

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Young Persons Drug & Alcohol Project (Rushes)
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 7 March 2000	
REPORT AUTHOR: George McNally	
REF: JD/GMcI/DH	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Social Work Committee of representations which have been received from young people in the Bellshill, Viewpark areas of their concerns for the future of the Rushes Project.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Rushes Project was established in April 1996 in response to growing concerns about young people's use of alcohol and drugs. It is a community based service for 12 - 18 year olds and their families.
- 2.2 The project was funded in its initial stages through the Urban Aid Programme, its funding ended in January 2000 and it has been funded since then through the Social Inclusion Partnership, although this will end on 31 March 2000.
- 2.3 The project has a number of key objectives:-
- To provide a direct service, supporting young people who are using alcohol and/or drugs.
 - To support parents and families of young people involved in the project and parents who have been referred to the project.
 - To provide outreach and detached services.
 - To engage and promote drug prevention
 - To provide resources, information and training on alcohol and drug related issues.
 - To seek to increase the involvement and influence of the local community.
 - To recruit, train and involve local young people in the project.
- 2.4 Since the launch of the project in April 1996, it has developed a significant record in successfully assisting young people to adopt a more responsible attitude to the problem of alcohol and drug misuse.

- 2.5 A measure of the project success can be gauged by a Caring Cup Award in 1998. The achievement and practices of the project were further recognised when in November 1999, the Scottish Drugs Forum used the Rushes premises to launch their policy document "Working with Young Drug Users".
- 2.6 The work of the project is recognised and respected by a range of agencies including the Social Work Department. More importantly however, young people have the confidence and trust to make use of the services and facilities which are provided.
- 2.7 Staff from the project are extensively involved in work with the local schools on education and preventative work, which in many instances, stops young people from any initial involvement in alcohol and drug misuse.
- 2.8 The Rushes Project when established in 1996 was viewed as an innovative measure to deal with the growing problem of alcohol and drug misuse among young people. In the intervening years, misuse of these substances has not decreased. The Rushes Project is held up by many professionals as a prime example of service provision designed to tackle the problem of alcohol and drug misuse.

3 FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROJECT

- 3.1 The project has four full-time members of staff, a Project Leader, two Youth Drug Workers and a Clerical Worker. Sessional staff and volunteers are engaged as required.
- 3.2 The current operational costs of the project are £102,000 per annum.
- 3.3 Following the unsuccessful bid to the Social Inclusion Partnership Board for continued funding. The Social Work Department as part of the budget setting process have highlighted the requirement to obtain an allocation of resources to enable the continued operation of this service. The outcome of this action will not be known until suchtime as the Council determines its overall budget position.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 In the period which the project has been in existence, it has achieved its original objectives. It has established a well founded reputation, young people have the trust and confidence to access and make use of the services which are provided. Any failure to find the necessary financial resources to enable the project to continue will result in a substantial blow to the efforts of the Council to harness and deal with the problem of alcohol and drug misuse by young people in the North Lanarkshire communities.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Committee is requested to:-

- i) take account of the representations which have been submitted by the young service users.
- ii) to otherwise note the report.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Copies of representations received are available in the Members library.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
28 February 2000

For further information on this report please contact , Principal Officer (Strategy) (TEL: 01698 332063)