

Report of: Jane Maxwell, East North East Area Leader

Report to: Inner East Community Committee – Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Gipton & Harehills and Killingbeck & Seacroft

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Re-engaging young people in Inner East Leeds

Purpose of report

1. This purpose of this report is to feedback on the work undertaken on behalf of the Community Committee in conjunction with the Community Champion for Children & Young People on the theme of re-engaging young people in positive activities in Inner East Leeds.

Main issues

2. The Inner East Community Committee has identified four themes for the 2014/15 municipal year. These are re-engaging young people, health (particularly mental health), improving the environment and employment and skills. The structure of this work programme was presented to the Community Committee in July 2014 where the Community Committee conversation helped shape each of the four themes.
3. The Community Committee agreed to focus initially on work with other council services and partners to better engage young people in the Wards of Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Gipton & Harehills and Killingbeck & Seacroft.
4. There is a local perception, backed-up by statistical evidence highlighted in the Neighbourhood Improvement Plans for the Inner East area, that a significant amount of young people in Inner East Leeds are disconnected from statutory organisations such as the council who offer services, advice and opportunities that could positively enhance their lives.
5. Over the summer, the Community Champion for Children and Young People, with support from the Area Support Team, held a series of local discussions with young

people and partners to better understand the issues facing them. This engagement activity is summarised in Table 1.

6. The main aim of this report is to feed back on the initial round of conversations held with young people on the subject of how best to engage with them, with a view to working in partnership to address concerns raised.
7. This is the start of developing a local programme of work with partners to improve the way we engage with children and young people. It is also important to state from the outset that this report is presented as a work in progress and seeks to generate debate and stimulate future dialogue.
8. Given the current financial climate facing local government it is now more vital than ever that the views of our citizens, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability or sexuality, are heard so that we can target and focus our resources where they are most needed.
9. Improving engagement with young people can open many opportunities. Gathering the views of young people can help the better targeting of future resources. It is also vital as an organisation that the council listens to and uses the voices of its youngest citizens to help influence decision-making so that they feel they are valid stakeholders in their communities
10. To aid transparency, the engagement activities carried out by the Community Champion for Children & Young People, with support from the Area Support Team are outlined in a table in the Background Information section.
11. During the conversations held with young people a number of issues emerged that warrant highlighting:
 - a. Any communication with young people needs to be on their terms i.e. in locations they feel comfortable with, in plain English, through informal conversations and via existing trusted relationships
 - b. The perceived role of the council in the lives of young people is minimal and ignored.
 - c. The activities provided by the council and partners need greater consultation with young people to inform the type, location and timings of provision.
 - d. The cost and frequency of transport to and from venues continues to be a barrier to engagement and involvement in positive activities, particularly larger city-wide activities

Areas for Development

12. It is clear that whilst there is a lot of good work going on in the area, there are still some areas of high challenge and opportunity.
13. As a council we need to look at how we can engage with young people in a way that better suits their needs. Feedback received from young people suggested that the councils formalised structure of panels, meetings and paper surveys/reports are unappealing due to their rigid nature.
14. Verbal communication in the form of short (no more than 30 minutes), informal conversations were offered and favoured by young people throughout this initial engagement exercise.
15. Suggestions were given about the need for a more relevant social media presence (WhatsApp, Instagram, Vines and Pinterest), TV adverts, and an application(s) for smart phones, though given the associated cost of the latter two suggestions this may be long term rather than short term aspiration.
16. The Area Support Team plans to gather the views of young people on their local area via a series of short video submissions via their phones. A key element of feedback from young people was that engagement with the aim of high participation rates would need incentivising – i.e. the offer of a trip, vouchers, win an iPad, etc.
17. A more immediate and affordable solution would be to build on existing trusted structures and relationships; be that within the Council (with the Youth Service, Youth Offending Team or Voice and Influence Team), via the Cluster Partnerships or via voluntary and community organisations that have a proven track record of engaging with young people.
18. Developing improved relationships with the Cluster Partnerships is particularly worthy of exploration given that this subject was the focus of a recent council Scrutiny Board investigation (July 2014). The Cluster partnerships in the area; CHESS, Seacroft / Manston and Inner East provide an obvious link to young people given their role as an umbrella organisation for schools in the area. A lot of positive work already takes place but we need to identify how our local partnerships can work more closely with the clusters.
19. Whilst there has been some positive work done with the Cluster Partnerships (the Summer holiday activity programme for example) and there is Elected Member representation on the Cluster Partnerships, there is room for more understanding how a stronger relationship would be mutually beneficial and how this could in turn be a platform for other services to engage with young people to help enhance their lives.
20. Another consistent issue that was raised by young people was that, despite evidence to the contrary, there is 'nothing to do in their local area'. Whilst the Youth Activity Fund summer holiday programme in Inner East Leeds has offered a range of positive activities, there is scope to widen the reach and target groups of young people

