Newcastle University

School of Architecture Planning and Landscape

Community engagement with young people – an examination of LPAs requirements within the North East

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April 2013

Introduction

1.1   This research forms part of the preparatory research for a possible community engagement facility at Newcastle University within the School of Architecture Planning and Landscape. This would provide an opportunity for young people within the North East region to become engaged with planning issues of their localities whilst giving students skills required to facilitate engagement activities during their studies. This work considers the current engagement efforts with young people of the 13 Local Authorities within the North East region. This engagement will be assessed on its depth and breadth, based on LA's current aims, methods and priorities:

1.   Within documents scoping possible activities (Statements of Community involvement and cross Council Community Engagement Strategies.)
2.   Based on community engagement work already undertaken as part of the LA's preparation and delivery of its current planning strategies.

1.2   Developing Neighbourhood plans within the LA's have also been noted, as these may require particular engagement efforts with young people due to their proposed inclusive nature. There will be key limitations in the accuracy of the research presented due to method; information is limited to the webpages and documents made available by the LA's on the internet. However this will provide an initial insight to the current undertaking of community engagements by Local Authorities which can be considered accurate in February 2013 based on the method outlined above.

Local Authority	Council Engagement Strategy		Statement of Community Involvement		Consultation documentation for policy		Neighbourhood plans	
	Present?	Young people?	Present?	Young people?	Present?	Young people?	Present?	Current stage
1. Darlington	CES						Sadberge	Consultation stage for proposed plan area.
2. Durham	CES						Gainford and Langton Parish	Consultation stage for proposed plan area.
							Great Aycliffe	Neighbourhood area approved.
3. Gateshead	CDS						Bensham and Saltwell, Deckham, North Felling, Sunderland Road & Teams	All plans approved in 2005.
4. Hartlepool	CCS						Headland	Consultation stage for proposed plan area.
							Hartlepool rural area	Neighbourhood boundary approved.
5. Middlesbrough	CCS						Marton West	Undergoing public consultation.
6. Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	CES						-	
7. North Tyneside	CEF						Fish Quay	Plan area approved.
8. Northumberland	CES						Allendale	At consultation stage of draft plan.
							Alnwick & Denwick, Tarset & Greystead, Morpeth, Ponteland	Consultation stage for proposed plan area
9. Northumberland National Park	?				?		Tarset and Greystead	Consultation stage for proposed plan area – part of which under Northumberland LA
10. Redcar & Cleveland	?						Skelton & Brotton Parish	Draft plan prepared undergoing public consultation.
							South Bank	At Consultation stage.
11. South Tyneside	CIS						-	
12. Stockton-On-Tees	CES						-	
13. Sunderland	CCS				?		-	

Table One: Summary of documentation available and concern for young people. Shading indicates present.

LPA	Community engagement aims of LPA	Priority groups for engagement by LPA	Involvement methods of LPA within planning (proposed in SCI)	Engagement with young people
1. Darlington	Darlington Borough Council (2010) in SCI: "We want to improve the way we involve you in making planning policy and in making decisions on planning applications. We also want to encourage more of you to get involved. We hope to do this by making it as easy as possible, and by making sure that you are only involved while plans or proposals can still be changed in response to your comments." Principle aim of Community Engagement Strategy (DBC, 2007) "to ensure a bigger say and a better deal for our communities." Visionary goals of CES: " An area creating and sharing prosperity, A location for learning, achievement and leisure, A place for living safely and well, A high quality environment with excellent communication links."	SCI (DBC, 2010) states key importance on increasing involvement from a wider section of the community with particular effort in involving groups that haven't traditionally been included in planning decisions; young people, those with disabilities and the ethnic-minority population. Specific consideration for young people under title of 'community diversity' in the SCI. Young people seen as a priority group within the council as a whole, addressed through "Children's and young people's plan" (DBC, 2007). Engagement in schools shown through 'Extended schools' and 'Schools cluster initiative'. DBC (2007) states success in council engagements with young people. (Full descriptions of these consultations – see Council's equalities Impact assessments.	Promotes the use of Planning Aid North to groups with little experience of the planning system, including young people and ethnic-minorities. (DBC, 2010) Orientation events will also be organised for representatives of these hard-to-reach groups. Other more general involvement methods include (DBC, 2010): - Local media - Notices in public - Advertisements/leaflets/letters - Website - Open events/exhibitions - Events for specific community representatives/organisations/individuals e.g focus groups – Specific events for those needing particular encouragement for involvement. Specific consultations with young people proposed for developing the LDF by Equalities Impact Assessment Questionnaire through schools and the Councils Youth Service. (DBC, 2009a)	23 consultation events and meetings for preferred options for the LDF core strategy in October 2009, which included 'hard to reach' groups i.e. young people (DBC, 2009b) However it's unclear of the breadth and depth of this engagement specific to young people.

