



COMMUNITY POLICING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BURNABY-NEW WESTMINSTER
TASK FORCE ON SEXUALLY EXPLOITED AND AT-RISK YOUTH**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council authorize the allocation of \$2,000 from the 2010 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget, and \$4,000 from the 2011 Provisional Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to support initiatives of the Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth, as outlined in Section 3.0 of this report.
2. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee for information.

REPORT

The Community Policing Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2010 September 09, received and adopted the *attached* report providing Council with an overview of recent and planned activities of the Burnaby-New Westminister Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor P. Calendino
Chair

Councillor P. McDonell
Vice Chair

Councillor R. Chang
Member

<p>Copied to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Manager Deputy City Manager Director Engineering Director Finance Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services OIC, RCMP Director Planning and Building Chief Librarian

TO: COMMUNITY POLICING COMMITTEE **DATE:** 2010 September 3
FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 1750 – 20
Ref: Sexual Exploitation
SUBJECT: **UPDATE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BURNABY-NEW WESTMINSTER
TASK FORCE ON SEXUALLY EXPLOITED AND AT-RISK YOUTH**
PURPOSE: To provide the Committee and Council with an overview of recent and planned activities
of the Burnaby-New Westminister Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council be requested to authorize the allocation of \$2,000 from the 2010 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget, and \$4,000 from the 2011 Provisional Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to support initiatives of the Burnaby-New Westminister Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth, as outlined in Section 3.0 of this report.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee for information.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

The Burnaby-New Westminister Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth (the Task Force) has been working since 1998 to address the sexual abuse of children and youth in the commercial sex trade. The Task Force, a subcommittee of the Community Policing Committee, is a multi-sectoral coalition, with representatives from the City of Burnaby, the City of New Westminister, Burnaby and New Westminister School Districts, the Fraser Health Authority, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and a number of non-profit agencies providing services to youth. Over the years, the work of the Task Force has been based on three goals, as follows:

- to create the legal and procedural means for intervention when children and youth are being sexually exploited in the sex trade;
- to ensure adequate provision of support, services and treatment for sexually exploited children and youth; and
- to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth.

The Community Policing Committee and Council were last updated on the work of the Task Force in 2009 March. This report provides an overview of Task Force activities over the past eighteen months, and outlines the Task Force's current priority initiatives.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF RECENT TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

In 2009 June, Task Force members and invited guests spent a day engaged in a facilitated strategic visioning session aimed at achieving a clearer understanding of the major challenges and trends facing sexually exploited and at-risk youth in Burnaby and New Westminster, and at identifying key priority areas for Task Force attention in the near and mid-term future.

As a result of the visioning session, the future work of the Task Force was conceptualized as two separate but related streams:

- Support and intervention (likely mainly focussed on sexually exploited youth); and
- Education, awareness and prevention (likely mainly focussed on at-risk youth).

It was agreed that for 2009, 2010, and 2011 the focus of the Task Force's work in the support and intervention stream would be leadership and advocacy for services, while the focus for the education, awareness and prevention stream would be youth engagement. The Task Force's recent key activities pertaining to each stream are outlined below.

2.1 Support and Intervention: Leadership and Advocacy for Services

The intent of the activities identified in this area of the Task Force's work is to gain a better understanding of the scope and nature of sexual exploitation locally, and to advocate for appropriate and effective services and supports for sexually exploited youth and their families. A Task Force survey of local service providers in the spring of 2010 suggested the following:

- there is a need for more workers with a mandate to reach out to sexually exploited youth;
- there is no local central co-ordinating body which can supply information on the number and the profile of sexually exploited youth; and
- there is a need for more information-sharing about vulnerable youth among service providers in order to provide the best possible support and service to the youth.¹

A survey of local sexually exploited and/or at-risk youth was also conducted in spring 2010 in an effort to better understand both youths' knowledge of what sexual exploitation is, and how service providers can better support them. The key results from that survey suggest that many youth who are exploited do not attach that label to themselves, and that supportive family members and trusted service workers are pivotal to youths' efforts to leave exploitative situations.