21. One of the key barriers to the success of the summer programme has been young people finding out about what is on offer for them. Despite it being mandatory that recipients of Youth Activity Funding register and advertise their activities on the Breeze website, the reach of the Breeze brand could be further developed to maximise its potential. The qualitative information needs to be further explored along with Breeze attendance data for the summer holiday activities for Inner East.
22. A council scrutiny board investigation in 2012 into the engagement of young people identified the potential of Breeze and specifically Breeze Cards to reach young people positively on a number of levels. Without wanting to recycle this report, key headlines included concerns that there was no automatic process for issuing Breeze Cards and, in turn promoting the Breeze brand, currently in place.
23. A rudimentary mapping exercise undertaken by the Area Support Team in January 2014 identified that there was an estimated 36 organisations, both statutory and third Sector, currently providing activities for young people in Inner East Leeds. It is widely acknowledged at the time that this estimate was conservative. Again, feedback from young people was that despite attending an event in their area it was not clear what else was on that may also interest them.
24. Whilst there are some anecdotal examples of links and signposting between providers, this is definitely an area that needs further development. The potential for organisations to become not only providers, but part of a pathway for informing young people of positive activities in their area, is significant.
25. This approach is not without problems as the current financial climate has created significant pressures on organisations that mean the incentive to signpost and work in partnership is more challenging due to financial constraints.
26. A key first step would be to gather together providers, both statutory and third sector, to network and exchange information, best practice and promote the mutual benefits of working in partnership. The Inner East Children and Young People's Community Champion is supportive of this approach.
27. During the conversations held with young people it was evident that there were a number of aspirations, such as the creation of new facilities and spaces specifically for young people that are not easily achievable due to financial constraints. We need to explore how new partnerships and various funding options could support these ideas.
28. One issue that did repeatedly arise however was the difficulty in getting to and from venues hosting existing activities and events. Despite the drive by Elected Members and the Area Support Team to provide as many activities for young people in their immediate geographical area, budgets mean that it just isn't possible to do so on a large scale and with the variety to cater to all needs.

Conclusion

29. This report has identified some issues relating to re-engaging young people in Inner East Leeds that deserve further attention and investigation.
30. It is suggested that the Inner East Children and Young People's Community Champion works with relevant partners to identify a programme of local work to address issues raised through initial discussions with young people identified in the report and discussion at the Community Committee workshop session in July.

Recommendations

1. That the Inner East Children and Young People's Community Champion works with relevant partners through the Inner East Children and Young People's sub group to identify a programme of local work to address issues raised through initial discussions with young people identified in the report and discussion at the Community Committee workshop session in July.
2. That a closer working relationship is forged between the Inner East Children and Young People's Community Champion, and cluster partnerships in Inner East Leeds to maximise opportunities to engage with young people.
3. That a networking event in the form of a "Conversation Dinner" be arranged with council services, partners and third sector organisations to form better links in the Inner East area, including identifying positive pathways for young people to follow.

