003/2004

Source: Police Recorded Crime, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System.
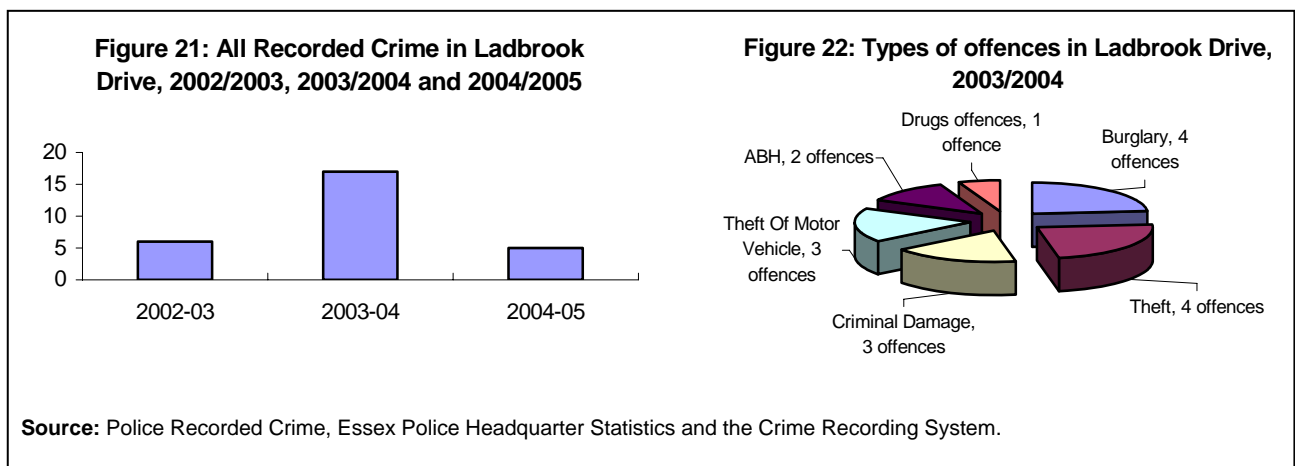
Figure 21 shows that the number of offences in Ladbrook Drive increased from six in 2002/2003, to 17 in 2003/2004. However, the number of offences fell again in 2004/2005 to just five offences.

Figure 22 shows the types of offences recorded in Ladbrook Drive in 2003/2004. The most common types of offences were Burglary (four offences) and Theft (four offences); followed by Theft of Motor Vehicle (three offences) and Criminal Damage three offences). These offences appear to support the types of incidents described by this interviewee.

This increase in the number of offences recorded in Ladbrook Drive in 2003/2004 might be linked to the perception of increased vulnerability, felt by older residents in the area.

Types of ASB in Harbour

ASB offences in Harbour

Figures 23 overleaf shows the distribution of ASB offences in Harbour in 2004/2005 according to police Recorded Crime data.

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[19] ASB offences were classified on the basis of offences used in the police report, *'Problem Profile on Anti-Social Behaviour'*, Intelligence Analysis Team (2004); Colchester Division, Essex Police. 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.

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

Public Order Incident 6%
Robbery 1%
GBH 2%
ABH 28%
Affray 1%
Arson 2%
Common Assault 5%
Criminal damage 55%
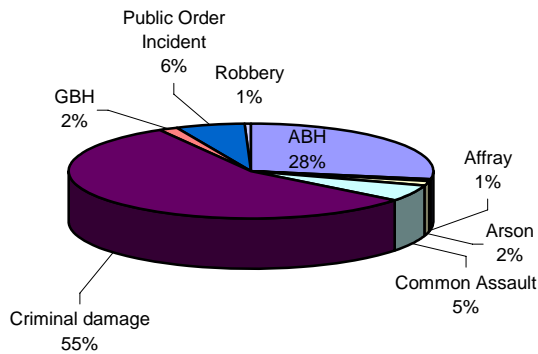
Figure 24: Criminal damage offences in Harbour and Colchester, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005
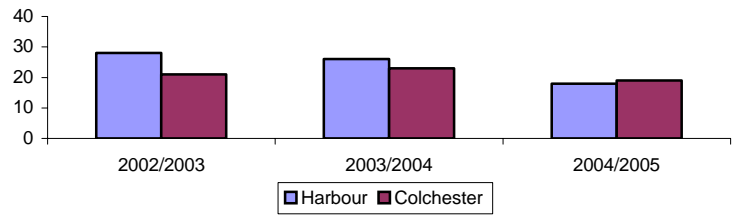
Harbour ■ Colchester

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

Notes: **1.** Crimes recorded under Old Heath Rd are not included in this chart since this road runs across three of the four small areas in Harbour and one small area of New Town. These offences could not be classified into small areas because postcodes were not recorded. **2.** Any crimes categorised under the Harbour beat code (E13H) where the road name recorded was located outside of Harbour ward are not included.