¹ In the past, the Task Force had access to statistics and other information about sexually exploited and at-risk youth through committees of front-line service providers in both Burnaby and New Westminster. Over the years, those statistics and that information have been a critical aid in advocacy work regarding services. However, given increasing concerns for privacy, and the consequent tightening of confidentiality policies in many organizations, committees are no longer able to provide the Task Force with an annual written report on the number of local youth with active or peripheral involvement in the sex trade.

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2.2 Education, Awareness and Prevention: Youth Engagement and Education/Awareness

The intent of the activities outlined in this area of the Task Force's work is to engage youth in healthy activities which build self-esteem and trusting relationships with adults, while raising their awareness of the dangers of life in the sex trade. To this end, the Task Force – with the help of Youth Voice² – completed two projects in spring 2010.

The first was the sponsorship in Burnaby of a five kilometre walk/run to raise awareness of recruitment into the sex trade, and of resources available to support youth to exit the trade. The walk/run was held during "Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth" Awareness Week in March 2010, and attracted forty runners. Participants received tee-shirts and information about local services available to high-risk youth through booths staffed by local service agencies.

The second project was the creation of a wallet-sized Youth Crisis Info card directing youth to a range of emergency services in Burnaby and New Westminster. The Task Force, which has been producing a youth information card for a number of years, hopes to ultimately replace it with a youth-targeted website. The Youth Crisis Info card is meant as an interim measure while the feasibility of establishing a website is examined. Five thousand copies of the Youth Crisis Info card were distributed in May 2010 to local youth through service agencies and youth venues.

Youth Voice also undertook two projects on its own, with the assistance of a \$1,450 grant from the Vancouver Foundation. First, Youth Voice invited the non-profit organization Children of the Street to offer a training session to youth regarding how to plan and lead a workshop. The training session was attended by Youth Voice members and the South Burnaby Neighbourhood House's Youth Leadership Group. Second, Youth Voice created a one hour educational presentation targeted to youth (consisting of ice breaker activities, a video created by Youth Voice, a jeopardy game, and discussion) which it will employ in the coming months to raise awareness of the issue of sexual exploitation among youth.

2.3 General Community Education and Awareness

In addition to the activities outlined above, the Task Force also undertook a number of activities aimed at raising general public awareness of the issue of sexual exploitation of children and youth in the sex trade. First, in both 2009 and 2010, the Task Force successfully requested that Burnaby Council proclaim "Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth" Awareness Week³, and displayed banners on pedestrian overpasses with the message "Buying sex from a child or a youth is a crime. It is child abuse!"

Second because cultural minority youth are at particular risk for recruitment into the sex trade, Task Force members made an educational presentation to New Westminster's Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) in spring 2009 on aspects of youth recruitment into the sex trade.⁴ Finally, the Task Force provided information about recruitment into

² The Task Force created *Youth Voice*, a group of local youth, in 2007. It is a facilitated, regularly-scheduled group for youth, which is intended to increase the involvement (and voice) of youth in the work of the Task Force. Youth Voice also focuses on raising awareness among youth about sexual exploitation, its prevention, and support services available.

³ 2010 was the 12th year the Province and the City of Burnaby proclaimed the awareness week.

⁴ A presentation to the Burnaby SWIS workers had been made by Task Force members in early 2009.

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the sex trade for the February 2010 edition of the Community Policing insert in the *Burnaby NewsLeader*. The insert is a monthly feature in the *NewsLeader*, and reaches a circulation of 61,500 in Burnaby and New Westminster.

In 2009, the Task Force was allocated \$5,000 from the Boards, Committees, and Commissions budget to cover expected expenses for 2009. However, the expenses were not incurred until early 2010, at which time the allocated funding was no longer available due to year end financial reconciliations. Thus none of the \$5,000 allocated for 2009 was spent. As such, the Task Force is requesting \$2,000 from the 2010 Boards, Committees, and Commissions budget to cover its 2010 program.

3.0 CURRENT TASK FORCE PRIORITIES

The Task Force's identified priorities for the remainder of 2010 and for 2011 are as follows.

3.1 Support and Intervention: Leadership and Advocacy for Services

Using information gathered through its surveys of service providers and youth, and in consultation with both groups, the Task Force will develop a conceptual framework for an appropriate and effective model for providing services to sexually exploited and at-risk Burnaby and New Westminster youth. Such a framework will allow the ready identification of service gaps and inadequacies, which will enable the Task Force to plan advocacy efforts for critically-needed services. The Task Force would report back to the Community Policing Committee and Council before engaging in any such advocacy work.

