

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Tuesday 20th December 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 meeting held on 22nd November 2005 (*to follow*)

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Involving Young People – Draft Final Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)
- 4.2 'Children's Champions' – Involving Young People Inquiry (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)
- 4.3 Scrutiny of the Draft Children and Young People's Plan – Scoping Report (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

5. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

22nd November 2005

Present:

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors John Cambridge, John Coward, Mary Fleet, Frances London, Arthur Preece, Carl Richardson and Gerald Wistow

Co-opted Members:

Jan Fawcett and Mr Relton

Resident Representatives:

Ian Campbell and Joan Smith

Officers:

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

Also Present:

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

27. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sheila Griffin, Pam Hargreaves and John Lauderdale and Co-opted member Liz Barraclough.

In accordance with Paragraph 4.2(ii) of the Council's Procedure Rules Councillor Rob Cook attended as substitute for Councillor Sheila Griffin.

28. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

29. Confirmation of the minutes of the meetings held 30th August 2005 and 25th October 2005.

Agreed.

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

The Scrutiny Support Officer outlined details of work undertaken to date as part of the Forum's in-depth inquiry into Involving Young People and drew attention to an overview of the findings from the Community Network's consultation exercise with young people considered by the Forum on the 25th October 2005.

As part of the next stage of the process the Scrutiny Support Officer sought consideration of recommendations for inclusion in the Forum's Draft Final Report, to be presented to the next meeting of the Forum on the 20th December 2005. To assist in the formulation of these recommendations Members were asked to take into consideration a more detailed analysis of the findings of the consultation exercise and re-consider the draft/suggested recommendations and action points previously discussed. Details of the more in depth analysis of the findings of the consultation exercise and suggested recommendations were outlined in the report for Members attention.

Decision

The report was noted and used to inform discussions on the following item (minute no. 31 refers).

31. Report of the Consultation Exercise: Involvement of Young People in Decision Making in Hartlepool (*Community Network Officer*)

Further to minute no.30, as outlined above, the Chairman invited Keith Bayley and Tracy Foster from the HVDA to present details of the findings of the consultation exercise undertaken regarding the involvement of young people in decision making in Hartlepool.

As part of a very informative presentation Keith Bayley reported that there was no definitive way to seek the views of children and young people as their aspirations varied with age. In recognition of this, and the need for a number of different approaches to seek views one of the key recommendations of the exercise was the formation of a participative youth Council. It was, however, noted that this had been attempted in various forms by other authorities and whilst it was acknowledged that there was a need for adult involvement in the provision of support and a framework it was felt that young people had the ability to take the lead in these matters and should be given the opportunity to

do so.

A discussion then followed during which the following points were raised:-

i) What would the cost of implementing the recommendations be and how would they be funded?

Members supported the recommendations but queried how they would be funded. The Children's Fund Manager informed them that £15,000 had been identified which would cover part of the development costs. There would be no time constraints on the expenditure of this money. Individual departments would also need to fund the recommendations but the Children's Fund Manager was unable to give a definitive amount which they would need to contribute. It was hoped this would involve moving existing money from other areas or projects rather than finding new money.

The Children's Fund Manager also explained that funding could also be forthcoming from the other stakeholders.

ii) Would there be involvement with other organisations during the implementation?

Members requested that Officers continue to work closely with the HVDA on the consultation. It was felt there was good scope to link 'Involving Young People' with the Neighbourhood Forums, possibly in conjunction with the 'Every Hartlepool Child Matters' strategy which was due to go to the Forums the following week. Using HYPE (Hartlepool Young People's Editorial) magazine as a conduit to young people was also suggested.

iii) What other examples of best practice were available?

Members referred to work done in other authorities on involving young people in Council business, specifically Middlesbrough Youth Parliament and Gateshead Youth Council and asked if any independent review of their success had been carried out.

iv) How could the interest of young people be engaged and retained?

The Children's Fund Manager commented that consideration may need to be given to some form of incentive for their involvement but members felt that being part of the process and having responsibility for decisions should be incentive enough. The Chair considered that giving the group a limited budget, allowing the young people to control how it was allocated may be an alternative.

Members raised concerns in relation to keeping young people interested if results were not instantaneous. It was felt that feedback should be as forthcoming as possible but young people also needed to be made aware that they could not change things overnight and should not walk away if they did not get instant results.

v) What involvement would adults have in the process?

The Children's Fund Manager also commented that attitudes may need to be changed for 'Involving Young People' to be successful. Members concurred with this and considered that people may need to change their perceptions of the young. Adults could not expect respect from young people if they did not give it in return. The Chair also stated that once they had given young people a voice through this forum, they should not take it away just because they may hear things they may not like.

The Chair proposed that representatives from Hartlepool schools be invited to a future Scrutiny meeting. Members supported the proposal but felt the time and venue of the meeting would need to be reconsidered in order to facilitate their attendance. The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that young people could be invited to attend future of the Forum meetings. Members asked if feedback could also be provided to schools on the scrutiny process. The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that mechanisms to report the findings to young people and schools would be incorporated into the draft final report of the Involving Young People inquiry, which could be discussed at the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum workshop on Thursday 1st December and at the next meeting of the Forum on Tuesday 20th December 2005.

Decision

- a) That the recommendations set out in the report be welcomed and incorporated into the existing recommendations of the Forum
- b) That representative young people from Hartlepool schools be invited to a future meeting of the Forum.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

20th December 2005



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE – DRAFT FINAL REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the draft findings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its inquiry into Involving Young People.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At Council on the 23rd October 2003 and again on the 4th December 2003, a Member raised the issue of involving young people in the affairs of the town and how the Council was proposing to develop robust mechanisms to ensure that young people's views were heard and considered. It was agreed that the subject was one that should be examined through the scrutiny process.
- 2.2 Consequently, on the 3rd February 2004 the (then) Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum began its inquiry into Involving Young People. This inquiry has been conducted over two broad stages:
- (a) 2003/4 Municipal Year – the Scrutiny inquiry was largely concerned with exploring mechanisms to engage young people in district affairs; and
 - (b) 2004/5 Municipal Year – the Scrutiny inquiry largely focused on strategies for involving young people through participation.
- 2.3 At the end of each stage of inquiry the Forum has postponed producing a Final Report whilst it waited for the results of a piece of work by the Hartlepool Community Network, which is based on consultations with young people. The findings of this piece of work were reported to the Forum on 25th October 2005 and again on the 22nd November 2005.

