



**myplace**  
support team

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## Myplace evaluation – interim report

Durham University  
YMCA George Williams College | September 2010



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## Executive summary

### Introduction

**myplace** is a major Government programme arising from *Aiming High for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* (HM Treasury 2007). The programme aims to establish 'world-class' places for young people, which will offer positive activities and access to a range of services.

BIG Fund (BIG) manages the implementation of **myplace** for the Department for Education (previously the Department for Children, Schools and Families).

The programme has been organised as follows:

- *Fast track round 1 projects*: Announced in November 2008, when the government committed £62 million of capital investment in 21 projects.
- *Standard track round 1 projects*: Announced in March 2009 when £178 million was committed to fund 41 projects.
- *Standard track round 2 projects*: Announced in December 2009, when £32 million was committed to eight projects located in the one-third most deprived areas of England.

Grants to projects range from £1 million to £5 million.

Within the overall aim, to develop 'world-class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people and their views and needs', the anticipated outcomes for projects in the Programme are:

- More young people, parents and communities feeling that young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities;
- More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, taking part in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development;
- More young people having access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable; and
- There should be stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.

### The Evaluation

The evaluation follows the implementation of the projects until March 2011. Its overall aims are to identify:

- The extent to which projects are adopting leading practice;
- The impact of adopting leading practice;
- The extent of progress towards the **myplace** outcomes.

A baseline Evaluation Report was produced in December 2009. That Report considered progress in the 21 'Fast track' projects, including three case study projects. A further five projects were then

chosen from the range of Fast Track and Standard Track Round 1 projects for more detailed investigation.

This Interim Report sets out some of the background to the programme and evaluates progress during the first year up to the end of March 2010 mapped against the aim and outcomes. It draws on case study information collected from the sample of eight projects, supplemented by data from an annual survey of all Round 1 projects.

## Method

### Case Studies

We selected the case study sample to provide evidence from models devised to suit different local circumstances. The case study projects are:

1. Culture Fusion (Bradford YMCA) (Standard track, round 1)
2. Hackney Youth Hubbz, Hackney (London Borough of Hackney) (Standard track, round 1)
3. The Hub, Dartford (YMCA Thames Gateway) (Fast track)
4. Minehead EYE (Minehead EYE Community Interest Company) (Fast track)
5. Oldham Youth Zone: MAHDLO (OnSide North-West Limited) (Standard track, round 1)
6. Parkfield, Torbay (Torbay Council) (Standard track, round 1)
7. Shoeburyness Youth Centre (Southend on Sea Borough Council) (Fast track)
8. Young Person's Village, Stoke-on-Trent (Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire YMCA Foyer) (Fast track)

We designed a framework of questions based on indicators relevant to the four anticipated programme outcomes and to eight 'leading practice' themes. This was to systematise the data gathered from these different projects across the remaining period of the evaluation. For this Interim Report, we visited each case study areas and revisited some of them to follow up issues. The focus was to set up contact with key stakeholders in each project, to conduct interviews where appropriate, to gather relevant local information, and to record observations about progress so far and issues arising within each area. We gathered wider material and data through desk research.

### Annual Survey

The first annual survey of all Round 1 projects (conducted by means of a written questionnaire) offers a snapshot review of progress so far and highlights developments, issues or concerns. It provides a simple, but useful comparator for the case study information, while providing an extra layer of information for the case studies. It used a framework of four main headings (partnership, the facility, participation and strategy) devised mainly, but not exclusively, around questions on leading practice, strategy and impact.

## Context

The evaluation is set within an analysis of the policy framework out of which it developed and in the context of an historical review of building-based work with young people.

### Broader Policy Framework

**myplace** must be understood in the context of an overarching policy framework relevant to children and young people. This includes:

- *Aiming High for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* (HM Treasury 2007). This report was the immediate driver for **myplace**. The focus of *Aiming High* was to enable 'all young people', but particularly those in deprived areas, to build on the potential of the transitional stage of adolescence by participating in positive and enjoyable activity that will enable them to develop skills and raise aspirations.
- *Every Child Matters*. *Aiming High* was part of an overall strategy emerging from the broader agenda of *Every Child Matters* (ECM) (DfES 2003), and supplemented by *Youth Matters* (HM Government 2005). The *ECM* agenda identified five outcomes for young people that must inform all initiatives and service objectives for children and young people. These were: *being healthy, staying safe, enjoyment and achievement, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being*.
- *The Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds*. The priorities of **myplace** are complementary to Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF) launched in 2006 under the influence of *Youth Matters*. These funds also focus on positive activities for young people, on youth participation and developing buildings in the context of the *ECM* outcomes. Evaluation of their impact has been broadly positive but problems remain about the most disadvantaged young people participating. These led to an extension and a further commitment of capital funds through YCF to refurbish youth facilities in the 50 most deprived areas.
- *Extended schooling and the Building Schools for the Future Programme*. The government approach to developing 'a more integrated and strategic approach to improving places for young people to go' (DCSF 2008) also underpinned the development of school facilities in the *Building Schools for the Future* Programme. In addition, all secondary schools were expected to develop extended schooling - offering a range of activities and services outside the school day.

### Historical Context

Historical analysis of building-based work with young people draws attention to:

- *Expertise in building-based youth work in the voluntary sector developed over 200 years of practice*. Learning from the experience of Sunday Schools and Ragged Schools which developed buildings specifically for their purposes, the YMCA, the large boys' clubs and the girls' clubs which developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century began to pay close attention to the detail of building for young peoples' activities. This included location, interior and exterior design, functionality and attractiveness. The history of buildings developed in the voluntary sector reveals a set of concerns relevant to **myplace**. This involves the desire to be world-leading in materials and design and to consider design relevant to mission, aims and objectives.

- *The experience of purpose-built statutory neighbourhood youth centres and of youth wings in schools established in the wake of the publication of the Albemarle Report in 1960.* A blueprint for building youth centres was established during the 1960s based on the design of the Withywood Centre in Bristol. These buildings were designed to encourage conviviality as well as physical and cultural activity. We can learn several lessons from the post-Albemarle history. Firstly, leading individuals were significant in setting up particular places as attractive for young people. Secondly, especially in the statutory sector, many Albemarle Centres declined because of lack of investment, particularly for repair and refurbishment. Thirdly, problems arose from locking budgets into buildings which sometimes stopped being sited in relevant locations or offering facilities attractive to changing youth populations. Finally, while there were resource advantages in youth wings, and they were widely used by young people, they did not tend to attract the most disadvantaged and those who had difficulties with schooling who preferred to use neighbourhood-based facilities.
- *Changing social patterns and experiences.* In recent years, youth leisure has been reconfigured towards the private and family setting because of demographic change, improved housing, the growing importance of schooling, new technologies and increased access to commercial opportunities. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that small-scale, local and neighbourhood activity remain significant in developing social capital among young people. Both trends have implications for the potential success and the impact of large-scale central building-based provision such as that planned by **myplace**. Some may well find it difficult to attract the number of young users to be sustainable over the long-term, and to generate participation from key target groups. Significant additional work may be required in local neighbourhoods to encourage use of central provision.

## Mapping Progress

### Challenges

The contextual analysis suggests several themes and issues which might present challenges to the success of the **myplace** programme. The report identifies the following significant areas for further analysis:

- Building Design
- Leadership
- Participation
- Sustainability
- Co-location
- Centralisation (Hubs)
- Evolving youth policies and strategies
- Targeted and universal provision.

We have used these as the framework for deriving recommendations emerging from the data.

The main body of this report uses the data from the case studies and the survey to highlight the extent of progress. It also draws attention to some key issues of concern around the principal aim and the four key outcomes of the programme.

## The *myplace* aim

World-class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people and their views and needs.

### Being World Class

The Report focuses firstly on the ambition of the *myplace* programme to be 'world-class'. In the case study projects the ideal of 'world-class' is aspirational. This translates in practice into efforts to be 'inspirational' and refers to the possibility of achieving the highest possible quality of provision for young people.

The ambitions for *myplace* are situated in an understanding of the local context in which each project is being established and with reference to specific youth issues in that context. For example, in Bradford there is a desire that *myplace* should contribute to social cohesion in a multi-cultural city.

'World class' is most readily applied to the quality of buildings which are held to reflect the worth according to young people. It also refers to the objective assessment of quality in design, function, use of materials, local environment, and sustainability. International standards are used to define quality with reference both to the level at which activities might be pursued, and also with regard to architectural standards. For example, in Torbay, the standard of the BMX track to be provided is identified as 'international' or 'world-class' in competition terms. This is experienced as a helpful, tangible measure through which young people can value the new facilities.

Quality is understood with reference to the inadequacy of previous provision for young people. Workers and young people are both keenly aware of pre-existing inadequacies. There was a great deal of hope and optimism locally that the *myplace* programme was indicative of a step-change in perceptions of young people. Much of the early planning and participatory activity has been focused on the detail of the new project, which has a starting point of those features lacking in the prevailing situation. This includes feeling safe, being able to take risks, being able to pursue interests and skills, wanting to return every night. Keeping young people in focus involves considering participation, activities, opening hours, and relevance across different interests. It is believed that the standards achieved must be 'at least as good as those offered to adults'.

There is a realistic understanding among workers that there are resource limits to what can be achieved. A central challenge is perceived to be the possibility of retaining aspiration, energy and enthusiasm in this context. Young people who are participating in the developmental stages of the projects are learning about the realities of resource limitations and through their engagement, are developing skills of negotiation around what can be achieved.

### Youth Empowerment

The Report focuses secondly on youth participation and empowerment. All projects have a commitment to youth participation and empowerment and this is supported by a range of strategies for engagement moving from intensive small group-work through to extensive consultation processes. Systems of engagement range as follows:

- electronic information and consultation using e-newsletters and Facebook;
- general youth consultation processes in the locality;
- mobilisation of the relationships with young people in partner organisations such as schools and other youth groups;
- consultation and mobilisation of existing local Youth Parliaments and Councils;

- integrating **myplace** concerns into the work of a pre-existing organisational participation model;
- the creation of a specific **myplace** group to work as a partner in the planning and 'delivery' of the scheme.

Most projects use a combination of methods. The standard model involve projects working closely with a core group of young people already in contact either through their engagement in local Youth Parliaments or with a participating agency. They supplement this with broader engagement with the wider population of young people through consultation methods such as peer-led surveys or e-newsletters. Other methods include specific events related to **myplace** or encouraging a specific group of young people to get involved in a particular aspect of development.

At the current stage of development, most young people have been involved in feeding through ideas about programmes and activities and in naming projects, while the structured groups have been mainly concerned with consulting with their peers, working with architects on questions relating to building design, and helping to select architects. The Sorrell Foundation<sup>1</sup> has been used with mixed results to work with young people to realise their ideas on buildings around what is desirable and what is possible.

The survey suggested that the activities which have had least youth participation are:

- income generation and funding to run the facility;
- the conduct of partnership meetings; and
- awarding contracts.

Getting young people engaged with the planning and development of projects has helped achieve advantages through:

- increased opportunity for engaging in positive activity;
- contributing ideas and seeing these take form;
- learning about processes of decision-making;
- independent thinking;
- learning negotiating skills; and
- widening opportunities for employment and education.

## Outcomes

**Outcome 1:** *More young people, parents and communities feeling that young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities.*

In this first stage of development, emphasis has been on planning for the buildings which will be attractive and safe for young people. This has included significant attention to the range of activities which will be on offer in the buildings and young people have been widely consulted with regard to

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<sup>1</sup> The Sorrell Foundation was set up in 1999 with the aim of inspiring creativity in young people and improving the quality of life through good design. The Foundation creates and prototypes new ideas and develops models that can be widely used. <http://www.thesorrellfoundation.com/home.php>

their leisure interests. Consultation with young people and community representatives and groups has included attention to the purpose and function of buildings, their reach and accessibility, the impact of buildings on local relationships between young people and communities, and the impact of buildings on local environments.

To date it is the views of young people, rather than those of parents and communities which have been predominant and the interests and enthusiasms of young people themselves have been at the forefront of planning. Young people are enthused by opportunities to influence building design which responds to their leisure interests.

The commitment to quality includes a commitment to the safety of buildings, but this is not necessarily a straightforward matter. For example, in one case study project, plans associated with attractiveness of design were compromised by questions of security and safety. Other considerations in this context refer to decisions about location.

Key considerations for location have included intentions to:

- create provision in places where few leisure facilities otherwise exist for young people;
- improve and develop pre-existing youth provision;
- facilitate access for a wide range of young people;
- counter territoriality amongst young people;
- develop the site according to young people's identified interests; and
- situate **myplace** centres in proximity to other services including schools and children's centres.

The issue of territoriality has been a central concern in Bradford and Hackney in particular leading to entirely different solutions because of different local conditions. In Bradford, numerous sites were considered and refused by the young people such as a site more centrally located near the bus station and new Police Station before the final location of an old mill near Bradford College was chosen for the Culture Fusion development. 'The important thing is it's not in anybody's territory, it's completely neutral, it doesn't belong, it's got no neighbourhood, it doesn't have any citizens living around it' (Stakeholder interview Feb 2010). In Hackney, the option of suitable and centrally located buildings was not available and the intention from the outset was to refurbish and regenerate pre-existing buildings. Young people were therefore consulted only about the nature of the refurbishment, and not the location. The question of territoriality is being addressed not by location, but by specialisation in Hackney, with each refurbished centre offering a high quality, specialist activity designed to attract young people across territorial boundaries.

Projects have had regard to broader environmental issues which encompass:

- the potential of the building to signal that young people have a safe and attractive 'place to go';
- improvement of the locality; and
- local community concerns.

The evidence is that so far the **myplace** programme has been welcomed by those who have been consulted and that the ground has been set to ensure that the buildings will provide attractive, safe and exciting places for young people to go. Young people are enthusiastic and optimistic about the possibilities.

There are occasional indicators of dissent among local adults and mainly this has been addressed constructively, but strategies for enabling parents and local communities to participate are less developed than in relation to young people.

**Outcome 2:** *More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development.*

In all case studies there is concern to meet general aspirations for young people, including those defined as disadvantaged relative to the expectations of *Every Child Matters*. However, there are some significant barriers to participation that need to be overcome around the way 'positive leisure time activities' may be perceived. Projects have given specific attention to local indicators of disadvantage. Project plans include provision which might be of universal interest, based on recreational sport and creative activity. This is to be co-located with specialist youth advice, information and guidance services. They have considered a range of barriers to access around location, building design, and programming. Practical questions such as transport can be and are being addressed. However there remain some significant questions:

- cultural barriers to access are problematic, especially in relation to youth sub-cultural styles associated with recreational activity.
- the cost of participation in activities – both in terms of getting to centres and of what may need to be charged for activities – may well discourage a number of young people, especially those from more disadvantaged backgrounds.
- some young people have suggested that the co-location of recreational activities and problem-focused services are contradictory. Most young people appear inspired by the idea of 'things to do and places to go' rather than targeted services. There has also been some negative comment by young people around the potential lack of privacy when using specialist services attached to recreational provision i.e. there is a stronger possibility of their being seen by their peers when accessing a possibly sensitive service. At this early stage we know relatively little about how the users of more problem-focused services perceive them when they are located within a more recreational setting.
- there is a possible tension between the need to finance projects through renting facilities to client agencies and the desire to ensure that the new facilities are universally attractive and accessible to young people.
- some localised services might experience a negative impact from the centralisation of resources on the new **myplace** centres – diminishing neighbourhood access for young people living in isolated areas. Even if there is improved transport, such young people might remain excluded.
- in some **myplace** projects there is a possibility that the presence of specialist services and an overt concern to target certain groups of young people may put people off participating in the leisure activities on offer. There is a danger that the projects will be perceived as places where those with 'problems' go.

At this early stage, opportunities for increasing participation among young people through **myplace** have been focused on planning and development, and related elements. Three significant issues emerge from this:

- there is a time-lag between those involved in planning and those who might benefit from the implementation of the new facilities. Already it is evident that some young people are inheriting decisions made by others and this raises questions of ownership and identification. Meanwhile, those who come to the new centres mainly as user groups are a different

constituency, possibly requiring a different set of skills in workers from those highlighted in the planning stage.

- the skills of youth workers have been essential to encouraging the participation and empowerment of the most disadvantaged young people and sustaining their involvement through group work.
- schools play an important role in enabling young people who would not normally participate to become involved in **myplace**, but the active participation and representation of schools is not widespread.

Overall, there are questions about how successful a number of **myplace** projects will be in terms of attracting young people in sufficient numbers – including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In some cases there is likely to be an increase in the number of young people involved in positive leisure activities. In others, particularly when the impact of current funding constraints on local provision is taken into account, a decline in participation in the short-term at least seems likely.

**Outcome 3:** *More young people having access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable*

There is some emphasis on the potential of co-location of services in **myplace** projects. It is anticipated that the focus on leisure activities will facilitate access to specialist services which might be located inside or close to the new buildings. There are a range of models associated with co-location, but all depend on a partnership approach to planning, organisation and management.

Partnerships have mainly been led by organisations with long-standing experience of working with young people in the voluntary sector, such as the YMCA, working in close collaboration with Local Authorities who have offered specialist advice and resourcing. A range of different organisations working with young people and offering information, advice and guidance are associated with **myplace** partnerships, but with differing levels of engagement and commitment, and with the potential for establishing different types of relationships once the centres are open.