Background Information:

- Link to the 24th July 2014 Children and Families Scrutiny Board investigation into the Cluster Partnerships:
<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s119256/Cluster%20Partnerships%20Inquiry%20Report.pdf>
- Link to 19th April 2012 Sustainable, Economy and Culture Scrutiny Board report in the Engagement of Young People in Culture, Sporting and Recreational Activities:
<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s66483/culture%20report%20final%20draft%20v3%201304.pdf>
- Link to the Leeds City Council Communications Team article relating to the Head Start Programme: <http://newsfeed.leedsvirtualnewsroom.co.uk/2014/08/free-bus-pass-scheme-is-just-ticket-for.html>
- Link to the Neighbourhood Improvement Plans for the Inner East area (Scroll down to minute 87, additional documents):
<http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=160&MId=6232&Ver=4>

Table 1

Brief description of activity	Dates and times	Councillors & Officers responsible	Feedback received
Workshop Session at Inner East Community Committee (Restorative practice employed)	Thursday 17 th July 2014 at 6pm	Cllr Maqsood, Cllr Khan & Andy Birkbeck	Y
Visits to 7 School Councils in B&RH Ward (Pilot)	Various over May, June and July 2014	Cllr Ingham, Sarah May & Mel Bratton	Y
Project visit to Street Works Soccer – Gipton	Tuesday 29 th July at 2pm	Jo Buck	Y
Project visit to Lego Workshop – Gipton	Tuesday 29 th July at 2pm	Jo Buck	Y
Shakespeare's Young People activity consultation, B&RH	Thursday 31 st July, 11am	B&RH Ward Members & Sarah May	Y
Project visit – East End Park Multi Sports	Monday 4 th August, 3pm	Cllr Ingham & Sarah May	Y
Informal consultation with young people, East End Park	Monday 4 th August, 3pm	Cllr Ingham & Sarah May	Y
Project visit to Friday Youth HUB – Day out at Scarborough	Saturday 9 th August – 9am – 6pm	Jo Buck	Y
Project visit – First Floor Arts activities, Burmantofts	Monday 11 th August, 10.30am	Cllr Ingham & Sarah May	Y
Glenthorpes Street Surgery – YP Consultation	Monday 11 th August, 5pm – 7pm	Cllr Ingham & Sarah May	Y
Project visit to Seacroft Play Scheme	Monday 11 th August 11:00am	Jo Buck	Y
Project visit – DAZL activity session, Burmantofts	Wednesday 13 th August, 10.30am	Cllr Ingham & Mel Bratton	Y
Project visit to Ice Pop Media session – Seacroft	Thursday 14 th August 1:30pm	Jo Buck	Y
Project visit to DAZL Dance - Seacroft	Tuesday 19 th August 11:30 am	Jo Buck	Y
Project visit to Street Works Soccer – Hovingham Hub, Harehills	Thursday 21 st August , 6pm	Vicky Hooper	Y
Visit to NEET event at Connexions Centre on Eastgate	Friday 22 nd August 2014 between 12pm – 1.30pm	Cllr Ingham & Andy Birkbeck	Y
Project visit to Mini Breeze – Seacroft	Friday 22 nd August 2:30pm	Jo Buck	Y
Meeting with Young Offenders' during a "Real Talk" session with LCC Youth Offending Service	8 th September 2014 at 3pm (TechNorth)	Cllr Ingham & Andy Birkbeck	Y
Attend "Youth Selfie" Conference with stall for IE Community Committee	10 th September 2014 between 1pm – 4pm	Andy Birkbeck & Lee Griffiths	Y
Informal consultation with young people at Harehills Festival	Sunday 14 th September 2014 between 10am – 4pm	Andy Birkbeck, Vicky Hooper & Clare Wiggins	Y
Mapping exercise of providers of young people's activities in Inner East Leeds	Ongoing with aim of completion by October 2014	Mel Bratton & Andy Birkbeck	In progress