3. SETTING THE SCENE

3.1 Over the course of this Scrutiny investigation there have been several 'streams of inquiry'. A lot of the work carried out under these has been about enabling Members to have a better understanding of young people's activities and, therefore, how they can become involved in decisions that affect their lives. It is, therefore, hoped that young people will become increasingly involved in the community and democratic processes, as a result of the recommendations of this report.

3.2 In 2003 MORI produced a report on the attitudes of the group they called 'Disaffected Youth' and concluded that:

'Though (young people) have well-formed opinions on, and are able to discuss issues such as mobile phones, sex, crime or their local neighbourhood; they have little patience with political debate, which seems to them to occupy a parallel universe to the one they inhabit. It should not be assumed that this group are 'apathetic'. They have strong opinions and often feel passionately about public service delivery issues that impact on their life and work. However, they do not make the connection between their personal dissatisfaction with a particular aspect of public life and participating in the traditional political processes as a way of expressing that dissatisfaction or seeking a solution to these problems.'

3.3 The conclusions that MORI reached in the above paragraph justify the Forum's approach to gaining an understanding of the activities of young people as a 'bridge' to developing participation strategies.

3.4 Since August 2002 citizenship has been a statutory national curriculum subject for all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 (11-16 year olds) and a national voluntary one for primary schools. More recently the Government has given consideration to extending citizenship education for those over 16. On 23rd March 2005 the Forum was provided with evidence about citizenship in schools and how it forms a strand of the framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in primary schools. The Forum commended the work being undertaken in this regard, and the connections that are being made between this and school councils.

3.5 The Council is also making good progress in a number of areas through encouraging participation in decision making and supporting the community. Some examples of which are:

- (a) young people developing a 'Behaviour on Buses' policy in collaboration with LEA officers;
- (b) development of the Sexual Health policy for young people for young people looked after was produced by a joint group of health, social services, education staff and young people;

- (c) the Children's Fund has received positive reports from inspectors in terms of the involvement of children and young people; and
- (d) holding a Cabinet meeting in a school.

3.6 In addition, every school in the town has a school council, which provides an opportunity for students to gain some experience of democratic processes and school based decision making. The Forum welcomed this development and questioned whether there might be opportunities to build on this mechanism to extend young involvement in a wider range of decisions.

4. OVERALL AIM OF THE INQUIRY

4.1 The co-ordination of the development of a strategy to involve young people and the development of mechanisms – identified by the young people themselves – to engage in district affairs.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (a) Is there a need for a mechanism to be established to involve young people?
- (b) If so is it a Council priority to fulfil this need?
- (c) If it is a Council Priority to respond, to what extent is it for the Council and/or its partner organisations to determine the format that this will take?
- (d) What mechanisms (if any) do Members favour for involving young people i.e. formal mechanisms such as youth councils or less formal mechanisms?
- (e) What influence/powers are the young people the Council is seeking to involve be granted, if any?
- (f) Who should the Council seek to involve e.g. age groups, educational organisations, 'other' groups?

5.1 It should be noted that the original terms of reference relate more to the first stage of the inquiry (outlined in section 2.2 above) than the second, although the purpose of the second stage was to ground the identification of decision making mechanisms within the context of the experiences of young people.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORUM

6.1 Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum 2003/4 Municipal Year:

Councillors: Allan, Cambridge, Griffin, Herbert, Iseley, Pearson, Preece, Rogers (Chair), Shaw, Turner and R Waller

Co-opted Members:

Mr Relton, Mrs Marchant and Mr R McGovern

6.2 Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum 2004/5 Municipal Year:

Councillors: Belcher, Cambridge, Fleet, Griffin, Lauderdale, London, Marshall, Preece, Richardson, Shaw (Chair) and Wistow

Co-opted Members: Mr F D S Relton, Rev J Smith, Mrs J Fawcett and Mrs L Barraclough

Resident Representatives: M Boreland, I Campbell and J Smith

6.3 Children's Services Scrutiny Forum 2005/6 Municipal Year:

Councillors: Cambridge, Coward, Fleet, Griffin, Hargreaves, Lauderdale, London, Preece, Richardson, Shaw (Chair) and Wistow

Co-opted Members: Mr F D S Relton, Rev J Smith, Mrs J Fawcett and Mrs L Barraclough

Resident Representatives: M Boreland, I Campbell and J Smith

7. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

7.1 During the various stages of the inquiry Members of the Forum formally met between 3rd February 2004 and 22nd November 2005 to discuss/receive evidence relating to this investigation.

7.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:

- (a) Detailed Officer reports supplemented by verbal evidence;
- (b) Detailed presentations from external partners, including from Hartlepool Community Network and B76;
- (c) Site visit to Gateshead Youth Assembly;
- (d) Site visit to Abbey Street Community Centre;
- (e) Site visits to youth projects and outreach workers; and
- (f) Site visits to Brougham, Dyke House, Fens, Jesmond Road, and West View Schools.

8. SCRUTINY FINDINGS

- 8.1 The findings of the Forum are outlined below and have been divided into three sections:
- (a) School and Youth Project Visits;
 - (b) Community Network consultation and Mechanisms to Involve Young People in Decision Making; and
 - (c) Co-ordinating Participation.

FINDINGS SECTION 1 – SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROJECT VISITS

- 8.2 Over the course of the inquiry Members of the (then) Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum decided that it was important to gather the views of young people about how they can be involved in the decisions that affect their lives. Members had welcomed the consultation that the Hartlepool Community Network was carrying out but considered that the Forum needed to incorporate the views of young people below the age of 16. Consequently, a working group was established by the Forum on 27th January 2005 to discuss how to incorporate young people's views into the process.
- 8.3 The working group agreed that a set of questions should be prepared for the visits so that the young people were asked the same questions for each of the visits.

Questionnaire Results from School Visits

- 8.4 Outlined below is a summary of the consultation results from the school visits to each of the questions the Forum's Working Group agreed would be asked during these visits.

1) *What sort of things do you like to do when you are not at school?*

The most common activities carried out by young people when they are not in school were: swimming; football; playing outside; dancing; riding bikes; gymnastics; playing on the computer; trampoline; shopping; watch TV; and puzzles.

2) *What sort of things would you like to do after school or at the weekend?*

The activities most young people would like to do after school (other than the ones they were currently doing) were: to go on trips (outdoor activities, museums etc.); ice-skating; spend time with/visit relatives; tennis; cricket; skateboarding and bird watching.

3) Why don't you do these things now?

