

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Tuesday 22nd November 2005

at 2.00 pm

in Committee Room B

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Cambridge, Coward, Fleet, Griffin, Hargreaves, Lauderdale, London, Preece, Richardson, Shaw and Wistow

Co-opted Members: Elizabeth Barraclough, Janet Fawcett, David Relton and Reverend Jesse Smith

Resident Representatives: Muriel Boreland, Ian Campbell and Joan Smith

Education Advisor: Rob Lowe

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 30th August 2005 and 25th October 2005 (attached)

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Involving Young People Scrutiny Enquiry:-
- (a) Covering Report - *Scrutiny Support Officer*
 - (b) Report of the Consultation Exercise: Involvement of Young People in Decision Making in Hartlepool - *Representatives from the Community Network*

5. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

30th August 2005

Present:

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors: Fleet, Griffin, London, Preece and
Co-opted Members Elizabeth Barraclough and David Relton.

Councillor J Cambridge was in attendance as sub for
Councillor Lilley.

Resident Reps Ian Campbell and Joan Smith were also in
attendance.

Officers: John Collings, Assistant Director of Children's Services
(Performance and Achievement)
Maggie Heaps, Adult Education Co-ordinator
Sue Ellis, Senior Learning Advisor (Learning & Skills Council)
Sajda Banaras, Scrutiny Support Officer
Pat Watson, Democratic Services Officer

11. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Hargreaves and Lilley.

12. Declarations of interest by members

None

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd August 2005 were confirmed.

14. Adult Learning – Covering Report *(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

The Scrutiny Support Officer presented a report giving a brief overview and reminding Members of the Forum's comments in relation to Adult Learning, from the previous municipal year.

Members were also reminded that since the Forum had first looked at this matter the remit of the Forum had changed to Children's Services. However, when the Forum had determined its work programme on 5th July it had been agreed that this item should remain with this Forum for the time being because of the work carried out in the previous municipal year. The issues agreed at the Forum meeting on 21st April 2005 were detailed in the report together with a list of the reports to be presented at this meeting.

The Scrutiny Support Officer requested that following the presentation of the reports Members should give consideration to the key issues raised and determine their response to the Portfolio Holder on the basis of the evidence received at this meeting.

Decision

Members noted the report and agreed the course of action as requested.

15. Re-inspection of the Adult Education Service *(Adult Education Co-ordinator (HBC))*

The Adult Education Co-ordinator (HBC) presented a report giving detailed background information and history in relation to the Inspection and Re-Inspection of the Adult Education Service. An extract from the Re-Inspection Report was circulated with the papers and Members were advised that a more detailed version was available on request.

The report also detailed the strengths and weaknesses identified during the re-inspection and tables were included indicating the scores on first inspection and second inspection in relation to teaching grades. A second table showed the comparisons in overall grades for the two inspections.

The Forum was advised that as all areas of the service were now deemed to be satisfactory or better the service would not be re-inspected until the next cycle of inspections which was likely to be in approximately three years. Furthermore, the satisfactory nature of the inspection would ensure that the Learning and Skills Council would continue to fund the Adult Education Service to provide learning opportunities.

A short power-point presentation provided recent information relating to the re-inspection and gave a pictorial representation of how staff had felt through the three stages of the inspection.

Decision

Members noted the report and presentation and commented that there appeared to have been a dramatic improvement in a short space of time. Not wishing to take anything away from the work undertaken by staff, Members commented that the first inspection had possibly been too severe.

16. Future Funding of Adult Education (*Adult Education Co-ordinator (HBC)*)

The Forum was presented with a report outlining background information and the history in relation to past funding and information relating to future funding.

Members were advised that all learning activities funded through ACL would be categorised in 1 of 6 types. These 6 types and their definitions were shown in an appendix. Under the new proposals the categories could be funded at different levels. It was thought that the first 4 categories would be funded by a similar formula to the FE strand. The other 2 categories would need to be funded under a 'guarantee' of funding. The figure for the guarantee of funding would be dis-aggregated nationally and would be based on the adult population of the authority. It may also include allowances for local disadvantage.

Members also noted that, in order to determine the level of provision which would need to be covered by the 'guarantee' of funding, each LEA had been asked, in Autumn 2004, to carry out a segmentation exercise to determine how much of its provision fell into each of the 6 categories. The results for Hartlepool were shown in a second appendix to the report. The analysis showed that in academic year 2003/04, 32% of course hours had been delivered in categories 5 and 6, with 28% of the total expenditure. A similar exercise was being carried out by the service for the academic year 2004/05, but the final figures were not available.

The report indicated that at present it was difficult to predict the effect of any future funding. It was believed that the service was in line with national averages for the percentage of provision to be covered by the ACL guarantee

Decision

The report was noted.

17. Reforming the Funding and Planning Arrangements for First Steps and Personal and Community Development Learning for Adults *(Senior Learning Advisor (LSC))*

The Senior Learning Advisor from The Learning and Skills Council presented a report to the Forum in relation to the above. Detailed background information was provided

Members were advised that in January 2004 the LSC had commissioned NIACE to develop a concise series of descriptors, which would identify the distinctive strands within adult learning provision for LSC planning and funding purposes, and which would enable the identification of provision that would be subject to the safeguard in the Skills Strategy for wider lifelong learning opportunities. The NIACE had completed the work by June 2004 and the product was a set of six descriptors which were described in the report under the following headings:

- First Steps
- Skills for Life, and Embedded Basic Skills
- Skills for Work
- Learning for Personal Development and Well Being
- Learning for Active Citizenship and / Community Development
- Skills for Independent Living

NIACE had recommended that the safeguard should apply to two strands of this framework: Learning for Personal Development and Well Being and Learning for Active Citizenship and/or Community Development, as the other four were all legitimate calls on the LSC main funding system.

Members were advised that the LSC HAD published a consultation paper on the future funding of adult learning in September 2004 and the main proposals in the document were:

- To establish a safeguard for learning for personal and community development;
- To redistribute the funding available for the safeguard, based on adult population, disadvantage and area costs, to ensure a more equitable availability of provision of this kind; and
- To fund first steps learning through the existing FE funding methodology.

In the paper, An LSC Consultation on Reforming the Funding and Planning Arrangements for First Steps and Personal and Community Development Learning, the LSC proposed a distinction between First Steps Learning and Learning for Personal and Community Development. The paper had proposed that First Steps Learning should be funded as mainstream FE provision, receiving a high level of public subsidy in recognition of the potential of such provision for contributing to the achievement of the Skills Strategy

Level 2 targets. It also proposed that Learning for Personal and Community Development should receive a lower level of public subsidy, with LSC funding operating more as a contribution towards the costs of making such provision, and with the expectation that locally determined fees would form a significant element in the provider's overall funding equation. Consultation on the funding paper closed in late December 2004.

The Key Issues arising from the Consultation were described in the report under the following headings:

Fees
Impact on Vulnerable Learners
Family Learning
Tracking Progression Effectively
Developing a Credit Framework

The Next Steps and Timetable were described, as follows:

August/September 2005:

- Share the NIACE report with local LSC colleagues and providers;
- Agree the size of the safeguard budget. Produce indicative shadow regional allocations for safeguard activity funding and obtain agreement to the redistribution process;
- Establish framework/protocol for implementing redistribution, whilst maintaining quality of provision, and minimising destabilisation for providers; and
- Incorporate the reforms within the Agenda for Change* proposals.

September/October 2005:

- On the basis of indicative shadow regional allocations, nominated regional colleagues develop an outline as to how provision will be shaped to take account of proposed increases/reductions.

November 2005:

- Local LSC to begin discussions with providers regarding safeguarded provision and indicative shadow allocations;
- Grant letter confirms LSC funds for 2006/07 and LSC Annual Statement of Priorities published.

January 2006:

- Initial allocation of funds to regions;
- Regional assessment of priorities for distribution of funding; and

- Annual review of colleges and providers' development plans.
- * Agenda for Change Prospectus available from 5 August 2005 at www.lsc.gov.uk

February 2006:

- Calculation of indicative allocations. Indicative allocations for 2006/07 notified to all providers, together with issues to be addressed in development plans.

March 2006:

- Discussion of indicative allocations and final adjustments.

April 2006:

- Funding allocations for 2006/07 confirmed to providers.

Members were updated on the Funding Position of Hartlepool Adult Education Services, as follows:

a. The History

All Local Authorities were required to produce Revenue Outturn data for 1999/2000, which confirmed how much was spent on Adult and Community Learning activity at that time and this was reflected in future ACL budgets. This was pre-LSC, however the amounts agreed at that time had continued to be honoured by the LSC up to 2005/2006. It was now felt that this was not the most equitable way to distribute this funding, hence the current reforms.

b. The Budgets 2005/2006

The following budgets had been agreed for 2005/2006.

