

Report from the Assistant Director, Partnerships and Early Intervention

Update on Involvement and Participation work in York

Summary

This reports sets out the main recent and forthcoming initiatives in the work to promote the participation and involvement of children and young people in shaping services in the city. No decisions are required, but Members' comments are invited.

Background

This update is provided under 12 sub-headings, of which the first is the most substantial.

1) Community Planning

One of the key aims of the Involvement Strategy is to develop an approach which ensures the involvement of children and young people in local decision making. In recent years, strong links have been built up with key individuals cross departmentally within Neighbourhood Management, the Children's Trust Unit, Children's Services, and Young People's Services, who have formed a project to support this work.

A need was identified to design robust processes to support the following:

1. Assessing local needs as well as aspirations (mapping)
2. Methods of engagement which could be adapted and used across the city in order to give as broad an opportunity for children and young people to engage as possible.
3. Resources and knowledge
4. Commissioning ward committee local improvement schemes relating to young people

The reasons why this was considered important were articulated as being:

1. To create enhanced shared knowledge on which to prioritise engagement, tailor engagement activities and local decision-making.
2. To support local members as community champions by offering effective opportunities to engage with young people.

3. To enhance resources through partnership working e.g. use of ward committee newsletters 'Your Ward' and the 'Schools Out' publication for information and feedback to young people. To promote shared knowledge of events new initiatives across directorates and therefore promote participation.
4. To create a greater understanding of what is possible in terms of ward committees commissioning local improvement schemes e.g. the ability to create new, commission additional, or adapt existing provision/services.

It is envisaged that once a process is agreed then this would be implemented on a rolling programme. Piloting of different approaches will be undertaken by the Neighbourhood Management Unit through ward committee and supporting events.

It is envisaged that a process of *mapping* would indicate key areas in which to commence the cycle and progress to the engagement element. These indications would be considered alongside ward committee neighbourhood action plan ambition statements and planned programmes of activity with key partners in order to identify a priority order for engagement. It is envisaged that the process will be offered to all ward committees and will be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals by the project team in order for ongoing improvement. The results of the mapping exercises will be available to ward planning teams therefore contributing at a very early stage to local action planning and decision-making.

At the same time, a package of engagement options will be put together including direct consultation/engagement through:

- Schools (incorporated into the school day)
- Ward Committee events
- Youth provision – fixed and detached/mobile
- Other events organised by internal and external providers (piggy backing)
- Other opportunities as they present themselves

Collation of the ward information would be undertaken by the Neighbourhood Management Unit with support from other partners. Collated information would be presented to ward planning teams but will be available to all project partners.

This process can deliver both direct prioritisation of ward committee budget spend as well as identification of long standing and topical local issues and concerns from a young person's perspective and therefore can feed into decision making on a number of levels.

A real asset to the outlined process is that there are already a number of established resources which can be utilised to feed back to young people, e.g.

- Your Ward newsletter (delivered to every household in the ward quarterly)
- Schools Out Publication. (delivered to all schools pupils and available through community venues)
- Ward web pages, Yortime and Yor o K websites
- School Council meetings
- School year assemblies
- Youth Work Sessions

In terms of *timescales*, the mapping element of the cycle can begin from April 2008.

It is envisaged that once a process is agreed then this would be *implemented* on a rolling programme. How often direct engagement would be possible or desirable would be identified once we were some way into the first cycle with the wards initially prioritised by the mapping process.

The mapping, collation and direct engagement will be the most people resource-intensive of the outlined process. It is envisaged however that through partnership working this can be managed through existing resources within the project partner's teams and that the benefits of establishing this level of engagement will outweigh the initial outlay in terms of time.

2) Coordination and Training:

A further key element of the Involvement Strategy is developing interagency cooperation, coordination and training. To promote this, the Yor-Ok Involvement sub-group is hosting a conference on 7th May 2008 at Next Generation, Hull Road, York.

This conference will:

- Draw on good practice in York and look to see how involvement can be more effective in the future
- Focus on practical skills in developing involvement work including: using new technologies, creative approaches, working with under 5's, inclusive practice, involving young people in governance and commissioning, involving children and young people in recruitment, equalities, involving parents, volunteering and commissioning.
- Share the lessons of effective involvement and how to bring them into everyday practice .

Bookings for the event are now being taken. Members would be welcome to attend.

3) Children and Young People's Plan:

A paper is being prepared for Yor-OK Board recommending that a new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) be developed for publication in April 2009. This is due to the pace of developments in the children and young people's agenda.

There will be in-depth consultation necessary which will build upon the work for the 2007 plan which:

- Drew responses from 4000 children and young people;
- Involved auditing 45 pieces of involvement and consultative work including targeted work with disabled children and young people and minority communities;

- Included 'supported' postcards consultations with children and young people; postcard consultations with parents through schools and events in the City Centre;
- Ensured young people were involved in developing the final format of the plan including a children's version and young people's version and creating a DVD to support the plan.