The most common reasons given by young people for not being able to take part in activities included: its too expensive; it is 'not easy to do' (this was quite a common view amongst young people suggesting a variety of barriers to activities); they are too far away; don't know where to go for chosen activities; parents are too busy to take them; transport is poor; more wardens are needed in parks/play areas; bullies; some classes/clubs are not available; some facilities are not very good; and they are 'not allowed' to do chosen activities – largely because they are too young. N.B. it should be noted that a reasonable number of young people responded that they *did* take part in the activities they wanted to.

4) How could we help you do these sort of things?

The most common responses to this question were: make activities free/cheaper; create new clubs; build an ice rink in town; design a letter telling young people what they can do – publicise 'what's on'; provide transport; we want a safe place to go to; put different activities on; run classes/groups more frequently; provide taster clubs/classes; and listen to young people when building new developments.

5) Where could you do them?

The most common answers to this question included: at school; in a local sports hall; Mill House Leisure Centre; Grayfields; outside (e.g. parks); school yard; at home; and as close to home as possible.

6) Are there any clubs or groups you would like to join?

The following were the most common answers from respondents: Cub Scouts; Brownies; Sports/Dance/Music/Art/Youth/After School Clubs; Ice Skating Groups; choir; cycling proficiency; BMX riding; much bigger skate park; and Horse Riding. In addition, a relatively high number of young people answered 'no' to this question.

7) Would you like your Mam or Dad to do these things with you?

About two thirds of young people wanted their parents to do these activities with them.

8) What would you like them to do?

The most common answers from the young people were: help me; join in; play with me; watch; and transport me.

9) *Some children can be naughty. What things could children do that would help them behave better?*

The most common answers to this question included: behaviour chart; make them play sensibly – or with someone who is sensible; play with them; teach them how to behave; reward the good kids so the bad get jealous; show them a prison cell; and we need people to help them who understand them.

10) *What's the best club or group you have been to after school or at the weekend? Why?*

The following answers were most common amongst the respondents: football team/clubs (learn new skills); dance class/group (keeps me fit/learn new steps); gymnastics (see my friends/do a show); after school club (play lots of games/make things); karate (it's the best); and swimming.

11) *Do you go to the library?*

Approximately half of the young people responding to the survey attended the library.

12) *What sort of things should libraries do to make children want to go to them more?*

The most common responses to this question were: provide more computers with access for everyone; provide more and 'better' books for kids; provide help with reading and read to young people; provide reading groups/book clubs; more people to help with homework; provide a play/activity area; provide more arts and crafts events; and make the library more fun and exciting – colourful.

- 8.5 The working group met on 26th May 2005 to discuss these visits. A number of potential recommendations emerged from this meeting and these are outlined in section 8.8 below.

Responses from Manor West Residents Association – Cool Project

- 8.6 This project is supported by the PCT, with an emphasis on health i.e. healthy food is provided and activities are mainly sport based. A Member of the Forum provided the following evidence from their site visit:
- (a) After school they: go swimming; play football; go to the library to play computer games; and attend Manor Residents After School Club.
 - (b) They would like to: go horse riding; ice-skating; ride motor-bikes; spend time at Summerhill and go quad biking behind B&Q.
 - (c) The reasons they gave for not being able to do what they wanted were: too much homework; not being old enough to drive; and parents telling them not be late.

Responses from the 'Beck Buddies'

- 8.7 The Beck Buddies are an award winning, environmentally friendly group of young people. They are aged between 5 and 12, and are run by HBC Countryside Wardens. Activities include litter picking, tree planting, and making bird and bat boxes. Due to the lack of a suitable local indoor venue, indoor activities take place at Summerhill, which requires parents/grandparents to transport them.

A Member of the Forum provided the following evidence from their site visit:

- (a) After school they: play football, play on the computer; visit their grandparents; play games/cards; watch a DVD if the weather is bad; go for walks with dad; and go to clubs.
- (b) The only things stopping them from accessing activities would be their age or size. Generally this group of young people access a wide variety of opportunities and activities provided across the town e.g. events/activities put on by the Library Service, Art Gallery etc.
- (c) In common with a number of groups of young people the Beck Buddies wanted to know why these questions were being asked and what would happen with the information.

Working Group Findings/Recommendations

- 8.8 On 26th May 2005 Members of the Working Group met to discuss their findings following the site visits to schools and youth projects. The following comments were made at this meeting:

General Feedback

- Some of the primary school children questioned by Members during the site visits were aware of the problems older children were having. Consequently, some young people questioned by Members were more concerned with providing activities for their bigger brothers and sisters rather than for themselves. However, this should not be interpreted as these young people being uninterested in being involved in processes/activities themselves.
- A strong view emerging from the working group was that the young people who have been involved in this process should have an opportunity to feedback on the process. Members were conscious that 'involving young people' has been the primary concern of the scrutiny inquiry and were, therefore, keen to establish links to young people following the conclusion of the inquiry. Consequently, Members made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

- a) *The Forum sends its findings to all schools in the town, thanking those who were involved in the process, whilst asking each school how they would like us to follow up the scrutiny process.*
- b) *Six months after the Forum has completed its final report the young people involved in the scrutiny process should be consulted to see if anything has changed in their view.*
- c) *The young people involved in the process should be invited to meet the Chair of the Council.*
- d) *That the Forum holds a series of meetings with young people at venues (possibly in schools) outside of the Council in the north/central/south areas of the town.*
- e) *That the Forum should actively pursue the possibility of co-opting young people onto the Forum.*

In relation to recommendation 1 (e) above the Forum may want to consider the likely impact that this will have on way in which the Forum works. For example, the Forum may not be able to discuss certain items with young people present, the format of meetings may need to be changed, as will the times. ***Consequently, it is proposed that whilst the Forum supports the principal of co-opting young people onto the Forum it will undertake a further evidence gathering meeting to discuss the 'pros' and 'cons' of this in more detail and receive evidence from bodies who have co-opted young people onto their membership – such as the Corporate Parent Forum.***

- In addition, young people also need to be aware of what we (as a Forum, and as a Council) can and cannot do, and why this is the case.
- Pupils at the Fens School were aware that there was not so much money in their area of the town, compared with other areas like NDC. The reasons for this need to be explained to the young people.

Recommendation 2

The nature of funding locally needs to be explained to young people so that they are aware of why something is built in one part of town but not in another. This could be achieved through the citizenship and PHSE strands of the schools' curriculum.

Access to Activities

- Children want to be in a safe environment. They want to do things, but sometimes it is hard because of a lack of transport. Consequently,

activities need to be near to where young people live, or transport needs to be provided.