2. Durham	Aim of SCI (DCC, 2012): "to work with our communities and other interested third parties to deliver sustainable development within the County - in the right place and at the right time." DCC (2010) aims for Community and Engagement Strategy "to build and support strong, active and inclusive communities in County Durham and to encourage people to take an active part in making decisions and influencing services across the County".	SCI (DCC, 2012) states young people as a 'hard to reach group' due to social expectations. Evaluation of community engagement will include measurement by "the level of actual involvement of 'hard to reach' groups." Notes the group to need 'targeting' for involvement with neighbourhood plans. In CES (DCC, 2010) a key priority is the inclusion of engagement; "Engage with all communities, particularly underrepresented groups and communities of interest and identity." Within this importance is placed on the inclusion of young people, noted as a key group within a new approach to community engagement.	Proposed methods in SCI (DCC, 2012) for preparing all Local Development Documents (all of which will be used to consult hard to reach groups i.e. including young people, bar email): - Council website - Public exhibitions - Community forums - Briefing workshops - Community Paper - Focus groups - Draft documents - Press releases - Email - Master planning SCI (DCC, 2012) states existing networks of groups such as meetings and forums as a key way into engaging hard to reach groups.	Two of Durham County Council's 14 Area Action Partnership's have received membership with Investment for Children after facilitating strong engagement with young people (of which some issues were planning related). http://www.iic-uk.org/pages/projects/aaps-area-action-partnerships.php No reporting of engagement activities specific to young people in consultation documents.

| 3. Gateshead | Aim of SCI (GC, 2007) is to "take a more inclusive approach to involving the general public, stakeholders and other consultees in planning issues and processes in ways that everyone can understand"

Community Development Strategy vision (GC, 2008): "Local people are able to challenge, influence and shape decisions that affect their lives and contribute to active and sustainable communities"
"1. Consultation, engagement and capacity building seeks to involve all sections of the community and meet the diverse needs of all residents.
2. Local people are empowered and confident that they can influence, shape and have an impact on new policies and service developments from an early stage.
3. Local people, community organisations, employees and employers who are confident and have the skills to involve and develop communities.
4. Communities that are active in identifying needs and opportunities for change and are committed to developing solutions and improving their local area.
5. Community development work is co-ordinated across Gateshead with partners sharing skills, knowledge and resources ensuring value for money for local people." | SCI (GC, 2007) emphases inclusive engagement including hard to reach groups (the young, old and minority ethnic or religious communities). Hard to reach group definition (GC, 2007): "any population grouping of significant size that, because of a shared location, identity, interest or a pattern of societal discrimination and/or victimisation, is difficult for local authorities and service providers to engage with."

Community development strategy (GC, 2008) young people priority for community empowerment: "Further develop engagement mechanisms with children and young people" | Consultation methods in SCI (GC, 2007):
- Planning for real, enquiry by design: "Helps communities develop simple models to put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved… People of all abilities and ages find it easy and enjoyable to engage in, so can reach 'hard to reach' groups, such as young people or those with literacy difficulties. Can be a useful way of gaining an understanding of local issues and concerns for both the planners and the community."
- Events: Public meetings, Council meetings, open days/ roadshows, displays, press releases
- Written: Pubic notices on sites, advertisements, written consultations
- Active: User comments and complaints, Focus group, Questionnaire survey, User panel, resident panel, Ballots, Participatory appraisal,
- Electronic; website, email, visualisations | (See Newcastle – joint One Core Strategy)

Consultation for the Neighbourhood plans including specific targeting of young people through the following (SRC, 2005):
- An outreach programme. One of the four outreach sessions for the Sunderland Road plan was held for young people at St. James Village Hall in January 2006 (SRC, 2006). It aimed to consider improvements for the local area.
- A schools programme with 9 schools included surveys from 183 Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Graffiti wall used in 'drop-in' sessions to give feedback. |