Figure 23 shows that Criminal damage was the most common type of ASB offence recorded in Harbour in 2004/2005, accounting for 56% of all ASB offences. Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) was the second most common ASB offence type (27% of all ASB offences).

Although criminal damage was the most common type of ASB offences in Harbour in 2004/2005, the rate of criminal damage offences in Harbour was lower than the Colchester average (Figure 24). Harbour had a rate of 18 criminal damage offences per 1,000 in the population in Harbour in 2004/2005 compared to 19 per 1,000 in the population in Colchester. Furthermore, the number of criminal damage offences in Harbour fell each year from 2002/2003 until 2004/2005 (as it did in the whole of Colchester).

ASB incidents

Figure 25 shows that Disorder was the most common type of ASB *incident* reported to the police in Harbour in 2004/2005. Disorder, which accounted for 62% of all ASB incidents in 2004/2005, includes a wide range of incidents (see Figure 26). Youth disorder / nuisance was the most common type of disorder reported (136 incidents), followed by disturbances in public places (57 incidents).

44

Figure 25: ASB incident types

- Public Order Offences other 1%
- Vehicle related nuisance 4%
- Other non criminal incidents 5%
- Violence 12%
- Criminal Damage 15%
- Disorder 62%
- Sexual Offences 1%

Figure 26: Incidents of disorder in Harbour (2004/2005)

Source: Police Reported Crime for Harbour ward, Essex Police Headquarter Statistics and the Crime Recording System.

Notes: The following categories were devised using the data indicated: **Disturbance in public places**: Assault, Civil disputes, Disturbance, and Fight. **Other disorder / nuisance**: Acc Damage, Air Weapon, Criminal damage, Fire, Fireworks, Harassment, 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.

Youth Disorder / Nuisance

The number of youth disorder / nuisance incidents reported in Harbour increased progressively between 2002/2003, 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. In 2002/2003, 109 incidents of youth disorder / nuisance were reported, compared to 131 in 2003/2004 and 136 in 2004/2005.

Of the 335 youth disorder / nuisance incidents reported throughout this three-year period, almost one half of these were located in Barnhall (46%). Speedwell had the next highest proportion of youth disorder / nuisance incidents (38%).

Public perceptions of youth disorder / nuisance

As noted in Section 7 of this report, however, one major limitation associated with Police Reported Crime data is that it is based on public *perceptions*, rather than independent evidence. Whilst this data enables us to find out about *c*omplaints of non-criminal behaviour people may have had about their neighbourhood, it is important to note that this data is highly influenced by expectations and perceptions. For instance, the increasing number of ASB incidents reported to the police *may* be a result of greater confidence that the police will take action. For this reason it is important to also take account of interview and focus group data.

Defining ASB

Several interviewees commented on the pertinent issue of how definitions of ASB vary from person to person. For instance, when asked about the level of ASB in the area, one interviewee said:

'It depends on how you define ASB. If you go down Wick Road, they say they suffer a lot of ASB, but it's really just five kids playing football in the street. But over a period of time we've distracted them and encouraged them to play football in other areas. But I wouldn't call it ASB'.

Another interviewee commented that the type of behaviour some people feel to be anti-social is, 'just kids being kids'. On the topic of local young people, another interviewee commented that, 'I think they might look intimidating as they hang around in groups, but when you actually talk to them they are a pretty nice bunch'.

The young people at the focus groups also raised this issue of how people perceive their behaviour. Participants in the Speedwell focus group felt that people tended to assume all young people were causing trouble. In the words of one focus group participant, 'if we're playing by the shops there's always some woman that tells us to go away'. Another participant commented that, 'there's an old man that takes photos of you to take to the police… we're just playing'. Another participant described an occasion where, 'one man went really over the top. He got really annoyed and started coming out with baseball bats and stuff and chasing us away'.

Participants felt the problem was that they had nothing to do. One girl from the Barnhall focus group acknowledged that, '…sometimes we cause a little bit of trouble. Not much though. Not many of us cause a bit of trouble though. It sets a bad example for the little ones'.

ASB amongst adults

When asked about other troubles in the area, several participants at the Speedwell focus group felt that disputes between adults was more of a problem than ASB amongst young people. One participant commented that, 'they're just in little gangs and arguing with each other'. They felt that people tended to focus on anything the young people were doing, whether they were causing trouble or not, and ignore what was going on amongst the adults.

Similarly, the Street Wardens commented that, 'a lot of ASB we get involved in is to do with adults rather than kids – neighbourhood disputes'. They also said they felt that complaints regarding the behaviour of young people were easier to resolve. They explained that this was achieved through developing rapport with young people in the neighbourhood, 'you can reason with them to some extent…And they don't get nasty with us as we've known them so long'.