- The effects of divorce and separation were acknowledged as big issues for a number of children in terms of moving away from parents, friends and places/activities they are used to going to. Again transport is key.
- The West View project was cited as an example of good practice because they go out and pick young people up and take them to activities.
- The role of parents is key – they need to be aware of what is going on in the town, and in turn to make their children aware of these (this works both ways though, children need to inform parent too). Generally people need to be more aware of what is going on across the town, and the information about this needs to be improved.
- From a visit to Rossmere Youth Project Members felt that the girls seemed interested in beauty products, and were content to 'hang-out' and were not generally keen to do too much. It was also noted that they could not afford to employ staff to monitor the computer room at night, which was a shame because of the large number of machines locked up and made unavailable at this time.
- From the site visits Members concluded that young people want local (neighbourhood) activities.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the council produces a leaflet outlining all the activities for young people for the north, south and central areas. It is important that the Council works in partnership to produce this.

In relation to recommendation 3 the Forum has been made aware that information sharing is a key consideration of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). Consequently, the Children's Services Department is developing an electronic directory to promote information sharing about activities and events across the town. The Forum welcomed this development.

Recommendation 4

Given the evidence gathered by the Forum from its schools visits the Forum recommends that young people should be considered as much of a priority as the elderly when accessing public/community transport. The Forum suggests that this recommendation is extended to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum, which is currently undertaking an investigation into 'Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision'.

Libraries

- A Member raised the issue that parents can be reluctant to allow young people to have library cards, for fear of them losing books and therefore

having to pay for them. The example of the Brougham Library was given, where out of issue books are available for children to take out and do not have to be brought back – although the vast majority are.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that all the town's libraries (including the mobile library) make out of issue books available to children without library cards.

- The Saturday and Sunday opening of libraries was felt to be very important by the Forum. It needs to continue (and possibly expand to some of the other libraries in the town) and young people need to be made more aware of it being open on these days.

FINDINGS SECTION 2 – COMMUNITY NETWORK CONSULTATION AND MECHANISMS TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN DECISION MAKING

8.9 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. A representative of the Community Network indicated that the consultation would primarily focus on young people aged 16 and over and that they would be willing to feedback their results to the Forum.

8.10 Indeed, the Forum identified consultation with young people as a requirement of the scrutiny inquiry. During the meeting of the (then) Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum on 13th April 2003 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.

- 8.11 As a result the table below outlines the conduct of the first stage of the inquiry.

| Date | Subject |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 3 rd Feb 2004 | Scoping Report presented by the Principal Strategy Development Officer |
| 2 nd March 2004 | Visit to Gateshead Youth Assembly |
| 9 th March 2004 | Mapping local involvement, initiatives, projects and activities and to hear evidence from officers involved in working with young people. |
| 17 th March 2004 | Visit to Abbey Street Community Centre |
| 23 rd March 2004 | Feedback from GYA visit |
| 13 th April 2004 | Forum agrees Interim Report to Full Council. The Forum supported the principle of involving young people in local democracy but agreed to put the inquiry on hold and await the results of the Community Network Consultation to further inform the scrutiny process. |
| 20 th May 2004 | Council – approved Scrutiny's decision to put the inquiry on hold and report back at a later date. |

- 8.12 On the 18th 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.

- 8.13 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.

- 8.14 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.

- 8.15 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.

Recommendation 6

The Council needs a *Citizenship Policy* for all age groups, and the work carried out by the Community Network could usefully link into this. Furthermore, representatives of each of the Council's departments should be involved in the development of a council-wide strategy, and the involvement of the LSP should be sought in relation to adopting this policy. Through a strategy of promoting citizenship young people will be encouraged to become more involved in the running of their local communities.

- 8.16 The (draft) findings of the work commissioned by the Community Network, *The Involvement of Young People in Decision Making in Hartlepool*, are attached at **Appendix A**. The recommendations of the report are listed below.
- 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.
- 8.17 During the meeting of the Forum on 22nd November 2005 Members thanked the Community Network for their report. The Forum was broadly supportive of the recommendations of the Community Network and sought to support

them. Furthermore, during the Working Group meeting of the Forum on the 1st December 2005, Members were informed that the Community Network's findings were due to be presented to Hartlepool Partnership on 16th December 2005. Consequently, it was agreed that the Chair should write a letter to the Partnership to express the Forum's support for the Community Network's report.

Recommendation 7

That the Forum supports the recommendations of the Community Network (outlined in section 8.16) and commends them to the Council as a whole.

- 8.18 Members were broadly supportive of the notion of creating a Youth Council/Forum. This has to be effective, be seen to be effective and have an end result for those involved. It was agreed that this should be one part of a number of formal and informal mechanisms through which young people can become involved. There was broad agreement that all young people were different, had different needs and therefore a variety of mechanisms are required to involve them. These needs can be reflected in a broader Participation Strategy currently under development and discussed below.

Recommendation 8

The Forum supports the development of a Youth Forum/Council, and requests that this is included in the development of the Council's Participation Strategy. The Forum would like the opportunity to comment on this aspect of the Participation Strategy when it is complete.

- 8.19 During the course of the inquiry Members of the Forum became aware of a youth magazine made by young people, for young people called HYPE. This was compared to the youth magazine called STREET produced by the Hartlepool Mail, which is not made by young people. It was suggested that the Council could usefully support and empower young people by transferring its advertising in STREET magazine to the HYPE magazine.

Recommendation 9

- a) That the Council transfers its advertising in youth papers to HYPE magazine so that it is supportive of the principle of involving young people in decisions that affect their lives.***
- b) The Forum recommends that the Council should support positive publicity about children and young people across the town, including in the Council's own Hartbeat magazine.***

FINDINGS SECTION 3 – CO-ORDINATING PARTICIPATION

- 8.20 Over the course of the inquiry the Forum has identified the need for the Council, and town as a whole to develop a co-ordinated approach to working with young people. On 16th December 2004 the Forum stressed the need for participation officers in the Council's Departments to be connected with a strategy for involving young people. The Forum's views reinforced emerging views amongst Council Officers in terms of the need to bring together participation workers (within and outside the local authority) to avoid duplication amongst these workers and share information.
- 8.21 The Forum expressed a desire to establish a mechanism to bring together key workers at a similar time to which a Participation Network was being established. Consequently, a working group of the Forum was established, on 25th February 2005, to explore the relationship between the Involving Young People Inquiry and the newly established Participation Network. The working group met on 3rd March 2005 to discuss these matters with the officers responsible for the Participation Network. The working group indicated that it supported the early stages of development of the Participation Network, and suggested that a progress report on the Participation Network was presented to the Forum at the same time as the Community Network presented its findings to the Forum (i.e. 25th October 2005).