A number of key points emerge from the prevailing circumstances:

- youth work personnel, and especially those with experience in national voluntary organisations, have been crucial to the coordination of partnership arrangements while maintaining participatory work with young people in order to ensure that new buildings will reflect their needs and interests.
- co-location in a free-standing **myplace** facility is the preferred model for delivering services. It is believed that location of services in new buildings will make them more accessible for young people. However, there are tensions and issues in this relating to different aspirations among young people for leisure and support, and to different methods and expectations in terms of working practices and use of buildings.
- governance arrangements with regard to partner organisations and service providers using buildings have not been clarified in all circumstances. Ensuring that these are sympathetic to the aspirations of young people and that they do not exacerbate competing cultures of provision is necessary to maximise use.
- co-location of **myplace** projects with schools and colleges has been considered in only a minority of cases, despite the development of extended schooling and the potential advantages in terms of access to a broad constituency of young people who might wish to use the fullest range of services and facilities offered.

**Outcome 4:** *There should be stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.*

All projects are working within overall strategies relating to children and young people and also to related strategies for neighbourhood and community regeneration. The impetus for the partnership arrangement and for developing **myplace** projects is centred on Local Authorities, but the Local Authorities themselves are active in the partnerships to different degrees. The predominant model in the case studies (but not necessarily of **myplace** as a whole) is a partnership between a Local Authority and a number of smaller Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) leading on delivery. There is less evidence of private engagement.

Partnership working is characterised by complexity associated with a lack of definition. Partnerships range from highly formal contractual relationships, in which local authorities and participating organisations have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, through to informal inter-professional and inter-personal networks. In the emergent situation, some organisations have made a clear commitment and are working with well-defined structures of decision-making to implement the **myplace** project. However not all affected organisations have committed themselves to the **myplace** vision and as such might be only loosely involved in partnership working.

The Annual Survey offered a relatively positive picture of partnership. Over three-quarters of respondents report that there is trust between partners, and clarity with regard to purpose. However, there are three main areas where tensions or issues appear to be emerging:

- the strongest issue is that key staff in one or more of the partner agencies are over-stretched. 56% of respondents reported a concern in this area.
- the underdevelopment of administrative systems and structures for the partnership is significant. 46% of respondents highlighted an issue in this area.
- just over 23% of respondents reported that there is a clash of organisational cultures between partners.

A number of important points relating to partnership emerge from the data:

- partnership with young people cuts across all levels of practice but is not always clearly structured in relation to decision-making processes.
- many partnerships are based on pre-existing relationships between organisations and networks of practice between workers. Within this, a common vision and commitment to positive outcomes for young people were thought to be significant.
- in these early stages, most projects have been focused on four key concerns: the working relationships of partner agencies, processes of participation for young people, the design of buildings, and finance.
- pre-existing skills in the youth workforce have been important to successful organisation, but specialist support from local authorities has also been pivotal, especially with regard to planning, transport and communication.
- not all structures of decision-making are fully developed although some are clear and explicit. The clarification of management and decision-making structures and systems will become particularly important once buildings are opened.
- leadership is provided by organisations and individuals who are in key positions. The qualities of individuals in specific organisational settings are crucial for the success of the projects. Often these qualities are associated with experienced youth workers. It is possible

that the skills and qualities needed in the developmental stage might differ from those required in the consolidation stage.

Questions about financial sustainability are related to partnership issues but not always directly. All case study projects have schemes to raise funds through membership fees, service users' contributions and the hire of rooms and facilities. In many cases, financial viability involves a redeployment of revenue streams from partners to the new project. Some projects have planned to engage the private sector as partners to help generate private finance. Significant problems associated with these strategies are anticipated with reference to the current economic climate. A number of the projects have business plans that depend on revenue streams that are, and will increasingly be under considerable pressure. This is a major underlying challenge for the success of the **myplace** programme.

## Challenges and Recommendations

The challenges as set out with reference to the contextual analysis have been used to inform the recommendations in the report drawing on the analysis from the data gathered through the first year of fieldwork.

### Design

While a great deal of attention has been given to the location, design and functionality of buildings in terms of the desire to be 'world-class', to meet the leisure interests of young people, to serve a wide constituency, and to offer a range of co-located services, there remain some important challenges:

- attention has been focused mainly on the facilities offered in buildings and their general location. There has been little attention given to the immediate interface between the location, and internal and external activity. Entrances to buildings are crucial areas for consideration in terms of atmosphere, welcome, safety (or danger). Similarly, the immediate vicinity surrounding the building is an important area for young people's association requiring further thought in terms of the use of workers and overall planning about safety. Projects need to give further attention to the experience of safety not only in the building but also in its immediate vicinity.
- as highlighted in one case study project, the quality of fixtures and fittings, of adequate and secure storage space as well as activity space, requires careful attention if buildings are to be fully fit for purpose.
- all buildings are to be subject to multiple uses not only in terms of different groups of young people accessing them, but also in terms of different providers with different cultures of practice and under differing terms and conditions of use. The impact of multiple uses on buildings should be more fully assessed.
- considerable effort has gone into the design of the new facilities and it would be of considerable help to others seeking to initiate similar projects if there could be further coordinated and written-up reflection on what works (and does not work) over time. In other words, where does capital investment work in terms of developing and sustaining provision, and where does it have a limited impact?

## Leadership

**myplace** projects often rely on key individuals, many of whom are experienced youth workers using inter-personal skills to affect inter-professional partnership working while simultaneously engaging young people in participatory processes.

Analysis of the qualities of leadership required for sustaining **myplace** projects is important in terms of the impact of these key individuals on the structural arrangements devised, the eventual necessity of replacement, and the priorities in a changing and developing situation. Some attention needs to be given to:

- supervision and management;
- the spread of responsibility;
- the personal, non-measurable qualities as well as the skills set required for successful leadership in this context;
- the possibility that the skills and attributes needed for the establishment phase of projects might be different from those highlighted in the planning and development phase.

## Participation

So far, **myplace** projects have been highly successful at increasing levels of youth participation and this has had positive consequences particularly for those young people who have been centrally involved as members of small groups created through the new projects. To sustain this, a number of issues relating to youth participation need to be continuously monitored. These include:

- the length of time young people can continue to be/are involved and the processes for replacing them;
- the problems associated with creating an 'elite' group of young people and questions of engagement of those most disadvantaged; and
- the scale of activity in which young people can be realistically involved and the recognition of boundaries as well as the possibilities for their engagement.

There are some broader questions relating to community/parental participation. In the light of limited involvement to date, it would be beneficial if:

- the meaning of 'community and community involvement' were to be made clearer;
- links with community development workers and community activists were encouraged.

## Sustainability

Initial planning for **myplace** projects did not envisage the current circumstances of economic uncertainty. The maintenance of quality and the ideals of **myplace** depend upon continuing financial viability. In the current situation, projects should:

- revisit and re-assess business plans;
- examine their plans and identify additional sources of revenue;
- reflect on organisational ethos and orientation with reference to different models included in this evaluation report.

## Co-location

Projects are by now committed to their preferred model around co-location of services. The model will have an impact on how young people use the buildings and how different types of users relate to each other. There are challenges in managing this and it is possible that the approach contains an inner contradiction with regard to the reach of the projects. Actions required include:

- exploring the potential to develop settings where young people are already involved in activity – notably schools, colleges and sports and leisure centres, and sports and enthusiast groups.
- giving attention to the points of tension and contradiction in the models adopted to inform future policy decisions both in terms of the organisation of the projects and also for national and local policy decisions about youth provision.

## Centralisation (Hubs)

The development of central 'hubs', sometimes with 'spokes' raises questions both about the relationship between the projects involved and the terms of working with agencies not involved in the partnerships. The centralised, hub model has the potential to draw in resources to the centre to the disadvantage of neighbourhood services in the peripheral areas. In this context:

- the development of hubs needs to be placed alongside an investment in detached youth work, community-based, project work and local groups and activities.
- careful attention needs to be paid to the way individual **myplace** projects are experienced and perceived by young people – and how they may need to be reconfigured in order to attract wider usage.
- the impact of the hubs on pre-existing services, especially those located on the outskirts of **myplace** areas, needs to be monitored.

## Evolving youth policies and strategies

Changing policy priorities are anticipated in the light of the new government.

- policy developments should be monitored by lead organisations with regard to their actual and potential impact on the **myplace** projects so that effective strategies can be devised to deal with change.
- an assessment of the impact of the **myplace** project on the quality of work in other local initiatives and projects also needs to be made by lead organisations so that strategy can be informed.

## Targeted or Universal Provision

There are tensions between targeted provision designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people or geared towards specific youth problems, and universal provision designed to attract a wide range of young people to leisure-based activity. Priorities and tensions need to be acknowledged so that they can be managed, especially in the context of changing policy direction.

To achieve successful outcomes in this regard, projects should:

- review potential areas of tension in their mix of universal and targeted provision.

- follow closely the emerging debate around local communities taking more responsibility for work and provision in their area, with reference to the role of social capital.
- examine the impact on young people of charging more for services and provision – and consider possible models of practice that could safeguard access for those who do not have the ability to pay.

The report concludes that projects need to look beyond the buildings that have inevitably been the primary focus of their attention during the planning and development stage. What will be of crucial importance to the **myplace** programme once the buildings are open, is the ability to carry forward the ambition, energy and enthusiasm characteristic of the developmental stage into the period of consolidation. This will involve developing clear strategies to deal with the challenges outlined.



## Introduction

### Background

This Report sets out some of the background to the **myplace** Programme and evaluates progress during the first year. **myplace** is a major Government programme aimed at developing 'world-class' places for young people. The Big Fund (BIG) manages the implementation of **myplace** for the Department for Education (previously the Department for children, Schools and Families (DCSF)). Grants to projects range from £1 million to £5 million. The **myplace** programme has been implemented in two rounds, the first including a fast-track for well developed projects which were able to respond to the **myplace** aims quickly:

- *Fast track round 1 projects:* Announced in November 2008, the government committed £62 million of capital investment in 21 projects.
- *Standard track round 1 projects:* Announced in March 2009, the government committed £178 million to fund 41 projects.
- *Standard track round 2 projects:* Announced in December 2009, the government committed £32 million to eight projects located in the one-third most deprived areas of England. (DCSF 2008a)

The report considers the development up to the end of March 2010, focusing on case study information collected from a sample of eight projects, supplemented by data from an annual survey of Round 1 projects (see Appendix 1 for full list of funded projects).

### Overall Aim

The core aim of **myplace** is to provide world-class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people and their views and needs.

### Outcomes

The programme has four outcomes:

1. More young people, parents and communities feeling that young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities;
2. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development;
3. More young people having access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable; and
4. There should be stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.

## The *myplace* evaluation

The overall aims of the evaluation are to identify:

- The extent to which leading practice is being adopted by projects and more widely (Appendix 2);
- The impact of adopting leading practice;
- The extent of progress towards the **myplace** outcomes.

The focus of this report is mainly on progress in eight case studies mapped against the programme outcomes.

### Case Studies

The case study work was designed to assess the progress of **myplace** against its planned aims and outcomes.

The questions which shaped the evaluation of the case studies drew on interim indicators and key performance indicators relevant to the outcomes. These were developed further around leading practice themes identified at an earlier stage of the evaluation (Appendix 2). The questions devised for the cases studies enable identification of appropriate respondents in each case study, including managers, partners, workers, young people and representatives of other interested groups from the locality. The final list of questions on outcomes and leading practice themes are in Appendix 3. At this stage of the evaluation, it is not possible to answer fully all the questions for each of the outcomes. However the list of interim indicators and key performance indicators provides a reference point for the extent to which each case study has made progress so far.

The case studies were not chosen as a representative sample. Within the constraints of the extent of progress at the point of the interim evaluation, the cases selected each contained interesting features which illustrate one of the key challenges or aspects of the programme design. The case study projects are:

1. Culture Fusion (Bradford YMCA) (Standard track, round 1)
2. Hackney Youth Hubbz, Hackney (London Borough of Hackney) (Standard track, round 1)
3. The Hub, Dartford (YMCA Thames Gateway) (Fast track, round 1)
4. Minehead EYE (Minehead EYE Community Interest Company) (Fast track, round 1)
5. Oldham Youth Zone: MAHDLO (OnSide North-West Limited) (Standard track, round 1)
6. Parkfield, Torbay (Torbay Council) (Standard track, round 1)
7. Shoeburyness Youth Centre (Southend on Sea Borough Council) (Fast track, round 1)
8. Young Person's Village, Stoke-on-Trent (Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire YMCA Foyer) (Fast track, round 1)

The evaluation team visited each case study project during February and March 2010 to contact key participants and to discuss developments. Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted to fill gaps emerging from the visits. Desk research identified supplementary and background information.

## Annual Survey

The annual survey covered all Fast track and Round 1 Standard track projects. It is intended to offer a snapshot of progress across the programme and to highlight any significant developments, issues or concerns. It offers a simple, but useful comparator for the case study information, while providing an extra layer of information for the case studies.

The survey was created using a simple *SurveyMonkey* approach, so it would be easy, quick to complete and allow simple factual analysis. It used four main headings (partnership, the facility, participation and strategy) devised mainly, but not only, to questions around leading practice, strategy and impact. The questionnaire employed mainly simple choice and ranked scale questions, although the form provided space for comment where appropriate (See Appendix 4).

The survey link was sent to a central contact with the request that they either complete it themselves or pass it on to the person most suited to completing it. There were 59 responses to the questionnaire – a response rate of 95%.

## Context: building for work with young people

### The rationale for the *myplace* Programme

The *myplace* programme emerged from *Aiming High for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* (HM Treasury 2007) which set out a vision for all young people to enjoy happy, healthy and safe teenage years that prepare them well for adult life and enable them to reach their full potential. *Aiming High* was part of an overall strategy of reform of children's and young people's educational and leisure services. Initiatives emerging from *Aiming High* had to conform to the broader agenda of *Every Child Matters* (ECM) (DfES 2003), supplemented by *Youth Matters* (HM Government 2005). These worked towards five outcomes for children young people: *being healthy, staying safe, enjoyment and achievement, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being*.

The *myplace* programme focuses specifically on improving youth facilities in response to evidence of demand from young people, parents and members of local communities. This suggests that facilities are needed to attract young people in their leisure time. To ensure new facilities meet expectations, Government places a high premium on participation of interested parties and especially young people in the developmental stages of the scheme. They expect this to continue as part of the sustainability of projects. *myplace* gives particular attention to the needs and interests of young people identified as disadvantaged.

The priorities of *myplace* are complementary to Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF), both launched in 2006 under the influence of *Youth Matters* and with a continuing commitment until 2011 (made in *Aiming High*). These funds also focus on positive activities for young people, youth participation and developing buildings to meet ECM outcomes. Evaluation of the first two years of the Funds suggested that not only had they had something of an empowering influence on the young people involved - encouraging participation in positive activities - but also that they contributed to some improvements in intergenerational relationships and community cohesion. There is also some evidence that the participation of young people in decision-making about youth facilities improved the quality and diversity of the provision on offer (DCSF 2010).

However, issues remain about the success of the Funds in increasing participation among the hardest to reach young people. Partly to address this, from 2008-2009 the 50 most deprived areas in England received extra YOF funding. This included the £22.6million 'Youth Capital Fund Plus' to be spent on refurbishing youth centres in such areas. Government expected that by March 2010, over 100 such facilities, including mobile units, would open (DCSF 2010:7).

The *Building Schools for the Future* Programme can also be seen as part of a government approach to developing 'a more integrated and strategic approach to improving places for young people to go' (DCSF 2008b). The Department views an extended school as one that provides wider activities and services often beyond the school day, 'to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community'. This approach drew on the North-American model of full-service schooling (see, in particular Dryfoos 1994) dealing with raising pupil attainment – especially in disadvantaged communities – and with meeting other policy targets such as those around reducing teenage pregnancies. There has also been an interest in making schools hubs for community services, including children's services (DfES 2004a). A prospectus, issued by the DfES in 2005, stated that by 2010 all secondary schools will be open from 8am to 6pm all year, providing access to activities for young people such as music, sport and holiday activities.

Alongside these other developments, Government saw **myplace** as making a significant contribution to youth strategy. In its advice to local authorities DCSF highlighted the following features for integrated provision:

- a. a wide range of attractive, structured, positive activities available throughout the whole week at times that suit young people;
- b. co-located multiagency services delivered both from places that young people want to go to, and on an outreach basis, ensuring that targeted services for vulnerable young people are delivered in the context of an offer that is universal and attractive to all;
- c. opportunities for young people to build relationships with, and learn alongside, others from different socio-economic, cultural and faith backgrounds, as well as adults and older generations from the wider community;
- d. mobile resources to provide a flexible response to young people's needs and reach out to areas without dedicated youth facilities; and
- e. access to these activities, opportunities and services through extended schools (DCSF 2008b).

There are historical precedents for building-based work as a medium for progressing work with young people, and the possibilities, opportunities and limits for **myplace** projects might be more fully understood through looking at that history.

## Building for work with young people

For 200 years or more, considerable expertise has been collected on the location, design and functioning of specialist buildings for young people. Most of the major questions and challenges facing **myplace** projects have been a fundamental part of practice for a century or more.

Work with young people in their leisure time has its roots in the emergence of Sunday schools and Ragged schools which classically combined educational activities with social and leisure provision. By 1851 three-quarters of working-class children were attending Sunday schools (Lacquer 1976: 44). Ragged schools provided for children and young people excluded, largely because of poverty, from other forms of schooling (Montagu 1904). While running on nothing like the scale of Sunday schools, their strong focus on groups of young people not attracted to, or able to access other provision, combined with a readiness to innovate beyond the simple programme of educational opportunity – created a significant base for the growth of other forms of youth provision (Eagar 1953). Importantly both Sunday and Ragged schooling developed buildings specially designed for their purposes.