The Yor-Ok Involvement group will be developing a consultation plan to support this development. A verbal update will be given at the Young People's Working Group.

4) Commissioning:

A commissioning framework is being developed for services for children in the city. This will:

- Build on strong tradition of partnership working;
- Realise efficiencies; innovation; more responsive local services; increasingly shared agendas / shared performance objectives;
- Increase emphasis (through thematic commissioning eg. risky behaviours) on delivering services in context of locally identified need.

It is planned that children and young people will have a clear and meaningful part to play in the full commissioning cycle, which will entail some work to support training for the young people (general and specific skills) ensuring young people are part of:

- Development of commissioning criteria/prioritisation
- Assessment of proposals
- On-going evaluation of work

As work progresses, further reports will be made to the YPWG.

5) Schools Council Conferences:

York has developed over the past five years a highly successful model of holding a conference for student councils from York schools.

The most recent event was for York secondary schools. Nearly all secondary schools attended including Applefields and for the first time Bootham school. The day was funded through a grant from Connexions and was very ably organised by students from Joseph Rowntree school with great support from staff at the school.

Note should be taken of the amount of work put in by the school to organise the day. The organising group containing students from across the age range met weekly from November and were always pro-active and prepared – as proved by the way the day ran so smoothly.

The event included workshops on promoting effective councils, dance and young people's vision for York. The day concluded with a mini question time based around the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

6) Hungate:

Young people's involvement in the Hungate project has been raised at the Show Me That I Matter group, and officers are working with the project team to ensure that young people's views about the move of services are taken into account..

It was agreed at the Show Me That I Matter Panel on April 7th that a group of Looked After Young People would meet to oversee a formal consultation process with Looked After Young People about their views on the move of Children's Services to Hungate. The consultation will start soon and will feed back to the Show Me I Matter Panel as well as Children's Services Managers and their representation on the Hungate project. Officers will ensure that their views are fully taken into account by the Hungate Project Team.

7) Leaving care leaflet:

A group of seven young people have been involved in writing a leaflet which tells other young people who are about to leave care about the services that are available to them and their entitlements. They have worked with a design company to write the content for the leaflet, brief the designers and take photographs that will be included. The leaflet should be finalised and printed in the next two weeks.

8) Yorkash:

The next year of YorKash finding has begun. We have recruited a group of 20 young people who have just begun the process and are looking at how they are going to publicise the grants. As discussed and agreed at the last YPWG meeting, they are looking to fund larger projects (£5k to £30k) that engage with more disadvantaged young people.

9) It's Up 2U:

It's Up 2U is running again; we are just in the process of promoting the scheme and are working closely with the police PCSO's to get the message into schools. The winning group from last year visited Eurodisney in February half term and had a great time. We have not yet secured but are still seeking a major sponsor this year so money from Yorkash is being used to underwrite the prize at present. The *It's Up 2U* scheme still provides the opportunity for groups to apply for small grants of up to £150 providing this is used in a project that benefits their community.

10) Health consultation:

We are working with a group of students from York University to develop a questionnaire about healthy lifestyles which will be distributed across secondary schools in the City to find out young people's perceptions of health issues and services/ strategies that are designed to address their needs. The students have worked with the Healthy Schools group and the PCT to ensure that results from the questionnaire can be fed back in and influence policy and practice. The questionnaires should be going into schools at the beginning of this term.

11) York Youth Charter Mark:

The North Yorkshire Chartermark has been updated to take account of other involvement standards (including Hear By Right, Health's Your Welcome and the new Information Advice and Guidance standards). The mark has four possible levels - a fail and then a bronze, silver or gold award. (See attached example of the information pack). We have piloted these in four clubs (the skate park, open access Duke of Edinburgh, a drop-in at York High and Castlegate). In each project a group of young people have been recruited and trained and undertaken the assessment. Currently one project has scored a Gold Charter Mark and one a Silver (the others are still in the process).

12) The Heard:

This is a group of young people who have used mental health services and are now working to influence them. Members from *the Heard* represent young people on the CAMHS board and the School Counselling Advisory Group. The Voice and Influence Team are working with Limetrees to look at future projects for young people's involvement in this area.

Options

As this report is for information, it does not present options as such. Some may however emerge from the discussion.

Analysis

Likewise, the report is essentially a background document, so does not contain further analysis.

Corporate Objectives

Involving children and young people meets the Council objectives of:

- Encouraging all Children and Young People to become Active Citizens
- Consulting with children and young people about the future of the City and about provision by the council.

Implications

- **Financial** No implications.
- **Human Resources (HR)** No implications.
- **Equalities** No implications.
- **Legal** No implications.
- **Crime and Disorder** No implications.

- **Information Technology (IT)** No implications.
- **Other** No implications.

Risk Management

There are no risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

The Young Peoples Working Group is asked to note the developments outlined in this report.

Reason: to update Members and to inform further involvement work with young people.

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annex: Youth Charter Information Pack.