4. Hartlepool	SCI (HBC, 2010) highlights the main aim stated within Hartlepools Community Strategy: "empower individuals, groups and communities and increase the involvement of citizens in all decisions that affect their lives". SCI (HBC, 2010) aim of SCI (HBC, 2010): "involve the community, including voluntary and community groups, local residents, businesses, landowners, statutory agencies and others with an interest, in the planning system" Corporate Consultation Strategy (HBC, 2006) aims: "• To ensure that the Council communicates effectively and efficiently with all parts of the community; • To ensure that the people of Hartlepool and those from outside the borough can communicate effectively and efficiently with the Council."	Consultation within planning should include provision for (HBC, 2010): "those groups who might face particular barriers to participation, for example young people, people with disabilities, the elderly, people with learning or communication difficulties and black and ethnic minority groups." "A representative sample of responses from consultation exercises will be analysed to identify any problems in engaging with traditionally under-represented groups." (HBC, 2010) In CCS (HBC, 2006) young people are considered within listed consultation groups under 'population sub-groups'. Inclusion statement can be seen to relate to young people - "Every effort should be made to include all relevant sections of the community, even if they are seen as "hard to reach".	Methods for people with little experience in the planning system i.e young people (HBC, 2010): - "Promote the services offered by Planning Aid North amongst... young people." - "Work with the Hartlepool Partnership and the Hartlepool Community Network to develop their roles as 'champions', encouraging participation in planning matters in their local communities and providing a community view on planning matters" Other methods (HBC ,2010): - "arranging specific events for groups who need particular encouragement to get involved, as required" - Open participation events/exhibitions - Events e.g focus groups, for representation of a particular segment of the community. - Council website – downloadable documents - Notices/advertisements/letters "The Council is also keen to raise the general awareness of what planning does and will talk, on request, to schools and colleges" (HBC, 2010)	No recorded specific consultations with young people for Local plans when looking at Local Plan Consultation Statement (2012), however a range of exhibitions in a range of locations did aim to consult the whole community.

| 5. Middlesbrough | No overriding aim stated in SCI (MC, 2010). Key principles for community involvement in planning:
- Relevant to the level of planning
- Early involvement
- Relevant involvement and participation methods to cater for all needs
- Continued involvement
- Clear language and terminology
- Transparency and accessibility
- Consensus building
- Inclusion
- Making views count
- Consultation fatigue

Community consultation aims to be effective, appropriate, inclusive and co-ordinated (MC, Undated):
"Effective: The outcomes of consultation inform decision-making and service delivery. Appropriate: There should be an identified need for consultation. It should be proportionate and undertaken with the relevant sections of the community. Duplication should be avoided. Inclusive: Every citizen of Middlesbrough, including hard-to-reach groups, should have the opportunity to express their views and have them considered. Co-ordinated: There should be a consistent and co-ordinated approach to consultation." | No specific identification of young people as priority group in SCI. However suggestions are made through stated engagement with 'Middlesbrough youth council' in SCI (MC,2010).

In cooperate consultation strategy (MC, Undated) young people are noted as a hard to reach group along with others which needs to be targeted: " hard-to-reach groups such as young people, old people, people with learning and physical disabilities, people whose first language is not English and people from minority ethnic groups." | General methods proposed in SCI (MC, 2010):
- Media
- Stakeholder/community meetings
- Website
- Letters
- One to one meetings
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Public Exhibitions
- Local resident and/or stakeholder focus groups

No methods are indicated as being young people specific. | No evidence for any engagement activity specific to young people for local policy (considered all consultation reports for SPD's – note however unable to access LDF reports on consultation) |