Dissatisfaction with the limits of these forms of schooling played a part in the generation of other institutions. Most notably, we see the establishment of the first 'youth' organisation – the YMCA in 1844, and the development of youth institutes, boys' clubs and girls' clubs from the late 1850s onwards. By the late 1880s the YMCA was beginning to make a mass impact – and the numbers of clubs for boys and girls had exploded (Smith 1988: 11). The work was also beginning to get a solid theoretical base with classic works appearing on the nature of club work (Sweatman 1863; Pelham 1889; Stanley 1890). Initially many of the buildings used for such work were part of existing church and religious provision, or were intended for other uses. Many of the clubs had large buildings, and began to develop significant expertise in building design and management. In particular, the success and experience of large boys clubs in and around Manchester informed advice given to those setting up new buildings (for example, Hulme Lads Club had a nightly attendance of around 700 within three

months of opening, Davies 2008: 293). In an influential text Russell and Rigby suggested, 'It is impossible to lay down any hard-and-fast rules on the planning or even to the furnishing of the rooms' (1908: 40). They continued:

... the disposition of the various rooms, the heating, lighting, decorating, and furnishing are matters of vital importance, and the authorities of even the humblest club will do well to spare neither trouble nor reasonable expense in arranging its rooms to the very best advantage, and in making them serviceable and attractive.

The site for the club should be selected with great care. It should not front a busy thoroughfare, nor should it immediately adjoin private residences, the inhabitants of which are likely to raise strong objection to the noise inseparable from the haunts of boys. A detached building is of course the best, but failing this it is wise to obtain premises adjoining business houses, lock-up shops, or works, which are generally unoccupied in the evenings. The club should be within a few minutes' walking distance from the homes of the lads for whom it is primarily intended, and — a condition which nearly always follows — in fairly close proximity to the large industrial workshops of the district. The exterior of the building should be made to look as attractive as possible; it can at least be kept clean and with its windows whole.

Meanwhile local YMCAs were developing both neighbourhood and large town and city centre buildings. Several of these occupied central positions, were distinctive architecturally, and could be described as significant public buildings. Examples include the Newcastle YMCA opened in 1900 (see Jeffs with Gilchrist 2005), and the central London YMCA on Great Russell Street which opened in 1912 (and was the first building in London built using ferro-concrete). As with their North American counterparts, the shape, design and presentation of the buildings were informed by the mission of the YMCA (Lupkin 2010). In many respects, these building projects from a century or more ago strongly mirror the concerns of *myplace*.

One of the striking features of all these developments is the extent to which they depended on the energy and vision of a particular individual or small group of people. For example:

- the development of larger boys' clubs in Manchester was largely the result of the efforts of Alexander Devine (Davies 2008);
- the growth of local YMCAs by secretaries like Henry Armstrong in Newcastle (Jeffs with Gilchrist 2005); and
- learning from successful major girls' clubs run by the likes of Lily Montagu (Spence 2004) and Maude Stanley (Smith 2001b).

It is a pattern continued by later innovators such as Basil Henriques (Henriques 1933), James Butterworth (Butterworth 1932) and Henry Morris (see Jeffs 1999).

### The development of club work

Several landmark youth buildings appeared during the inter-war period most notably the new building opened in 1939 by the Methodist initiative – Clubland in Walworth. Established by the formidable organiser and advocate of youth work, the Rev. James Butterworth it reflected an approach to working with young people that involved four key elements – three of which can be found embedded to different degrees in *myplace*:

- Young people deserved good quality facilities. Their activities and clubs should be housed in attractive buildings that were both functional and beautiful. They also deserved the best equipment. Why are these things less necessary for those who live in the slums of south London, he asked, than for university undergraduates? (Morgan 1939: 285).
- There should be a strong emphasis on participation and involvement in governing the club or group. Clubland had large separate clubs for boys and girls and older members organised on 'a specially thought-out system of self-government (club parliament, separate 'houses' run by selected members from each section).' (Rooff 1935: 182).
- Members should make an acceptable contribution to the cost of the facility.
- All members should take their part in the life of the church. 'Church loyalty' and 'all-round fitness' were central aims. (See, Butterworth 1932; Smith 2002, 2009)

Following the First World War, there had been some small steps toward state funding and involvement in youth work, for example granting powers to local education authorities to set up Juvenile Organising Committees (Board of Education Circular 86, 1921). However, it was with onset of the Second World War and *In the Service of Youth* (Circular 1486, 1939) that organised services began to emerge. There was a need for different approaches and some forms gathered pace including the 'open' club and 'detached' youth work supported by significant state funding (see Jeffs 1979; Smith 1988). During the war there was a major expansion in the number of youth clubs and centres in both urban and rural areas (Smith 1988: 34-8) overwhelmingly located in church, community or school buildings. This work has a much stronger emphasis on 'mixed work', recreation and on enjoyment rather than 'improvement'.

With the ending of the war government enthusiasm for work with young people waned – and such investment in buildings that took place often concerned bringing back into life bomb-damaged clubs and units. There was, however, a growing interest in developing 'youth wings' in local schools (following the pioneering work of Henry Morris and the Cambridge village colleges) (see, for example, Ette 1949). These had the advantage of enabling access to facilities such as gyms, playing fields and specialist classrooms. Beyond this the primary need, according to commentators like Ette (1949: 76), was for smaller scale provision such as club rooms.

Much of the work described above was in what is now called the 'third sector' and was based in an associational form – the club. Clubs have members, structures that enable those members to have a voice, and some appreciation that for them to continue members have to pay and raise money. In youth work, the 'club' was a means by which people could freely identify with one another and gain the skills, disposition and knowledge necessary for citizenship:

The club at its best creates a society of personalities with a community sense, which is the essence of good citizenship... We are not concerned with the making of 'good club members' or 'well-organised youth groups', but with a much wider issue, the making of good citizens. This can only be done in a society where each member is important, where each one is given a chance to contribute something to the life of the group - the leader no more and no less than the member. It is for this reason that self-government is so important in club work. (Brew 1943: 12)

This appreciation was reflected in the way a large institution such as Clubland was run, and it was part and parcel of how many smaller groups ran.

## The Albemarle effect

The Albemarle Committee Report (HMSO 1960) was a moment of special significance in developing provision for, and work with, young people. Established in 1958 to review the work of the youth service the Committee helped to shape the government's response to what much of the media saw as the 'youth problem'. In part this was framed around a growth in adolescent and teenage delinquency. Just before the appointment of the Committee there were riots in Nottingham and London (especially in Notting Hill and Brixton) centred on 'race'. However, there was also concern around the growth of a more obviously 'teenage' culture linked to fashion and music; and the growing significance of 'teenage consumption'. In addition, National Service was ending. With a rise in the birth rate after the war, there had also been a big increase in the numbers of young people (see Jeffs 1979).

The Government accepted many of the Committee's proposals including the call for major investment in new facilities that should reflect a more liberal view of what is suitable and possible. The Government spent £28 million between 1960 and 1968 on 3,000 building projects (Smith 1999). The Ministry of Education's Architects and Buildings branch was brought in to further design and establish standards – and these were first set out in one of the Ministry of Education's regular building bulletins in 1961. A report on a 'model' centre in Withywood, Bristol followed in 1963. This effectively created a blueprint for 1960s youth club buildings (Davies 1999). It laid down that:

- the main function of the mixed youth club should be social: 'to provide a meeting place where interests and activities may arise spontaneously from the corporate life of the group';
- the social function should be supported by social, practical, physical and cultural activities;
- the plan of the building 'should ensure close physical and visual relationship between activities';
- the building should be as compact and as flexible as possible. (Davies 1999: 62-3. See, also Ministry of Education 1963).

While many of the resulting buildings provided a long-term convivial setting for youth work, problems arose out of inadequate initial investment in key aspects of the buildings, design (in particular having large central social areas), and from a failure to set aside money for repair and refurbishment (Davies 1999: 63). A further issue was that large parts of the budgets for work with young people 'had to be locked into a limited number of geographical locations' (*op. cit.*). The result was significant restriction on the ability to respond to the changing experiences and needs of young people. The story of Withywood itself is illuminating (see Robertson 2009). Having been highly successful initially and led by an enthusiastic worker, it suffered from under-investment, and was not provided with the necessary resources through the 1970s and 1980s to offer a full programme of activity. It suffered from under-use. Many local residents viewed it as depressing and off-putting and it became the focus for vandalism. Alongside this there were significant internal health and safety issues. Withywood Youth Club was demolished in 2005 to be replaced by a community facility, healthy living centre, church and some youth provision. A similar story can be told of many other large free-standing 'Albemarle' centres – and may well be repeated for a number of **myplace** centres. [We look at some of the challenges for **myplace** projects around design on pages 53-4].

## Co-location and extended schooling

A significant number of 'Albemarle Centres' were built as youth wings on school sites. There was also a growth in joint appointments (involving schools and youth services) – and the emergence of a new

job, that of 'youth tutor'. Some advantages to co-location included, notionally, the ability to access other facilities on the site. In practice the costs associated with this, and some resistance from head-teachers limited use. Co-location also had advantages to the school both in being able to access additional investment in plant (particularly around sports areas), and because youth wing or annexes 'were often used for teaching or as a social and recreational base for older pupils during the day' (Davies 1999: 112).

One of the major problems with co-location has been that young people who had difficulties with schooling were, it was argued, less likely to use such provision. Heads were not generally disposed to encouraging young people that they had excluded back into the school, nor were they keen on use by what they perceived as troublesome groups. Perhaps as a result many young people and parents saw school-based provision as more attractive and safer than free-standing youth centres. Researchers in the early 1980s found that young people classified as being from socio-economic groups 'A, B & C1' were much more likely to use youth provision based in schools and churches while those from groups 'C2, D & E's preferred community centre based provision (DES 1983: 37).

As budgets became tighter, co-location effectively became a government preference for the limited scale of building provision that took place in the 1970s and early 1980s. It often linked into policies around 'community schooling' and was adopted because of 'value for money'.

There was, and continues to be, a strong social case for basing youth work and leisure-time work in schools. With the rise in the school-leaving age, and an increase in post-16 participation, there was a fundamental lengthening of the process of transition to independence. Whereas when the Albemarle Report was published around 80 per cent of young people entered work as soon as they legally were able to (then at age 15), the figure is now around five per cent (Jefferies and Smith 2010). Schools and colleges became the place where young people could be found. They were where young people met each other, and where they organised their social lives. The commitment to 'extended schooling' recognised this (DfES 2002; 2005).

The extended schooling policy has not, of itself, become a major driver of new building development in schools. However, it has acted to widen and deepen the range of extra- and extended-curricula activity. It has also become a factor when considering developing or replacing facilities. The commitment made to a radical improvement of school plant under the *Building Schools for the Future* (BSF) Programme (DfES 2004b) opened up opportunities for extended schooling until the evening watershed. Alongside the development of academies this has implications for the building programmes associated with **myplace**. Several **myplace** projects are only a short way from major school new builds (linked to both the Academy and BSF programmes).

## Changing leisure, changing technology

The growing significance of schooling in young people's lives has been a central factor in the way they think about their leisure. To some extent this change was masked well into the 1970s as youth centres were benefiting from a 'bulge' in the numbers of young people (Smith 1988: 65-87) but the demographic tide was running against them. As the number of young people in the population dropped there was a decline in the membership of youth organisations by those over the age of 11 years (Hendry et al 1993: 46; Maychell et al 1996).

Along with the rise of schooling and demographic change, improved quality of housing, changed intergenerational relationships and the growing availability of home-based entertainment meant that it was no longer necessary for so many young people to leave the home to gain space for themselves. As electronic communications have developed, the home has been further cemented as a central site for leisure. Meanwhile, as Albemarle centres declined for want of resources, a massive growth in

commercial and other leisure opportunities (Smith 1988) ensured that by the early 1980s young people were far more likely to use leisure centres than attend dedicated youth provision (DES 1983: 74). These movements have fundamentally altered young people's view of youth provision and while **myplace** recognises the fundamental need to make facilities attractive, many centres will have to fight an uphill battle in terms of attracting users.

### Smallness, localness and civil society

When making sense of **myplace** it is important to recognise that the vast bulk of leisure-time work with young people takes place in local churches and faith organisations, on local playing fields, in community and village halls, and in Scout and Guide 'huts'. It is small-scale, local and located in civil society. According to the Children's Workforce Development Council (2010) some 173,000 people volunteer to help run Scouts and Guides groups, 523,000 volunteer as youth workers, and 3.4 million volunteer in the fields of sport and recreation.

The local remains significant in people's lives. While in the United Kingdom there has been a downward trend over the last thirty years in 'traditional' forms of social capital, a study undertaken in 2008 found that 77 per cent of people felt they belonged strongly to their neighbourhood. This represented an increase of 7 percentage points on 2003 (DCLG, 2009). As Anne Power's extensive research shows:

Neighbourhoods frame people's lives, providing a bundle of services that people need, and an environment on which families depend. They also provide a vital anchor to individual lives, the 'container' within which different social groups develop contact with each other. (Power 2007: 22)

Locally-organised, community-based youth provision offers sanctuary, relationship and community. A safe space away from the daily surveillance and pressures of families, schooling and street is one of the fundamental elements of successful local youth organisations (McLaughlin *et al* 1994). Research shows that they are often places where workers care and young people are valued, respected and have choice. Relationships between workers and young people are central to this (Spence *et. al.* 2007: 43). They are settings where young people 'connect with broader social institutions and the wider adult community' and provide non-familial settings in which 'societal rules for conduct are learned ... integral to their emerging sense of self' (Hirsch 2005: 54). The associational nature of such youth provision helps to cultivate social capital and community (Smith 2001; Robertson 2000, 2005 *op. cit.*).

Recently there has been a growth in interest from all the major political parties in England in strengthening social capital and of more localised forms of citizen involvement and control (see, for example, Cameron 2009, Byrne 2009). Some funders, notably the Rank Foundation (see Rogers and Smith 2010), have sought to grow such local, small-scale work. However, there are signs that policy concerns with 'joined-up services' and with monitoring young people are eroding such space within state-sponsored provision (Jefferies and Smith 2010).

**myplace** projects, which are mainly large-scale and centralised, aim to achieve similar outcomes with regard to young people to those characteristic of small, local initiatives. Classically, these outcomes are reliant on the building of sustained and positive relationships with, and between, young people. To be successful in this respect **myplace** projects will have to replicate key elements of locally-organised, small-scale provision – and to ensure continuity in staffing. Some projects – especially those with strong links to boys' and youth clubs traditions – have significant experience in doing this but others may struggle.

## Challenges

This brief review suggests that although there are significant historical precedents for success, **myplace** projects face several challenges. Here we want to highlight eight challenges:

**Building Design.** There is an obvious and long-standing set of challenges around whether the building design appeals to young people, is flexible in use, easy to manage, suitably located and adequately funded in the long-term.

**Leadership & Partnership.** Innovation in setting up larger youth facilities has often been associated with the presence of a committed leader with vision and considerable organisational ability. There is also some evidence that significant social innovation comes disproportionately from smaller groups and organisations (Mulgan *e. al*, 2007: 2).

**Participation.** The extent to which an initiative embraces participation, is central to the vision of the **myplace** programme. Participation covers different levels of involvement of young people and includes relationship building. This has particular implications for structure and places particular requirements on the culture and organisation of the project.

**Sustainability.** The ability of the project to develop long-term income flows – and, in particular, to draw income directly from its activities – will be critical to continuing the work. This has implications for decision-making, policy and programming. There are particular tensions about targeted and universal provision and for membership and entrance fees.

**Co-location.** For a nearly a century the design of dedicated centres for young people was based on the premise that most of their potential users would be in work or not at school. The context has now changed as the vast bulk of potential users are now at school or college and young people now have a greater range of leisure opportunities open to them in their homes or through private provision. The classic model was that of the free-standing centre that sought to offer young people association and activity in their leisure time away from work. **myplace** adopts the activities focus but adds to it specialist services related to extended youth transitions. There are questions about how the co-located leisure-specialist service model will work in practice and whether there are tensions and contradictions within it. It might also be asked whether free-standing centres or a broader model of co-location involving proximity to other services (especially on school and college sites) makes more sense.

**Centralisation (Hubs).** Many of the **myplace** developments look to a ‘hub’ model where young people are drawn to a central location or to provision organised around a particular interest or enthusiasm. Some are neighbourhood-based, others are in town centres. Location is clearly a key factor in whether young people use a facility, but there is also an important set of questions about the hub and its related parts, whether identified as ‘spokes’ or satellites. Previous large-scale youth provision has often looked to being provision in itself and has not depended on spokes. Some detached or outreach work may well have taken place which drew in people, but sustained work led to local activity or ‘satellites’ being set up that made little reference to the ‘centre’. There are particular questions to ask about the impact of centralisation on peripheral and neighbourhood provision. These include the extent to which:

- the work is defined by government rather than more locally-generated objectives;
- local work is starved of resources in order to sustain central, and high-profile, provision; and
- there is a decline in the scale of opportunity for positive leisure activity.

**Evolving youth policies and strategies.** In contrast to historical circumstances where projects had a great deal of local independence, flexibility and variation in decision-making and focus, present-day

youth projects must fit in with local authority strategies if they are to receive state funding. This frame alters their work. A further set of challenges face projects as central government strategies change. **myplace** developed within a particular framework of government policy. Changes to such policy could have profound implications for evolving structures and processes.

