

Item No. 5.3	Classification: Open	Date: December 8, 2004	Meeting Name: Council Assembly
Report title:		Deputation requests – supplementary advice on the Community Radio Group.	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Chief Executive (Borough Solicitor)	

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OFFICERS

Comments from the chief executive on the Community Radio Station Group deputation

The provision of a third tier of operations for radio - below National and Regional levels - at the local level, is to be known as Community Radio. This is a development by government as part of its response to the activities of Pirate radio stations which are uncontrolled and unlicensed transmissions. These it is to be noted are also commonly referred to as 'Community Radio Stations'.

The Executive has noted the motion from last Council Assembly on this subject and received detailed reports from the Strategic Director of Regeneration, setting out current examples of how education and training to help access radio are being developed locally, and the Strategic Director of Housing, outlining the problem of unlicensed radio stations in the way they affect the Housing Service. The example of the Radio Peckham model is appended to this concurrent report.

Recent action by government means that the new tier of radio stations will be set up and run by and for local communities. Legislation is now before Parliament, which if agreed by both Houses, will result in the Community Radio Order, which follows public consultation, becoming effective. This will pave the way for the media regulator, Ofcom, to advertise community radio licences.

Currently, anyone involved with pirate broadcasting, even if they allow their premises to be used, or if they advertise on a station commits an offence. The maximum penalties, at Crown Court, are unlimited fine and two years in prison.

Ofcom is addressing the pirate problem proactively, listening to the broadcasts of pirate stations from its monitoring station to gain information about pirates, such as the telephone numbers used in station operation. Service providers may cut them off if they are being used for illegal activity. Other information gained from this monitoring, such as about advertisers, is used to support enforcement action.

Community radio will complement existing independent local radio stations. It gives the local community the opportunity to train and gain experience as broadcasters and learn other transferable skills. It can help tackle social exclusion and encourage community development. It can act as a conduit for getting messages across to otherwise hard to reach audiences about important community services.

Advantage has been taken of this latter opportunity in Peckham where through Neighbourhood Renewal process the 'Radio Peckham' training model was recently offered. Please see Appendix 1 for details.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Deputation Request File	Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB	Lesley John 020 7525 7228

Lead Officer	Ian Millichap, Constitutional Team Manager
Report Author	Kevin Flaherty, Constitutional Team
Version	Final
Dated	03.12.04

The Radio Peckham Model

Introduction

The station was developed as part of the Neighbourhood renewal process in the Peckham and Nunhead area, a process managed through the Peckham Programme.

The overall aim of the renewal process is to improve community cohesion and to raise local aspirations particularly for young people in the area.

As a result of consultations with local residents and communities of interest, it appeared that timely information on what's happening locally was perceived to be a major gap. A community Radio station was suggested to see if this could be made to work to bridge that gap. Its aim being to let as many people as possible know what's happening in the area and what's available for them to get involved with through the accessible medium of radio.

A key feature of this initiative being that a community radio station needs to place major emphasis on the development of widespread local community participation and this has to mean innovative ways of training a large number of people to become radio literate.

Thus, as the first step following approval by the Southwark Alliance and the necessary application to Ofcom for a license - over the summer months –staff at the Peckham Programme, Groundwork Southwark and a specialist agency called Eclectic Productions – began to make preparations for the launch of Radio Peckham by running a series of training courses for anyone interested across the local community from 12 upwards.

Training

Courses provided were required to cover all the essential elements of operating a radio station and programme making, and aim to train and enable residents to run their own station. Practically based and hands-on, all courses were graded to the level of the target group, and designed to enable all 'students' to be able to use contemporary professional radio technology.

As well as learning the technical skills necessary for station operation and programme making, students were able to practice a range of 'life skills' essential for employment and for other education. All courses place a strong emphasis on confidence building, teamwork, responsibility, communication, organisation, and problem solving.

The courses provided during the summer project were:

- Radio Production course (5 sessions)
- DJ Skills
- Jingle Making
- Basic IT
- Introduction to Web Design
- Digital and Web Imaging

- Web Streaming and Site Design

Residents participating in the summer courses were able to gain the skills necessary for further progression during the pre-broadcast and broadcast stages of the project.

Students completing the courses received in-house certification and a CD copy of their work, essential as evidence of achievement for more advanced training courses or employment in the industry. We were also able to provide references.

Students were encouraged to continue developing their skills by further radio involvement in the form of broadcasting live on FM or via Internet radio.

Web training

An additional feature was the provision of training on use of the web.

Web training was offered to individuals representing the different community groups in the local area. Each group was encouraged to undertake research on the concerns and issues of the community group they are representing. This research contributed to the content required to design web pages, which could be build upon the 'Nunhead' website.

As well as the standard web training, the technologies of audio web streaming will be covered. This to work in conjunction with the radio stations own website and the broadcasting of programmes on the radio station or web streaming.

Web streaming can provide an important part of the design, structure and broadcast of a community radio station by enhancing the quality and accessibility for the user and the community groups involved.

The IT based courses were held at Nunhead Library using the open learning facilities. The general courses that are run from the library follow the Adult Learning calendar, thus making the summer months a quiet season. The facilities were used all day and weekday evenings during the 6-week initial training stage. *(And will integrate on an ongoing basis with the next Adult Learning year.)

The training in the end meant that:

- 200+ local residents became involved,
- 85% from the Nunhead neighbourhood.
- Over 110 Local organisations supported the project in an active way, (making programmes, referring new students, acting as subject topics).

Broadcasting and Programming

Broadcasting took place from 'The Hub' a new youth facility in East Peckham. Radio Peckham was enabled to cover a 2-mile radius and was also 'streamed' for Internet broadcasting on www.radiopeckham.org by license from Ofcom.

The programming provided a mixture of chat / issues / phone ins, community events and music as decided by the community.

Initial conclusions

In relation to the development of the Radio Peckham initiative the following broad conclusions should be noted:

- Becoming involved in the activity of radio is strongly motivating
- People find learning about making radio exciting and easily learn a range of useful life skills, well beyond the skills of making programmes
- All age groups and communities can easily become involved
- The medium of radio can create a strong sense of an identity with community
- Feedback so far suggests that this has proved to be a worthwhile and enriching experience for all concerned.

November 2004
Peckham Programme.

Notes:

Members of Eclectic Productions first worked together on the building of a radio station for Goldsmith's College in New Cross, in order to provide access to all students. After building and equipping the studios, Eclectic devised training courses to enable students with no previous experience to make their own programmes. Eclectic found the experience to be very motivating for participants. The project was hugely successful, and Wired FM still broadcasts and trains students 4 years on. One of the team became a representative for the 10 student stations in London, working to improve access and facilities for the student radio movement.

Since then, Eclectic became involved with training in local community groups and colleges, and the strategic planning and set up of Community Radio stations throughout the UK. Their goal is empowerment and enabling local residents to develop skills for employment and to use Radio as a means to make their voices heard.

Groundwork Southwark Youth and Environment Programme aims to encourage the participation of young people and children in consultation and the positive, practical changes within their own neighbourhood and communities. It aims to bring a sense of pride and purpose to the young individuals involved. The project is offering young people a voice to be heard, through creative projects and inclusion in decision making, which could ultimately lead to future employment, skills building and accreditation opportunities for their efforts, greater community awareness, confidence and raised self esteem.

The Hub Youth Project offers young people the opportunity to use Music, Media, Radio as a vehicle to discuss their views in a fun and educational way whilst having a positive impact on their environment.