6. Newcastle Upon Tyne	Key objective of SCI stated in Community Engagement Strategy: " to encourage wider involvement in the land-use planning process by setting out when and how people can have their say on both the city's statutory planning documents" (NCC, 2007, p5) Principles for consultation exercises in the SCI (NCC, 2006): - Scoping of exercise - Discussion with the council as planning authority - Mapping of community structures and stakeholder interests - Building capacity and creating partnerships - Undertaking consultation and encouraging participation - Ensuring everybody has the opportunity to be involved - Giving feedback - Undertaking evaluation and undertaking external assessment. Newcastle' s community Engagement Strategy aims to "support strong, active and inclusive communities, who are informed and involved in decision-making and enable us to improve public services to enhance quality of life across Newcastle. By this we mean: strong communities, active communities and inclusive communities. " (NCC, 2007, p3)	The SCI (NCC, 2006) states inclusion is a key principle for consultation exercises. Consultation groups for the general public include groups representing the young: "Those planning an [consultation] exercise should consider how best to involve hard to reach groups including the young, older people and black and minority ethnic communities." (NCC, 2006, p21) "Community engagement.. [has] particular emphasis on promoting equality and diversity and involving communities in plans for their area." Within Community Engagement Strategy (NCC, 2007, p5)	Consultation methods in SCI (NCC, 2006): - Planning for real, enquiry by design "People of all abilities and ages find it easy and enjoyable to engage in, so can reach 'hard to reach' groups, such as young people or those with literacy difficulties. Can be a useful way of gaining an understanding of local issues and concerns for both the planners and the community." (NCC, 2006, p39) - Public meetings - Open days, roadshows - Written consultation - Speaking at council meetings - User comments and complaints - Focus group - Questionnaire survey - User panel, citizens panel - Ballots - Participatory appraisal - Residency periods - Electronic consultation ; website, email, visualisations etc. For One Core Strategy: "An extensive online campaign.. including using Twitter, Facebook, the Council's websites and Let's Talk Newcastle" (NCC, 2013)	Consulation for One Core Strategy and Urban Core Area Action Plan (NCC, 2012): - Raised awareness for consultation by distributing copies of the City Life to young people and schools. - Children's Workshop Event, 4th July 2012, with 22 attendees

7. North Tyneside				
Strong belief in equality and diversity stated in aim of SCI: "to make North Tyneside a place where everyone matters and is treated as an equal citizen, in light of their different needs." Other stated aims: "To place the community at the heart of making planning decisions To deliver a flexible planning system, able to respond quickly to changing local circumstances To help to achieve sustainable development To ensure efficient management of the production of local development documents To be sound i.e. based on robust, trustworthy evidence." (NTC, 2010, p5) The three underpinning principles for Community Engagement within the council as a whole are as follows: - "Improved co-ordination – the Council will improve the co-ordination of engagement activity within the organisation and with key partners delivering services in North Tyneside. - A targeted consistent approach – matching approach to the audience, subject and time with positive outcomes for everyone. - Supporting active involvement – supporting residents, businesses, and community and voluntary groups to be actively involved in improving their communities." (NTC, 2012b, pp. 4-5)	Young people are considered as a hard-to-reach in SCI, stating particular efforts will be made to engage these groups. Specific consideration is also given to youth offenders, pregnant teenagers, young people in care (NTC, 2010). SCI (NTC, 2010) states new emphasis on children and young people as a group of the community to be included when engagement is taking place after research stated discovered the group as significantly underrepresented in questionnaires. "We will make sure that initiatives such as these are used wherever possible to help young people engage effectively in current planning issues. Where other opportunities come about or existing events take place we will get involved where appropriate to give a variety of opportunities to have their say." (NTC, 2010, p19) The council as a whole engages with young people, stated in the Community Engagement Framework (NTC, 2012b)	It has been noted that current engagement for the Core Strategy significantly under represent young people; only 2% of respondents were under 24, compared with 28% of the population being within the same age category (NTC, 2010b). SCI shows engagement efforts specific to young people through the young mayor and youth cabinet: "NTC now has its own Young Mayor, who has been elected by young people in the Borough to represent them… identify[ies] what issues are most important to young people, and will have a budget for addressing issues and making a difference. This is a big step in enabling young people to make their voices heard." (NTC, 2010, p13) "A Youth Council with elected members between 13 – 18 years old." (NTC, 2010, p13) General methods of engagement state in SCI (NTC, 2010): - Public exhibitions, Workshops - Questionnaires - Local Councillor - Planning Aid - Area forums - Residents panel - VODA - Letters, Newsletter, Notices - Website	Significant engagement noted for local area action plans: "Extensive engagement was undertaken with young people with Planning Policy Officers taking part in lessons at Norham Community Technology College (March 5th 2012) and Whitley Bay High School (March 12th 2012) to discuss the AAP proposals and encourage the young people to make comments. Consultation leaflets were also distributed at Burnside Business and Enterprise College by a school representative who sits on the North Tyneside Youth Council." (NTC, 2012, p8)