ACL Budgets

Main ACL Allocation	£449,510
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	£101,659
Family Learning	£ 37,769
Family Literacy Language and Numeracy	£ 77,687
Total	£666,625

Budgets had been maintained at the same rate as 2004/2005, however there had been no increase for inflation.

Further Education Budget	£310,590
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This includes an increase of 1.5% on the FE budget for 2004/2005.

Additional Budgets

Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Capital	£ 32,865
Disability Discrimination Act Capital	£ 55,451
ESF Project Re-engaging Learners	£100,000
ESF Project Skills for Life	£ 60,000

c. The Future Funding of Hartlepool Adult Education Services

The report indicated that it would be unwise to guess at this stage how the Reform of First Steps and Personal and Community Development Learning for Adults would affect the amount of funding given to Hartlepool Adult Education Services. A clearer picture would be available once the National LSC and NIACE had worked together to agree the amount of safeguarded budget and shadow allocations had been distributed to the Local LSCs.

Initial findings suggested that nationally, about two thirds of Local Authority ACL provision would fit with the two descriptors that fall within the safeguard - Learning for Personal Development and Well Being and Learning for Active Citizenship and/or Community Development. An exercise undertaken by Hartlepool Adult Education Service in Autumn 2004 showed that 32% of course hours and 28% of ACL expenditure fits within these two descriptors, considerably lower than the national figures.

The Consultation Paper on the Reform of First Steps and Personal and Community Learning for Adults had suggested that, among other factors, budgets may be based on percentages of adult population. Using the electorate figures from December 2004, Hartlepool accounts for approximately 14% of the adult population of Tees Valley. The Service currently attracts 16% of the FE budget contracted to Local Authorities in the Tees Valley and 15% of the ACL budget. This indicated that Hartlepool Adult Education Service was currently attracting an equitable proportion of funding in comparison to other Local Authority providers in the Tees Valley. What was not yet known was how the factors used to allocate the budgets nationally would affect regional and local budgets.

Members were advised that the Local LSC would be in a better position to comment on allocations to individual providers in early 2006.

Following presentation of the report the following questions/comments arose:

- A Co-opted Member commented that in the past Adult Education fitted with the social, educational and cultural needs of people in the Town but he was now concerned that financial constraints could lead to a lesser provision with the danger that Hartlepool people will suffer.
- A Resident Representative commented that she was concerned about the lack of culture and the lessening of courses for personal development and well-being.
- A Resident Representative asked, "if there is a clash between the LSC and HBC who has priority". The reply was that this would depend on

budgets/delivery. A short answer would be that HBC would have the final say because provision is the statutory responsibility of the Council. Pragmatic solutions are usually found beforehand.

- A Co-opted Member asked if HBC was legally bound to find funds to provide courses. The reply was that fee paying and other sources would usually fund courses that the LSC will not.

The Senior Learning Advisor (LSC) indicated that she would be happy to bring further updates to the appropriate Scrutiny Forum.

Decision

a) That the Portfolio Holder be advised that it is this Forum's view that Adult Education is vital to the Town, especially in community areas in local venues where people can feel comfortable in the learning environment.

b) Members noted the improvements identified on the re-inspection but wished it to be noted that they felt strongly that the service had been judged too critically on first inspection, though not taking away from the achievements. It was felt that the service was in an effective situation to build on what is now in place.

c) That Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee be requested to arrange for Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum to receive future updates from of the Senior Learning Advisor of The Learning and Skills Council.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

THE CHAIRMAN RULED THAT THE FOLLOWING ITEM SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE AS A MATTER OF URGENCY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 100(B)(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 IN ORDER THAT THE COMMITTEE COULD MAKE THE DECISION AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY

19. Commissioning of Health Services

The Scrutiny Support Officer advised that in line with the decision of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum be invited to participate in a Scrutiny Inquiry into – "Commissioning of Health Services" due to be undertaken by the Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum on the 20th September 2005. Members were advised of the dates and times of future meetings and the Chair plus a Member expressed interest in participating in the Scrutiny review.

20. Children's and Young Persons Plan

Resident Representative Ian Campbell advised that he had been requested to be the Community Network representative on consultation re The Children's and Young Persons Plan at the Hartlepool Historic Quay on Wednesday 7th September 2005 and offered to bring any back any relevant information.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

25th October 2005

Present:

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Pam Hargreaves, Frances London, Arthur Preece, Carl Richardson and Gerald Wistow

Co-opted Members:

Rev Jesse Smith, Liz Barraclough and Rob Lowe

Resident Representatives:

Ian Campbell and Joan Smith

Officers:

John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager
Peter Davies, Principal Youth Officer
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Rebecca Redman, Research Assistant (Scrutiny Support)
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also Present:

Keith Bayley, HVDA
Becky Verrall, Community Network Officer, HVDA
Tracy Foster, Community Network Officer, HVDA

21. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Coward, John Lauderdale and resident representative Jan Fawcett.

22. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

23. Confirmation of the minutes held 30th August 2005.

Deferred until next meeting.

24. Involving Young People – Covering Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted a report which outlined the work to date of this Forum in the undertaking of their in-depth inquiry into Involving Young People over the last couple of municipal years, which was put on hold whilst an extensive consultation exercise was undertaken by Hartlepool Community Network. In addition to this, feedback was also requested from the newly formed Participation Network once the Community Network consultation exercise had been completed.

The Scrutiny Manager advised that over the course of the enquiry she was of the understanding that the Forum felt strongly that there was a need for a co-ordinated approach with young people and that as a result of this, the submitted report concentrated on two sets of mechanisms for involving young people as follows:-

- (a) Mechanisms to involve young people in decision-making; and
- (b) Mechanisms to co-ordinate the activities and participation of young people.

The Scrutiny Manager was also pleased to advise that arrangements had been made for this Forum to consider the findings of the consultation exercise carried out by the Hartlepool Community Network together with the work of the newly formed Participation Network during this meeting, therefore the submitted report provided an overview of Members' earlier discussions along with draft recommendations to form the basis on which to frame their discussions and subsequent content of their Draft Final Report, given their enquiry was nearing to completion.

Decision

That the submitted report be referred to during the consideration of agenda items 4.2 and 4.3 during this meeting, in particular the draft/suggested recommendations to form the basis of this Forum's Draft Final Report to be considered at the next meeting of this Forum on 22 November 2005.

25. Youth Consultation – Community Network Report (*Community Network Officer*)

A joint presentation was delivered to the Forum by two representatives from the HVDA. The presentation included information on how the Citizenship Programme was being developed; detailed the key aims of the programme; and funding and delivery arrangements

The Community Network Officers reported that around 20 young people from across Hartlepool had taken part in the initiative that aimed to raise awareness of how the political process and democracy worked. The students had learned about governance at a national and local level including meeting with

the Hartlepool Partnership and visits to London to meet Hartlepool MP Iain Wright and the UK Office of the European Parliament.

It was hoped that the Citizenship Programme would encourage young people to take on the role of youth representation and identify themselves as youth leaders. This would in turn, help them feel more confident to come forward and get their voices heard on issues important to them.

A discussion followed where the following points were raised.

How were the young people chosen to participate in this initiative? – The Community Network Officers indicated that this was advertised in colleges and schools, although some of the schools had proven difficult to gain access to. There were concerns raised about this as Members felt this would be where some of the most valuable contributions could be gained. Although it was acknowledged that Schools Councils' had a part to play with regard to consultation with young people, it was agreed that better access to the people undertaking the consultation would be beneficial. A member of the Forum indicated that a good point of contact may be through the chair of the school governors. As a result of this, Members felt it was appropriate to raise their concerns in terms of access to school children for future consultation exercises to the Authority's Director of Children's Services.

How was it ensured that the young people who participated were from the diverse community? – The Community Network Officers acknowledged that it was not as diverse as they would have hoped, although half the children who participated came from Café 177.

What stakeholders had taken part in the consultation event? – The Community Network Officers indicated that the event had included 25 representatives from the voluntary sector, Children's Services Department and people working with young people.

When would the report on good practice and development in relationship to development be available? – It was indicated that draft report would be presented to the next meeting of this Forum and with the final report submitted to the Hartlepool Partnership in December.

Members agreed that this consultation would prove very useful and could have a long term impact on the youth of the town. Members felt that the possibility of having young people representatives on Council meetings or ensuring their views were fed into the meetings would be beneficial, in particular to Neighbourhood Forums. The Community Network Officers indicated that there was a course available to post-16 year olds aimed at equipping young people with the skills required to take part in decision-making. It was reported that the Corporate Parent Forum already had young representatives attending and contributing and this had proved extremely useful.

