

Notes from Meeting in Rosebery Hall, 1st September 2017 to discuss youth Strategy.

The meeting was attended by Community Council, Police , Fire service and Youth Strategy staff from ECC.

The purpose of the meeting was to learn from Scott Donkin, (Partnership Information Manager), and Isla Anderson of their work with youths in Edinburgh.

Scott stated that it was essential to review the activities that were on offer to youngsters. Are we doing the right thing? Are we supporting youth engagement?

He told us that it was difficult to recruit staff to work on Friday and Saturday evenings.

He asked how we were seeking the opinions of youths. He spoke about the document "Youth Talk". He also questioned what happened to money that is being invested in youth work and if it is producing the results expected.

He stressed that anti social behaviour was being instigated by a very small minority and "all kids" should not be blamed. The meeting agreed with this and expressed concern about the effect that the problem kids were having on the others.

Is our programme 'fit for purpose'? Will it work? There are widely differing views on the available facilities. In Liberton they explored young people's perceptions of facilities, trying to involve about half of several thousand in the area.

The youths did come up with ideas that adults would not have thought of, or considered. As well as engaging with youths at schools they got many ideas from kids 'hanging about the streets'..through the use of a touring mobile library

The team prepared a map of the area and marked all the known facilities on it. Youngsters were asked to put a green dot on what they thought were good facilities and a red one on what they thought were "crap". They were then asked for their reasons and this led to valuable debate - eg. graveyards are good!

Some thought that youth clubs did not make them feel welcome.

They gathered information from a 'Youth Talk' event where groups of kids had been selected to represent as large a variety of backgrounds as possible. The groups met round tables when the "blend" was very important, 10 to a table. There was plenty of feedback and much focussed on 'find a solution'. This led to about 70+ pledges being made by a range of youth service providers to make changes to improve their offerings, not necessarily involving money.

The youth's decisions are to be followed up some are quick wins but many are long term projects - over years rather than months.

The community must be involved in the process so that they know what is happening - it may be necessary to change many of their views! Possible barriers might have to be broken down.

Scott left the meeting and Isla described her previous role as a CLD worker in this area.

There followed a general discussion about what had been said. One factor was agreed - early intervention was extremely important. The perceptions of organised groups might have to be changed. Services should be available to all. Kirkliston should be included in future discussions Graeme to make contact with David Buchanan leader of their community council. Neil has contact details if needed.

Overall the attendees thought the engagement model used in Liberton driving changes based on what the youths say needs changing (within reason) was excellent and we wish to adopt a similar approach for South Queensferry and Kirkliston. In terms of next steps we have invited Isla to attend the meeting we are having with Jenny Smith Depute Head of Queensferry High School on Monday the 4th September (which is to find voluntary opportunities for S6 students) to discuss how best we start the engagement process, they might also have details of some of the young people we should target. An option might be to engage with some of these S6 students seeking volunteering opportunities to help with the reaching out exercise .

Following this meeting Graeme, Neil and David will draw up some form of Terms of Reference/Mandate for this Youth Engagement Team or whatever we choose to call it setting out some broad processes, actions and timeframes to take us forward. We see our group as being malleable with individuals/groups/stakeholders coming in and our as required but the core members will be Graeme, Neil, David and Isla.

A follow up meeting will be arranged.

David Flint and Neil McKinlay

02/09/2017