8. Northumberland	"The SCI will help to ensure that we treat people in a fair way across the whole of Northumberland." (NCC, 2009, p1) SCI consultation values: "We will: involve people early on in the decision-making process and in developing policy, engage with relevant people and organisations at the appropriate time using effective engagement methods and allowing sufficient time for meaningful consultation, be adaptable, recognising that some consultation methods work, better for some people and some issues and that a 'one size fits all' approach will not work, respect the diversity of people and their lifestyles and give people a fair chance to have their voice heard regardless of gender, age, race, abilities, sexual orientation, circumstances or wherever they live, communicate clearly with people using plain English and avoiding jargon, let people know how their views have been taken into account within agreed timescales, make documents publicly available on the website and across our networks of council offices and libraries, be consistent in our approach." (NCC, 2009, p6) Council community engagement vision: " Community engagement in Northumberland means that every person living or working in the county can have a voice if they choose to and that the methods used for engagement are of consistent quality and accessible to everybody. A community that is connected with the council and its partners can create real change that leads to a better quality of life." (NCC, 2008, p2)	Emphasis in SCI on inclusive engagement; to involve a wider range of the population, especially specific groups currently underrepresented i.e young people (NCC, 2009) "The council is also committed to finding ways to involve a wider range of people and groups. In some cases, this is difficult because of various barriers, particularly amongst the socially excluded, under-represented or seldom heard groups." (NCC, 2009, p16) Comprehensive engagement strategy gives no specific consideration for young people (NCC, 2008).	Consultation methods in SCI (NNC, 2009): - Printed e.g Newspaper, leaflet, - Visual materials - "Websites and posters that appealed to young people were seen as good ways to gain their attention" (NNC, 2009, p18) - Electronic e.g Website - Events e.g Exhibitions and road shows, Workshops New methods to be used to engage young people (NCC, 2009): - Youth Cabinet - Schools e.g leaflets and questionnaires to be completed during Citizenship lessons. - Other possible methods to be explored include: interactive methods (such as text messaging or online forums), Competitions (e.g. photograph competitions), Informing community centres and youth projects and considering guidance from groups representing young people. Emphasis placed on using more innovative methods in LDF newsletter: "Future events may also take the form of focus groups, workshops and exhibitions and we are making additional efforts to reach individuals and organisations not normally represented." (NCC, 2010, p2)	Engagement methods for consultation on the SCI (NCC, 2009): "We worked with the Youth Council to devise an online survey for young people attending high schools in the county." Evaluative comments of engagement efforts through schools (NCC, 2009, p18): "Recent consultation undertaken with young people in High Schools across Northumberland identified the importance of integrating consultation work into the school timetable - either through tutorials, assemblies or face to face conversations." "Most pupils did not want to give up free time to attend meetings outside of school." "Schools receive many consultation requests" "For young people outside of the school system alternative methods will be needed"

9. Northumberland National Park	SCI aim: "provide a diverse range of opportunities to enable you to have your say on all aspects of the Authority's work." (NNPA, 2010, p6)	"We need to recognise the importance of engaging a wider range of stakeholders including underrepresented groups." (NNPA, 2010, p9) Targeted audiences for consultation include difficult to reach/ excluding groups due to "lifestyle or lack of knowledge of the planning system" (NNPA, 2010, p33). Examples given include young people and ethnic minority groups.	"We realise that it is important to explore a broad range of consultation methods so that we can then adopt the most appropriate ways of involving communities in our work." (NNPA, 2010, p9) "The Authority is involved in using alternative communication methods to contact young people, for example Facebook..also looking to expand its approach to involving young people in policy development through various methods including identifying community champions in certain areas, for example the Tyne Valley." (NNPA, 2010, p11) Emphasis placed on using a variety of methods to involve everyone. General engagement methods (NNPA, 2010): - Leaflets - Electronic communication - Working group meetings - Authority website/media - Specialist surveys - Consultation events: drop in sessions, targeted workshops and focus groups. - Use of many existing groups e.g 'Area action' groups - Workshops/road shows	

10. Redcar and Cleveland	SCI aims to "ensure that consultation in the planning process is conducted in an inclusive manner so that everyone has the opportunity to express their views" (RCBC, 2010, p5)	Involvement of 'Hard to reach' groups used to monitor success of engagement indicated through the number of individuals/groups participating in consultations (RCBC, 2010). 'Hard to reach' groups include young people, however representation of which isn't requirement through 'general consultation bodies' (RCBC, 2010). These enforce consideration for certain groups e.g based on ethnicity or religion.	Consultation activities to be conducted by the council (RCBC, 2010): - Make documents available in public places and its website - Letter/email - Press release Possible other activities include: - Council magazine - Leaflets - Drop in sessions - Stakeholder meetings - One-to-one meetings - Focus groups - Action planning/workshops - Presentations - Questionnaires/surveys	Consultation workshops undertaken for the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Development Policies DPDs: Youth Environment Day 29th April 2004 - "young people engaged with the Planning system by focusing upon the provision of power and utilities when planning settlements." (RCBC, 2006, p11) 29th April 2004, 10th November 2004, 27th January 2005, 8th & 28th 2005. "Invited young people to provide their attitudes and aspirations towards housing including where new housing should be built over the next 15 years and where and what type of housing they would like to be living in when they are 20-30 years old." (RCBC, 2006, p11)