Recommendation 10

The Forum was supportive of the continued development of the Participation Network, and would like further links to be explored between this network, the participation strategy and the Children's Services Forum. It is also recommended that a Member of the Children's Service Scrutiny Forum be appointed as Chair of this body.

- 8.22 A number of related themes have emerged during the course of the inquiry that have highlighted the importance of the Council developing a holistic framework for joined-up activities in which (and through which) young people can become involved. Indeed, on 16th December 2004 Members stressed the need to develop a co-ordinated approach to joined-up working in the town in relation to involving young people, which has been a recurrent theme in the Forum's inquiry ever since.
- 8.23 On the 16th December 2004 the Forum was provided with a presentation on Co-ordinated Hartlepool Youth Provision (CHYP). This body has evolved over the years (and was formerly known as YAG) and brings together partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors. It is a partnership group for the adolescent age groups (predominantly 13-19). CHYP is seeking to develop participation networks, open to all agencies in the town who work with young people. By bringing together the representatives from various agencies that work with young people the intention is to group together the

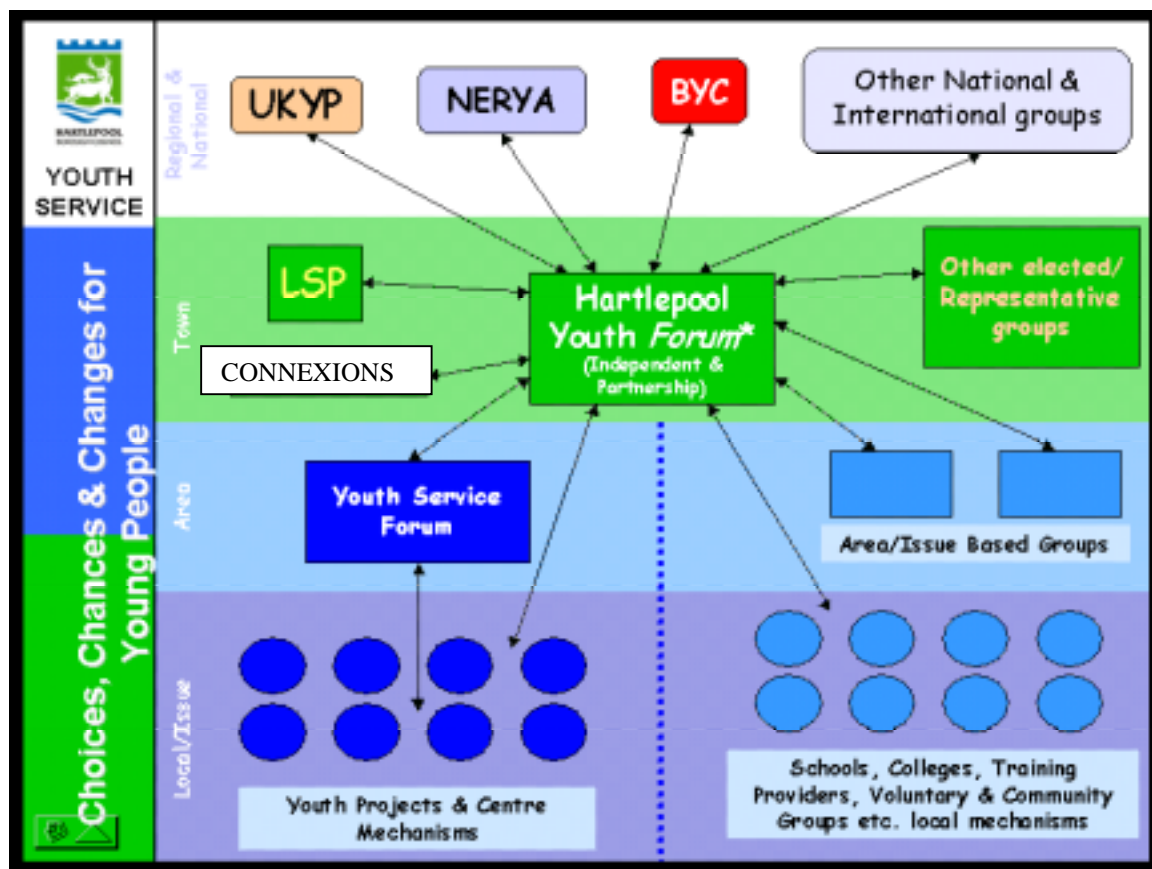
themes identified by practitioners working with young people and link into Council departments and back to the various agencies involved in service delivery.

- 8.24 It should be noted that Members have highlighted the need to focus on young people from a primary school age so that young people do not become hard to reach by the time they are 13. However, Central Government has defined a number of age-group guidelines, which often acts as a focus for local practice, i.e. Connexions for 16-19 year olds, youth work provision for 13-16 year olds, Children's Fund for 5 - 11 with sign-posting for 11 upwards to others, and Sure Start for Under 5s. The green paper "Youth Matters", identifies local authorities as the key player, in coordinating responses to teenagers (and all young people 0-19 as part of Every Child Matters). So, whilst the Youth Service has a statutory responsibility to provide services across the 13-19 age range.
- 8.25 On 25th February 2005 the Forum was presented with a report by the Children's Fund Manager on Participation for 5-13 year olds. Three key issues emerged from this report:
- (a) All Children's Fund services get constant feedback from children about their services. The outcomes of peer evaluations are fed back to the Children's Fund Partnership by children and young people;
 - (b) Child friendly tools have been developed to allow children to provide the feedback on services; and
 - (c) The Children's Fund has received positive reports from inspectors in terms of the involvement of children and young people, and this has been recognised as good practice.

Members commented that the success of the Children's Fund was due to young people being consulted with and listened to.

- 8.26 A further mechanism for co-ordinating the involvement of young people discussed by the Forum was the Youth Service's vision for involving young people (see **figure one** below). It was suggested by some Members on 16th December 2004 that the (then) Culture and Learning Scrutiny Forum could add its weight to this vision by supporting it.

Figure 1: Choices, Chances and Changes for Young People



Key to acronyms: LSP – Local Strategic Partnership
 UKYP – United Kingdom Youth Parliament
 NERYA – North East Regional Youth Assembly
 BYC – British Youth Council

- 8.27 On 25th October 2005 the Forum reconsidered the proposed framework in **Figure 1** and made the following recommendation.

