

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture)

Date: 23rd February 2012

Subject: Children and Young People Engagement

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The third Scrutiny session on Children and Young Peoples engagement in Culture and Sport will focus on the vital involvement of young people in developing, designing and improving services. This will take as an example a report from Parks & Countryside on consultation with young people and in particular their involvement in developing the Physcapp playground at Temple Newsam.
2. The report also looks at how young people can use Breeze to regularly feedback their thoughts and views. It summaries the findings of the summer survey of young people on their view of how friendly to children the city is. Appendix 2 outlines the 12 priorities identified by Children and Young People
3. Members of scrutiny will have the opportunity to meet young people involved in projects across the city, and hear about their experiences city

Finally in summing up, this report presents a vision for the future of Breeze looks at some of the funding arrangements, sponsorship opportunities and proposed structural arrangements that would enable the development of the Breeze initiative.

Recommendations: To note this report as an example of how young people are engaged in service development, and endorse the vision for the future development of Breeze.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.0.1 The first section of this report outlines engagement by children and young people with parks and green space. In particular it provides a case study of the playground developed recently at Temple Newsam which forms the content of Appendix 1. It also looks at Breeze as a vehicle of communication including the 2011 consultation into Leeds as a Child Friendly City.
- 1.0.2 Finally the report sums up the vision for the future development of Breeze including resources and sponsorship opportunities.

2.0 Main issues

2.1 Consultation on Parks and Green Space / Fixed Play Strategy

- 2.1.1 As part of the development of the Parks and Green Space strategy, a comprehensive residents survey has been conducted on usage of parks and green spaces on 4 occasions commencing in 2004. As part of this process, a survey was sent out to 2,000 young people aged 12-16, with a simplified survey sent to 2,500 aged 5 -11, sampled from the Breeze cardholders database. This was in addition to surveys sent to 30,000 adults from the electoral register based on those people who had consented to their personal data being used for this purpose.
- 2.1.2 Whilst Roundhay Park is the most popular park for young people to visit, people generally choose to visit their local community park. From responses made it is possible to estimate the number of visits made given the percentage who visit and how often that they stated they visit. On that basis in the period of a year there were nearly 10 million visits by resident young people in Leeds.
- 2.1.3 The questionnaire asked residents to state how they travel to the park or open space and 77% indicated that they choose to walk, with the rest getting there either by car, bus or bicycle. The length of visit is also of interest with 47% of young people staying for over 2 hours, and 34% more than 1 hour.
- 2.1.4 The importance of social interaction and playing sports or games is key with 56% visiting to meet friends and 42% to play sports or games. Other reasons to visit include to get some fresh air and go for a walk illustrating the importance to health gained from visiting a park or green space.
- 2.1.5 From general comments made, it was clear that there was a need to develop further facilities for older children, who often congregated at playground designed for younger children. Whilst in general young people felt safe, some issues were identified particularly with regard to intimidation by other youths and therefore the presence of a site based gardener is regarded as important in perceptions of safety.
- 2.1.6 In addition, a survey was sent out to 2,500 children aged 5 – 11 who were sampled from the Breeze cardholders database. From the analysis results, 96% of all respondents visit a park.

- 2.1.7 Again, in general community parks are visited most often and if the data regarding number of visits is combined with the frequency of these visits the results can be extrapolated to represent the total child population Leeds, an equivalent of 3.6 million visits. Over 40% of children went to a park with their parents, with 26% going with siblings and 20% with friends, which indicates that for younger children, visiting the park is often a family activity. When comparing how younger children get to a park, 51% walk there, fewer than compared to older children, although over 14% choose to cycle. The key reason to visit by far by 81% of respondents was to play on the playground, with other reasons to ride a bike or to go for a walk.
- 2.1.8 The data from these surveys, coupled with more general feedback and consultation has informed the development of a fixed play strategy with the following key principles:
- To recognise the importance of play and social interaction and the contribution that parks make
 - To develop and improve play facilities primarily in community parks and not on smaller local green spaces
 - To develop more facilities for older children, such as skate parks, and multi-use games areas
 - To ensure that facilities are clean and well maintained, and the important role that site based gardeners play in contributing to safety
- 2.1.9 There are now 144 playgrounds for younger children, and following consultation and the introduction of the fixed play strategy 23 skate parks and 31 multi-use games areas have been developed more suitable for older children.