**Targeted or universal provision.** Much of the provision reviewed here was built on a 'universal' model. Workers looked to attract a wide range of young people from their local neighbourhoods. They did this partly out of concern to build community and what we might now also describe as 'social capital' (with people of different backgrounds, experiences and classes mixing). They were also universal out of economic need. Clubs and centres depended on attracting enough people prepared to pay their membership subscriptions or entry fees to cover their running costs. Over the last twenty years or so targeted provision has grown in emphasis – and **myplace** developments reflect this. The economic and moral need for good use of these new facilities, especially given a problematic general funding environment and cutbacks in local authority services for young people, will require a much stronger focus on universal provision in a number of projects.

## myplace: mapping progress

This section reports findings from the case studies, (for which full reports are included in Appendix 7) from the 2010 Annual Survey (Appendix 6) and from the desk research. The material is structured around the aim of the **myplace** programme and the themes and outcomes that run through it. We consider key dimensions under each of the broad headings identified as significant within the Programme framework documentation (DCSF 2008b; The Big Lottery Fund 2008). The objective is to highlight some of the experiences of the Programme; the tensions and challenges faced by projects; and how they are seeking to overcome issues.

### The **myplace** aim

As outlined earlier the core aim is to provide: 'World-class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people and their views and needs'.

The following examines the *ambition* of the Programme and the extent to which developments have reflected the active participation of young people.

### **Ambition: delivering a step change in the quality of youth facilities within available resources**

Ambitions for the new **myplace** were discussed around the meaning of 'world-class' in case study visits. The idea of world-class in practice is 'aspirational' and refers to efforts to be 'inspirational'. In all situations, the ideal of 'world-class' relates to 'quality'. This sometimes translates into 'the best that can be achieved' and, in this sense, ambition is implicitly limited by resources. The challenge for those involved in the projects is to maintain the ambition, vision and enthusiasm that had inspired applications for **myplace** funding, and to sustain the hopes and dreams of young people while positively managing resource limitations.

In the most general sense, the aspirations of those involved are to address specific local social, economic and community issues facing young people. For example, in the Bradford project, the ambition is that **myplace** should contribute to creating a multicultural city which understands difference as a strength rather than a weakness. In Hackney, the aim is to address territoriality and to offer parity of quality of youth provision across different neighbourhood areas linked to the borough's Sustainable Communities Strategy. In Shoeburyness, it is hoped that training in catering will at the same time offer a service which will impact positively on the health of the local community.

In all areas, there is evidence of an aspiration to bring into the projects young people who might not otherwise have opportunities to take part in activities or to access services easily.

There is ambition to provide 'high quality' buildings and facilities that reflect the worth of young people and at the same time make a positive impact on the local environment in terms of design, appearance and functionality.

For one stakeholder a 'world-class' building means 'something that stands apart and it will certainly stand out in Bradford' (Interview). In Shoeburyness, there was reference to the quality of the training kitchen that is to be installed, and to the dance studio as 'top of the range'. Apart from what was subjectively described as the 'wow' factor (Bradford, Torbay), objective international standards define quality around:

- the level at which activities might be pursued; and
- architectural standards.

So in Torbay, the standard of the BMX track is 'international' or 'world-class' in competition terms. With this in mind, young people have a tangible measure to judge the quality of resources provided. Meanwhile, in North Staffordshire the aim of the architects associated with the building is to achieve an 'Outstanding' international environmental award.

***it's just gonna be different***

*We wanted the place to be seen, the shape of the building we want it to stand out so it's not like a lot of the other buildings in Oldham so people drive past and wonder what it is. We're having lights in it that shine out over Oldham, a lot of it is glass so you can see in to what is going on when you're walking past. It's just gonna be different.*

***Young Person: Oldham***

These ambitions suggest a step-change insofar as workers and young people refer to the inadequacy of prevailing provision and the frustrations of the compromises which they have previously had to make in inadequate situations.

One member of the Young Peoples' Development Group in Oldham described the current situation as she saw it:

... there's not a lot for young people, we've got youth centres which are quite run down, but there isn't really much, we have three youth buses in Oldham that work like youth centres but we haven't really got a lot.

The responses to the 2010 **myplace** Annual Survey, and the material explored in the case studies, both indicate that projects have given careful attention to building design. Responses to the Annual Survey show that those with significant responsibility for local projects are confident about the design of the new facility in terms of meeting the needs of the young people with whom they want to work and each case study has interesting and unique design dimensions. This may be indicative of the relatively high degree of involvement by young people in consultations around design – and the expertise (both internally and externally) that projects were able to call on. It could also arise from the general optimism associated with building projects of this sort.

The review of previous programmes of building youth facilities suggested a number of design features relevant to the evaluation of the **myplace** buildings. Of particular interest are:

- the immediate attractiveness of the buildings to young people which includes the sorts of spaces that greet people on entering buildings (and the environment these create);
- whether the design allows for flexibility in use – both in terms of the use by different groups at the same time; and the ability to host a variety of activities;
- the extent to which the building can offer the range and quality of facilities that was originally envisaged;
- accessibility by people with different needs; and

- how safe young people might feel in different areas of the facility, for example in the entry areas, toilets, and the corridors and spaces between different activity areas.

Attractiveness to young people and relevance to the needs and interests of user groups are central to ambitions for the new centres. Issues raised in planning for building use for young people included:

- how young people and youth services use buildings;
- feeling safe;
- being able to take risks;
- being able to follow interests and skills; and
- the desire to return every night.

The safety and risk aspects had less strong responses in the survey than the other features. In the case studies, the focus around safety relates principally to the question of location on the one hand and to the containment of young people on the other. In Hackney, for example, the initial design idea to have light, open space for free association was amended when the police argued that for security reasons it was essential to contain the spaces within the centre.

Questions relating to the use of buildings, following interests and skills and wanting to return involves keeping young people in focus with reference to questions of participation, programming (the design, timing and shaping of the various activities on offer), opening hours, and the relevance of different activities. Projects understand that to establish their attractiveness, not only must the place be accessible and stimulating, but the workers must act with integrity, collaborating to offer services and activities which are suitable to a wide range of young people and at a standard which is 'at least as good as those offered to adults' (Interview, Oldham) . This indicates the importance of attention to finding the 'right' people to be workers; implementing appropriate management approaches; training; and being clear on roles among workers and collaborating partners. The extent of the clarity of such systems-planning varies across the case studies from the pre-structured (Oldham) through to the emergent (North Staffordshire).

Maintaining the centrality of young people in the face of a series of practical and time-consuming demands during the developmental stage is a challenge to the workers involved. They sustain this principally through the commitment to youth participation and to youth empowerment as intrinsic to aspiration, inspiration and ambition.

Overall, individual **myplace** projects have the ambition to deliver a step change in the quality of youth facilities within available resources. They are organising to achieve this. However, many are dependent on vulnerable revenue streams so that the scale of their achievement may be limited. In addition, success in this area for **myplace** projects in a situation of declining state resources may involve the loss of other facilities.

### **Youth empowerment: putting young people in the lead to drive every aspect of project design and delivery**

The **myplace** Programme has been characterised by attention to the opinions and involvement of young people. The participation of young people in decision-making is crucial to the quality of the projects. Many have grasped this and in doing so have mainly incorporated, built upon and extended practices already characteristic of youth work and established in existing youth organisations such as Youth Councils. Participation is an important theme in planning **myplace**. As a stakeholder in the *Culture Fusion*, Bradford project put it:

The ethos and values of the building are going to be determined by the young people so anyone that works with young people in that building will have to work in a certain way...I'm hoping that it's going to create a lot of power for young people in terms of how things happen for them.

All projects are working with models of youth empowerment through information, participation and decision-making. Systems of engagement range as follows:

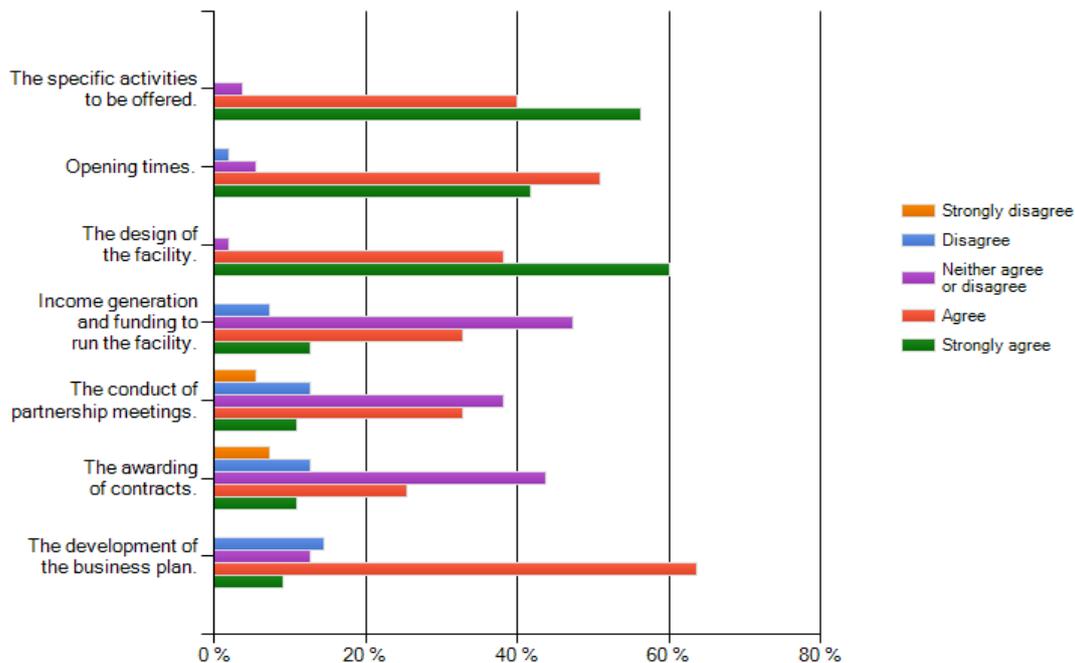
- electronic information and consultation using e-newsletters and Facebook (for example Bradford, Hackney, Torbay);
- general youth consultation processes in the locality (for example 'Debate Shoeburyness', 'Question Time' North Staffordshire);
- meeting with young people in partner organisations such as schools and other youth groups (for example Minehead, Shoeburyness, North Staffordshire);
- consultation and mobilisation of existing local Youth Parliaments and Councils (for example Bradford, Hackney, Oldham);
- integrating **myplace** concerns into the work of existing participation arrangements such as youth committees and user groups (for example North Staffordshire, Thames Gateway);
- creating a specific **myplace** young people's group to work as a partner in planning and 'delivering' the project (for example Oldham, Hackney, Torbay).

Mostly projects have used a combination of methods. The standard model involves close working relationships with a core group of young people already in contact either through their engagement in local Youth Parliaments or with a participating agency. Projects then follow this up with broader engagement with the wider population of young people through methods such as peer-led surveys or e-newsletters. Other methods include specific events related to **myplace**, such as the fundraising and promotional activity day in Bradford, or encouraging a specific group of young people to be involved in a particular aspect of development, such as building design and planning as they have been in most places.

The 2010 **myplace** Annual Survey also explored this area. Respondents were asked to make a judgement about the involvement of local young people in decision-making around the purpose, design and operation of the new facility. Specifically they were asked whether a significant number of young people had been centrally involved in deciding about key aspects of developing the **myplace** project. *Figure 1* shows their responses.

Figure 1 Young people's involvement

Young people: Please make a judgement about the involvement of local young people in decision-making around the purpose, design and operation of the new facility. A significant number of young people have been centrally involved in making decisions about:



In several areas respondents describe a situation where there has been significant discussion and exploration with young people. This is especially marked around:

- opening times;
- activities on offer; and
- the design of the facility.

Other parts of the project have been less of a focus for exploration including income generation and funding to run the facility; the conduct of partnership meetings and awarding contracts.

Beyond consultation and decision-making, young people are engaging other young people, taking part in peer education, and accredited learning and leisure opportunities as part of **myplace**. In all cases, projects understand that young people's involvement is part of a learning process around questions of decision-making, negotiation, and collaborative working. They also consider it will build their skills, understanding, and self-belief, while widening their aspirations.

Currently, most young people have been involved in feeding through ideas about programmes and activities and naming of projects. Structured groups of young people have been particularly concerned with consulting with their peers, working with architects on building design and helping to select architects. Young people in several projects have worked with the Sorrell Foundation<sup>2</sup> with

<sup>2</sup> The Sorrell Foundation was set up in 1999 with the aim of inspiring creativity in young people and improving the quality of life through good design. The Foundation creates and prototypes new ideas and develops models that can be widely used. <http://www.thesorrellfoundation.com/home.php>

mixed results in realising their ideas on buildings and finding out what is desirable and what is possible.

### **Debate Shoeburyness**

*Debate Shoeburyness has played an important part in encouraging young people and other interested parties to talk to each other. At a Debate Shoeburyness event organised by Shoeburyness High School, over 300 young people were joined by representatives from local organisations to discuss community issues. A key message from this event was the need for more affordable, high-quality positive activities for young people.*

*Because of this event, some 92 young people carried out more detailed work. Young people have contributed to the project through special sessions, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Through Debate Shoeburyness all young people get an opportunity to put forward any concerns they may have or ask any questions. In Shoeburyness High School this is facilitated by the extended schools coordinator through form groups. Every young person is invited to contribute with ideas, issues and questions. They then hold elections to decide on those young people to act as representatives, providing an indirect representational democracy.*

The processes of youth empowerment are necessarily dynamic. The volatility of youth populations and the life changes which occur within the age range mean that long-term involvement of individuals cannot be assured. The range of interests among young people also encourages some to engage in particular aspects of **myplace** development rather than others. Incoming members sometimes need to approve decisions made by one particular group. Sustaining groups, keeping continuity and interest in the developmental period requires continuous attention and planning by workers.

### **Bay Six, Torbay**

*With the support of youth and participation workers a group of young people came together through the local secondary schools to form their own steering group known as the 'Bay Six'. The group set about looking at previous consultations, going into schools, taking assemblies, undertaking questionnaires as well as working with the local press with the main objective of ascertaining what services young people would like to see. The Bay Six were then invited to sit on the short-listing panel as part of the tendering process to determine the lead agency for the **myplace** bid where they were able to represent the views of young people. Being involved in project development has provided young people with opportunities to play a key role in important decisions. As briefly mentioned the original architectural designs were not what the young people have envisaged. While at the time the young people were not sure how to respond, with encouragement they were empowered to challenge the designs they had been presented with. We know that one young person involved in the project design is now working as a volunteer youth worker and peer mentor and looking to develop professionally within this field. Another example is of a young person who has been excluded from mainstream education and has to be transported outside of the local authority to be educated. This same young person now has a placement working with the new architects.*

Young people gain advantages through engaging with the planning and developmental stages of the projects. Specific events, such as that associated with fund-raising in Bradford, organised by young people and targeted at young people as participants, have in themselves added value to young peoples' lives. Opportunities for contributing ideas through consultations and debates, and seeing

those ideas start to take form – especially when publicised positively by the local press – encourages young people. There is a clear sense in the case study projects that they feel they have a voice which is being heard. Meanwhile opportunities to take part in real decision-making adds enormously to the skills, knowledge and understanding of those involved. For example, it was pointed out in Torbay that rather than equating decision-making with power and control, young people have been encouraged to listen and engage with ideas of others. ‘Empowerment’ means a more collective approach to working with others rather than simply giving their opinions and expecting their ideas to be upheld by adults higher up the decision making chain. Through involvement in such processes, young people are starting to think for themselves and they are learning negotiation skills.

Opportunities to engage at different levels and continuing attention to youth empowerment processes remain key to the possibility of developing attractive leisure facilities for young people. The emerging model is one in which the ideal is for parity of participation for young people and their full engagement in decision-making and negotiating processes.

### Outcome 1: More young people, parents and communities feeling that young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities

**Offer: attractive location, building design, and overall offer so young people feel they have a place they want to go**

#### **Postcodes – Torbay**

*In finding a site several criteria were considered important. Firstly territorial issues and the need for a relatively neutral site, ease of access from the surrounding postcodes, centrality and the right size and potential to offer a world-class or quality facility.*

Each case study area has unique circumstances in which building design is progressing. Location has been an important consideration for projects both in accessibility for young people and broader environmental issues. For young people, key location considerations are:

- building in places where few leisure facilities otherwise exist for young people (for example Minehead, Oldham, Thames Gateway);
- improving and developing pre-existing youth provision (for example Bradford, Hackney, Shoeburyness, North Staffordshire, Thames Gateway);
- ensuring that a wide range of young people have geographical access (for example Bradford, Torbay, Oldham, Shoeburyness, North Staffordshire);
- territoriality (for example Bradford, Hackney, Oldham, Torbay, Thames Gateway);
- possibilities on the site for development around young people’s identified interests (for example Oldham, Torbay);
- proximity to other services including schools’ facilities and children’s centres (for example Bradford, Shoeburyness).

On environmental issues, central considerations for all projects have been:

- the potential of the building to signal that young people have a safe and attractive ‘place to go’;
- improvement of the locality and making a positive impact in their locations;
- local community concerns – for example around movement by relatively large numbers of young people to and from the facilities, and the impact (especially noise) of the various activities on neighbours.

To some extent, decisions about location have been opportunistic. The availability of sites for development, the character and dimensions of the sites available and the need to work within resource limits have constrained choices. In each locality, the priorities and circumstances differ and therefore solutions to the question of location are individually unique. For example, territoriality amongst young people is a priority issue in both Bradford and Hackney but is being addressed in completely different ways.