Decision

That the thanks of this Forum be conveyed to the representatives of the HVDA in the sharing of their findings from the consultation exercise.

That the on-going work being undertaken by Hartlepool Community Network be supported.

That the Authority's Director of Children's Services be informed of the operational problems encountered by HVDA in reaching young people within the school environment for this consultation exercise in particular the need to address access for future consultation exercises.

That arrangements be made to enable the detailed consultation findings report to be submitted to the next meeting of this Forum on 22 November 2005 by the representatives of HVDA should the governance arrangements/timescales allow.

26. Participation Network – Involving Young People (*Children's Fund Manager*)

The Children's Fund Manager delivered a presentation which outlined the development of the Hartlepool Participation Network (HPN); the development of a Participation Strategy for the Children's Services Department; the membership of the HPN along with the principles to which it would operate;; and to ensure that children and young people participate in consultation and that the right people were consulted at the right time.

The Children's Fund Manager had been commissioned by the Director of Children's Services to develop a Participation Strategy for the department in consultation with children and young people. It was suggested that there was potential for the development of a borough-wide Participation Strategy which would significantly strengthen children and young people's contribution to the development of the town.

The presentation highlighted the challenges faced with involving children and young people in consultation whilst listing some of the positive outcomes already achieved.

It was noted that the two most recent Neighbourhood Action Plans had included consultation with young people. It was also noted that Hartlepool now had a representative on the United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP). Although it was acknowledged that some young people felt nervous about giving their views, it was hoped that the development of this strategy would enable them to feel less hesitant about participating.

A discussion followed where the following points were raised.

How was Hartlepool's UKYP representative chosen? – The Children's Fund Manager indicated that work had been on-going for some time to progress this which culminated in 20 young people taking part in a residential trip and electing a representative. This tenure had been agreed at 1 year with the next election due to take place in February 2006. Members expressed concern that the young people who took part in the election were not necessary representative of the youth of the town. The Children's Fund Manager advised that this was Hartlepool's first representative on the UKYP and it was hoped that as young people were becoming more aware of this, interest would increase.

Who was responsible for ensuring that young people did participate and that the citizenship strategy was effective? – The Children's Fund Manager indicated that a Children and Young Person's Plan was being developed and would be submitted to the responsible Portfolio Holder by the Director of Children's Services (DCS). The DCS would have the responsibility to ensure that the Plan was co-ordinated and operational. This would include contributions with partner agencies and organisations. The Scrutiny Manager added that this Plan would be considered by this Scrutiny Forum's as part of its work programme early in the New Year.

Hard to reach groups? – Members were concerned that some of the youths in hard to reach groups were not being consulted. The Community Network Officers acknowledged this and felt that this group of young people were more likely to visit Café 177 and be able to participate from there.

Members agreed that this was a good starting point, however, it must be ensured that feedback was given to all who participated.

Decision

- That based on the evidence received that there is clearly a need for informal and formal mechanisms of involving young people in decision-making;
- That the Forum supported the development of a town-wide Participation Strategy;
- That a similar framework to that of Figure 1 as outlined within the Scrutiny Support Officer's covering report be developed, assuming it remains valid in order that young people can be engaged in the democratic process;
- That consideration be given to linking School Councils and Neighbourhood Forums in the proposed framework for engaging young people in the democratic process; and
- That Members of this Council should be 'champions' for the voices of young people in the democratic process.

27. **Adult Learning – Draft Final Report** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted the Draft Final Report of this Forum following their on-going enquiry into the Authority's Adult Learning Service, in response to the service's poor inspection results reported in March 2004.

During this inquiry the Forum:

- Explored the funding criteria for Adult Education Service;
- Discussed the current and future funding policies with the Learning and Skills Council; and
- Considered the importance of the contribution of Adult Education to the Authority's social inclusion objectives.

The Draft Final Report stated that the Adult Education Service was re-inspected in May 2005 and at a meeting of this Forum of 30th August 2005, further reports were considered by Members which included details on the re-inspection, future funding and arrangements for First Steps and Person and Community Learning for Adults.

At that meeting, Members reached the following recommendations about Adult Learning:

- Members noted the 'Re-inspection of the Adult Education Service' report and presentation and commented that there appeared to have been a dramatic improvement in a short space of time. Without wishing to take anything away from the work undertaken by staff, Members commented that the first inspection had possibly been too severe;
- That the Adult Services and Public Health Portfolio Holder be advised that it is this Forum's view that Adult Education is vital to the Town, especially in community areas and in local venues where people can feel comfortable in the learning environment; and
- That Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee be requested to arrange for Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum to receive future updates from of the Senior Learning Advisor of The Learning and Skills Council.

Decision

Members agreed the content of the submitted Draft Final Report which would then be considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at its meeting on 25 November 2005 and the Adult Services and Public Health Portfolio Holder thereafter.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

22 November 2005



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE – COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum with an overview of the evidence being provided to the Forum at this meeting, with a view to making provisional recommendations to go forward to the next meeting of this Forum, where the Draft Final Report of this inquiry is due to be discussed.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 At the last meeting of this Forum on 25 October 2005, an overview of the findings from the Community Network's consultation exercise with young people was provided.

2.2 During this meeting, further information is to be shared with this Forum with regard to a more detailed analysis/findings of the consultation exercise commissioned by the Community Network.

2.3 As such, it is hoped that this report will assist Members of this Forum in framing their discussions, with a view to reaching some conclusions and subsequent recommendations to be detailed within their Draft Final Report, for consideration at the next meeting of this Forum on 20 December 2005.

2.3 Finally, this report concentrates on two sets of mechanisms for involving young people. These are:

- Mechanisms to involve young people in decision-making; and
- Mechanisms to co-ordinate the activities and participation of young people.

3. COMMUNITY NETWORK CONSULTATION

- 3.1 During the early stages of the scrutiny inquiry Members focused on the means and mechanisms by which young people could become involved in decisions, and expressed unanimous support for the principle of involving young people. During these meetings Members explored numerous areas of good practice, considered a snapshot of local involvement and heard evidence from officers and other interested organisations who are involved with young people at a local level. This included Hartlepool Community Network who were in the process of developing a consultation programme to ascertain whether there is the demand for youth participation and what form this may take.
- 3.2 During the early stages of the Involving Young People Inquiry the (then) Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum identified consultation with young people as a requirement of the scrutiny inquiry. At that time a representative of the Community Network indicated that it had recently commissioned a comprehensive consultation exercise into the views of young people aged 16 and over, about the demand and form of youth participation, and that they would be willing to feedback their results to the Forum. The Forum agreed that the results of the consultation exercise should be incorporated into its inquiry.

Matters Arising

- 3.3 The matters arising from the Community Network report can be divided into two sections:
1. the findings of the Forum in relation to recommending a mechanism to involve young people, that were put on hold on the basis of the Community Network completing its consultation; and
 2. more general comments of the Forum in relation to issues arising from the Community Network progress report presented to the Forum on 18 November 2004.

1) Mechanisms

- 3.3 In relation to the first set of matters arising the minutes of the Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum on 13 April 2003 show that:

The Community Network Officer confirmed that the consultation process, involving partners and groups of young people, would take approximately six months to complete.

Consequently:

Members of the Scrutiny Forum decided that at present the inquiry should be put on hold and recommendations to Council would not be submitted until the young people and the organisations sponsoring them had completed their consultation process.

3.4 Nevertheless, during the early stages of the inquiry Members made the following comments with regard to the formation of a Youth Council:

- Bringing young people together was logical.
- If it was set up as a consultative committee then a purpose would be achieved.
- There was also a danger, if not carefully managed, of attracting only intelligent and articulate young people, therefore failing to reach those who needed to be empowered i.e. difficult to reach youths from difficult backgrounds.
- Age range – a variety of age ranges for a youth assembly/council were discussed during the inquiry with the overall spectrum encompassing 11-25 year olds. Some Members felt that if it was extended to 25 years there was a danger of the younger members being dominated or feeling overwrought.
- It must be meaningful and the voice of the young people must carry equal weight to the voice of adults.
- A model should be adopted or devised that best suits Hartlepool.
- Consultation was very important in order to highlight issues and decide upon a way forward.

Members may want to consider whether there are any recommendations they would like to make on the basis of these comments, and in the context of the Community Network presentation.

For example:

- **What mechanisms (if any) do Members favour at this stage for involving young people in decision-making i.e. formal mechanisms such as youth councils or less formal mechanisms?**
- **What influence/powers are the young people the Council is seeking to involve be granted, if any?**
- **How would any mechanism proposed by the Forum relate to the existing school councils?**

2) More general comments

3.5 On the 18 November 2004 the Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum was provided with a Progress Report and Action Plan from the Independent Consultant commissioned by the Hartlepool Community Network. The

Forum was provided with an outline of the action to date, current partners and future potential partners.

