

**To: Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup>. October 2011**

**Report of: Young Peoples Engagement – Scrutiny Panel**

**Title of Report: Progress report on the Young Peoples Engagement project**

## **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To update the committee on the progress of this project

**Scrutiny lead members: Councillors Campbell, Sinclair and Sanders**

**Policy Framework: Strong and Active Communities**

**Recommendation(s):**

## **Introduction**

1. This report provides an update on progress within this project. To remind members the previous committee set a Panel to work on a youth engagement project the members are Councillors Campbell, Sinclair and Sanders. The full scope of the project is attached at **Appendix 1** but in brief it is a 4 step programme delivered by the Positive Futures Team working with young people from challenging backgrounds. There are 3 overriding aims:
  - To work with and support young people who are disadvantaged
  - To provide lasting skills for the young people involved
  - To encourage and launch a group of young people to form the first “Positive Futures Youth Forum” and do all possible to sustain this as a positive engagement, listening and involvement group for the Council and its partners
2. It is important at this point to “set the scene” for this work so that when members are judging progress they can do so based on the starting point for the young people we are focusing on. The Positive Futures Team works with around 100 referred young people each year who live in the City. Young people are referred for a number of reasons; offending or risk of offending behaviour, drugs misuse and other issues that make them “high risk”. Referrals come via an established process

and many are the subject of a contract of some sort to change behaviour and/or are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The main objectives of the programme are to support young people to:

- Improve their life skills
- Access education, training and employment
- Access activities
- Address their offending behaviour
- Challenge issues of drugs misuse and sexual health through support and education

The many complex issues and needs presented by these young people mean that what may seem like small life style changes, such as being somewhere on time on a regular basis, are in fact huge achievements in what are often chaotic lives.

### **What has happened so far**

3. Over the past 5 months Positive Futures staff have identified and worked with 11 young people selected from the wider engagement work undertaken within the service. This work represents stages 1 and 2 – Engage and Communicate - within this project. Young people are being provided with a range of support and skills essential to improvement and to allow them to engage further within the programme. This work represents stage 3 – Training/Education - within this project. The detailed data describing the project is attached at **appendix 2**.

The work with young people is at various stages. Some young people are more able or keen to engage than others and the work to move them forward requires patience, perseverance and skill. We cannot hope to be successful with all but any input has a positive affect on the lives of the individuals engaged. The hope is that we will have about 5 young people to form a Positive Futures Youth Forum. The Panel is still hopeful of this outcome and we continue to support and encourage within the programme.

### **Examples of Engagement Activities**

4. Four of the young people have successfully completed a 1 week coaching course to earn their Football Association Level 1 Coaching Certificate, they are now organising a football tournament in their communities and through this demonstrating confidence, independence as well as organisational skills.
5. The group are meeting monthly to talk collectively and monitor their progress. In addition each person has a weekly 121 with someone from the Positive Futures Team to discuss individual progress and personal issues.

6. Overall engagement is good but as discussed earlier in the report young people are at various stages and so vary in their abilities and willingness to engage to the level we expect of them. There are in particular regular attendance and contribution difficulties. The Positive Futures Team are considering new and innovative ways to improve this engagement by providing activities and challenges that are appealing to the group.

### **Next Steps**

7. One of the major focuses is to launch the concept of a Positive Futures Youth Forum using young people identified within the programme. The intention is to support a small group to make a film. The subject matter will be of their choice but the aim set for them is to present a positive and realistic impression of themselves and what they have to offer. This piece of work will allow the young people to gain skills, use their own voices, become more confident and through this begin to provide the opportunities for The Council to have an insight into a group who are generally “hard to reach” within community development.
8. To make this a worthwhile experience that can provide a sound foundation and give a positive launch, we are looking for support and will be making approaches to institutions such as Oxford Brookes. We are also talking to Jack FM, a local radio station, about a media project around the same theme.
9. We of course continue to support and encourage.