In Bradford, a town centre location in a ‘neutral’ space that also has very few people living nearby has been chosen. ‘Neighbourhood issues’ and the geographical separation of different ethnic groups have been crucial to the decisions about location here. Choosing a location that was not identified with a particular group was a priority. Using ideals of peace and globalisation around which to organise planning adds a further dimension to the effort to transcend local divisions. A long term issue here might be local change in territories and neighbourhoods. What is seen as neutral at one point in time can quickly become seen as partisan.

In Hackney a different approach has been taken. A series of refurbished buildings in local neighbourhoods are linked into a broader **myplace** project. Each neighbourhood centre has been designed with the intention of contributing to equality between neighbourhoods and to provide high quality local facilities for young people. At the same time, each centre will pursue specific activities and specialisms at a high standard. The intention here is to persuade young people to move outside local territories in order to access their various interests in specialist activities. There remain questions about whether parity of provision will address territorial rivalries and whether specialised activities are in themselves sufficient to motivate movement across territories. The experience of cross-community work in Northern Ireland would seem to indicate that a range of other initiatives are also necessary to facilitate productive engagement between different and rival groups (Shubotz and Robinson 2006).

Some consideration has been given in **myplace** planning to the proximity of other services in terms of impact and accessibility but mainly the decisions about location considered the centres as stand-alone units. Where co-location is mentioned, it is generally about support services relocating into the new **myplace** building (for example Staffordshire, Shoeburyness, Thames Gateway, Torbay). Except in Shoeburyness, where there are links to extended schooling, there has been little consideration given in the case study sites to the possibilities for co-location with other services such as schools.

In all circumstances, the ideal is to develop modern facilities which will be attractive not only to young people, but attractive in and of themselves. Projects hope such facilities can make a positive statement about the value of young people, that they will ‘challenge perceptions of what youth facilities have to be like and who they are for’ (Shoeburyness, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008), and that in their design and construction they will make a significant contribution to the physical and social regeneration of localities.

**Minehead EYE – creative space**

*The design of the building has been carefully considered in terms of the type of experience it will offer for young people. In this sense project planning has addressed questions relating to the type of environment that allows space for young people to interact and engage in free association. The building has been conceptualised as a creative space which might be adaptable to new opportunities and ideas. It is more than simply a service resource for young people to consume. It is intended to encourage active participation and is anticipated as a 'place that can make things happen'. There is as hope that when the building opens people will be inspired by the quality and resources that have been invested in the project.*

The evidence is that although some compromises have had to be made in the planning stages with reference to resources, planning issues and security, the designs are, in the main, expansive, ambitious and attractive. Young people have been involved at various levels. Sometimes they were able to contribute to the design brief and choice of architects. In others their role was limited to consultation with the architects. Sometimes involving young people centrally has challenged architects to innovate in response to their ideas:

*This is an exciting project for the practice, not only as it calls for an innovative design in order to respond to the diverse range of features required by the brief, but also for the fresh, pioneering way that the young people of Bradford have been involved in the project from the outset...*

*...Culture Fusion has really given us an opportunity to think outside the box – to get the maximum impact from a challenging brief, budget and timescale (Bowman Riley Architects, quoted by Bradford MDC Information & Communication, 12th November 2009)*

In some of the projects, quality of building design links to environmental sustainability. This has been an important concern particularly in North Staffordshire which is planning a campus-like facility and where the architects are:

*...aiming for the highest sustainable accreditation in the UK. Seddon are renovating and redeveloping existing YMCA facilities in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, to create a Young Persons Village on the site – and are aiming for a BREEAM Outstanding rating for the project. If successful, the building will be among a handful in the UK achieving the standard. BREEAM, from BRE Global, (the Building Research Establishment) is the leading environmental rating tool for buildings around the world. Outstanding is the highest standard that can be achieved under the standard (Seddon press Release: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2010).*

The Shoeburyness project is planning one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in Southend. Such environmental concerns reflect not only the needs and interests of young people, but also to contribute towards the attractiveness and safety of buildings. They also link with the developmental processes in the work with young people. For example, in July 2009, North Staffordshire YMCA residents went to Germany to undertake a one-year apprenticeship with Streif to learn how to work on building 'flat-pack' environmentally sensitive buildings using eco-friendly methods (The Sentinel, 9 July 2009). This not only gave them skills, but opens the possibility of their employment in the new building project. In Shoeburyness, the environmental theme links to plans for a kitchen garden which will provide some of the food for the restaurant and so contributing towards healthy living.

## Community: engaging and changing the perceptions of parents and communities

While all organisations are aware of the family and community context within which **myplace** is progressing, definitions of communities of interest differ and the need to engage local people varies between places. Parents and families are not usually addressed directly, but as members of local communities though with a particular interest in the project.

At one end of the scale, partners view the new project entirely as a youth facility and the task around 'community' is mainly to keep local people informed and to win and maintain their enthusiasm. For example, in Bradford the community is very broadly defined since the plan is to reach out across local boundaries and to be relevant across the whole geographical area of the city. **myplace** is using the existing programme of community engagement adopted by the YMCA which mainly involves attendance at neighbourhood forums. All the projects are working at this level to publicise **myplace** and ensure that information is in the public domain.

### **Community involvement – Shoeburyness**

*The **myplace** project team have undertaken proactive community outreach work to ensure that they have been able to talk with local people and hear what they think about the new facility and what should be in it. The outreach team have engaged over 200 local people in a conversation about the new facility. Six community outreach sessions with youth and community workers have taken place, visiting various locations, including parks, the local superstore and housing estates. Through these meetings valuable feedback has been provided which has informed the design of the new facility. In addition, another 83 people expressed their support for the proposal during a visit to the youth centre to find out more about what was planned.*

*So far the project team have yet to come across tensions between young people and community members. One of the councillors describes himself as being quite proactive in meeting with the elderly population of Shoeburyness to talk about the new SYC. Having facilities for the whole community in the form of the café and volunteering opportunities has been taken as a positive sign by local residents.*

*The importance of listening to people, encouraging debate and questions has led to people feeling included. When the outreach team talks to local residents and young people the feedback given is positive. Having a presence as a local worker and being known to community groups has allowed the project manager to push/pull people in getting local residents and young people on-board. The project team describe the project as having a high profile amongst residents but also, politically among councillors and through the media. This stems from the transparent inclusive approach of the project manager.*

In the middle of the scale, projects understand that local residential neighbourhoods will be affected by the developments and they have asked for the views of residents mainly through public meetings and representation in decision-making. There are different models for this. For example, in Hackney the project goes through the network of Tenants and Residents Associations, and in particular those which are working near the **myplace** centres. These in turn are conceived on a strategic level as part of the processes of both neighbourhood involvement and an integrated approach to young people, so all relevant organisations are structurally linked with each other and with the Borough Council. Minehead use a different model through creating 'Minehead EYE' as a Community Interest Company (CIC). Membership of the CIC is open to individuals from community groups, young people and representative organisations. In this way the partnership organisations and other organisations are

interlocked in a management structure which is accountable both to the formal partnership and to the membership. In addition, from general consultations, several groups and organisation have come together to form the Minehead EYE focus group, to ensure community interest is maintained as the project develops.

At the other end of the scale, the plan is to integrate local interest groups from the community into the activities of the centre. For instance, development of the site in Torbay is framed by a legal agreement (a Deed of Covenant) which requires community use, while in Shoeburyness, involving the community is seen as crucial to developing a good customer base for the restaurant. Because of this, work is proceeding not only to consult with local people about *myplace*, but also to ensure the focus on young people continues to be integral to the wider community interest. Specific ideas that projects identify to develop wider involvement include:

- programming which will involve adults in activities and offer space for different groups to participate;
- buildings which encourage use by parents and carers; and
- structures for community support such as a patrons or friends scheme.

Responses to the 2010 Annual Survey also throw some light on this area. Projects describe six broad approaches to involving community members (other than young people) in decision making on the purpose, design and operation of the new facility.

The first, and most widely reported approach, uses *community forums, community meetings and public consultations* as a means of getting feedback on the proposed provision. Most projects used this approach as part of their local engagement. A significant number have relied on this alone.

Second, a significant number of projects look to *involve local people and groups in governing the project*.

A third approach is to *engage directly with local community groups and organisations* and, sometimes, to ask them to get involved in developing the project.

Fourth, a small but significant number of the projects are *local organisations engaged in a process of community development and participation*.

Fifth, a few respondents discuss *making use of elected members* both for articulating local concerns and in 'selling' the project to local people.

Last, there is some evidence in responses to the survey of *everyday conversation and contact* playing a part. This may take the form of conversation with current users of a centre or with those organisations already working in the local area through the normal course of engaging with local people. The process has not been without tensions. As one respondent commented:

The project did have a strong community representation on the project steering group, and it was proposed that the governance arrangements between the two community groups involved would become the management committee for the building. However the match funders through their due diligence on the project proposal questioned the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and were fearful that the community groups did not have the capacity to manage the facility longer term. Support and training was offered to the community groups to build their skills and capabilities but this was turned down as the group (and individuals within the group) believed they did have the skills.

## Outcome 2: More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development

### Reach: maximising reach and focusing on the most disadvantaged

In all case studies there is concern to meet universal aspirations for young people, including those defined as disadvantaged, and meeting the expectations of *Every Child Matters* (ECM). This involves not only providing facilities and programmes and using methods which will achieve the widest reach, but also paying specific attention to those who might need special help or specialist support. The key factors in delivering the aspirations of those involved in **myplace** are:

- combining accessible activities to engage young people in their leisure and increase their enjoyment with providing cooperating specialist services 'on-site'; and
- the continuing commitment to youth participation in identifying the issues and contributing to decision-making.

To maximise reach projects must address various structural and identity differences as they affect young people including ethnicity, disability and poverty. In addition they must pay attention to particular circumstances such as geographical isolation, unemployment, homelessness, and crime. The priorities are inevitably informed by local and social circumstances. For instance, in Torbay, the impact of the tourist industry on employment patterns, leisure opportunities and the mobility of young people has had a significant effect on design and programme planning. On the one hand tourism offers the opportunity to tap into an important source of income (use of the facilities by visitors); on the other usage by local young people is likely to drop during the tourist season (with alternative work and leisure opportunities opening up). In Bradford, questions of ethnicity, cultural difference and the need for community cohesion have been central to the themes of global connections and peace which have informed planning and design. In Minehead, there are significant questions about more peripheral communities and the rural isolation of some young people which highlight how important outreach and transport are. In Shoeburyness, providing healthy food in the restaurant, combined with improved sports facilities is a direct response to rising obesity levels. In North Staffordshire, the continued commitment to services for vulnerable young people involves maintaining and developing the network of local specialist services that are needed to meet their needs. In Hackney the developments are taking place in areas which are identified through indicators of youth risk and marginalisation in local neighbourhoods and characterised by problems associated with deprivation.

Some projects give specific attention to the possibilities of including young people not normally represented in decision-making processes. One mechanism is to work through the agencies already involved in partnerships and working arrangements to involve the young people with whom they are in touch. This has invariably been sustained by **myplace** workers deploying youth work methods. There is some evidence that the creation of a small group to focus on the **myplace** project, supplemented by other activities, such as residentials, visits and outings, which facilitate small group work, works well to sustain the interest of the young people involved (for example Torbay, Oldham and Hackney). Close working with schools has also been particularly useful in widening the reach of empowerment and participation (for example Minehead, Shoeburyness and Bradford). Given the compulsory nature of schooling it is possible for workers to make contact with much larger numbers of young people than they would either through street, project or centre-based work. In addition, the approach taken by informal educators such as youth workers often provides for young people an attractive contrast to the more formal activities of schooling.

At this developmental stage there are some issues emerging around plans to marry universal and targeted approaches. The ideal of ‘things to do and places to go’ which inspires the interest of most young people focuses on accessible, constructive and safe leisure-time activities. Some young people (some of those, for example, involved with the Torbay case study) do not want the new **myplace** centres identified as service centres. In the main, young people focus on leisure activities; they want places to relax and meet friends in a safe setting. Nevertheless, they do recognise that being able to access confidential and specialist advice easily is important. This does not always sit easily with the approach of targeted and service-based provision which focuses on addressing issues around particular ‘problem’ groups.

First, and depending on the nature of the provision, targeted work can significantly alter the perception that young people, and their parents and carers, have of the centre. It can become labelled as a place where ‘people with problems go’ and, as a result, to be avoided. This sort of labelling has been a longstanding problem in some forms of youth provision (see, for example, DES 1983).

Second, and linked to the above, there can be a major problem of branding. People’s perception of a centre as a place for leisure activity can be significantly undermined by the presence of welfare services. It can create confusion around what the place is and the experiences it offers i.e. its identity. This is often not helped by the visibility of different logos on the outside of buildings as planned for some **myplace** centres.

Third, from the perspective of the user of specialist services there can also be an issue of stigma. Their use of services can become highly visible and this might be exacerbated by particular methods of ‘targeting’ such young people. There is a need to ensure that young specialist service users are not labelled in accessing the **myplace** facility.

Fourth, there are potential conflicts of interest in use of the building by various ‘client’ services. In particular, if a project is financially dependent on rent from participating agencies, as in the case of Staffordshire for example, then they will need very careful management to ensure that sufficient time and space is assigned for young people rather than organisations. One common expression of this problem is the amount of space in buildings that becomes dedicated to office use rather than as activity spaces. Some **myplace** projects might be vulnerable to the increasing use of space for business purposes, which may have a negative impact on the opportunities for young people.

Overall, there are questions about how successful a number of **myplace** projects will be in terms of attracting young people in sufficient numbers – including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In some cases there is likely to be an increase in the number of young people involved in positive leisure activities. In others, particularly when the impact of current funding constraints on local provision is taken into account, a decline in participation in the short-term at least seems likely.

### **Barriers: overcoming local barriers and attracting and engaging young people to take part in positive activities**

Projects mostly identify the local barriers to participation around physical, social and economic factors affecting young people. Physical barriers translate into access issues. Social barriers translate into culture and relationships. Economic barriers relate to the costs to young people of joining in.

The centres are addressing the issue of access around location, design and use of the buildings in a number of ways. Where buildings are designed as ‘hubs’, located in central positions with a centralisation of youth activities and services, there are obvious questions about access from districts further away from the centre and from rural locations. Projects are addressing such barriers of distance through attention to transport on the one hand and on the other hand through the possibility of outreach or ‘satellite’ facilities. For example, in North Staffordshire, there is some concern to

encourage access for young people who live outside the immediate vicinity of the development, specifically because of the linearity of the geography of Stoke-on-Trent. In response a member of YMCA staff has been allocated the job of considering transport issues. These include looking at cycle routes and the canal as part of the sensitivity to environmental issues. Nevertheless, they view the fact that a railway station and a bus-stop are each less than ten minutes walk away as an obvious benefit. The YMCA website details all the transport and access options. In Minehead, the problem of access for young people from areas further afield was discussed in the Cabinet meeting of the council. It was recorded that 'talks were underway with the community college and *Atwest* on the use of minibuses and with the use of voluntary drivers it was intended to keep the costs as low as possible' (West Somerset District Council, Cabinet minutes 8/4/09). In Torbay, where historically transport costs have been prohibitive, negotiations are underway with the local transport company for reduced fares for young people accessing the new facility during the evenings. This is part of a broader strategy there to accommodate young people from rural areas in which the **myplace** project will work in partnership with smaller non-central projects, detached and street-based programmes, and a mobile youth work facility. Such work also contributes to the 'reach' of the Torbay project insofar as the outlying areas identified fall within the top 20% for indices of deprivation.

All the case study projects considered questions of access in the design of buildings. In some cases, this translates simply into conformity with minimum legal standards for disability access. In other cases, such as Torbay, particular plans have been made to provide space for parents and carers to be accommodated comfortably in the building. Projects have given a great deal of attention to the needs of young people for opening hours which include evenings and weekends.

The social barriers considered mainly relate to differences and divisions between young people. Territoriality relating to differences of religion and ethnicity (Bradford, Oldham), or with neighbourhood identities (Hackney) have been addressed partly through decisions about location and partly through the development of activities and the inclusion of services which it is hoped to appeal to groups beyond identity difference and territorial allegiances. The priority to address territoriality and difference is highest in the Bradford project. They have attended to a number of elements including the breadth and the uniqueness of the activities included in the scheme, its situation in a city-centre location, and the use of a range of methods, including electronic media to engage young people.

Some success is already being reported and one member of the young people's advisory group stated that 'I would never have spoken to someone from that culture if it wasn't for this'. Another exclaimed that '*Culture Fusion* is already happening!' before the building is completed and as a result of the activities introduced through **myplace**.

Economic barriers are particularly associated with questions of disadvantage and the need for projects to take this into consideration in their planning. This has an impact on programme planning, the cost of participation in activities on offer, and the costs of membership. It is implicit in the case study data that economic disadvantage is connected with other youth issues and as such, addressing economic disadvantage is integral to all the projects. For instance, making provision for young mothers in the facilities and programming, or aiming to enable young people to move from being defined as NEET, to EET (for example Shoeburyness) are important factors. There is also some consideration of economic difficulties with transport costs and membership fees. In Oldham, the plan is to charge 'nominal' entry fees for activities while in Torbay, tiered membership costs will enable local young people to access facilities at the lowest rate and tourists will pay a premium. Projects have given little detailed attention to the broad economic barriers which young people might face in accessing particular activities. There is the obvious cost of entry to the activity in the centre – which in situations where projects have to generate significant income to keep provision open could lead to prices that are beyond the range of the poorest young people, especially those for whom there are additional transport costs in reaching the centres. Some activities, such as skateboarding, are also

associated with the adoption of particular clothing styles which can be expensive but might be considered by young people to be necessary to fully participate in the activity and its associated social groups. These are 'hidden' costs for young people and their families which will impact on their ability and willingness to take part in some activities.