Difficulties amongst adults were described as 'neighbours not getting along'. One interviewee commented that this tended to involve, 'members of the same family and extended families and people that have lived there a long time sitting on doorsteps slagging the neighbours off'. Another interviewee felt that the adults concerned tended to be, 'confrontational people victimising others in the neighbourhood'. Similarly, another interviewee commented that:

'People just think of kids when they think of ASB, and that's not necessarily the case. For example, the man over the road often has people complaining about him, he bullies other people, yet he's a grown man with a family'.

Why people felt ASB had improved

Focus group responses

One focus group participant commented that ASB had improved in their neighbourhood because, 'there's been people coming in', [organising activities for young people and policing the area]. Participants at both focus groups agreed that when they had things to do it keeps them out of trouble, 'because there's something to do rather than vandalising stuff'.

Interview responses

The seven interviewees who said they thought ASB had improved were asked why they felt this was the case. A number of factors were raised, suggesting that this improvement was probably due to various changes in the area. The comments received are described below.

Activities for young people

Three interviewees said they thought the main cause of this perceived drop in the level of ASB was due to the activities that had been organised for young people. For instance, one interviewee said they thought it was because 'there's more for kids to do. Whereas before nothing ever got done for them'. Similarly, another interviewee commented that 'I think there's less of them hanging around now as there are more activities for them to get involved in'.

The general consensus was that the input of additional activities for young people in Old Heath was undoubtedly an improvement for the area. However, several interviewees expressed concern that the activities, 'don't necessarily get the naughty ones you really want to divert from ASB'. For instance, one interviewee commented that whilst these activities may occupy 'kids on the periphery' and prevent them getting involved in ASB, the youths that are mostly responsible for causing problems are unlikely to get involved. This interviewee felt the activities probably represent 'too much structure for problem kids'.

Multi-agency input

Interviewees commented that they felt the joint input of various agencies in the area had made a real impact on the community. For instance, one interviewee commented that:

> 'You now see housing officers walking around the housing estate, council officers, street wardens, church minister, police. This was unheard of before'.

This interviewee saw the task group as an important factor in facilitating communication between agencies about what was happening in the area. They commented that 'the communication is unbelievable really because everyone seems to be talking to everyone else'. Another interviewee commented that they felt the task group had effectively, 'given residents a say', enabling their views to be shared with agencies and community workers in the area.

The Community Police Officer gave the example of how joint working had been successful in dealing with a problem with underage sale of alcohol that had occurred in the ward. This interviewee felt that the problem had been tackled very effectively through, 'a United Solutions (US) problem-solving group, proactive patrolling, challenging the sale of alcohol to underage people and cleaning up the area'. This

interviewee also commented that the Community Police Officer, Community Street Wardens and the local housing officer had jointly dealt with this issue.

Another instance of where the Community Police Officer said he felt that a multi-agency approach had been particularly effective was in dealing with neighbourhood disputes in the area. For instance, the Council had moved a problem family out of the area, and ongoing communication between agencies had lead to a joint prosecution in two major court cases.

Two interviewees commented on the impact that they felt the presence of the Police Community Safety Officers (PCSO's) had had on their community. For instance, one interviewee said, '[They] do a good job, and are seen as an authority, keeping an eye on things and moving people on'. The Community Police Officer commented that they act as the 'eyes and ears for the police', providing a regular police presence in the community.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1: OLD HEATH 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 Old Heath 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.

This survey refers to the 'Old Heath' area, which is the preferred name for the community according to the local task group. This area includes Old Heath Road, Barnhall estate, Whitehall estate, and Speedwell Road estate. Politically, this area is known as Harbour ward. Please see the map on page 16 for further details.

Please read each question carefully and complete as directed.

Community / voluntary group name:

....

Name of person completing form:

....

Role of person completing form:

....

Contact telephone number:

....

INVOLVEMENT IN OLD HEATH TASK GROUP

Background to the task group

The Old Heath task group started meeting in June 2003 to explore solutions to local needs identified through community research. Members of the task group include residents, councillors and workers in Old Heath and Barnhall.

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

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

2. When did you first hear about the Old Heath 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 Old Heath 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	
Another local community / voluntary group	
At an Old Heath 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 Old Heath 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 Old Heath 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 Old Heath 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 Old Heath area?