| 11. South Tyneside | CIS Vision: "South Tyneside is a place where everyone can get involved in decisions that affect them and people have the opportunity to significantly influence the delivery of local services" (STC, 2013, p1)

Approach to community engagement within planning(STC, 2013):
- Easy access to involvement for all groups, both through consideration to public planning events and when using existing community involvement networks.
- Inclusive community involvement which reaches out too hard to reach groups (As detailed in Equality and Diversity policy; a criterion point used to evaluate community consultation).
- Effective involvement which has potential to effect decision making.
- Ensure clear communication including readily accessible information and using simple vocabulary.

Vision for cross council community involvement:" We want everyone to know how they can get involved and make it easy for them to take part. Our services will reflect people's needs and we'll have a real understanding of our communities and what's important to them. Partners involvement activities are coordinated, focused and people feel they are being listened to." (STC, Undated, p.6) | 'General consultees' doesn't include the specific representation of young people in SCI (STC, 2013).

Little consideration for young people within Community Involvement Strategy for the council as a whole; key focus on disability, race and gender inclusion (STC, Undated). However it does state well-established links to Communities of Common Interest groups: "South Tyneside groups represent people from Bme backgrounds, people with disabilities, older and young people and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender." (STC, Undated, p41) | Proposed in SCI (STC, 2013):
- Letters and Email through database of individuals, groups and stakeholders.
- Press notices and statutory notices.
- Council website.
- Questionnaires.
- Discussion groups and meetings.
- Public exhibitions – Informal setting to view plans and speak to professionals.
- Workshops – These are noted as being a fun and interactive form which can be designed to engage young people (NTC, 2013). A summary of the feedback from the workshop will be given. | Planning aid ran 3 workshops for young people to be involved in 3 area action plans (South Shields & Waterfront, Central Jarrow and Hebburn) of the area in 2007. This involved children from the ages of 7 – 16 through 7 local schools.
" pupils worked in groups to complete activities, discuss and debate, and present their ideas through different formats to the group" (Planning Aid, 2007, p13)

An aim of the workshops was to give an insight and understanding of key planning documents and parts of the system. Secondly participants were made to think and present ideas to improve their locality in the future (Planning Aid, 2007).

An event on Hebburn AAP, involving pupils from Hebburn Comprehensive and Bedewell Primary School, took place on Friday 9th November 2007 at Bede's World. (STC, 2008) |

| 12. Stockton-On-Tees | Principle aim of SCI is: "To ensure that the views of local residents, partners and stakeholders are at the heart of community plans and planning. Through consultation, we will strive to enable all members of our community, our partners and our stakeholders, and any others who might be affected by local development policies, to have an opportunity to influence the planning, development, appraisal and implementation of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Local Development Framework." (SOTBC, 2006, p8)

Community Engagement Strategy aims "to deliver better services which strengthen the confidence and the ability of our communities not only to influence but also take greater control of what we actually do for them." (SOTBC, 2010, p7) | Young people included within the list of consultees but not considered as a 'hard to reach group'; not suggested as a priority needing additional consideration (SOTBC, 2006).

Proposed and stated engagement with young people in CES: "We will strengthen communication between Stockton Borough Council and young people by creating a more joined up service to improve community engagement and cohesion, considering the value of including young people representation, using the advice and support of key advisers and building on the current Youth Assembly arrangements." (SOTBC, 2010, p18) | Access to young people's viewpoints will be through the Youth Viewpoint Panel, schools and associated groups (SOTBC, 2006).

A number of consultation methods are used, these include:
" • Forum/open meetings
• Focus Groups
• Events/roadshows
• Questionnaires." (SOTBC, 2006, p8) | Sent Egglescliffe Youth Group information on new policy e.g LDD and Core Strategy (SOTBC, 2006).