2.2 Fixed Play Facilities

- 2.2.1 The approach to consultation has developed in recent years, which has resulted in play facilities now reflecting much more closely the needs of each community. Since 2009 there have been over 30 sites that have either seen new play facilities or major refurbishments.
- 2.2.2 The process of consultation starts by distributing questionnaires to schools, community groups, residents and local ward members, primarily targeted at children and young people. Questionnaires are also added to 'talking point', the Council's online consultation portal. The questionnaires ask respondents if they have visited the site and for what purpose. They also ask what people enjoy doing whilst they are there, and for non-visitors, what would encourage them to visit. Where relevant, visits are also arranged to local schools to meet with classes or predominantly the school council. Questionnaires are also distributed to adults in order that they can contribute and also express views if they feel that the introduction of a play facility would impact on them. This information is used for a design brief focussed around what children and young people would like to do and what they would like to see there.

- 2.2.3 A landscape architect then interprets this design brief and comes up with a design incorporating equipment, landscaping, planting, paths, and seats in line with available budget. This initial design is then presented either to resident or friends groups and ward members, and where possible with local schools so that refinements can be made again in line with available budget.
- 2.2.4 This approach has resulted in many changes to what might be considered a traditional approach to playground design with often a 'one size fits all' approach. The range and diversity of play spaces developed in recent years reflect more closely the individual needs of each community. There is less emphasis on play areas designed primarily for safety, with a risk based approach now adopted to provide some degree of challenge for children whilst not endangering life.
- 2.2.5 Playgrounds tend to incorporate the needs of children with all abilities e.g. wheelchair accessible roundabouts at Deepdale, and the play panels for autistic children at Farsley Park. Where climbing frames are incorporated into the design they have accessible ramps and ladders for children with mobility issues. Where possible, back rests are included on roundabouts, 'springies' and seesaws for toddlers and children who require support. Playgrounds also now often incorporate natural elements into the design such as landscape features, rocks, logs, mounds and trees, examples of which recently are the Bumps, Middleton Park and Deepdale.
- 2.2.6 At Cross Flatts Park and Sandford Road play area, Kirkstall there are examples of 'green gym' equipment that has been incorporated which can allow adults who often accompany children to a play area to use equipment. There are examples at Cragside and Harehills Park where equipment has been installed primarily for toddlers, with larger items of equipment incorporated to allow older children (often siblings) to interact at a suitable distance apart. Following consultation and where relevant, play areas are not necessarily fenced with examples at Church Street, Cross Flatts Park, Harehills Park and Middleton Park. This emphasises that the environment surrounding a play area can be incorporated into the surrounding park which often may well be fenced anyway.
- 2.2.7 In order to give a more detailed perspective on the approach taken to consultation and engagement and the impact that this has on final design, a case study considering the use of the play area recently developed at Temple Newsam is attached as Appendix 1.

3.0 Breeze communications – a two way process

- 3.1 To allow young people to have a voice, and influence the way the city is shaped Breeze actively encourages a two way communication process. This is carried out through formal consultation, at events, online and in focus groups The past two years Breeze has actively participated in consultation on the Comprehensive Spending Review, Vision for Leeds 2030, Kirkgate Market, Child Friendly Cities, and around service design and delivery for Breeze events and communications. Informal feedback is also encouraged through online communications such as the Breeze website and social media.

4.0 Child Friendly City

- 4.1.1 In April 2011 the Child Friendly City programme was initiated in Leeds. The CFC programme is a UNICEF initiative based on the UNCRC underpinned by the voice and influence of CYP. We are working closely with UNICEF and other local authorities on developing our approach.
- 4.1.2 To get started we created 5 working groups for the CFC these are
- 4.1.3 Play and culture; voice and influence; urban sustainable environment; safety and rights and responsibilities.
- 4.1.4 Through these groups we collated all previous consultations carried out in the past 2 years with children and young people relevant to the CFC. This included 37 consultations with children and young people and the views of over 14,100 children and young people.
- 4.1.5 This information provided a number of recurring issues relevant to children and young people in the city. We worked with the youth council to run fun consultation activities over the summer 2011 at Breeze on Tour as well as other venues.. As a result 2000 CYP prioritised the issues they felt were most important to them. These can be found in Appendix 2.