- 3.6 The aims of the project at this stage were outlined as follows;
- To develop Citizenship within the Borough of Hartlepool through the development of a Youth Network.
 - To promote, engage and progress young people's representative roles within the LSP and Local Authority frameworks and link with the Youth Network.
 - To support and encourages staff to evidence their understanding of Citizenship and Citizenship activities through a jointly developed format.
- 3.7 To achieve these aims the Community Network aimed to ensure young people were proactively involved throughout the process, and involve stakeholders/partner organisations to enhance the links and inclusion of young people regarding the planning and development of services and activities.
- 3.8 Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum made the following comments during the subsequent discussions of the presentation:
- a) Whilst the work carried out by the Community Network was welcomed by the Forum. The view amongst Members was that work should also be targeted at a much younger age range than 16 and over. Consequently, the Forum agreed to pursue its own consultation process with younger groups.
 - b) Members of the Forum regarded the work that was being carried out by the Community Network as an important development towards mapping all schemes and services available for young people. The work being carried out represented the beginning of a process to set a holistic framework to link/join together schemes and services for young people.
 - c) A Member commented that the Council needs a *Citizenship Policy* for all age groups, and that the work being carried out by the Community Network could usefully feed into this. ***A co-ordinated approach to involving young people based on citizenship is what we should be striving for. Furthermore, representatives of each of the Council's departments should be involved in the development of a council-wide strategy, and seek the involvement of the LSP.***
- 3.9 At today's meeting the Community Network will present a report based on the findings of the consultation exercise that they have carried out. Consequently:

- ***The Forum may want to consider the extent to which it accepts the findings/recommendations of the Community Network, and how this can be incorporated into the findings of the Involving Young People Inquiry, particularly in relation to the comments above.***

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended:-

- (a) That Members note the content of this report and use it to inform discussions around item 4.1(b) on the agenda; and
- (b) That Members may wish to re-consider the draft/suggested recommendations and action points highlighted throughout this report (which were initially discussed at the last meeting of this Forum), based on the further information provided by the Community Network during this meeting.

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DRAFT

The Involvement of Young People in Decision Making in Hartlepool

**Commissioned
by
Hartlepool Community Network**

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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform the Community Network and partner agencies about the most appropriate strategies for engaging with young people in Hartlepool in the consultative process. The report draws on a range of work undertaken by the Hartlepool Community Network, around the issues of consultation with young people and information collected from two recent successful consultation events, from which a range of recommendations arise.

What was apparent through the research was that young people are keen to be involved in and are happy to be engaged with, participation and consultation in Hartlepool. The term 'difficult to reach' is often used with young people, whereas the reality is that what is required is tailor made approaches to the client group.

The findings in this report indicate clearly that the young people of Hartlepool have a willingness and intention to actively engage in participation. There are good examples in Hartlepool of listening to young people and of talking and effectively communicating with young people. However, there does need to be some real change in terms of feed-back to young people.

Not all young people have the same interests and aspirations. Young people differ by age, by neighbourhood, by academic or vocational aspirations. There are young people in employment, young people in education and training; finally there are young people not in education, employment and training (NEET). Not all young people are the same, however they share the common experience that they are at the margins of decision-making.

Recommendations

1. The creation of an overarching youth forum/council where young people play an integral role in the overall direction of the process. Such a body should have an 'arms length' relationship with major service providers, if it is perceived to have a degree of independence.
2. Consideration should be given to how a network for schools councils feed into an overarching youth forum/council.
3. Elected representatives on partnerships should have defined lines of accountability and role.
4. Hartlepool Community Network to continue to support the current young people representatives involved with the Local Strategic Partnership.
5. That the election process for representation on Strategic Partnerships should involve the widest possible number of young people through the active involvement of all relevant agencies and fora e.g through the Participation Workers Network.

6. Hartlepool Community Network and partner agencies should use good practice as recommended in this report when engaging with young people.
7. Hartlepool Community Network and other agencies need to ensure that there is a two-way dialogue with young people who become involved with consultation/participation/engagement.
8. The importance of feedback cannot be overstated, without proper feedback there can be further alienation from decision-making.
9. Where possible the need to fast-track decision-making and consequent feedback to young people must be considered.
10. To establish a database of consultation to avoid duplication of effort.
11. A web based consultation system, set up with links to youth projects, schools and colleges in the Borough could play an important role in providing opportunities for feedback about strategic decision making. This could include a database, which outlines the consultation events and outcomes carried out within the Borough.
12. Examine the use and adaptation of the Post 16 Citizenship Programme Course, instigated by the Community Network as a training programme for those who sit on partnerships. Basic awareness raising and induction may also necessary.
13. Consider resourcing initiatives such as Hype, a youth magazine owned, managed and written by young people, which can act as a conduit for young people's views and issues.
14. The development of a Participation Strategy created and owned by all partner agencies and young people.
15. The positive role played by the Youth Participation Workers Network in providing a focus for professionals entrusted in youth participation needs to continue.
16. The need for consultation to be targeted at specific age ranges.
17. Co-ordination of funding opportunities between agencies work with young people.
18. To make information of available resources available to those who undertake consultation work.

2. Introduction and Background

Children and young people in Hartlepool make up 26% of Hartlepool's total population, with a breakdown being as follows:

- Under 5's – 5,301
- 5 years to 15 years – 13,801
- 16 years to 24 -10,208

A total of 29,310 children and young people out of total population of 90,161. The purpose of highlighting such statistics at the beginning of this report is to show the significant number of children and young people in Hartlepool. It demonstrates the importance of responding effectively to the needs and aspirations of children and young people. This report focuses on young people, there is no exact distinction between the two groups; but one definition would be that young people refers to those of secondary education age and upwards, up to the age of 25.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Community Network and partner agencies about the most appropriate strategies for engaging with young people in Hartlepool in the consultative process. The report investigates the opportunities for engaging young people in democratic decision making processes and how to encourage enhanced engagement in the future.

Although there has been consultation in Hartlepool in the past, there has been no clear agreed format for the process of consultation with young people at a strategic level. To address this, the Community Network was keen to ensure they find out how young people want to be consulted with and what factors could encourage their involvement in decision making, currently and for the future. The Community Network wanted a report, which would outline a series of recommendations, which would lead towards a more strategic approach to youth participation and consultation and the use of 'good practice' when carrying out such work.

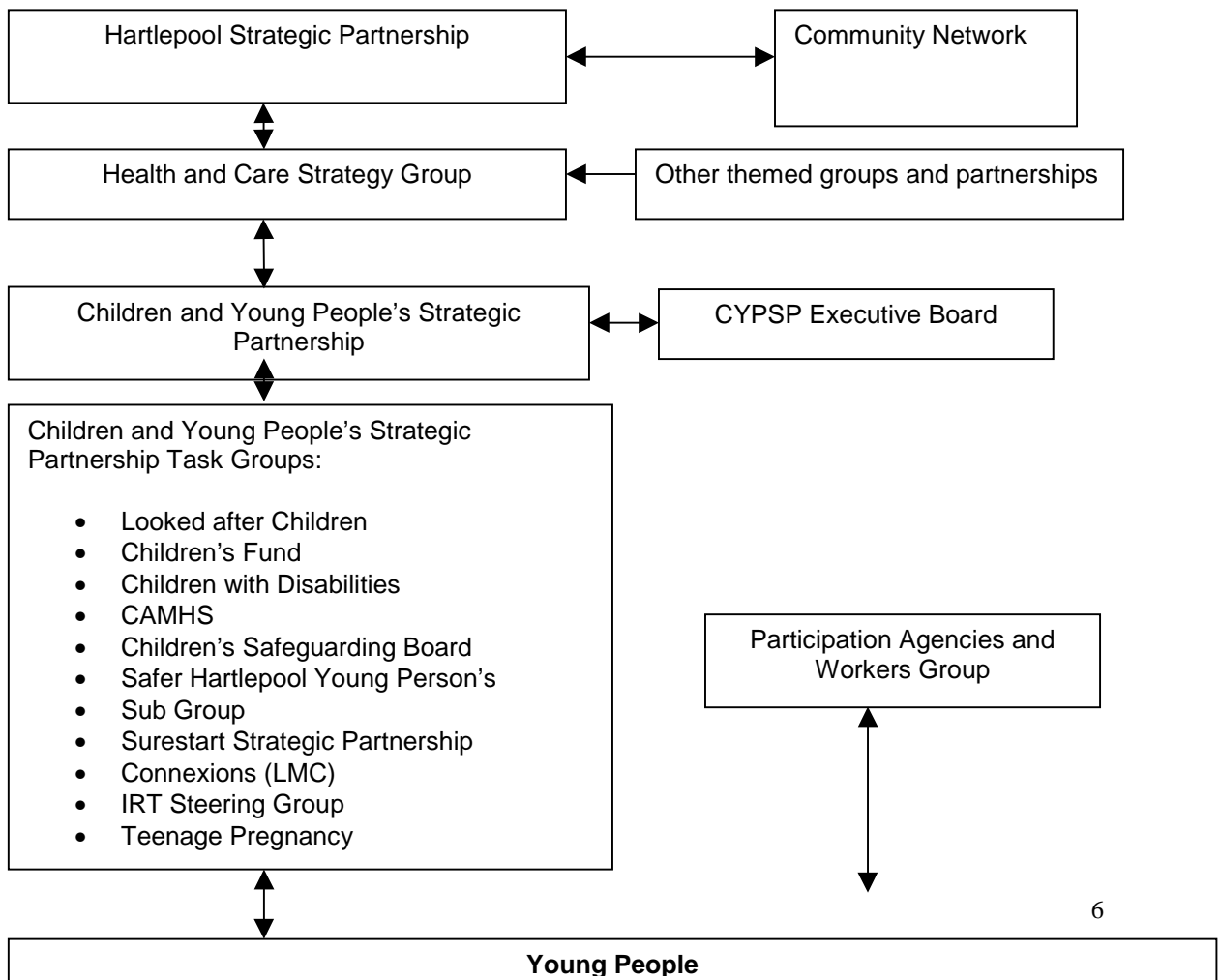
The Community Network was also anxious to be informed by the 'front line', Youth Participation Workers and those agencies and organisations who are the 'experts in the field'. The Community Network wanted to gain the service providers perspective on youth participation and consultation and be advised by those who have a background in successful engagement strategies with young people. In Hartlepool there is an active Participation Workers Group, whose aims are:

- a) To promote an increased understanding of 'participation' work throughout the town by providing clear definitions and working examples of participation work.
- b) To generate a set of principles for good practice in 'involving young people'.

- c) To operate these principles acting as role models for other parties and to disseminate these principles as widely as possible using a range of methods.
- d) To support participation work across Hartlepool by jointly organising and delivering training, development and experiential learning opportunities around participation methods and skills both for young people and staff supporting young people's participation.

As well as national, regional and local planning regarding working with young people, which has stemmed from the Government's strategic document 'Every Child Matters' (November 2004), Hartlepool has a number of examples of effective engagement and participation with young people, in its direct service provision. However, it is only latterly, as a result of documents such as 'Every Child Matters', that agencies in Hartlepool are now looking at youth engagement/consultation and the decision making process, in a more strategic and structured way.

The main role of the Community Network is to represent the communities of Hartlepool as a whole, to the Hartlepool Local Strategic Partnership. The aim is to enable them as a network, to represent a wider range of community interests and wishes. From its onset the Community Network recognised that Hartlepool is not one homogeneous community, but is comprised of a range of communities of interest, young people being one such defined group. The diagram below attempts to show some current relationships between partner agencies which seek the views of young people. However the structure is currently under review by the Hartlepool Partnership.



3. Methodology

The methodology for the collection of data for this report has centred on direct facilitated consultation with two groups – young people and Stakeholders (i.e. agencies and organisations who are working directly with young people around consultation and participation). The report also incorporates previous consultation work undertaken with young people by the Community Network.

3.1 The Community Network's Involvement With Young People

This was initiated with the election of two Representatives to the Hartlepool Partnership during 2002, to represent 11-17 and 18-25 year olds. The 11-17 Representative was elected through the mechanism of schools and youth clubs and the 18-25 through the voluntary/community sector to encourage the widest spectrum of views. A wider youth group was developed to support the two representatives and undertake consultation and engagement around particular issues highlighted by the Partnership, or raised by young people involved with the group. The reference group for young people was named **fc4u** (Future Crew For Youth). This group undertook some wide-ranging consultation with young people.

3.2 Young Peoples Event: 'What Ever You Want'

This consultation event was structured as an event, offered at no cost to young people, which involved opportunities for activities and discussion. Taking place in an appropriate venue, Café 177, the activities were selected to engage young people – art, computers, decks, and video. Within these activities Participation Workers were able to structure discussion relating to the themes of 'Every Child Matters' and the Local Strategic Partnership. Originally the target number of participants for this event was 100; there were 73 young people at the event, aged between 13 - 23yrs, from all areas in Hartlepool.

3.3 Stakeholder Event

The Stakeholder event involved a morning of discussion with agencies and organisation carrying out consultation and participation with young people. In total, 10 agencies from all over Hartlepool attended. The agencies represented young people aged 7 years and upward with no agency being there representing under 7's (see Appendix 1 for list of agencies participating).

The structure of this consultation involved agencies and organisations performing three tasks:

- a) Mapping current good practice of youth consultation and participation.
- b) Identification of changes that the practitioners would like to see in next two years and identify who would be the leaders of such change.
- c) Exploration of how agencies see the role of Hartlepool Community Network role's in relation to young people.

This event was facilitated by independent consultants who collected the data. As well as this action-based research, the researchers also looked at desk research and examples of good practice in the area.

3.4 Desk Research

There have been a range of strategic documents, which have informed national, regional and local working with young people and participation. It is not possible to execute a comprehensive literature review of all strategic resources due to the volume of material available, so this review will be concentrated on several of the main, most pertinent documents.

The findings from this desk research are explained in the next two sections of this report, entitled the National Agenda and Examples of Best Practice.

4. The National Agenda

4.1 Every Child Matters: Change for Children – November 2004

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a Governmental approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

The Government suggests that this be achieved through organisations that are involved with providing services to children - from hospitals and schools, to police and voluntary groups - teaming up in new ways, sharing information and working together, to protect children and young people from harm and to help them achieve what they want in life. The Government suggests that by adopting this method, children and young people will have far more say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively.

The document sets out that over the next few years, every Local Authority will be working with its partners, through Children's Trusts, to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and act on it. They will need to involve children and young people in this process, and when inspectors assess how local areas are doing, they will listen especially to the views of children and young people themselves.

In March 2005, the first Children's Commissioner for England was appointed, to give children and young people a voice in Government and in public life. The Government suggests that the Commissioner will pay particular attention to gathering and putting forward the views of the most vulnerable children and young people in society, and will promote their involvement in the work of organisations whose decisions and actions affect them.

In addition, the Children's Fund was launched in November 2000 to tackle disadvantage among children and young people. The programme aims to identify at an early stage children and young people at risk of social exclusion, and make sure they receive the help and support they need to achieve their potential.

In terms of engagement with young people, PK Research Consultancy and the National Children's Bureau have researched the most effective ways of involving children and young people in services. A useful handbook has been produced for practitioners, backed up by a research report.

The handbook draws on the findings of a research study that explored the experiences of 29 organisations in seeking to listen to young people and take action on what they said. The research points to this being most likely to succeed where organisations had worked to sustain and embed their participation activity.

The handbook and the accompanying research report both aim to stimulate thinking and provide useful ideas about how to actively involve children and young people within services and policy making.

The handbook focuses on how to listen to children and young people so that their views bring about change. It aims specifically to:

- a) Identify and illustrate the benefits of child and youth participation.
- b) Guide organisations in thinking about how to create appropriate environments in which children and young people can be involved in meaningful ways, so that their views are listened to and acted upon.
- c) Help organisations explore how they can develop cultures and infrastructures which sustain and embed participation throughout all their activity.
- d) The documents that Every Child Matters signposts include:
 - Handbook - Building a Culture of Participation
 - Research Report – Building a Culture of Participation
 - Learning to Listen – Core Principles for the Involvement of Children and Young People
 - The Evaluator's Cookbook – Participatory Evaluation Exercises: A Resource for Work with Children and Young People

4.2 The Youth Democracy Report: The Electoral Commission-March 2004

This report outlines the challenges of engaging with young people and also of dispelling the 'myth of apathetic youth'. It suggests that young people care passionately about the issues that affect their lives. They get involved in political issues ranging from signing petitions to going on marches from donating money to causes to discussing current affairs with their friends. The Electoral Commission has been working with 16 – 24 year olds to give young people a greater understanding of the role of democratic institutions and to enthuse them to take action.

The report includes a selection of case studies of successful engagement strategies as well as a useful resource list for tools for democracy projects.