The Task Force will also endeavour to identify and implement an alternative way to access reliable statistics on child and youth sexual exploitation in Burnaby and New Westminster. To do so, the Task Force plans to create a guide to assist local service providers to identify youth who are – or are at-risk of being – sexually exploited, and to conduct a pilot project for tracking sexually exploited and at-risk youth.

3.2 Education, Awareness and Prevention: Youth Engagement and Education/Awareness

Working with Youth Voice, the Task Force plans to sponsor an awareness walk/run during Sexual Exploitation Awareness Week again in 2011. Swangard Stadium has been reserved as the start and end point for the run for March 13, 2011.

Working with Youth Voice, the Task Force also aims to launch a website resource regarding services available to sexually exploited and at-risk youth in Burnaby and New Westminster. The webpage would be hosted on an external site such as HostUtopia, where youth are highly likely to encounter it. It would contain information about the Task Force, about youth-oriented events in Burnaby and New Westminster, and about the above-noted services. Youth would be able to search for services by location (e.g., northwest Burnaby, southeast Burnaby), by type of service (e.g., alcohol and drug services, legal assistance) or by agency name. The website would also provide links to the websites of all organizations listed as offering services, to resources such as the

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Directory of Services for Burnaby and New Westminster compiled by Burnaby Community Connections, and to social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. It is estimated that the cost of developing the website would be in the range of \$2,000, while the cost of purchasing a domain name and hosting the site would be in the range of \$100 per year. The Task Force would report back to the Committee and Council with specifics of any website developed before its launch.

During the remainder of 2010 and into 2011, the Task Force will also work with representatives from both the Burnaby and the New Westminster School Districts to enable Task Force sponsorship of presentations to Grade 7 to Grade 10 school classes with a view to raising youth awareness of the dangers of high-risk behaviour.

3.3 General Community Education and Awareness

It is anticipated that the Task Force will again use "Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth" Awareness Week to raise general public awareness of youth exploitation in the commercial sex trade by requesting Burnaby Council to proclaim the week, and displaying banners from pedestrian overpasses. As noted above, the proposed awareness walk/run will also be held during the awareness week.

To support its remaining 2010 initiatives, and those proposed for 2011, the Task Force recommends that the Community Policing Committee request Council to authorize the allocation of \$2,000 from the 2010 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget, and \$4,000 from the 2011 Provisional Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to the Task Force for the above-noted activities. This request is consistent with requests made for Community Policing Committee funding to support Task Force activities in 2001, 2006, 2007, and 2009. Sufficient budget funds are available to satisfy the request.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth has been working since 1998 to address the sexual exploitation of children and youth in the sex trade. At a strategic visioning session in 2009, the future work of the Task Force was re-conceptualized as two separate but related streams:

- support and intervention (likely mainly focussed on sexually exploited youth); and
- education, awareness and prevention (likely mainly focussed on at-risk youth).

For the remainder of 2010 and into 2011, the Task Force has identified seven priority activities as follows:

- development of a conceptual framework for an appropriate and effective model for providing services to sexually exploited and at-risk Burnaby and New Westminster youth;
- creation of an advocacy campaign for critical services for sexually exploited and at-risk youth;
- identification and implementation of an effective vehicle for accessing reliable statistics on child and youth sexual exploitation in Burnaby and New Westminster;
- sponsorship of a walk/run in March 2011 to raise awareness of the sexual exploitation of youth in the commercial sex trade;

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- launch of a website resource of services available to sexually exploited and at-risk youth in Burnaby and New Westminster;
- sponsorship of presentations to Grade 7 to Grade 10 school classes with a view to raising youth awareness of the dangers of high-risk behaviour; and
- participation in "Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth" Awareness Week in March 2011.

To support these Task Force priorities, it is recommended that the Community Policing Committee request Council to authorize the allocation of \$2,000 from the 2010 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget and \$4,000 from the Provisional 2011 Boards, Committees, and Commissions budget to Task Force work. Sufficient budget funds are available for this purpose.

It is further recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee for information.



B. Luksun, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JS/sa

cc: City Manager
Deputy City Manager
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
City Clerk
OIC – RCMP
Chief Librarian