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REPORT TO:	COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	12 JULY 2001	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN/
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	STUART BATCHELOR (5820)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	WALKING THE WAY TO HEALTH PROJECT	REF: Wwth3
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

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### 1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Officers submit a Stage Two application to the New Opportunities Fund for funding towards a three-year project.

### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the success of the pilot Walking The Way To Health / Green Gym project and seek their approval for the submission of a New Opportunities Fund bid which would secure a three year project covering the whole of South Derbyshire.

### 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 At the Leisure Services Committee of 7 December Members approved the delivery of a pilot project called Walking The Way To Health / Green Gym. The project has proved to be very successful even though the Foot and Mouth Crisis prevented much of the originally planned activity taking place. A full Project Report is provided as Annexe No. 1 but in summary the projects were concerned with the following

#### Walking the Way to Health

This scheme has been developed by the Countryside Agency and British Heart Foundation to use walking as a way to create a healthier nation. It is based on the formation of a local partnership between local authorities, health services and the community to develop walking opportunities for local people who would benefit from adopting increased levels of walking activity.

The local people have included clients with enduring mental health problems referred to walking schemes by Occupational Therapists, as well as a broader cross section of people who were directly targeted through direct marketing.

The walking initiatives initially included a programme of led walks, establishment of walking groups and production of walks leaflets (both urban and rural). However, this programme was radically reduced by the Foot and Mouth outbreak as many rural

footpaths were closed. Each initiative was designed to achieve a health gain through the activity, e.g. timed routes and set distances rather than casual strolls or rambles.

### Green Gyms

The 'Green Gym', a registered trademark of the BTCV, is a development of the exercise referral idea, such as the District Council and Green Bank Leisure Centre G.P. Referral Scheme, where G.P.s refer patients who would benefit from physical activity to countryside facilities such as Rosliston Forestry Centre. The Green Gym idea uses environmental activity such as, tree planting, hedge laying, allotment tending, to achieve the physical activity and consequent health benefit

- 3.2 The pilot project was financially supported by The National Forest Company, Southern Derbyshire PCG and Aurora County Developments Limited (management contractors for Rosliston Forestry Centre) and all three partners were pleased with the project and wish for a longer term initiative to be developed.

### Project Proposal

- 3.3 The development of the pilot project would involve an application to the New Opportunities Fund for funding towards the three year appointment of a part time Project Co-ordinator / Contractor who would develop a range of walking and exercised based activities to achieve the following aim and objectives;

#### AIM

To increase levels of awareness, within South Derbyshire and the National Forest, of the health and social benefits of walking and outdoor activity by providing increased opportunities to its residents.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To develop a planned, monitored programme of walks as part of cardiac rehabilitation
- To encourage people suffering from mental ill health to participate in led walks
- To establish health walks as part of the exercise on prescription scheme
- To provide local residents subject to social exclusion with the opportunity of participating in a led walk
- To encourage local residents to walk independently within the National Forest and to promote walking as a means of improving health and well being

Further detail on these objectives and the associated targets is provided in Annexe No. 2

- 3.4 Following the pilot scheme, meetings have taken place with the Regional Office of the Countryside Agency, who are promoting Walking The Way To Health scheme, and they are very positive about an expanded scheme. They have accepted a Stage One application and have encouraged the submission of a Stage Two application, based on the above objectives, to the New Opportunities Fund.

- 3.5 In preparation of this application approaches have been made to a number of partners including The National Forest Company, Aurora Country Management and Southern Derbyshire PCG, all of whom are willing to invest financially into the proposed project.
- 3.6 With these partners already in place the Stage Two application can be submitted with any further partners adding extra value to the project.
- 3.7 From a Strategic point of view the project will ensure that the District Council maintains a role of developing innovative health development projects and will link with some of the other health based strategies such as the Parenting Strategy.
- 3.8 In terms of direct benefits to the Council the Project Officer will be able to link with the existing Exercise on Prescription Scheme and develop its quality and capacity.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The total cost of delivering the project will be £90 000. This will be funded through applications for financial assistance to The National Forest Company for £21 000 (approved), £9 000 from Southern Derbyshire PCG (approved), Aurora Country Developments £4 000 (approved). It is anticipated that a successful bid to the New Opportunities Fund will secure at least £40 000. The required contribution from the District Council would be £5 000 which would be made up of £1 000 a year from the Environmental Health Health Promotion budget and £2 000 underspend from the pilot project. Further support would include provision of office and administration support from the Community and Leisure Development Unit. The remaining balance will be funded from income received from participants and further grant aid from other agencies.
- 4.2 No additional funding is required from the District Council towards the project.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 This partnership approach to developing health projects could result in a successful New Opportunities Fund bid which will provide the District with a three year project to establish a number of walking groups and initiatives, further develop the successful Exercise on Prescription Scheme and ensure that health improvement is at the forefront of the Districts community development agenda.
- 5.2 The proposal is particularly attractive, as it would secure over £80 000 of external funding without any increased expenditure from the District Council.

#### **6.0 Background Papers**

- 6.1 File Reference HIP3