Recommendation 11

That the 'Choices, Chances and Changes for Young People' Framework should be developed, where possible, as a basis for involving young people in the democratic process. Furthermore, links should be made between this framework and the Council's Participation Strategy where possible.

- 8.28 A further proposal from Forum on the 25th October 2005 was that links between school councils and the Neighbourhood Forums should be incorporated into the framework in **Figure 1**. Consequently:

Recommendation 12

The Council should seek to make links between the school councils and the Neighbourhood Forums and that funding streams developed by, and, for young people should be explored through this route.

- 8.29 At the meeting of the Forum on 25th October 2005 the Forum discussed the development of a Participation Strategy for the Children's Services Department. This strategy was broadly welcomed by the Forum and it was felt that a number of the recommendations of the Forum could be linked into the future development of this strategy. Consequently:

Recommendation 13

The Forum supports the development of a Participation Strategy and would like to see linkages developed between this and the Forum's recommendations, and that this strategy should be developed across the town.

- 8.30 Furthermore, given that involving young people has been identified as a key principle of the 'Every Hartlepool Child Matters' document. This document is currently being prepared by the Council, with the co-operation of partners, under a new duty stemming from the Children's Act 2004. Members of the Forum were keen to see the findings of this report incorporated into this document where possible. Consequently:

Recommendation 14

The Forum would like to see the findings of this report submitted as a response to the consultation process for the 'Every Hartlepool Child Matters' report.

- 8.31 It was recognised that the Council is not the only local agency with a responsibility for involving young people, and that connections should be made to other agencies when developing and funding strategies.

Recommendation 15

That the Council should approach outside bodies, for example the PCT, Police and Fire Service in relation to making links to the Council's participation work. Furthermore, given the responsibilities of the Police and PCT for involving young people the Council should seek to approach them for additional funding for developing a participation strategy.

- 8.32 The Forum was supportive of the work being carried out by CHYP and felt that the Council should seek to hold an annual youth conference through which information could be shared amongst young people and youth practitioners (in the Council and voluntary/community sectors).

Recommendation 16

The Forum recommends that the Council should organise an 'annual youth conference' through which information can be shared by young people and youth practitioners, and that connections should be made with the Participation Network here.

- 8.33 At the meeting on the 22nd November 2005 a Member drew attention to a pilot project launched by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) geared towards giving young people the skills to become involved in decision making. Four pilot projects have been chosen in New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas, including in Middlesbrough. Between four and six young people have been selected in each area aged between 15 and 20 to take part in the project and be trained as 'young advisers'. These young advisers will then show community leaders and decision-makers how to engage other young people in community life, regeneration and renewal.

Recommendation 17

The Forum recommends that the Council and Hartlepool NDC explore the possibility of entering into future projects geared towards training 'young advisers'.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 As a result of the evidence gathered by the Forum and the findings it has reached, Members may wish to approve/amend the list of draft recommendations outlined below:

Recommendation 1:

- a) That the Forum sends its findings to all schools in the town, thanking those who were involved in the process, whilst asking each school how they would like us to follow up the scrutiny process.
- b) That six months after the Forum has completed its final report the young people involved in the scrutiny process should be consulted to see if anything has changed in their view.
- c) That the young people involved in the process should be invited to meet the Chair of the Council.
- d) That the Forum holds a series of meetings with young people at venues (possibly in schools) outside of the Council in the north/central/south areas of the town.
- e) That the Forum should actively pursue the possibility of co-opting young people onto the Forum.

Recommendation 2

That the nature of local funding needs to be explained to young people so that they are aware of why something is built in one part of town but not in another. This could be achieved through the citizenship and PHSE strands of the schools' curriculum.

Recommendation 3

That the Council produces a leaflet outlining all the activities for young people for the north, south and central areas. It is important that the Council works in partnership to produce this.

Recommendation 4

Given the evidence gathered by the Forum from its schools visits the Forum recommends that young people should be considered as much of a priority as the elderly when accessing public/community transport. The Forum suggests that this recommendation is extended to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum, which is currently undertaking an investigation into 'Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision'.

Recommendation 5

That all the town's libraries (including the mobile library) make out of issue books available to children without library cards.

Recommendation 6

That the Council needs a *Citizenship Policy* for all age groups, and the work carried out by the Community Network could usefully link into this. Furthermore, representatives of each of the Council's departments should be involved in the development of a council-wide strategy, and the involvement of the LSP should be sought in relation to adopting this policy. Through a strategy of promoting citizenship young people will be encouraged to become more involved in the running of their local communities.

Recommendation 7

That the Forum supports the recommendations of the Community Network (outlined in section 8.16) and commends them to the Council as a whole.

Recommendation 8

That the Forum supports the development of a Youth Forum/Council, and requests that this is included in the development of the Council's Participation Strategy. The Forum would like the opportunity to comment on this aspect of the Participation Strategy when it is complete.

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That the Forum was supportive of the continued development of the Participation Network, and would like further links to be explored between this network, the participation strategy and the Children's Services Forum. It is also recommended that a Member of the Children's Service Scrutiny Forum be appointed as Chair of this body.

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Recommendation 17

The Forum recommends that the Council and Hartlepool NDC explore the possibility of entering into future projects geared towards training 'young advisers'.

COUNCILLOR JANE SHAW CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

To Follow

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:

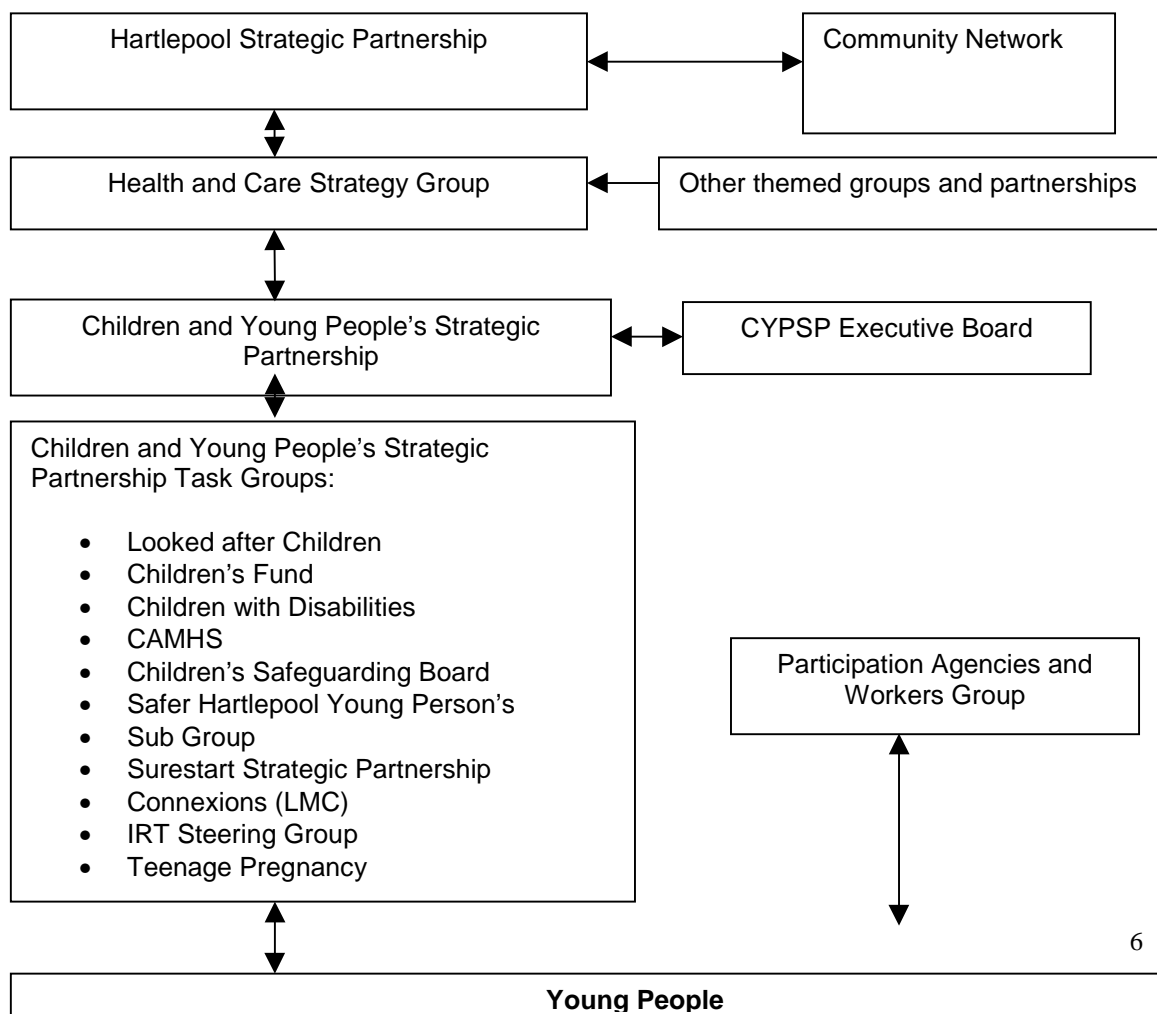
- a) To promote an increased understanding of 'participation' work throughout the town by providing clear definitions and working examples of participation work.
- b) To generate a set of principles for good practice in 'involving young people'.

Appendix A

- 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.

Appendix A

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.

Appendix A

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.

Appendix A

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.

Appendix A

- 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.

Appendix A

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.

Appendix A

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 Appendix A

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 | Involvement in staff interviews | 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 |
| | Small group of mixed age range Part of project planning group | Meeting held at Hyped base | | Young people support peers around substance use Young people inform peers about process |

4.1 Appendix A

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

4.1 Appendix A

| Who | What | Where and When | How | What were the outcomes |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Regeneration (Neighbourhood Action Plans) | <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> | Ideas and consultation methods fed into Hartlepool participation Network | <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> |
| B76 | <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 Appendix A

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

4.1 Appendix A

| 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.

Appendix A

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

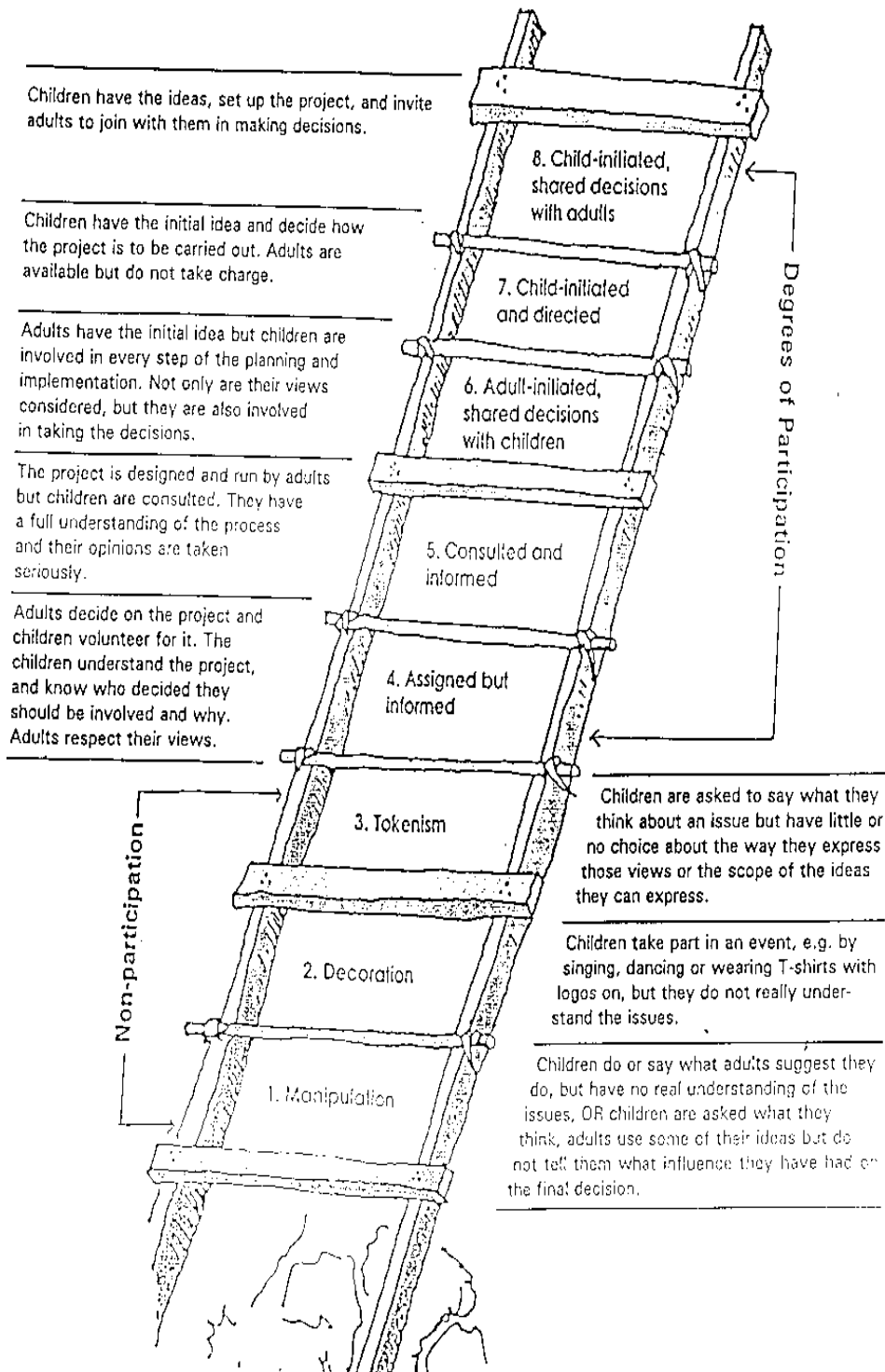
Agency Participants in Stakeholder Event