Open Space, Recreation and Landscape Study for Core Strategy involved young people specifically through engagement methods (SOTBC, 2010b). |

| 13. Sunderland | Council community consultation principles in SCI (SCC, 2006):
- Ensure the consultation is inclusive
- Use a suitable technique appropriate to the type of consultation
- Communicate clearly
- Promote quality in consultations
- Work in partnership
- Provide mechanisms for involvement

Community Consultation Strategy aims "To ensure that the community is given the opportunity to be involved in and influence, policy making, service delivery and evaluation in order to continually improve services. " (SCC, 2007, p13) | No direct mention of young people involvement in SCI. Engagement from this group may be fostered from consultation through Local Community Groups/ Interest Groups and hard to reach groups; those most likely to find consultation processes difficult due to being unaware of current planning procedures (SCC, 2006).

Sunderland City Council (2007) states a need to include all sectors of the community in the consultation process in the Community Consultation Strategy. This should including hard to reach groups; young people, minority ethnic communities, the disabled, Older people and gay, lesbian and bisexual (SCC, 2007). This is emphasised through a complementary document 'Hard to reach framework' which has the aim of "extend[ing] the level of consultation with people who are difficult to engage or who find the council hard to reach for one reason or another." (SCC, Undated, p3) | Proposed in SCI (SCC, 2006) (specifically for local community groups and hard to reach groups):
- Council website
- Media & press
- Public exhibitions
- Fora
- Participatory appraisal
- Workshops
- Draft document publication | The 'Hard to reach Framework' as part of the Community Consultation Strategy identifies the success of previous interactive engagement activities with young people:

"Successful consultation has been carried out with young offenders using arts based techniques and working with artists. Young people have also been involved in consultation activities working with a filmmaker and architect." (SCC, Undated, p12)

"Young people..prefer more active methods, they often respond well to new technologies as well." (SCC, Undated, p12) |

<u>Summary of findings</u>

<u>Aims</u>

2.1   Most Local Authorities had a clear aim for community engagement within the council, the emphasis of which varied. Many focussed on the effectiveness and efficiency of engagement methods, some specifically stating the need for consistency and co-ordination in approach. A number saw this resulting in better local service provision and stronger, more active communities. South Tyneside and Northumberland state an improvement in the quality of life for community members. Whilst most Local Authorities aim for the community to influence decision making, Sunderland, Northumberland and Gateshead further this by stating community members will have control over decisions. Around half of the Local Authorities provide an aim of being inclusive in engagement efforts which leads into discussing targeted groups in 2.3.

2.2   Within the Strategy for Community Involvement, an overriding aim was less clear however provided many similarities between local authorities. The majority aspire to include all groups of the community therefore allowing everyone to influence the planning process, inclusion being a key word used by many Local Authorities. However the emphasis which is placed on inclusion varies; it is the single principal aim for Redcar and Cleveland state. Some Local Authorities, as well as involving the community, will also ensure the responses make a difference to decisions made. For example Darlington will only involve the community at stages where they're able to influence policies. There is a suggestion that many desire to increase the amount and quality of involvement, for example improving the clarity of communication of events and simplifying documents for improved accessibility. Community involvement for planning can be seen to differ in Durham and North Tyneside, stating the aim of ensuring sustainable developments.

<u>Priority groups</u>

3.1 All 13 local Authorities identify young people as a group they wish to engage with, either at cross council level or for community involvement for planning consultation. 69% of these Local Authorities prioritise engaging with young people within planning, by stating the group as 'hard to reach', generally defined as needing particular attention from the council to ensure engagement. Most Local Authorities also identified the old, disabled, minority ethnicities and religious communities as needing attention. Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council and Middlesbrough Council prioritise young people to a lesser extent, stating the group within a general list of consultees. The local authorities of South Tyneside and Sunderland, as shown in table one, lacked any mention young people for engagement within planning. Instead these two local authorities prioritise other groups within the community for engagement: racial/ethnic/national groups, religious groups, disabled persons and local business persons (SCC, 2006; STC, 2013).

3.2 In addition North Tyneside gives specific consideration to selected groups of young people, stating community engagement to include youth offenders, pregnant teenagers and young people in care. This Local Authority suggests a new and strong emphasis on engaging with the youth of the community following findings showing the group to be previously significantly underrepresented in engagement efforts.

<u>Proposed engagement methods</u>

4.1 'General consultation methods' stated by all local authorities provide a range of engagement activities, most of which apply to 'hard to reach' groups i.e. young people. The majority also provide additional specific methods for young people, either directly or through those to target 'hard to reach groups', addressing the need for additional encouragement for involvement identified (see 2.3). This is proposed in most Local Authorities through forms of 'events' targeting a selected group. Workshops seeming particularly popular method, seen as a fun way to encourage involvement.