### **Quality: ensuring the effectiveness of provision in improving young people's outcomes, including quality of the workforce**

Plans for **myplace** centres including a wide range of activities and services, aim to improve ECM outcomes and are integral to local strategic planning relevant to community, children and youth. In the participatory work which is being undertaken as part of the developmental stage of the **myplace** centres, there is some evidence of a positive impact on the outcomes for those young people involved. The extent of the impact will however, not become clear until the centres are up and running.

Structures and systems which draw on and mobilise pre-existing skills in the youth workforce have been and remain crucial in each of the case studies. Youth workers in particular have been able to use their skills to positive effect in working to engage young people and to coordinate the input of other services. There is some awareness that various skills will be needed to achieve a successful **myplace** centre. For example, in Torbay, it was stressed that workers involved in the project will need to fulfil several roles and that the centre would not be simply a leisure facility or a youth centre. The workers will need to have the characteristics of skilled youth workers including the capacity to be reflective, think critically, and engage people in dialogue. They will also need to be able to run a project or administrate, deal with logistical issues and at the same time encourage and empower young people.

At this stage, before most centres are open, it is too early to evaluate the real impact on the youth workforce. However, it is clear that the size, complexity and specialist nature of many of the **myplace** projects will require a particular mix of knowledge and abilities – one which partners might need to assess against the existing youth work labour force.

### **Outcome 3: More young people having access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable**

#### **Co-location: delivery partnerships enable integrated service delivery models that are attractive and accessible to young people**

The nature of the emerging delivery partnerships is dependent on the characteristics of the lead organisation and key workers. It is interesting that in seven of the eight case studies, leadership is significantly influenced by workers from organisations which have a history of providing services which are attractive and accessible to young people.

Five of the case studies, Bradford, North Staffordshire, Shoeburyness, Thames Gateway and Torbay have key involvement of YMCA organisations or workers. The Association has a long history of managing larger buildings and the complex programmes necessary to generate income. Experienced YMCA workers are taking lead roles in these projects and their professional histories of working to engage young people, including those who are disadvantaged, has been important in building plans which are responsive to young people's needs and interests. The typical YMCA/Local Authority model of collaboration involves representation on various committees and this has been adopted as a

model in some **myplace** projects where other services are represented in **myplace** management structures. This is an open and process-based arrangement which does not necessarily lead to any particular model of co-location. In Bradford, Connexions and a third sector organisation Bradford Youth Development Project, intend to locate their services in the new building. Other provision, such as that offered by the NHS would be delivered from the building but the key service would not have any established presence there. In North Staffordshire, the intention is to rent facilities to associated service organisations whilst the YMCA itself plans to continue its work with other agencies such as Connexions, The Primary Care Trust and the Learning and Skills Council through service level agreements. In Shoeburyness it is planned that Southend YMCA will operate the restaurant and professional kitchen which will be used as a training centre. The partner organisation, Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS) will operate a youth volunteering centre from the premises. In Thames Gateway the intention is to develop co-located provision providing space for a number of projects to provide a range of 'innovative' activities. However, at the time of the research it was not yet clear which projects would be co-locating. In Torbay, a number of agencies have been working within the **myplace** partnership. These include Connexions; Groundwork SW; Shekinah Mission; Torbay Voluntary Service; The Children's Society, South Devon College, and YMCA South Devon. All these partners intend to be involved in the delivery of services through **myplace** and it is anticipated that some will give up their current premises in order to move to the new site. However, the extent of this has not yet been finally established.

A sixth case study, Oldham, stems from the influence of the Bolton Lads and Girls Club located historically in the model of the large northern boys' clubs and in the more recent history of the successful rejuvenation of that particular club. The key features of success here include a clear and unwavering focus on 'youth', on the idea of the 'club' in which youth activity and association is the foundation for other work, and clear managerial roles and structures.

In the seventh case study, the Minehead EYE project has developed a particular partnership model comprising Minehead EYE, a Community Interest Company (CIC), and CLOWNS (Creating Learning Opportunities in Western Somerset). Membership of the CIC is open to representative organisations as well as to individuals from community groups and young people themselves. CLOWNS represents a wide partnership of relevant statutory and voluntary support services and is well-established in its family intervention work across Western Somerset. Having such a well-established partner with strong community relationships adds credibility to the Minehead EYE as a new project. Meanwhile, the intervention work of CLOWNS provides a link for young people who come from disadvantaged background into the provision that Minehead EYE is able to offer.

In the eighth case study, Hackney, **myplace** is part of a whole-systems approach to community and youth provision within the Borough's Sustainable Communities Strategy. The local authority is using a firm of consultants (Regenfirst) who have worked with the Borough on a number of other community projects in the past. The role of the consultants is to interpret and implement the local authority strategy for **myplace**, managing the development on a day to day level working alongside two key partner organisations identified as 'preferred providers'. Regenfirst are explicitly working with the Borough's youth service to maintain the youth focus while delivering integrated and partnership working across sectors. Here the model is more akin to that of the neighbourhood youth centres developed under the influence of Albemarle, but with a more up to date approach to integration and participation.

The centrality of youth work and youth service personnel in organising the developmental stage has been important in creating partnership arrangements in which the focus has remained on developing activities which are attractive to young people. The range of recreational activities planned range across sport and culture, and young people's interests have been important in establishing the priorities here. In Oldham for instance, the young people involved were concerned that the architect

had placed too much emphasis on sport in their plans. Therefore the architect adapted the plans to allow more flexible use of the building and to accommodate cultural and creative activity. Information, advice and guidance is in itself integral to the youth work method and is part of the informal processes of relationship building in which youth workers engage. However, it is recognised in all situations that young people also need access to specialist services. It is clear that a wide range of specialist services and agencies are working in the field of the partnership arrangements of **myplace**.

Co-location of services in the case of **myplace** projects usually entails the grouping together of a number of targeted services for young people with a broader offer of leisure activity. It offers a particular approach to the ideal of integration pursued through major policy initiatives relating to young people. Co-location has been adopted as an attractive option both as a means of offering easier access to services for young people and as a way of maximising revenue. For example, in North Staffordshire, co-location follows a 'campus' model and will involve hiring parts of the project to organisations who wish to relocate or to use the building for the delivery of their specific youth services. However, not all projects plan to fully house partner services in the new building. For example, in Bradford, there are four tiers of integration. The central drivers are the lead organisation, *Culture Fusion*, which comprises Bradford YMCA in partnership with the Local Authority. The next tier involves those organisations, including Connexions and Bradford Youth Development Project, which plan to relocate to the new building. The third tier, including NHS provision, would be delivering services from the building but would have no permanent presence there. Finally, there are organisations from districts further afield which will bring young people in to the centre.

Co-location is sometimes highly complex. For example, the design of the Hackney structure is intended to form a broader framework for Hackney Youth Service. It entails creating a new Youth Hub and four supporting 'spokes' each known as *Hubbz*. The Hub will provide a youth centre and a base for the central youth service comprising the Youth Inspection Team, the Youth Parliament, the Grants Panel, Youth Ambassadors and Youth Volunteering Programmes. The spokes will provide a focal point for more locally based provision in the areas of greatest need. These services will be both maintained and commissioned. They will be managed by the Youth Service and its preferred voluntary/community sector groups and organisations (VCS). The partners intend that each of the spokes in the Hackney model will have its own specialism such as IT, media, sport, enterprise or drama – and attract young people from other areas. In addition, it is envisaged that each will become a local hub, working with local organisations and partners, as well as in partnership with young people to plan and deliver services. As well as pursuing the focus of their own specialist area, it is intended that each of the *Hubbz* will have youth service staff supporting it as part of a strategy for offering positive activities. For instance, one of the *Hubbz*, Stoke Newington (a refurbished youth centre) will work in partnership with the Crib, a preferred provider for youth activities and the local Tenant Residents Association. The site is located close to both Stoke Newington School, which has Technology status, and Clissold Leisure Centre, which together provide a cluster of facilities. They propose spreading activities across this cluster based around either an ICT or healthy living and healthy eating theme.

In some situations the extent of the co-location of services is not yet clear. For example, partners in Torbay are still negotiating on the possibilities. There is a likelihood that some partners might give up their current premises to move on to the new site. They consider it to be important because having a vested interest relates to levels of commitment to the overall project. Organisations were expected to show their commitment to the vision and direction of **myplace** before they could be included in the partnership (interview, case study visit). However, moving sites has implication not only in Torbay but for all projects affected by the scheme and these need to be managed carefully by participating agencies.

An alternative model of co-location might involve two or more organisations that have a large, regular presence of young people, particularly schools and colleges. Some **myplace** plans refer to the importance of facilities such as schools nearby, for example Bradford and Hackney where the emphasis is on the complementarity of services and ease of access for young people. But among the case studies, only Shoeburyness Youth Centre, which is part of a campus that includes Shoeburyness High School and a children's centre, fits the model fully. Across the whole **myplace** scheme, only six Fast track or Standard track (Round 1) projects are co-located with schools and colleges. As well as Shoeburyness Youth Centre these are:

- *The Buzz*, Halton which is part of a developing 'Youth Village' comprising Riverside College, local High Schools, the Leisure Centre, local library and children's centre. It will offer a cinema, exhibitions, performance and arts activities, gym, chill-out rooms, ICT facilities, meeting rooms, and one-to-one advice and guidance.
- *Carlisle Youth Zone* will be built adjoining the Richard Rose Central Academy which will act as a project partner, along with Cumbria County Council and the University of Cumbria.
- *The Phoenix Centre*, Bognor is based on the Bognor Regis Community College Campus and offers opportunities to get involved in performing arts, sport and learning how to run a radio station.
- *New Life*, Hartlepool is an arts centre that will run in partnership with St Hild's Church of England School. It will be built on a disused playing field next to the school. It also involves Northern School of Music and Minto Music, an organisation that specialises in music recording.
- *Trafford Youth Village*, based at the Broadoak High School in Partington, Trafford, is a new centre with a 400-seat theatre/cinema with retractable seating, a projection room with music recording and film editing facilities, and a sports area with a virtual floor for hockey, gymnastics and other sports, a gallery and exhibition centre with studios, conference facilities, and an ICT room.

The relatively small number of projects linked to schools is surprising given the explicit requirement in the **myplace Guidance** that projects should be developed in the context of 'a wider integrated strategy for improving places to go that links to other plans for improving services for young people and the infrastructure that supports their delivery – such as strategies for children's play and school asset management strategies, including Building Schools for the Future' (DCSF/BIG 2008).

Of the six co-located **myplace** projects, four have a significant creative arts focus – and there are some advantages for both parties in the arrangements – including the possibility of high use rates and the possibility of joint working. The fifth project involves demolishing an existing youth centre and replacing it with provision with a wider remit. The sixth project has an Academy for a partner and is looking for a more business-oriented governing body. An interesting feature of two of the developments is that they are part of 'youth villages' – groupings of separate facilities in one location. The largest of these is the *Buzz* in Halton which includes a college, high schools, a library, a sports centre and the new youth provision. Another project, the *Young People's Village*, Stoke-on-Trent includes housing but does not involve a school or college and has more of a sports orientation – however it is conceptualised as a 'campus'.

Co-location with schools and colleges offers advantages such as access to young people, joint working and better use of facilities through 'shared' use (Jefferies 1979) which suggests efficiency gains. A further, important element, evident in **myplace** in Shoeburyness is the way in which co-location and

joint working can be a force in generating community involvement. However, it can also have disadvantages. As one respondent to the Annual Survey put it:

Co-location with the ... school offers huge potential and opportunities for future joint working and targeted support but also presents challenges in establishing clear independence and a concrete identity to ensure participation by young people...

There are some difficulties associated with the relationship between formal and informal educational approaches and the different expectations and powers of workers in each educational culture which can translate into competition in an outcome-led climate (Spence et al 2007). This is reflected in issues around access to the facility for young people excluded from the school or college, or who are perceived as troublesome by them, and the reluctance of some young people to come into a school setting. However, even given the disadvantage of such co-location the relatively small numbers of projects that have taken this route needs exploration, especially, given the **myplace** Programme has been operating at the same time as a major rebuilding programme in schools (Building Schools for the Future).

#### Outcome 4: Stronger partnership working between Local Authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and run financially sustainable facilities with and for young people

##### Strategy: integrated and strategic planning for improved youth facilities

Given the range of aspiration and ambition of a scheme characterised by partnership working, youth participation and facility, and programme development, it is inevitable that planning and delivery will be characterised by complexity. Co-ordinating such complexity, which involves attention to both to broader questions of policy and design, and to detailed questions of implementation, has become the main task of the lead agency. Lead bodies are working mainly towards local authority strategies for children and young people, including Children's Plans, but also linking into related strategies such as that for *Sustainable Communities* in Hackney. Having clear structures in place for management and decision-making are recognised as important, but the current developmental work is often concentrated on a small number of key individuals, (sometimes one individual) working under the umbrella of a partnership committee or team within a broader strategic remit.

In these early stages, most projects have been focused on four key concerns: the working relationships of partner agencies, processes of participation for young people, the design of buildings, and finance. Particular priorities in the project in general (and at any given moment) are related to the configuration of interests involved and to the stage of development. To some extent they also reflect the particular skills of influential participants in creating structures of communication and decision-making (for example Oldham) or community and youth participation (for example Bradford and Minehead).

Structures and systems which draw on and mobilise pre-existing skills in the youth workforce have been and remain crucial in each of the case studies. But it has also been necessary for projects to access specialist support and advice in the developmental process. Here the role of local authorities in the partnerships has been central, particularly on questions of planning, transport and communication.

**A unifying effect?**

*All partners share the intention to make a difference in the lives of young people, creating aspiration and bringing the young people on board. The project itself has been described as having a unifying effect. Young people repeated this several times during the case study visit, as did the project team, the Children's centre and one of the local councillors. This councillor was quite keen to point out that there was complete cross-party support for the **myplace** project. Both the project team and partners talked about an ethos in the centre which was more than the services people provide. Having a shared ethos and vision for the project based on the quality of relationships with young people and wanting to help young people where two strong themes emerging during discussions with the project team and partners.*

*Shoeburyness Youth Centre*

Within the structures and processes established, systems of decision-making and communication which enable the needs of all participants to be expressed, and conflicts to be addressed, are considered essential. Within this, projects recognise different levels of engagement in some situations. One way of making sense of what they are doing is to look at different levels of engagement in each project. The first level involves the immediate partners working with a model of youth participation. The second level involves participating organisations, and the young people associated with those organisations who have a stake in the new building and new arrangements associated with it. The third level concerns local communities and community organisations and the young people who belong to those communities. Finally, there is in most places a notion of 'youth' as a universal category to be considered beyond any affiliation to organisation, group or locality. Each of these levels might involve different methods of communication and decision-making, from the highly structured executive committee, through open-membership advisory groups, public meetings and consultation exercises, and on to simple mass systems of communication and feedback using the internet. To work effectively, each of these systems needs to be articulated as part of the whole. The level of development is variable so far, related partly to the stage of implementation and partly to the inherited ways of working which are impacting on local schemes.

Within these structures, projects consider specific features as necessary for success. The Torbay project usefully defined these as:

- planning consistency (looking to ensure that what is offered is coherent, reliable and fits the values of the project);
- identity maintenance (ensuring clarity around the character of the project);
- recognising the significance of local history and its influence on current circumstances;
- a willingness to think differently and to look to new ideas for inspiration;
- an ability to compromise where necessary.

Additional considerations offered elsewhere included:

- enabling the needs of all interested parties to be addressed and met;
- a willingness to recognise and address conflicts and weaknesses;
- sound financial planning;
- good public relations.

Overall, strategy integration occurs around the particular structures and priorities of the **myplace** Programme as it has developed locally. The lead organisation, formally participating partners, and the local authority are creating the reference points for the programme. There appears to have been little explicit strategic reference to related initiatives such as Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF), Youth Capital Fund (YCF) or extended schools in this process. Some projects have drawn upon YOF and YCF funding but this has not generally happened as part of an overall local strategic appraisal.

### **Partnership: effective cross sector partnership and collaboration**

All case studies have partnership arrangements in place, many of which reflect previous working relationships and networks in the locality. For example, in Shoeburyness, the three main organisations already had a working relationship which involves a 'shared vision' to make a positive difference to the lives of young people. The project partners developed links mainly from historical partnership arrangements between local authorities and third sector organisations around youth work and youth facilities.

Just what projects mean by 'partnership arrangements' is of some interest here. In the 2010 Annual Survey, 64% of respondents indicated that within their **myplace** partnership one agency was the dominant partner. Just over 10% of the respondents described the partnership as involving two broadly equal agencies as being the dominant partners. When this is examined against the public and third sector split, all but one of the projects so described have a notional lead partner in the third sector. Some 23% of the projects are described as having three or more agencies as broadly equal partners. Of these projects more will have a notional lead partner in the public sector.