4.3 Stronger Links Final Report: The National Youth Agency – 2004

The Stronger Links project was established to further develop a regional infrastructure for youth work in England. This was in response to a growing regional dimension being promoted by Government across a number of public policy areas. It is funded by DfES and managed by a steering group of national youth bodies. This report puts forward the term 'regional platform' as an ideal model of regional youth infrastructure. The platforms will involve what they call the 4 P's:

- Purposes for which they might be established.
- Principles from which they will work.
- Practices they might adopt in undertaking their key functions.
- Positioning they will need to consider if they are to have maximum impact.

In addition to this model, the Stronger Links Report offers an 'agenda for action' which covers 7 key proposals:

- a) Endorsement of the model of regional platforms.
- b) An annual programme of joint action to be agreed which would include the development of overarching strategies to support specific themes within and across the regions.
- c) An annual planning and evaluation cycle for regional and national collaborative initiatives to be established based on annual conferences.
- d) Securing of regional platforms via:
 - Regional units – to carry out audits and share good practice
 - Regional Government offices – encourage coherent picture across the regions
 - National bodies – make the process better
- e) Annual programme of joint action, which would attract resources and involve young people.
- f) Development of resourcing strategy for the next 3-5 years.
- g) The National Youth Agency to provide secretariat function.

4.4 Youth Matters: Consultation - DfES 2005

This document sets out the Government's new strategy for providing opportunity, challenge and support to teenagers. Within the document it sees as important that young people have more influence over what is being provided in each locality. They should have more opportunities to be involved in the planning and delivery of services and have more opportunities to express their views during local inspections. The proposals outlined in the document aim to address four key challenges:

- a) How to engage more young people in positive activities and empower them to shape the services they receive.
- b) How to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities.
- c) How to provide better information advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives.
- d) How to provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has serious problems or gets into trouble.

The Government states that this approach to reform is based on six underlying principles:

- a) Making services more responsive to what young people and their parents want.
- b) Balancing greater opportunities and support with promoting young people's responsibilities.
- c) Making services for young people more integrated, efficient and effective.
- d) Improving outcomes for all young people, while narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not.
- e) Involving a wide range of organisations from the voluntary community and private sectors in order to increase choice and secure the best outcomes and;
- f) Building on the best of what is currently provided.

As well as the plethora of Governmental strategies that are about, there also exists various quango's and Government departments publishing reports and findings (e.g. Regional Youth Work Unit) and other research bodies looking into subjects such as young people and E-democracy using new technologies and the Internet as a useful mechanism for engaging young people in citizenship programmes.

5. Examples of Best Practice Elsewhere

There are examples of good practice, which are local to the North East, specifically Gateshead, Middlesbrough and Easington.

5.1 Gateshead

Gateshead has had a Youth Council since 1998 (originally the Gateshead Youth Information Service). It is seen to be a leader in the field of youth participation having had national recognition. This area has been instrumental in getting young people into partnership and acts as an umbrella organisation for youth projects and young people in Gateshead by providing training information and advice to youth workers, volunteers, management committees and young people. It empowers young people in the facilitation and organisation of the Gateshead Youth Assembly, which is managed and overseen by young people themselves. It offers a 'one stop shop' information and advice service to young people and works in partnership with other organisations in a local regional and national level to deliver the best possible service to young people and to raise the profile of young people in the region.

5.2 Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough set up a Youth Parliament in 1997, so that young people could be listened to and taken more seriously. Through the Youth Parliament more young people's issues are being seen as important and young people in Middlesbrough have a forum of young people's opinions. The Youth Parliament meets as a large group and smaller groups have been set up to discuss specific issues of interest to those attending the meetings, conferences and events including making their newsletter and being involved in Peer Education Projects.

5.3 Easington

Easington's approach was to form a Young People's Task Group, which mapped service provision and identified a youth needs analysis. This group came up with four key strategic areas, which they state are crucial in the lives of young people: Community safety; Health; Leisure and Environment; Education and Training.

The conclusion of the work was the creation of a youth strategy which has five clear aims:

- a) Development of current and future youth provision in the district.
- b) Establishment of youth needs and provision.
- c) Correlation of youth service provision with the needs of young people in the district, identifying strengths and weaknesses in provision.
- d) Development and facilitation of action plans to identify young people's needs concerns and priorities, ensuring that young people are at the forefront of service delivery.

- e) Review and evaluation of action plans annually to promote youth inclusion and community regeneration within the district.

Easington used enhanced IT approaches to consult with young people as they recognised that this form of electronic feedback was favoured by the youth group. It also allowed for quicker analysis and dissemination of results to the young people.

6. Previous Work Undertaken to Engage with Young People by the Community Network

6.1 The **fc4u** (Future Crew for Youth) youth group undertook an awareness raising/consultation event in Middleton Grange Shopping Centre during the Easter holidays of 2003 which featured a blown up map of Hartlepool, upon which the thoughts and ideas of potential facilities/services and their geographical location were placed by over 200 young people.

6.2 Hartlepool Community Network undertook a piece of work with young people to produce a video documenting their views and the views of other young people about their home town; what they like/dislike about it and what they would change. The 'Youth Action' video, which was finished in August 2003, was recorded, edited and produced by young people. Much of the footage recorded and interviews conducted, were with young people invited from the street, the town centre, the cenotaph or from workshops taking place during the Youth Arts Festival in the summer of 2003. The video, which highlights several issues relating to personal safety, was shown as part of the Council's Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's enquiry into anti-social behaviour and to the Hartlepool Partnership. The Hartlepool Partnership agreed that the Community Network should lead on consultation around the issues of participation and representation mechanisms. It is this decision, which has informed the production of this piece of work.

6.3 September 2005 saw **fc4u** take part in the Headland Eco Festival, hosting their own 'Caribbean Tent' specifically for young people. The event was planned and organised by volunteers between the ages of 11 to 26 and attracted c.300 young people and their families over two days. Young people could take part in everything from salsa dancing to steel band workshops, beach volleyball and 'hoola hooping' or relax making Caribbean garlands and drinking non-alcoholic, fruit cocktails (which at 20p a cocktail, made £160 for the group). Again, the purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the existence of the Hartlepool Partnership and the role young people can play in it, either by becoming representatives on partnerships or through the youth newspaper and the youth group. Many visitors to the tent signed a petition for an elected youth council for Hartlepool.

6.4 **HYPE** (Hartlepool Young People's Editorial) is a town wide newspaper developed by the Community Network to give young people the opportunity to discuss issues that are important to them. It has provided an invaluable insight into which issues are important at any given time, this has been useful for both agencies working with young people or agencies providing services for them. The paper has been written, edited and produced by young people for young people. Three editions have been prepared to date. HYPE has been circulated through community buildings, schools, colleges, youth clubs and other places that young people tend to hang out. There are currently 14 contributing members ranging from 16 to 25.

6.5 **fc4u** petitioned for a town-wide elected Youth Council. Putting forward the view that a Youth Council would allow all Council departments and other service delivery agencies to consult with young people at a much earlier stage and in a much more organised way. It will also extend to young people the opportunity to discuss and raise awareness about issues, which are important to them at the time that they are important. The petition, with over a 100 signatures was raised at the Mayor's 'State of the Borough' debate in 2003. The issue was raised at the full Council meeting on the 23rd October 2003 and obtained written support from the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum. As a result of the above, an investigation was initiated by the Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Forum.

6.6 The young people involved in promoting a Youth Council articulated the view that a formal mechanism to engage with young people was required to ensure that their voices could be heard through the development of an elected Youth Council for the whole of Hartlepool. This would require open elections, advertised through schools, colleges, community buildings and youth clubs etc for any youth representatives elected to partnerships.

6.7 The Community Network has good links with other fora in the town, such as the 50+ Forum and the All Ability Forum. The Network has developed systems of accountability for representatives such experience is highly relevant in the development of a representative Youth Forum/Council.

7. Youth Consultation Event

The data collected from the event was largely recorded on flip charts in bullet point format, which have been reproduced here. The responses are related to the themes identified in 'Every Child Matters'.

7.1 Staying Healthy

- Young people are clear about areas of consultation they require.
- There is confusion about information that is currently provided.
- Consultation event made us aware of anomalies of law and support required.

7.2 Staying Safe

- Young people are clear about danger areas throughout the town.
- Young people have views on policing and local knowledge of areas of risk.

7.3 Economic Well-Being

- Clear about things that do not work e.g. Job Fair.
- Have other ideas/suggestions about information about opportunities and choices related to overseas work, volunteering etc.
- Support for accessing training related to job readiness.

7.4 Enjoy and Achieve

- Clear about what they want and how they would like to use leisure facilities in Hartlepool.
- Young people need decision makers to know they are 'active and mobile'.
- Young people know about specific activities that they would like to do and be involved with.
- Critical of advertising and its appropriateness.