<b>Name and contact details of author:-</b>
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**List of background papers: None**

**Version number: 3**

## **Appendix 1 Young Peoples Engagement**

### **A partnership project between the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee and the Positive Futures Team**

#### **Aims**

Our overriding aims in delivering this work are:

For a group of young people to be given:

- Lasting skills that they can use and develop for their own and/or the community they live in.
- Increased confidence and improved reputation with their peers and local community.
- A stake in their communities
- An opportunity to be involved and make a difference
- A broader understanding and engagement with those people who help to shape where they live

For the Council:

- A group of skilled young people who are able to play a meaningful and supportive role in regeneration
- Lasting skills in the community
- A community based insight into communication and engagement
- To learn in partnership with communities
- The possibility of a Positive Futures Youth Engagement Forum

#### **Method**

Young people are key to successful regeneration. Their opportunities, attitudes, skills, education and contributions are pointers along the path to sustained improvement in outcomes. They must be involved in a meaningful way but for some this is easier than others. The life skills gained to date by some of our young people make them ill equipped and often unwilling to contribute to the development of their communities in a positive way. They find themselves suspicious of those in authority, lacking in confidence and respect and therefore un-accepting of the view that they can make a difference or have anything to say that will be listened to. It is this group of young people we want to work with.

We will build a programme around 4 principle stages:

- **Engage**
- **Communicate**
- **Training/Education**

- **Have your say**

## **Engage**

A direct approach to young people with little confidence or trust that asks them to engage and contribute within the development of their communities will be unsuccessful. They will not see the point or have the interest in getting involved. We need to begin building trust and relationships and get to know each other. The hook for this is to engage a number of groups in activities they like...football, dance, music etc. Through this we can identify young people who can succeed, with support, through our programme

## **Communicate**

Within smaller groups to begin to talk individually to young people about the project, what is in it for them and us and what skills they may need to play an equal part. The skills needed are likely to vary and could be anything from improved reading and other practical mainstream educational skills to team building and personal adult developments skills. It is important that we don't set youngster up to fail so this is an important gateway within the project; both the young person and we need to show and see some practical interest in their development and this project

## **Training/Education**

To work with about 10 young people to improve their skills and further engage and interest them in this project. We cannot second guess the menu of skills so trainers and development workers will be commissioned as needs arise. To begin to introduce concepts such as

## **Have your say**

- What does community mean for you
- What do you want to say about where you live and the opportunities available to you
- How can young people make a difference in Oxford
- Young Peoples engagement forums – what sort of animal should they be

For those remaining young people to support them in presenting the views they want the Council and others to hear through the media of their choice and guarantee them a response. We will have at this point the starting point for the Positive Futures Youth Engagement Panel which will need development and support.....that is another project

## **Timescale**

It is difficult to put a timescale on this development work, the variables are many! It is hoped that we can complete the programme with 5 young people from our target group within 12 months.

Pat Jones/Neil Holman  
March 2011

## Appendix 2

### Data Analysis

Overall numbers

Period	No of newcomers	No of YP actively engaged	No of YP that dropped out	Total
May & June	11	5	0	11
July – Sept	0	5	0	11

Background Data

Disability

Total Number	% of total cohort
1	9.1%

Age Group

Age	% of cohort
< 10	
10 - 12	18%
13-15	73%
16-18	
19+	9%

Gender & Ethnicity

Gender	% of cohort
Male	82%
Female	18%

Ethnicity	% of cohort
White British	82%
Mixed	18%

Referral Point –

Organisation	Number
Schools	8
YOS	3

Engagement Activity:

Activity	Male	Female
Football	5	0
Bowling	3	0

3 young people yet to engage in activity

### Training/Skills Support

	<b>Number</b>
FA Level 1	4
Leadership	
Literacy/Numeracy	
College	
Confidence building	11
General Life Skills	5

### Location

<b>Area</b>	<b>Number</b>
North East	2
South East	7
Cowley	2