The picture painted by Annual Survey respondents of the partnerships they were involved in was relatively positive. In part this may arise from the large number of projects that have one agency as a dominant partner. Over three-quarters of respondents report there is trust between partners, and clarity around the purpose of the partnership. However, there are three main areas where tensions or issues arise in a significant number of partnerships:

- the strongest issue is that key staff in one or more of the partner agencies are overstretched. More than half (56%) of respondents reported an issue in this area.
- a less strong, but still significant issue concerns the need to develop the administrative systems and structures of the partnership. Almost half (46%) of respondents highlighted an issue in this area.
- just over 23% of respondents reported that there is a clash of organisational cultures between partners.

There is little evidence of private sector involvement in the case study partnerships except through formal, pre-existing relationships such as those in Hackney with Regenfirst. This organisation has worked with Hackney Borough Council on several schemes. There have been expressions of interest in commissioning the private sector to deliver services, including sports activities and classes in Hackney and Thames Gateway, but no formal partnership arrangements have been agreed so far. However, in Oldham, there are plans to involve the private sector in formal partnership arrangements and to generate 25% of the income, to which end they are dedicating a specific management role. Such planning involves careful consideration of who might have an interest and in how the project will deliver benefits for these interests. For instance, as part of this process, the editor of the local newspaper has been invited on to the management group and this has resulted in positive publicity through sympathetic reporting. In Shoeburyness on the other hand, previous negative experience in

efforts to raise private finance to renew a youth centre meant those involved in **myplace** had few expectations about support from the private sector.

The partnership arrangements form a spectrum from the highly formalised to informal, process-based organisation. This depends to some extent on the ways in which the idea of 'partnership' has been interpreted and to some extent on the different models of management and working relationships around the **myplace** development. Where a specific organisation has been created to implement the **myplace** project, then formal arrangements have been put in place in order to constitute that body. This is apparent in the creation of Minehead EYE as a Community Interest Company, for example. In other circumstances, where **myplace** is developing out of a pre-existing facility, as in the case of North Staffordshire YMCA, then the partnership arrangements tend to be more loosely conceived. Here there is some slippage in the language between formal working arrangements or 'partnerships' such as those with the local authority and semi-formal relationships between those agencies who have made a commitment or have a vested interest in the new development.

All the case study projects have links with a wide range of agencies and it is apparent that the processes of implementing **myplace** are facilitating cross-disciplinary and cross-service working relationships, especially bringing about the potential for a range of specialist services to be co-located in new buildings. In some circumstances, the developmental relationships are set to be translated into arrangements for managing the new facility. However, this is not always the case and there are some situations where the nature of the relationships, and the level of commitment to the scheme from participating agencies, is unclear. Where these arrangements are not formalised in advance, it is possible that the groups and agencies using **myplace** will constitute a tier of paying clients and this might militate against joint working arrangements.

### **Sustainability: developing a robust revenue model**

All case study projects had schemes to raise funds through membership fees, service users' contributions and the hire of rooms and facilities. Membership fees were not generally seen as a major contribution, but they signified a relationship between the young person and the organisation, conferring benefits and responsibilities. Different tiers and types of membership are planned with differential rates associated with length of commitment (for example Oldham) or place of residence (for example Torbay). Differential membership is at its most exaggerated in Torbay, where the reality of the tourist trade suggests the possibility of raising significant income through short-term, holiday membership which will subsidise the wider scheme for the benefit of local members. However, other projects, for example Hackney and Minehead, are looking at various additional income-generating uses of their buildings.

Service-users contributions are a crucial source of revenue. Those services which will take up residence in the new facilities will necessarily contribute to the overall running costs directly and they will also bring with them workers and other resources. They will supplement this with other services which might deploy staff and hire specific facilities for the delivery of specialist services or by making use of the facilities for occasional events such as meetings. In some situations, such as Shoeburyness, Hackney, and North Staffordshire, the development is continuous with previous funding arrangements associated with youth services and facilities and an ongoing commitment here creates an underlying security for the **myplace** project. The project in North Staffordshire pays particular attention to the potential for fund-raising from specialist schemes associated with the YMCA's commitment to working with homeless young people. Here the continuing partnership with the local authority remains crucial.

All the case study projects focus on generating additional income. Bradford has recently launched a public appeal for much needed additional funding to enable it to deliver its scheme. Other projects are hoping that enterprises such as restaurants, shops, equipment hire and backpacker accommodation will be profitable. There is also a continuing expectation that some funds can be raised through private sector support although projects recognise that in the current economic downturn this becomes more problematic. The Oldham and Torbay projects hope employing dedicated business managers with responsibilities for attracting private finance will help meet funding targets.

Respondents to the 2010 Annual Survey identified the sustainability of their projects as an issue. Here is a sample of their comments:

Obviously in the current climate the long-term sustainability has caused some issues. While we have full commitment to this **myplace** building (being at the vanguard of our IYSS strategy and therefore cemented in our plans to sustain) it is still difficult to get partners to commit to funding five years hence.

The main challenge is financial sustainability in the currently challenging economic climate.

While our original **myplace** project had a sound building design and we had a strong design and build contractor working with us to deliver the project within the required timescales, the problems and questions raised by match funders surrounding the projects long-term viability and sustainability as reflected in the business case (plan), the governance structure and the land assembly for the site resulted in the capital element of the project being undeliverable.

Accurate funding projections are difficult due to uncertainty of future budget allocations and service level agreements.

The centre is not due to open until 2011. It is clear that while the capital contribution is crucial, the lack of additional revenue support will place strains on the operation of the centre.

### **Leadership and Partnership: high-quality leadership and strong partnership to define, refine and deliver vision through changing circumstances**

Leadership is exercised at organisational level, at worker level and through young people themselves. The role of long-standing voluntary organisations and the significance of Local Authorities not only through their strategic framework for work with young people, but also for their ability to offer specialist technical advice has been noted earlier. The extent to which local authority representatives are active or reactive in each situation impacts on the culture of the **myplace** project as it develops. For instance, in Minehead, apart from the allocation of land and the financial commitment, the county and district councils have given and continue to give officer time and advice on various areas from appointing architects, to business planning, funding opportunities and external support options. Significantly, West Somerset District Council has stated a willingness to support the initiative by deploying youth workers to the centre when it opens. Meanwhile, in North Staffordshire and Dartford, the councils act as supporters rather than initiators of the local schemes. Here the culture and processes of the YMCA as the lead organisation have a particularly strong impact on the emergent **myplace** projects. In Hackney on the other hand, where the local authority is the initiator, the resulting

project closely follows the overall organisational and systems framework which has been devised to achieve the strategic vision of the council.

For young people, the emphasis is on them learning leadership skills through their participation in the decision-making and management processes associated with **myplace**. Several aspects are enabling those involved to develop a range of skills associated with leadership including:

- the need to negotiate with formal organisations;
- to make decisions within limited resources; and
- to communicate information to peers.

Each of the projects has its own unique model of leadership which is related to the organisational model and the participation model. However, the possibility of leadership being exercised ultimately relates to the activities of those individuals implementing the **myplace** project. In some situations, leadership is formally established in one person, such as the Chief Executive of *Onside* in the Oldham case study. In other circumstances, for example in Bradford, Shoeburyness and Torbay, leadership has been formally invested in a youth worker with a history of practice in the area who is acting as a coordinator for the partnership. Some individuals occupy roles of leadership through their position in the lead organisation. This is the case of the managers of the YMCA in North Staffordshire and in Thames Gateway. Elsewhere leadership is more diffuse. So for example, in Minehead, a tightly knit group of people associated with the professions and the local authority, linked both formally and informally, is co-ordinated by one individual who concentrates on administration, organisation and publicity. However in Hackney, individuals associated with the local authority, with Regenfirst and with local schemes are all required to exercise leadership qualities at some level.

***A collective model of leadership***

*A collective model of leadership incorporating systems and roles to provide clarity, accountability and transparency was that preferred and in use. Formally, the CEO is at the centre of strategic thinking and promotion in relation to the **myplace** scheme. The individual occupying this role needs creative energy as well as an open style and an ability to trust others to pursue their own roles effectively, especially in relation to the day to day work with young people and the representation on other youth bodies. North Staffs.*

Mostly, those involved as leaders stress the importance of working to sustain a network of communication and systems of collaborative decision-making among those with an interest in **myplace**. Diffusing power and control and ensuring opportunities are available to others to express leadership qualities especially among young people is one of the tasks and functions of the actual leader. Those taking on this role stress the importance of democratic processes of decision-making as a means of establishing trust and sustaining a sense of ownership, encouraging creative thinking and enthusiasm, and enabling stakeholders to deal with changing circumstances. The manager of the Shoeburyness project emphasised the importance of being able to keep people on board, to work with consensus, and have an ability to build relationships. These functions are particularly important because of the importance given to questions of consistency, commitment and conflict resolution in the successful establishment of the project. But there is no guarantee that a change of personnel would result in a continuing commitment to diffused leadership. Given the complexity of projects, it is perhaps inevitable that to some extent, individuals who occupy coordinating roles must be endowed with personal leadership qualities. In Minehead, where the functions of this individual are mainly to service the leading committee they believe that ‘the applied energies and expertise of the individual’ have been crucial to the success of the project so far.

In Oldham, overall leadership is formally attached to the CEO. Other individuals in the *Onside* organisation are enabled to express leadership qualities in their specialised roles, but are accountable to the CEO. The principles followed in the coordination model remain relevant and recognised in Oldham but they pursue these through deliberation – debate, consultation and careful consideration managed by a central administration – rather than through diffusion. This ‘deliberative’ model is also more apparent in North Staffordshire and Thames Gateway.

As well as the ability to coordinate and constructively engage others whether through participation or deliberation, successful leadership in **myplace** involves a number of necessary skills and attributes. These include the ability to build structures and implement systems which are appropriate to the local model of development, an ability to work across a range of different services and agencies, engaging with key individuals, and in particular, an ability to work with local authorities and councillors, skills in engaging with young people, financial and management skills, an ability to work at different levels, to keep focused and to enthuse and generate the support of other participants.

## myplace: challenges and recommendations

### Introduction

Earlier it was suggested that **myplace** projects face a number of challenges – and eight were highlighted. These were based around:

- Building Design
- Leadership and Partnership
- Participation
- Sustainability
- Co-location
- Centralisation (Hubs)
- Evolving youth strategies
- Targeted or universal provision

The following discussion briefly addresses some issues facing **myplace** projects concerning these challenges. These have been identified from responses to the 2010 **myplace** Annual Survey, the case studies, other contact with **myplace** projects, a review of the literature and the professional expertise of the evaluation team in developing and running similar provision. Over the next year special attention will be given to these dimensions in the continuing evaluation of the Programme.

### Design

As reported earlier, from both the responses received to the 2010 **myplace** Annual Survey, and the material explored in the chosen case studies, projects have given careful attention to the design of facilities. Analysis suggests that there are four particular areas here that need continuing monitoring and activity.

#### Recommendations:

First, while projects have attended to the overall experience of the building by young people, and to general questions of accessibility, there has been little specific attention to the ‘entrance’ of the centre. It is recommended that projects address this gap, reviewing and altering where necessary and possible:

- The degree to which the entrance is defined by a reception desk and door controls. The concern here is that the ‘administrative’ can easily take precedence over the ‘welcome’ and that this can significantly colour the expectations people have of a building. Part of the issue here may be the amount of space devoted to the entrance – in a smaller space the reception desk etc. becomes more dominant.

- The character and size of the initial social space that people enter into once they have passed through the entrance. As identified earlier in the design of many 'Albemarle' centres the function and character of this space could be problematic. It needs to be a welcoming space big enough to be a 'meeting place' that allows social interaction, but shaped to enable easy, direct, and clearly signposted entry to other areas of the building.

Second, building on what is known from the experience of the Albemarle centres of the 1960s, and more recent experience from the *Building Schools for the Future* (BSF) Programme, projects need to give careful attention to the quality of fixtures, fittings and equipment. As Price Waterhouse Coopers (2010: 78) have concluded in the BSF evaluation, schools and Local Authorities were 'unanimous of the need to ensure the design and quality of new/ refurbished buildings are fit for purpose both now and in the future, and linked to this the importance of ensuring durable fixtures and fittings is key'. They drew specific attention to the importance of storage space in one of the case studies.

Third, it is recommended that projects give further attention to the experience of safety both in the building and its immediate vicinity. Responses to the 2010 **myplace** Annual Survey showed that while safety had been a consideration in design, there was still some room for further work. One particular area of concern is the extent to which entry arrangements to buildings may work to seal-off the external areas alongside the entrance. Classically, youth workers have worked around the front door and attended to both inside and out. The design of some of the new buildings takes the 'frontline' back into the building – and already one significant incident outside a new **myplace** building had late intervention because of this.

Finally, given the need to sustain relatively high levels of use, often by different groups and agencies, it is recommended that projects review the capacity of their buildings to host multiple activities for different audiences.

## Leadership

One of the most striking features of the **myplace** projects featured as case studies is the extent to which their informing vision, and the progress made is wrapped up with the activities of a key individual or small group of people. It is a phenomenon well-known in the field of youth work and plays a fundamental part in developing effective local groups and organisations (Hunter 2010). Some funders even actively look for key individuals to invest in, recognising that developing individuals is as important as developing the project (Dunning 2010). A common way of framing this phenomenon is 'leadership'.

The 'classical' view of leadership has been informed by a search for special traits and behaviours and the situations where leaders work and emerge. In this view, leaders:

- Tend to be identified by position. They are part of the hierarchy.
- Are the focus for answers and solutions.
- Give direction and have vision.
- Have special qualities setting them apart. (Doyle and Smith 1999)

A second view of leadership is as a social process – something that happens between people. In this reading it is not so much what leaders do, as something that arises out of social relationships. Leadership in this sense does not depend on one person, but on how people interact together to make sense of the situations that face them.

Discussions about what leadership is sometimes focused on the technical. Leadership within this can be simply the exercise of influence over others. But for many others, judgements about leadership – whether it is ‘good’ or not – must have a strong ethical dimension. It should enrich the lives of those ‘led’. Heifetz (1993) has argued that leadership must be:

- Inclusive – all share in the process.
- Elevating - people become wiser and better by being involved. (See, also, Greenleaf 2002; Covey 2004).

These qualities are apparent in several case studies. For example, OnSide – the organisation behind Oldham Youth Zone – has been developed with a clear image of central leadership and commitment legitimated by participation, deliberation and the search for consensus among all those with investment and interest in the project. In the context of **myplace**, effective leadership was defined by the key individual there as involving ‘an understanding of what young people want and an ability to communicate, so that other people want to do it as well, having a vision and sticking to it.’ The Thames Gateway project viewed leadership as being underpinned by a clear ethos based around valuing people equally, the importance of partnership, community engagement, innovation and excellence, and sustainability.

Three particular dimensions of leadership were highlighted in the study:

**Having the ‘right’ individual at the core:** The impact of having the ‘right’ person at the centre of a large project such as a **myplace** development appears crucial. At Parkfield, Torbay the central manager was seconded from the YMCA, and was described by another as ‘A person-centred professional who empowers people to facilitate their own lives and their surrounding communities’. She has extensive knowledge and is widely respected among those agencies involved at a partnership level and this has helped in bringing people together. Her skills and disposition as a relational youth worker have been crucial in building up relationships and developing the work of the Bay6 group of young people over the past 15 months. In Shoeburyness, the manager has extensive knowledge of the local area and local systems. She emphasises the importance of being able to keep people on board, to work with consensus, and have an ability to build relationships. Similarly, at Minehead EYE, the principal contact occupies a crucial role in co-ordination, administration, organisation and publicity. The applied energies and expertise of this individual have made a significant contribution to the success of the project so far.

**The quality of the lead agency:** One of the key features of **myplace** is that while partnership is stressed, the bulk of these partnerships (approaching two thirds) have one agency as the dominant partner (see the 2010 Annual Survey, Appendix 5). The quality and nature of this organisation, consequently, becomes of fundamental interest. For example, in the Oldham Youth Zone while individuals are a key element of success, the probity of the organisation was a crucial factor in establishing effective leadership. It was considered vital that the lead agency consistently demonstrated self-confidence, maintained links with relevant partners, especially local authorities, and other interested parties, and was experienced as being ‘on top of things’. One possible impact is that the culture of that lead agency comes to dominate and can also obscure the need for particular structures of governance associated with the partnership.

**Exploring shared leadership:** Beyond the significance and process of the lead organisation, many projects, such as *Culture Fusion*, Bradford, have looked to shared leadership. Participants there believed in the importance of shared and clear responsibilities of the partners involved and anticipated that this will emerge more definitely over the life of the project – especially once the building has been opened. A longer-term consideration regarding leadership in *Culture Fusion* was that of maintaining effective partnership working with diverse stakeholder groups, ensuring all needs are satisfied and

working towards the success of the programme. In that partnership, a wide range of leadership skills have been demonstrated around issues such as planning, design, project management, finance, cost control, as well as the core skills associated with Community and Youth Work and the principles of involving young people. However, this needs effective co-ordination and often relies on the effectiveness of a key worker who takes responsibility or who has that brief in the work role.

In smaller communities such as Minehead (and the area surrounding it) there has generally been a recognition by those involved centrally in **myplace** projects that people have to work together to get things done; they need to collaborate across sectors in order to address local needs. In the Minehead example, as reported, leadership is characterised by a range of overlapping and tightly knit formal and informal relationships. For example members of the project team are also local councillors and they have worked to ensure that the project has retained a high profile in local political circles. A possible problem here is that the informal and overlapping can become dominant and decisions made through interpersonal rather than inter-professional relationships. It can also create an in- and out- group – with an inner core effectively making decisions, feeling ownership, and knowing what is happening, and an outer group feeling they are onlookers.

