

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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For decision

Progress report on work to engage young people in Inner East Leeds

Purpose of report

1. This purpose of this report is to update the community committee on work undertaken to engage children and young people in positive activities in Inner East Leeds.

Background

2. At a previous meeting of the community committee on 9th October 2014, a report was presented on the work undertaken to engage children and young people in Inner East Leeds against the backdrop of an acceptance that a significant amount of young people remained disconnected from statutory organisations such as the council who offer services, advice and opportunities that could positively enhance their lives.
3. The report set out several measures that could be practically undertaken by the community committee to improve this picture. The report was also followed up by an interactive workshop session which explored this theme further and facilitated conversations about perceived barriers to engagement and input on how engagement could be improved.
4. This report provides an update on the work that has taken place since the last report and an overview of the children and young people's activities that have been supported by the community committee.

Main issues

5. The report that went to community committee in October 2014 made a series of recommendations. These were:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
6. While tangible progress has been made towards these recommendations, it has to be reported that there have been barriers to achieving universal progress. Steps were taken to align the role of community champion closer with ideas and themes of young people in the Inner East in the form of making several visits to local schools. Attempts were also made to forge closer relationships with the cluster partnerships.
7. It must be reported that a networking event involving partners and third sector providers did not materialise. However a prerequisite of such an event is that it would require cooperation from services and partners across the sector and this is something that proved difficult to coordinate at the time this piece of work was conceived. Progress towards the establishment of a mooted Inner East Youth Panel has been hampered by various factors and this alone has proved a barrier to ambitions for more widespread and meaningful engagement with young people.
8. Since the publication of the previous report October 2014, there is a reluctant acceptance within the Communities Team that, although undertaken in good faith, the scope of the report was over-ambitious. Specifically, there is a feeling that the objectives of the report did not align with the priorities of the service areas or cluster partnerships and therefore much of the momentum envisaged by the piece of work was either lost or was not progressed further. This was not aided by personnel changes within the Communities Team.
9. The tangible progress towards some of the report outcomes is not a comparable reflection of the time and effort that was channeled into this piece of work by the Communities Team in partnership with the Community Champion for Children and Young People. Following the publishing of the report in October 2014, The Communities Team and the Community Champions undertook visits to 25 venues over the course of three month period to engage with young people and seek their views. At the time, this level and type of engagement was a pioneering new approach by the community committee and even in isolation should be viewed as an important piece of work.

10. Despite the shortfalls towards the recommendations in the previous report, there has been some notable work coordinated by the Communities Team towards advancing the young people's offer in Inner East.
11. One of the more attainable solutions mooted to improve young person engagement was to build on existing structures and relationships forged between the council, the Cluster partnerships and voluntary and community organisations in the city who have a proven track record of engaging with young people.
12. Breeze Leeds is the council's flagship platform for activities for children and young people aged 0-19 and their families. Their website, Breezeleeds.org is a one stop shop for a range of city-wide activities and events that are on offer. Since the last report, the Breeze website has undergone a major refresh as a result of some long-awaited financial investment. The new website was launched last year. It features a comprehensive search facility where activities and events can be searched for in a variety of ways, including by postcode and activity type. The website also has the functionality to access the monitoring for projects that have received funding from the council. The new website is now on council systems which has made it compatible for use on mobile phones and tablets.
13. As of January 2016, Breezecard membership in Inner East stood at 18,722. This is an increase of 1333 since the January 2015. The following table shows the Breezecard take up broken into the three Inner East wards:

Ward	Breeze Card membership Jan 2015	Breeze Card membership Jan 2016	Increase
Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	5149	5645	496
Gipton & Harehills	7280	7765	485
Killingbeck & Seacroft	4960	5312	352

14. One of the most successful ways of increasing Breeze memberships is through signing young people up to the scheme at localised events, such as Breeze on Tour and Mini Breeze.
15. During 2015, 1719 people from Inner East attended Breeze events across the city. Two of these events were held on Oxtown Fields. This was a slight drop from 2014 where 1774 from Inner East attended Breeze events this might be attributed to the venue move away from Roundhay.
16. Inner East Youth Activity Funding (YAF) is a ring-fenced budget delegated to community committees specifically to support projects which provide after school or school holiday activities for young people. Youth Activity Funding is a core part of the community committee offer to facilitate and shape the young people's activity in Inner East.