7.5 Making a Positive Contribution

- Understand what contribution that they make.
- Willing to make a contribution but want to be heard.
- Want feedback from adults as to whether there are any actions from their contribution.

Responses were also collated on how young people wanted to be consulted:

7.6 Web-Based Activity

- Want to use ICT to gather information.
- Using the Internet to vote on issues.
- Mass use of Young people's e-mails to share information.
- Willing to put time in to develop a web site.
- Chat rooms and forums on computers.
- Database of participation projects, meetings, events etc (Access to all workers/stakeholders).

7.7 Possible Development of Youth Forum

- Want meetings organised for them.
- Small-organised groups for discussion work.

7.8 Development of Participation Strategy

- Want to contribute to improving Hartlepool.
- Young people want a voice; adults need to know how to listen, through with action and feedback.
- Adults and Workers to be fun and light – with the right attitude.
- Project based consultation.
- Access to learning materials e.g.: Video's, Drugs case, camera's, recording equipment, audio equipment.

7.9 Use of HYPE – Young People's Magazine to Disseminate Information

- Identified places to advertise activities, events etc.
- Want more advertising and information of places and things on offer.

7.10 Additional Comments:

- More drop in facilities required – may link to improving advertising.
- Want transport for young people to get to events, clubs and other activities.
- One to one interaction – young people need to be recognised as having the need more privacy when discussing issues.

8. Recommendations from the Consultation Event

8.1 Recommendations Identified Through the Consultation Event

Overall, the consultation event was successful, with some useful information gathered. As it stands, the consultation was a good example of the participation process. The following recommendations draw on the experiences of the young people involved in this event.

8.2 Age Sensitivities

It is recommended that when planning consultation events with young people, events are banded by age group to address the differing issues and approaches needed.

8.3 Venue Staff

It is advisable that all staff are briefed as thoroughly as possible to ensure young people are supported as thoroughly as possible. There should be attention paid to the language that it is used as language can often be a barrier for young people to relate to participation and consultation.

8.4 Material Feedback

As a result of consultative exercises with young people, the resources, footage and documentation produced from the consultations need a system for presenting this to strategic decision-making bodies.

8.5 Results

It is imperative to have a system of structure and communication to indicate to young people if issues raised in consultation are to be followed through.

8.6 Attention

Adults need to be aware of the attention spans of young people; many consultation activities are too long to retain engagement.

8.7 Dissemination

There needs to be more access to school's, to enable effective dissemination of findings to inform young people that their views are being valued and heard.

8.8 Artists as Consultation Agents

Artists and other professionals, who are not youth participation workers, are often perceived as 'neutral' and more accessible.

8.9 Promotion

Advertising outside of the usual publicity mechanisms e.g. postcards advertising, are important to reach young people as well as using activities to engage in the consultative process.

8.10 Venue

Using youth friendly venues designated youth space and respecting young people's leisure time. A mixture of activities was used throughout the event to counteract issues identified as stemming from class-based attitudes. Traditional routes/activities tend to attract middle class young people e.g. young people newsletter/ Citizenship Programme, whereas more non-traditional routes tend to attract working class young people e.g. Rave, MC, participation events. It was hoped that by using a wide range of activities would open the event to as many young people as possible.

8.11 Issues Which Require Consideration

Action planning must involve the direct contribution of young people, and as such the following actions identified and timescale can only be a guide to what could be achieved, if there is to be avoidance of adults deciding young people's priorities.

9. Stakeholder Consultation – Key Findings

The structure of this consultation involved agencies and organisations performing three tasks:

- a) Mapping current good practice of youth consultation and participation.
- b) Identification of changes that the practitioners would like to see in next 2 years and identify who would be the leaders of such change.
- c) Exploration of how agencies see the role of Hartlepool Community Network role in relation to young people.

The mapping exercise of good practice, which has or is taking place in Hartlepool is set out in the following table:

4.1 (b)

Current Models of Good Practice

Who	What	Where and When	How	What were the outcomes
UK Youth Parliament	National organisation to represent young people views to Government	Election for youth representatives in August 2004	Packs were sent to schools and elections took place	Two young people were chosen to represent Hartlepool
Co-ordinated Hartlepool Youth Provision	Meeting for Officers and Workers to discuss common areas of work	Held on a quarterly basis	Meetings co-ordinated by Sean Harte	
Hartlepool Participation Network	Meeting for Participation Workers to discuss their work and future developments	Held on a bi-monthly basis	Meetings co-ordinated via Sean Harte/John Robinson	
NDC Youth Forum	Youth Forum developed	New Deal area – meet at Belle View Centre	Participatory activities with young people	Committed to move forward to develop a Youth Parliament
Looked after Young People	Young people involved in interview for Children Services Director	Early 2004		Successful appointment of champion for children and young people
Hyped Group	Employing new staff Small group of mixed age range Part of project planning group	Involvement in staff interviews Meeting held at Hyped base	Young people were supported on the day of interviews Guidance developed for adults involved Young people had input to interview questions Young people in interview process	Young people receive interview/recruitment training and are involved in staff selection Young people support peers around substance use Young people inform peers about process

4.1 (b)

Who	What	Where and When	How	What were the outcomes
<p>Hartlepool Community Network</p>	<p>Community Network Officer supports LSP young people's representatives</p>	<p>Preparation, minute taking and talking through issues</p>	<p>Pro-actively coach young people's representatives</p>	<p>Two young people representatives on LSP</p>
	<p>Community Network Officer and young people have designed training programme for other youth representatives</p>	<p>Meetings arranged at appropriate time for young people "formal venue" better to be young people friendly</p>		<p>Development of training programme for young people who want to become representatives</p>
	<p>Community Network Officer and fc4u (Youth Group) involved in mapping of young people's ideas for improving Hartlepool</p>	<p>Event held in Shopping Centre.</p>	<p>Stall set up by young people, who enrolled other young people to discuss issues and views</p>	<p>Information presented to LSP</p>
	<p>DVD produced</p>	<p>Hartlepool in 2003</p>	<p>By being visual and inviting all young people to contribute</p> <p>Video Booth: loan of cameras and youth editing of video</p>	<p>Video shown at Local Strategic Partnership and Learning and Scrutiny Forum</p>
	<p>Community Network Officer organised young people's meeting</p> <p>Development of citizenship programme</p>	<p>Held at Dyke House 2003/04 via CAT Young Movers Sub - Group</p> <p>Venue: Belle View Centre, Hartlepool and visits to House of Commons</p>	<p>Facilitation of young people discussions and ideas, including visits to areas of interest</p>	<p>Engaged with young people in the Dyke House area – regarding what they wanted in their area</p> <p>Designed and delivered Post 16 a citizenship course</p>

4.1 (b)

Who	What	Where and When	How	What were the outcomes
<p>Regeneration (Neighbourhood Action Plans)</p>	<p>Initial consultation with children and young people via primary and secondary schools, youth groups etc</p> <p>NAP follows 7 theme areas of local strategic partnership (LSP)</p>	<p>Ideas and consultation methods fed into Hartlepool participation Network</p>	<p>Discussion about priority concerns and issues in the local area in which they live</p> <p>Consultation in school; and leisure time in each NAP area</p>	<p>Ideas are incorporated into neighbourhood action plan. Priority concerns and issues are identified for the area in which the young people live</p> <p>LSP receives copies of neighbourhood action plans and NAP is put forward for endorsement by LSP</p> <p>In process of setting up young people's forum to contribute to spending priorities for NRF spending</p>
<p>B76</p>	<p>A project which aims to build confidence through video and drama work</p> <p>Young people create educational resources (usually a video) around the issue they would like to raise awareness of</p> <p>Barnado's UK Advisory Group</p>	<p>Youth Advisory Group meet on a bi-monthly basis to give feedback about services offered at B76. Meetings held at B76</p> <p>Group meet with Project Manager and other project representatives</p> <p>Various locations throughout the North East</p>	<p>Groups meet with Children's Services Manager</p> <p>Young people from Barnado's services consulted on a regular basis. This is feedback at national meetings</p>	<p>Groups asked for opening hours to be extended to evenings through summer months</p> <p>Young people create educational resources around issues they would like to raise awareness of</p> <p>Videos produced on issues e.g. bullying, substance misuse, exclusion from school etc</p>

4.1 (b)