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

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

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

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

Yes	
No	
Unsure	
N/A	

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

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TASK GROUP OBJECTIVES

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

11. To what extent would you describe each of the following as important concerns for the Old Heath 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 community networks						
b) Organising community activities / events						
c) Diverting young people in Old Heath from anti-social behaviour						
d) Working towards providing suitable community meeting places						
e) Continually identifying and addressing local needs as they emerge						
f) 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 community networks		
b) Organising community activities / events		
c) Diverting young people in Old Heath from anti-social behaviour		
d) Working towards providing suitable community meeting places		
e) Continually identifying and addressing local needs as they emerge		
f) Other [please state] ……………………………… ………………………………		

13. If you have any other concerns about the local area that you feel the Old Heath 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

14. How confident do you feel that you can have an impact on the following issues in the Old Heath area as an individual?
(please tick one response for each item)

	Very confident	Quite confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Unsure
a) Creating better / more community meeting places					
b) Diverting young people from anti-social behaviour					
c) Increasing support for local groups					
d) Other [please state] ………………………………………					

15. How confident do you feel that you can have an impact on the following issues in the Old Heath area as a member of a local community / voluntary group or community worker?
(please tick one response for each item)

	Very confident	Quite confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Unsure / n/a
a) Creating better / more community meeting places					
b) Diverting young people from anti-social behaviour					
c) Increasing support for local groups					
d) Other [please state] ………………………………………					

16. How confident do you feel that you can have an impact on the following issues in the Old Heath area as a member of the Old Heath task group?
(please tick one response for each item)

	Very confident	Quite confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Unsure / n/a
a) Creating better / more community meeting places					
b) Diverting young people from anti-social behaviour					
c) Increasing support for local groups					
d) Other [please state] ………………………………………					

17. Has your confidence in the community's ability to make an impact on each of these issues in the Old Heath area increased or decreased since June 2003 (which is when the task group started meeting)? 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) Other [please state] ………………………						
Why?	……………………………………………………………………………………………… ………………………………………………………………………………………………					

TASK GROUP ACHIEVEMENTS

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

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

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Improving quality of life

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

19. One objective for the Old Heath task group is to improve the quality of life for people living in the Old Heath area. Do you feel quality of life has… since June 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
20. In what way, if at all, do you think the Old Heath task group has helped to improve quality of life for people in the Old Heath area?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

21. Can you think of any factors that may prevent the Old Heath task group from significantly improving quality of life for people in the Old Heath 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).*

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

……

……..

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

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

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

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

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

Communication

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

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

24. 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	

25. To what extent do you agree or disagree that communication between community workers and other professionals (e.g. the council) in the Old Heath area and the local community has improved since June 2003 (which is when the Old Heath task group started meeting)? *(please tick)*

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

26. 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

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

Yes		**Please continue to question 28**
No		**Please go to question 37**
Unsure		**Please go to question 37**

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

Yes		**Please continue to question 29**
No		**Please go to question 37**

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

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

30. 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	

32. 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	

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

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

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

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

35. 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	

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

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Community Activity

37. To what extent do you agree or disagree that there has been more community activity in Old Heath since the task group started meeting in June 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	

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

	Very successful	Quite successful	Neither successful / unsuccessful	Not very successful	Not at all successful	Unsure
Football in the community						
Funday						
DJ workshops						
Indikart racing						
Arts workshop						
Essex Youth Service mobile unit visit						

39. How much of an impact do you feel that the following activities have had in diverting young people from anti-social behaviour? *(please tick one response for each activity)*

	A high impact	A slight impact	Not very much of an impact	No impact at all	Unsure
Football in the community					
Funday					
DJ workshops					
Indikart racing					
Arts workshop					
Essex Youth Service mobile unit visit					

40. If further funding for were available for activities in the community, how would you prioritise each of the following? *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, and 7 means that you would least like to see this repeated.*

Football in the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Funday	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
DJ workshops	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Indikart racing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Arts workshop	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Days out for young people (e.g. to the zoo or the beach)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Essex Youth Service mobile unit visit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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

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

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

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

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

INVOLVEMENT WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

42. To what extent would you agree or disagree that the community / voluntary group you work with has become more involved with the local community since June 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
43. In what way? *(please describe in the space provided)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yes	
No	
Unsure	

For those that Strongly agree or Slightly agree

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

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

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

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

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SUPPORT

48. 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) ………………………………………………..	

49. 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 al that apply)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

52. Please indicate how effective the Old Heath 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

53. Are there any other ways in which you feel you could be more supported? *(please describe)*

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

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

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………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX 2

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

Abbotts Activity Centre
Community Street Wardens
Essex Youth Services
Football in the Community (Colchester United Project)
Greenshoots (Essex County Council project)
Health Visitor
Housing Officer
Local councillors
Mezzie Mays Community Cafe
Old Heath Environmental Protection Association (OHEPA)
Old Heath Primary School
Old Heath Residents Association
St. Barnabas Church
Task Group Chairperson and other task group members
YMCA