17. When the Youth activities Fund was launched in 2013/14 it was agreed that the monitoring of funded activities would be taken over by the Breeze Culture Network. Training has been rolled out to officers and organisations with partial success. A steering group was brought together to streamline this process and to make both the application process and the monitoring system more user friendly for organisations and a more effective monitoring tool. The new data collection and analysis process, facilitated by the new website, will be robust and able to reflect a much more detailed picture than has formerly been available of who is accessing what kind of provision and where. This can in turn inform future commissioning. A new and improved monitoring process was implemented in September 2015 which has provided an easier way to monitor Breezecard data against events and organisations.
18. To compliment this picture the Breeze Culture Network, with a Leeds membership of over 2000, has been used as the basis for area audits of activity and there is the scope for the Breeze team to work with the Communities Team to produce a base line audit of providers to inform commissioning, to build a picture of the what is available for young people and to strengthen the network and pathway for young people into positive activities. This area of worked will be picked up in April to inform the spend of Youth Activity Funding for the 2016 summer holiday activities programme.
19. Since YAF was adopted in 2013/14, it has been used to fund over 70 projects from 20 organisations in Inner East and it remains a competitive application process. However, it is recognised that there is scope for improving the way that this funding for activities is coordinated across Inner East to avoid duplication and to ensure a good spread of activities. A suggestion to this end, and to compliment the piece of work described in section 16, would be to establish a cross-ward working group consisting of elected members and the Breeze team to inform and shape the Youth Activity spend.
20. A critique concerning young people's engagement in Inner East has been a perceived lack of activities for young people to engage with, especially during school holiday periods. While this is an unfounded criticism as there is a large and expanding offer of activities for young people, there is an acceptance that this offer could be communicated more effectively. It has been previously suggested that a way of addressing this would be to have an online platform that compiles local activities in one place. The new and improved Breeze website, which is fully accessible on mobile devices, should be viewed as a significant step towards that action. However, in order to increase the way young people share information about activities they have participated in, young people have previously identified that Instagram is currently the most popular way of doing this. To this end, there is the potential for the Breeze team and the Communities Team to undertake a piece of work to establish a user platform that can be linked to Instagram.
21. In addition to the bespoke work carried out by the Children & Young People's Champion and the Communities Team as a direct outcome from the October 2014 workshop, the Communities Team also worked with the clusters to produce a questionnaire which was circulated to 300 young people in Inner East asking them about what activities they like to take part in and at what times. Over 150 copies of the questionnaire were returned – a return rate of over 50 percent - and a piece of work was undertaken to log the information and extract popular trends, which in turn was used to inform elected

members decisions on YAF spend for the summer holiday activity programme in Inner East.

22. The cluster partnerships across Inner East provide an important link to young people given their role as an umbrella organisation for schools in the area. In recent times, efforts have been made to forge closer working between the Communities Team (ENE) and the cluster partnerships to improve the offer for children and young people. The Communities Team have worked closely with both the Inner East Cluster and the CHESS cluster to coordinate their summer holiday activities programme and the summer holiday activities commissioned through the Inner East Youth Activity Fund. Area Officers also now attend the cluster partnerships meetings which have been important in building relationships and improving communications.
23. In addition to the bespoke work detailed in this report, the Communities Team play a significant role in communicating and promoting activities for children and young people via the Inner East Facebook pages and by emailing them to partners and contacts. We also work with the Inner East Cluster partnership to produce a booklet that publicises the activities in the summer holiday activity programme, jointly funded through Youth Activity Funding and the cluster.

Conclusion

24. This report is a follow up to a report that went to the Inner East Community Committee in October 2014 which explored potential solutions to address a perceived disconnect between young people in Inner East and services and activities offered by the local authority and partner organisations. The report concedes that while there have been some barriers to addressing this issue, there have been some notable successes in advancing the offer. The report offers some recommendations on how this issue can be addressed further going forward.

Recommendations

1. The Inner East Community Committee to delegate responsibility for considering applications for Youth Activity Funding/Wellbeing for children and young people to a funding panel composed of elected members from each ward, the Community Champion for children and young people, elected members on the cluster partnerships, the Inner East Community Committee Chair and staff from the Communities Team (ENE).
2. The Community Champion for children and young people and elected members on the cluster partnerships to help facilitate access for the Community Youth Engagement Team to primary and secondary schools in the area so they can conduct meaningful engagement with pupils about provision.
3. The Communities Team to work with Breeze to develop an Instagram-compatible platform for young people in Inner East to share their experiences of activities they have taken part in.