Who	What	Where and When	How	What were the outcomes
Connexions Shadow Board	<p>Central participation group for Connexions. All 5 locality groups meet to discuss Connexions work with service users</p> <p>Video made by young people about the Local Management Committee</p>	<p>Third Monday of every month</p> <p>Various locations in Hartlepool July 2004</p>	<p>5 members are elected from Local Youth Forum to sit on Central Forum</p> <p>Young people involved in writing scripts, music and taking part in video</p>	<p>To inform young people of relationship between workers and young people</p> <p>To inform young people about the Local Management Committee</p> <p>Video shown in schools on a regular basis to inform young people of connections local users groups</p> <p>Outcomes are ongoing young people discuss matters relevant to connections and the way personal advisors work with young people</p>
Youth Clubs	<p>Peer mentoring</p> <p>Planning their own activity programme</p>	<p>During youth club sessions</p> <p>During youth club sessions</p>	<p>Weekly outreach and group work</p>	<p>All involved in planning were engaged in process</p>
Young People at Café 177	<p>Held a dance event in September 2004</p> <p>Venue for holding youth consultation events</p>	<p>Series of meetings – multi-agency</p> <p>Café 177 – utilising all areas of the building</p>	<p>Greater access to sports facilities and change of attitudes</p> <p>Through multi-agency contacts</p>	<p>Reporting back findings from young people to Sports England</p> <p>Vast amount of information from young people particularly around "ECM"</p>
Best Value Review Group	<p>Best value review – family resource worker and community support worker roles</p>	<p>Various venues in the Easter holidays</p>	<p>Focus group with young people including those with disabilities</p>	<p>Currently writing improvement plan</p> <p>Involvement of teenage parents in the development of Anna Court which is now open and has just won a National Award</p>

4.1 (b)

Who	What	Where and When	How	What were the outcomes
Children's Fund	Mentoring and activity centres Weekly activity one to one and issue based work	Fully developed set of participation tools		Activity programmes, issue work amended and altered accordingly

10. Youth Consultation/Participation – The Way Forward

10.1 Broader Consultation

There is a need for a much broader based strategic approach to consultation. Wider town wide consultation and in one which schools are included. The option of young people leading on some of this work should be explored.

10.2 Strategic Planning

The importance of focussed consultation, targeted with specific groups will always be necessary and useful, but this is not a substitute for broad based consultation with large numbers of young people. Any action plan arising from this report needs to be reviewed annually, against identifiable measures of success.

In the past it has not been clear who has taken the lead in improving young people's involvement and engagement at a strategic level across agencies. The advent of the Children and Young People's Partnership presents an opportunity for this to change. There has been a considerable amount of individual consultation by agencies. Strategically there needs to be a clear strategy, plan and policy in relation to young people's participation and one that is inclusive of young people's views and wishes. Rather than being solely led by adults either in a political role (strategic partnerships) or a providers role (agencies and organisations working with young people). There needs to be a degree of control and ownership by young people themselves.

Within the strategic decision making process, attention needs to be drawn to the disenfranchising effect of long bureaucratic decision making processes on the engagement of young people.

If young people are to be included in participation, this needs to be real and respectful rather than a tokenistic gesture. In terms of representation we need to be at the top of the representation staircase. (See the ladder of Participation taken from Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship by Roger Hart, published by UNICEF 1992). See Appendix 2.

10.3 Information

More attention needs to be paid to the dissemination of information post – consultation if young people are not to become disaffected with the democratic process. Ideally an access point for young people to put their views forward could be created. Lack of feedback can result in disinterest if the young people perceive that their views are getting lost.

More weight could be attributed to Peer Information/Groups. What is being produced needs to be shared, made more presentable and accessible to young people – just as alternative strategies for engagement in consultation need to be employed, so do alternative and engaging strategies for dissemination of findings need to be sought.

10.4 Consultation

Consultation must involve real partnerships between young people and adults. This requires those adults who do engage with young people to listen, hear, acknowledge and accept what children and young people say, even if they do not agree with the points that young people are putting forward. It may be necessary to review and put into place some fast tracking decision-making processes.

10.5 Training

There is a need to value the role of the young people and does not attempt to turn them into 'mini adults' customised training is required.

10.6 Engagement

It is important that young people bring stakeholders together to meet and present their views. The differing needs of varying age groups needs to be taken into consideration and age group issues related to consultation/participation need to be addressed.

There needs to be a culture shift in relation to young people. Stereotyping of young people needs to be challenged, as well as agencies perceptions of children and young people who can participate i.e. do not marginalize. There was seen to be a real need for a Youth Forum/Council, which would empower young people and act as a mechanism for 'captivating passion' and which fosters leadership, consistency and learning.

10.7 Resources

Some resources are already in place. The exact level of resourcing for a more structured approach will be dependant upon the approach adopted.

10.8 Possibilities for Overall Co-ordination

In relation to working with young people around consultation and engagement there could be a number of strategies adopted to inform and direct use with a requirement for everyone with young people. The following recommendations would contribute to ensuring that the Community Network and other agencies work collaboratively.

a) The bringing together of agencies working with young people together as a Network such as through the Participation Network and the CHYP Group.

Possible actions - mapping, of all youth provision. Recognising that not everyone with an interest in this area of work is currently involved e.g. the exclusion of small groups in Hartlepool. There exists the possibility of bringing together groups for joint funding initiatives related to work around consultation and participation.

b) To bring together information and related directories of resources related to youth participation and consultation work

Possible Actions - Directory of workers, artists, facilitators, toolkits, general resources, venues etc.

c) Continued support for individual Young People's Representatives on Partnership

Possible Actions - Regular discussions/briefings, developing an appraisal system and linking work with other initiatives.

d) Training for Representatives

Look at the possibility of customising training using the experience of the Post 16 Citizenship Programme for Representatives on Partnerships and Reference Groups.

11. Conclusion

What was apparent through the research that was undertaken to inform this report was that young people are keen to be involved in and happy to be engaged with participation and consultation in Hartlepool. However, most young people were also disenfranchised around the mechanisms and structures of decision making i.e. they had little interest in the role of Hartlepool Local Strategic Partnership. For these young people, the important people 'making things happen' were the participation workers working with them in a more direct way.

Young people perceive that there is a mismatch between young people's priorities and the priorities of bodies such as the Hartlepool Local Strategic Partnership. Young people's issues and priorities are adult led, rather than young people led, and these adult priorities are often justified and promoted over young people's priorities because of mandatory responsibilities - whether this is accurate or not.

The strategic framework for the Local Strategic Partnership is grounded in a set format of tiers of responsibility. It needs to be considered how do young people gain access to those tiers even within the Participation Workers group there is currently no place for a young person's representative and this is with a group who probably have the most realistic view of the perspective of young people.

Although on the face of it, partnerships express the desire to consult and engage with young people, existing structures mitigate against this. This sets up confusion for young people and creates the perception of young people not being listened to.

This situation is further compounded by the lack of any clear feedback mechanisms being in place for young people to know that what they have had to say, has been listened to, heard and considered, respectfully. There is also no mechanism for young people to know that what they have had to say, that had made a difference and that they have had an input in affecting change. This lack of feedback further exacerbates disenfranchisement with the tiers of local Governance. Young people see the decision making process as remote and irrelevant to their spheres of influence.

Young people have differing needs dependant on their age and interests, it is important not to generalise about young people and not to fall into stereotyping and myth making of 'how young people are'. It is important to recognise that by and large the readers of this research and interpreters of its findings are going to be adults and therefore filter our understanding of the issues from our adult perspective. As adults we also need to be brave enough to accommodate and value other perspectives, which will not always sit easily within our framework of reference.

The findings in this report indicate clearly that the young people of Hartlepool have a willingness and intention to actively engage in participation. However, if this enthusiasm and energy is to be capitalised on, there needs to be some radical change in the communication systems and understanding of the nature of engaging with young people at all levels of local Governance.

Consultation and representation need to be genuine partnerships and not tokenistic box ticking exercises. The Community Network could develop a mechanism to take this challenge forward with partners and act as a real and vital conduit for youth representation within the Hartlepool Local Strategic Partnership framework. A Youth Forum/Council, which was genuinely directed by young people could play a leading role in such a process, no one group can represent the views of all young people, but this should not be used as an excuse to not create such a representative structure. A wide ranging Youth Forum/Council would not be a substitute for the specific consultation work, which may be required with very specific groups of young people. For those aged 11 –16 an Inter School's Youth Forum/Council may be an appropriate mechanism to develop.

Appendix 1

Agency Participants in Stakeholder Event

Tracy Foster	Hartlepool Community Network
Kay Porritt	Hyped
Helen Sewell	Children's Services Department HBC
Rebecca Wise	West View Project
Chris Wise	West View Project
Mally Priddy	Hartlepool Youth Ltd
Lindsay Gould	B76
Ronnie Rowbotham	Barnados Hartbeat
Beth Hawkrige	Barnados Hartbeat
James Sinclair	Connexions
Gemma Clough	Regeneration HBC
Francesca Magog	Children's Services Department HBC

Appendix 2

The ladder of participation

(Taken from "Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship", by Roger Hart, published by UNICEF, 1992)