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 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)



CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM REPORT

20th December 2005



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: 'CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS' – INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE INQUIRY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek clarification about the Forum's position on 'Children's Champions', with a view to incorporating a recommendation on this matter into Involving Young People Final Report.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The notion of appointing Councillors and Resident Representatives as 'Children's' Champions' has been suggested as a possible recommendation of the Involving Young People Inquiry during the course of the investigation. This matter was discussed by a Working Group (established by this Forum at its meeting on 22nd November 2005) on 1st December 2005. The Working Group agreed that the recommendation should be removed from the Draft Final Report on Involving Young People (see item 4.1 on the agenda), and be discussed as a separate item. Once the Forum has discussed this potential recommendation it can be incorporated into the Involving Young People Final Report with Members support.
- 2.2 It has been suggested during the Involving Young People Inquiry that Councillors and Resident Representatives (in their capacity as representatives on the Neighbourhood Forums) should adopt the role of 'Children's' Champions'. Thereby 'championing' young people and acting as voices for them in the Council and on the Neighbourhood Forums.
- 2.3 The Forum has made a couple of suggestions in relation to this matter that need to be discussed by Members during the meeting:
- a) that every Councillor should act in this capacity (which would provide a large number of advocates for young people but potentially reduce the focus of the role); or
 - b) to have a 'Children's' Champion' in every ward (reducing the number of advocates but potentially enhancing the focus of the role).

- c) In addition it was suggested at the Working Group meeting that Resident Representatives could also fulfil this role. Members may want to discuss this in more detail.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the report is noted and the Forum agrees whether to incorporate a recommendation on 'Children's Champions' into the Involving Young People Final Report.

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Hartlepool Borough Council
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CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM REPORT

20th December 2005



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN – SCOPING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the progress towards a draft Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for consideration by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum during February and March 2005.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Hartlepool Borough Council has a new duty under the Children's Act 2004 to prepare and publish a CYPP in co-operation with key partners. This item forms part of the Budget and Policy Framework for the Council, as set out in Part Four of the Council's Constitution. Consequently, Scrutiny is statutorily involved in this process prior to the draft Final Report being submitted to Council in April 2006.
- 2.2 Since the beginning of September 2005 officers of the Children's Services Department have been engaged in discussions with a wide range of partners and other interested parties in the development of a first consultative draft of the CYPP, published on 16th November 2005.
- 2.3 The consultation period on this first draft plan runs until 16th December 2005. This will then lead to the production of a second draft plan in January 2006.
- 2.4 Cabinet will meet in mid-January 2006 to consider the second draft of the CYPP. Following this meeting the second draft CYPP will be sent to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum for consideration. Public consultation on this document begins on 25th January 2006 and ends 27th February 2006. Consequently, it may be possible to feed the results of this consultation into the meeting of the Forum on 7th March 2006.
- 2.5 Members should be aware that this is the first time a CYPP has been produced by the Authority. The Government expects that the CYPP should evolve over its first years of existence, and this will be reflected in Hartlepool as the Children's Services Department works ever more closely with partner

organisations. It should also be noted that, given this is the first year CYPPs are being developed across the country, best practice will also develop over time.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 For the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to comment on the draft CYPP as part of the Budget and Policy Framework process for this item.

4. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 Outlined below are the proposed terms of reference for the inquiry:-

- 1) To consider the appropriateness of the proposed format of the CYPP in relation to the:-
 - a) Full version;
 - b) Summary for adults;
 - c) Summary for young people (This is being prepared with and for young people and because proper engagement and consultation with young people takes a significant amount of time, this may not be complete until the third draft stage. It may not, therefore, be completed in time for Scrutiny to examine it); and
 - d) Availability in other formats.
- 2) To consider and comment on the key aspects of the content of the draft CYPP, in particular:-
 - a) The accuracy of the section on the Hartlepool context;
 - b) The appropriateness of vision statements and key principles; and
 - c) The relevance of the priorities identified in the section dealing with the five Every Child Matters outcomes ('Be Healthy', 'Stay Safe', 'Enjoy and Achieve', 'Make a Positive Contribution', and 'Achieve Economic Well-Being').

- 4.2 During the Scrutiny Investigation Members should be aware that, although the responsibility for preparing and publishing the plan lies with the Local Authority, the CYPP is a joint plan, which is being developed in partnership. Consequently, the CYPP will reflect a range of agreements between those involved in the process.

5. POTENTIAL AREAS OF INQUIRY / SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- 5.1 Given the tight timescales for this inquiry the Forum may want to consider evidence provided by the Children's Services Consultant who is the Temporary Lead on the Preparation and Publication of the CYPP.

6. PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

6.1 Detailed below is the proposed timetable for the review to be undertaken:-

7th February 2006 – Evidence to be provided by the Children's Services Consultant: Temporary lead on the preparation and publication of the CYPP.

7th March 2006 – Any further evidence requested by the Forum to be presented to this meeting. In addition, the Forum must agree a draft final report for submission to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 10th March 2006 and Cabinet on 29th March 2006.

6.2 It may be possible to arrange an additional meeting between 7th February and 7th March 2006 if Members feel that this is necessary.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members are recommended to agree the remit of the Scrutiny investigation as outlined in section 4.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- i. Every Hartlepool Child Matters: A Strategic Plan for the Provision of Services to the Children and Young People of Hartlepool (working title first draft)

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