4.2 There is a suggestion that new and more interactive methods are required for young people, stating they are more likely to facilitate involvement and providing different ideas. Enquiry by design, a method in which simple models are used for groups to put across ideas about their local area, was stated in the SCI of Gateshead and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. Interactive electronic methods, for example the use of Facebook and online forums, are to be used in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Northumberland National Park and Northumberland. Overall Northumberland proposes the most innovative and wide ranging methods, for example the use of competitions.

4.3 Method to access young people in facilitating proposed involvement varies, although many are reliant on schools. Hartlepool council offers speakers to come into schools on request. Other suggestions are through existing representative positions, such as the young mayor and youth cabinet or existing networks such as community groups. Alternatively Northumberland National Park is considering the creation of new representative positions; 'Community Champions'.

<u>Previous engagement</u>

5.1 The depth and breadth of engagement work previously undertaken varies greatly between the Local Authorities. Around 58%, as shown in figure one, have facilitated some form of recent engagement, most of which was undertaken through schools. Workshops are the most popular form and where detail was given they either focused on a key topic within planning or their locality. All aimed for oral or written response from the young people in the form of discussions, debates and presentation, or written comments. In addition, Gateshead and Northumberland have conducted surveys with school children. Other stated methods involved distributing information to young people through schools or youth organisations on scheduled consultation events and proposed changes to policy.

5.2 Evaluative comments given by Northumberland Council suggest limitations of engagement through schools. Consultation exercises are advised to be integrated into lesson as to students are unwilling to give up time outside classroom hours. Competition is also suggested in accessing young people for consultation though schools and the method doesn't provide for children not within the school system. Sunderland City Council provides evaluative comments stating the success of interactive activity based engagement, especially through the use of technology and leadership from creative professionals.

5.3 42% of Local Authorities have carried out two or more different types of engagement with young people, suggesting that breadth of involvement is limited. Gateshead and North Tyneside have attained the greatest depth and breadth of engagement recently with young people, both using multiple methods on several occasions, facilitated by the Local Authority independently. In contrast the engagement efforts of South Tyneside where run entirely by Planning Aid.

5.4 There is no evidence of the Local Authorities of Durham, Hartlepool and Darlington engaging with young people. This contradicts their individual Strategy of Community Involvement, stating the group as 'hard to reach' in which specific efforts would be required for involvement, supported by a number of proposals.

Recommendations

6.1 A limitation of the research method used was that the information for each Local Authority available was inconsistent. Documentation which the findings are based on was limited to that provided by the council webpage's which often stated only a selection of documents where available and therefore additional research is required. This likely to particularly affect the scope of evidence for previous engagement with young people to be particularly limited. Therefore additional research is required, possibly needing to contact Local Authorities in which significant documentation is unavailable (see figure one) to be contacted directly. In addition a number of interviews would provide more complete information on the detail of recent engagement activity.

6.2 Enough information was available to clearly identify the following Local Authorities as potential partners for the university, which could be approached in order to work with them to engage young people within their area:

1. North Tyneside – Strong emphasis on young people, suggesting the group and specific sub-groups as a new priority for engagement with significant engagement has already been undertaken which could be built on. A neighbourhood plan under construction may further engagement opportunities.
2. Northumberland – Emphasis on engaging with young people, seen as a currently underrepresented group. Large amount of consideration given to innovative methods to involve the group with evidence of some previous engagement which was evaluated. Multiple neighbourhood plans currently being produced may also facilitate more engagement opportunities.

Secondary to these three other local authorities showed potential suitability: Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Gateshead, Redcar and Cleveland.

6.3 A key overall finding is that many Local Authorities prioritise engagement with young people and propose specific methods to enable this. However the results also suggest there to be limited implementation, with few Local Authorities providing evidence of substantial engagement with young people. Therefore there may be considerable potential for Newcastle University for carry out engagement activity with young people on behalf of these local authorities. Within most Local authorities Neighbourhood plans are being created, most of which are in their

early stages, providing an opportunity for additional engagement with young people.

6.4 Some Local Authorities set out clear intentions for engagement activities which Newcastle University would need to consider when proposing involvement work which it could facilitate. However most wish to use more interactive and innovative methods, some which has been completed such as workshops, which the university could extend.

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