5.0 Our vision for Breeze....

- The Breeze concept has huge potential, but it is not exploited fully. It should be the primary means by which universal services are designed, developed and implemented. The way in which young people engage in services provided by the council and its partners can be greatly enhanced if a greater focus and weight of importance can be given to Breeze as the Council moves to a "Child Friendly City".
- The Breeze web site, card and events have been developed through a range of external funding streams and the Councils Capital scheme, and this represents a considerable investment. With the infrastructure in place we now need a commitment to core funding to secure a base from which to develop sponsorship, traded services and other external funding opportunities.

5.1 Scope

- 5.1.1 Breeze is the umbrella brand for all out of school activity for young people in the City.
- 5.1.2 Regular year round Breeze branded provision which delivers the universal offer in localities will promote young people's use of council facilities
- 5.1.3 Breeze branded activity will become known for being high quality by parents and young people
- 5.1.4 All activities delivered by the council and the voluntary sector will be publicised through the Breeze web site with printed brochures reflecting local provision being

available in schools (Through the Breeze web site information on activities can be centrally collated and then downloaded for print by partners to suit localities, saving time and staff hours across the city.)

- 5.1.5 Young people of all abilities will be able to follow clear 'activity pathways' to develop their skills and talent to their maximum potential
- 5.1.6 Informal education opportunities will continue to be developed through Breeze .which offer the full and rich resources of the city's statutory and voluntary cultural and sporting sectors to support, enthuse and inspire those young people who are failing in formal education.
- 5.1.7 Working with Igen and other partners, volunteering opportunities will be developed and brokered enabling young people to become involved in their communities.
- 5.1.8 Young people will be encouraged to shape and lead on activities that they feel passionate about.

5.2 Organisation

- 5.2.1 The following outlines some of the steps that will help this potential to be realised:
- 5.2.2 The Establishment of a Breeze team – Breeze is delivered by various sections across City Development and Children's Services as part of their generic service delivery. It is cost effective and unique to Leeds. The current restructure within Children's services opens up an opportunity to align and refocus services. A central Breeze team would drive the vision further whilst linking back into the distinct services, maximising resources and generating future funding through trading services, securing sponsorship and external funding.
- 5.2.3 Participation will be recorded and mapped through Breezecard, where possible
- 5.2.4 Breezecard data will be analysed to inform commissioning.
- 5.2.5 Better joint planning will ensure value for money.
- 5.2.6 Face to face practitioners working with the most vulnerable children and young people in Leeds will have the information they need to encourage participation

5.3 Finance

- 5.3.1 To continue maintenance, development and marketing, Breezeleeds.org needs a commitment to future core funding.
- 5.3.2 Breeze events also need secure funding and will only be sustainable by using a combination of core funding, traded services and sponsorship.
- 5.3.3 Through the pooling of Wellbeing and extended services funds, joint commissioning of activities in the areas would ensure value for money. This should also include financial provision for publicising positive activities in printed brochures distributed by schools promoting activities.

5.4 Sponsorship Potential

5.4.1 We have produced a Sponsorship document and devised a 'Breeze Buddies' scheme to attract sponsors. Discussions have taken place with the Leeds Chamber of Commerce which is guiding our approach and appendix 3 and 4 have been produced with the help of that guidance and discussion with other sections in the council. So far this has included the following suggestions:

- That we emphasise the development of employability skills through access to positive activities.
- That we should seek member support in approaching potential sponsors.
- That we seek the support of the Chief Executive of LCC as part of a corporate approach to potential sponsors.
- The Chamber of Commerce will broker meetings with appropriate businesses in Leeds on our behalf.
- We are more likely to receive in kind support than hard cash. We have to find ways to turn this to our advantage eg: we are currently negotiating with Sky for them to develop a Breeze application for mobile phones which could result in a saving of costs in Breeze card production.

5.4.2 Small Breeze events can be delivered at full cost recovery.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 That the report is noted

6.2 That Scrutiny Board consider and support the proposed vision.