In the *Young People's Village*, Stoke-on-Trent a collective model of leadership incorporating systems and roles to provide clarity, accountability and transparency was that preferred and in use. They felt it necessary to continually analyse involvement in strategic meetings and only to attend those most beneficial to the development. However, it still looked to the organisational centrality of the YMCA.

One interesting variant on these models is in the *Hackney Hubzz* project. Leadership here is being exercised by a firm of consultants managing the work on behalf of the local authority. It is established by a commissioning process out of which a set of working relationships are established. This public-private partnership appears to be working well in terms of the establishment of the scheme, but there are questions about what happens when consultants move on.

## Recommendations:

Projects should implement careful decision-making procedures at this stage in four dimensions around leadership in **myplace** projects.

First, in many of the projects, a lot of the responsibility for carrying the plans forward is vested in one individual. There is evidence from the annual survey and the case studies that this can place a high degree of strain on that individual. In addition, the amount they have to do can create a bottleneck – they become the conduit through which the bulk of information flows and the site of much day-to-day decision making. There are other possible difficulties. There may well be a tendency for an individual to put most energy into their own particular areas of expertise or interest such as face to face work with young people, while neglecting the development of other areas, such as the structural concerns of organisations. This could potentially create weaknesses in the project as a whole and requires careful supervision and management.

Second, with one person having a range of responsibilities and often having significant local networks and knowledge, if they leave the project or are assigned to other duties, a vacuum can be created. There needs to be a broader spread of responsibility to guard against this.

Third, the costs of not having a person with vision and entrepreneurial skills at the heart of the project may well be significant – both in terms of taking the physical project forward and in dealing with stakeholders. One of the issues of evaluation in this area is that the energy and work of committed individuals can't be quantified or measured using 'objective' approaches. The personal qualities of workers who are expected to inhabit particular roles need to be identified in addition to the skills required to complete tasks.

Fourth, and a major consideration in terms of the long-term health of the project, the disposition, abilities and knowledge required to develop and bring a project into life may well be very different to those required to administer and sustain the project once it is operational. In the not-for-profit realm aspects of this may be described as 'Founder's Syndrome'.

The vast majority of non-profit organisations go through a birth-and-growth process that is pretty much the same, no matter the locale or service being provided. And, because of those similarities, most organisations experience the phenomenon known as "Founder's Syndrome" – a label normally used to refer to a pattern of negative or undesirable behaviour on the part of the founder(s) of an organisation (National Resource Center 2006).

The problems can centre on the extent to which the enthusiasms, passions and single-mindedness necessary to establish the organisation become a negative rather than a positive force. The day-to-day administration of a large centre, the management of a diverse staff, and the focus on income generation demand different qualities and skills. Some individuals have the ability to change or can call on other capacities in order to make this transition. Others may not be the 'right' people to carry the project forward. Some strategic thinking about roles and responsibilities in the next phase of establishing the new centres needs to be developed.

## Participation

The **myplace** Programme focuses on seeking the opinions and involvement of young people. The participation of young people in decision-making is crucial to the quality of the projects. Many have grasped this. As a stakeholder in the *Culture Fusion*, Bradford project put it:

The ethos and values of the building are going to be determined by the young people so anyone that works with young people in that building will have to work in a certain way...I'm hoping that it's going to create a lot of power for young people in terms of how things happen for them.

In Hackney strong levels of activity by the youth parliament and neighbourhood youth panels have been reported. Young people have been involved in *Hackney Hubbz* throughout the process of **myplace** development, from the initial bid through to developing the plans for the centres. A team of ten young people, the *Hubbz* team, led on this process, planning and running consultation sessions. In Shoeburyness young people's engagement in the project is ongoing. They have been involved alongside architects and property managers as full members of the project team overseeing the building of the new facility. Young people have been a part of the Minehead EYE project since its inception and the adults behind the Minehead EYE project are keen to ensure that the project is viewed as non-institutional, friendly to young people and accessible to those in districts further afield.

## Recommendations:

There are some longstanding questions that inevitably crop up in the shaping and operation of the sorts of buildings and activities that are characteristic of projects within the **myplace** Programme. These are, again, matters that projects need to monitor.

- *How long young people can be involved.* 'Youth' by its very nature is a transitional period – and the timescale of involvement by individual young people in a project may well be significantly shorter than the planning, building and finishing cycle. Addressing this fact can

lead to significant learning for the individuals, groups and projects participating, but the length of planning time can also work to limit the scope and scale of involvement in practice. Strategies are required in order to sustain involvement and ensure continuity of decision-making.

- *The creation of an elite group of young people.* In order to enable consistency and to work developmentally, it is almost inevitable that youth empowerment methods will cohere around a stable but small group of young people. Most projects have in place different levels of potential and actual participation, but the empowerment of one central group can lead to the creation of youth elites whose representativeness might be questioned. Strategies need to be put in place both to interrogate the 'representativeness' of core groups, and also to continuously open opportunities for others to participate. This, however, has resource implications.
- *The scale of activity.* Young people's participation is concentrated within certain functions and specifically on decision-making relating to buildings and programmes. Even here, the degree of empowerment varies. It is unclear in some situations how young people will be engaged in the management of the building and facilities once the **myplace** centre is open. The boundaries and limits for decision-making by young people need to be made clearer in some situations and thinking needs to be applied to the phase of establishing and managing the new centres as well as to the developmental process.

### Community and parental involvement:

In many of the projects the strategy around the involvement of local community members and parents is less well defined than with young people. In the case studies attention was given to community with reference to the priority of youth and in part so that young people would be encouraged to make use of the new facilities. Some projects also recognise that local adults may well become significant users of the building – particularly if it is to be sustainable.

One of the interesting features appearing in one or two projects concerns the extent to which they are informed by, or look to a community development model. Some of the organisations can be thought of as community enterprises or community initiatives (for example Minehead EYE). Some have a social enterprise dimension that looks to the involvement of local people (for example, Oldham Youth Zone and Shoeburyness Youth Centre). Given current movements in thinking around how local services might be best organised, and the needs of local neighbourhoods addressed, this is an aspect of **myplace** that is worth monitoring and exploring.

### Recommendations:

- **myplace** projects need to be clearer about the meaning of 'community' and 'community involvement'; particularly the issue of the centrality of young people in the thinking, but also with understanding of the potential impact of the centres on a wider community of interest, including parents.
- Developing links with community development workers and neighbourhood activists might be of benefit in establishing greater community participation in management and decision-making and in encouraging community 'ownership'.

## Sustainability

As reported in the 2010 *myplace* Annual Survey, the long-term financial viability of *myplace* projects is a matter of increasing concern for many of those involved. To a significant degree this flows from the impact of the financial situation following the banking crisis of 2008. It was the perception of a number of respondents that the ability of local authorities to commit to sustained expenditure on work in such buildings will be reduced; and that funding streams from central government are likely to be significantly cut back from March 2011. In addition, a number of third sector organisations are reporting that the funding available from trusts has decreased. Meanwhile the amount of money available from the private sector whether as donations or for the hire of facilities has reduced. Significantly, the disposable income of families is also predicted to decrease in real terms. A further factor causing concern is that in some projects projections for their business plans may have been over-ambitious – and as buildings come closer to realisation, so attention to income generation grows.

Some projects may face significant problems. A particular issue arises where the *myplace* project represents a large net addition to provision. In a situation of limited and diminishing resources it is difficult to see where the necessary income streams will come from, especially given the pressure for resources from existing provision.

There may also be problems where the project is especially (and maybe necessarily) ambitious. Some projects have trimmed their facilities but are still having to focus attention on immediate fundraising to get the project off the ground rather than pay attention to the longer-term.

Perhaps the most worrying aspect of the worsening financial situation for public services is the extent to which local authorities and other funders will look to shift resources into higher profile projects such as *myplace*. As one or two respondents to the 2010 *myplace* Annual Survey noted, continued income flow to these projects may well entail closing or slimming down other, neighbourhood-based, provision. The impact of ‘super-libraries’, sometimes described as ‘community learning and information hubs’ is a case in point. Such ‘aggregation’ has often led to a reduction in the number, opening times and stock of local branch libraries (Pattenden 2010).

### Recommendations:

As a result it is recommended that *myplace* Projects:

- Revisit their business plans to make an updated, realistic assessment of likely revenue flows.
- Examine the shape and nature of their proposed or actual provision to identify additional sources of revenue.
- Reflect on their organisational ethos and orientation. In particular, they need to look at the range of models represented in the case-studies.

## Co-location

The dominant form that co-location has taken in the *myplace* programme is the grouping together of a number of targeted services for young people with a broader offer of activity. It represents, essentially, a ‘one-stop’ model which works to marry universal leisure provision with targeted specialist services in one place. This approach is distinct from the model of co-location with another key youth facility such as a school or college. Apart from the prevalence of a particular definition of ‘co-location’ in the context of *myplace*, one obvious contributing factor to the choice of model is the

high proportion of projects that are based in third sector organisations. Historically, for reasons of independence, such organisations have sought to avoid too close partnerships with statutory systems and structures. Maintaining freedom of action, they have worked to have buildings of their own that can be used for a variety of purposes. A further factor, particularly in respect of in the relatively low number of projects looking to co-locate with schools and colleges, concerns the tight timescales involved in the **myplace** Programme. There has not been the opportunity to harmonise **myplace** developments with new *Building Schools for the Future* projects, or to work through some of the complex questions that need addressing before building on a school site.

### Recommendations:

- There is little scope for current **myplace** projects to change the model of co-location which they have adopted. However, any review of policy around provision for young people whether nationally or locally should consider the implications of the choice of model. A sustained and careful exploration of the potential for development of settings where young people are already involved in activity – notably schools, colleges and sports and leisure centres, and sports and enthusiast groups – needs to be undertaken.
- Meanwhile, in co-locating specialist services for targeted groups of young people with universal leisure provision, projects need to give sustained attention to the places where tension might arise in order to develop a strategy for managing them. That might relate to the use of the buildings, labelling and stigmatising some groups of young people or in relations between workers attempting to integrate provision using different methodologies. This task should be addressed before projects are opened.

### Centralisation (Hubs)

The notion of the hub has gained popularity as integrated children's and youth services have developed, playing out government policies around 'joined-up' thinking and coordinated responses. They generally involve centralising a number of services and facilities on a limited number of sites. Encouraging people to use them inevitably entails some outreach (sometimes described as spokes). In some ways they resemble the one-stop-shops in which councils have invested in the hope that people will experience a better level of service (in particular avoiding shuttling between different local authority departments and offices).

There are some strong reasons for developing hubs. First, concentrating facilities on fewer sites offers the possibility of a reduction in unit costs. Second, it offers the opportunity to develop the specialist provision which is a feature of a significant number of **myplace** projects. Third, there are some administrative benefits to bringing together teams of workers, especially where integrated working is being encouraged. Last, there are arguments for such developments where there is a need to bring together people from different neighbourhoods and postcodes in order to foster community cohesion (as, for example, is the case in Culture Fusion, Bradford).

However, the hub model does carry some important costs that can undermine an ability to respond to changing circumstance and to address deep-seated issues in local neighbourhoods. These are outlined below.

First, changing habits, culture and social patterns can relatively quickly lose the 'customer base' for a centre (Davies 1999). Centres can become seen as being in the 'wrong place' and offering dated activities. For example, the 'skatepark' and BMX phenomenon is particularly apparent in current designs. These activities, while being currently popular, have waxed and waned over the last thirty

years. They have the possible added problem of being seen and experienced as male-dominated (Abulhawa 2008). This problem can be magnified, as was the case in many larger Albemarle centres, by a lack of resources for maintenance and for investment in new uses and enthusiasms. Even though there was emphasis in the prototype design in Witherwood on integrating flexible use into the designs it was difficult to take advantage of this.

Second, as already noted, in a situation of limited resources the development of hubs can mean the closure or scaling down of neighbourhood work. Workers are based at the hub, for example, rather than locally. Unless the hub is located in a place where young people congregate in large numbers (such as a school, college or a shopping area or an entertainment area/zone) they become more distant and less accessible.

Third, there can be an issue around how hubs are perceived by young people. In part this may be to do with scale. They may be seen as too big or complex – and unless you have a clear idea of what you want, difficult to negotiate. In addition, the diet of organised and ‘positive’ activity they seek to offer could be unattractive to some significant groups of young people. This has been a longstanding issue in work with young people. For example, at the time of the Albemarle developments it was couched in terms of how to work with ‘unclubbable’ young people – those who could not be attracted to the new centres. The ambition in **myplace** projects to engage with young people who are suffering significant disadvantage or who are at the margins of their communities could be similarly limited. A solution, then as now, is the more extensive use of detached youth work and local project work (Passmore 2003; Crimmens *et.al.* 2004; Tiffany 2007). A further issue here concerns the perception of the hub itself. If it is seen by young people as a collection of services aimed at particular groups of young people, then its appeal may be limited.

Last, a disproportionate amount of attention in **myplace** projects is placed on the hub and not enough on other elements. A hub only makes sense when it is part of something bigger (the wheel in this analogy). When the language of **myplace** is analysed there is a lot of talk about the hub, some about spokes, but very little about the ‘rim’. The problem with this is that the bulk of non-school work with young people happens at the ‘rim’ – in village and community halls, religious organisations, homes and sports groups. Hubs can only offer part of what is needed by young people. They need to be balanced by attention to, and the resourcing of, local work. The danger is that the current attention being given to hubs, and the resources they demand, will harm local work. That in turn, will harm hubs. The activity at the rim can encourage and facilitate young people’s use of the **myplace** facilities.

There is also a structural question of the interconnectedness of those operating in the spokes. The ‘rim’ needs interconnectedness independent of the hub, otherwise a centralised model of accountability and communication can stifle creative relationships between participants in the spoke. More networked forms that shift the focus away from formal arrangements to take in more informal processes are required if groups and agencies are to adequately respond to changing circumstances (see Gilchrist 2009: 99-119; Richardson 2008; Smith and Smith 2008: 133-154).

## Recommendations:

In the light of the above it is possible to make three recommendations.

- Centralisation, characterised by the development of hubs, needs to be placed alongside an investment in decentralised approaches such as detached youth work, community-based, project work and local groups and activities.
- Careful attention needs to be paid to the way individual **myplace** projects are accessed, experienced and perceived by particular and different groups of young people and

consideration needs to be given to processes of reconfiguration if there is narrow or unbalanced usage.

- The impact of the hubs on pre-existing services, especially in peripheral areas, needs to be monitored.

## Evolving youth policies and strategies

The organisational basis for services for young people and the character of the 'offer' they make has altered fundamentally over the last decade. Agencies are operating in an environment of considerable uncertainty. Like many others in education and welfare, the organisations involved in the **myplace** Programme have had to make sense of policy change. Three key 'waves' of change have been associated with:

- The introduction of the Connexions Service and its subsequent phasing out as a separate entity (DfEE 2000; DfEE 2001; DfES 2002a);
- The *Every Child Matters* agenda (mediated in part by *Youth Matters*) (DfES 2003; HM Government 2005);
- *Aiming high for young people. A ten year strategy for positive activities* (HM Treasury 2007).

The overall impact on services and agencies has been a sustained period of organisational change and shifting priorities (and this has been reflected in the case studies and the 2010 **myplace** Annual Survey). As with social work there has been an increase in the amount of administrative work undertaken by frontline workers (see, for example, Audit Commission 2009; Crimmins *et. al.* 2004) and centralisation through direct funding; target setting and commissioning. With the onset of integrated services (and the *Aiming High* agenda) there has even been a change in the way the work is discussed – the focus is on positive activities for, and work with, young people, rather than youth work. Things now look set to change again.

Perhaps the most significant strategic dimension for **myplace** projects concerns the number of local authorities that are effectively placing work with young people within what might be called a 'social work' frame, retaining targeted work (focusing on resources on vulnerable groups, young people in deprived areas and those at risk of exclusion), while 'outsourcing' the majority of universal provision. As a manager of integrated youth services put it, the decision is based on, 'the need to make significant savings while managing increased demand for public sector services' (quoted by Watson 2010). Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire have already proceeded along this route – and a number of other authorities are actively considering it.

A further dimension concerns the developing debate about greater citizen involvement in services and provision in their neighbourhoods (Byrne 2009; Cameron 2009) and most recently, the employment of community organisers and encouraging people to come together in neighbourhood groups 'so they can work together to make life better' (Cameron 2010). There is likely to be a greater emphasis on, and demand for smaller scale, local provision for young people (see, for example, the research undertaken by Richardson 2008). There may also be significant implications for the management structure of some of the facilities – with the movement of responsibilities to a lower 'tier' of government or even to the community itself.

A number of respondents to the **myplace** projects survey saw the development as raising the profile of the area of work; adding, significantly, to local provision; and as providing a living example of what can be achieved by investment in place. In our interviews it was also clear that in the early stages

there was some hope that this would encourage additional expenditure upon services and opportunities for young people. In the current economic circumstances where there are considerable cutbacks in local services for young people (including some of the more specialist provision that formed part of a number of project business plans), the impact of **myplace** appears more problematic. Within projects there may not be the necessary revenue to fully utilise the provision; and externally there may be some curtailment of other work in order to sustain flagship developments such as **myplace**.

### Recommendations:

A move away from an integrated services approach to universal provision, combined with the new administration's concern that local people should take more responsibility for what is provided in their neighbourhoods, could impact significantly on **myplace** projects.

- Policy developments should be monitored by lead organisations with regard to their actual and potential impact on the **myplace** projects in order that effective strategies can be devised to deal with change.
- An assessment of the impact of the **myplace** project on the quality of work in other local initiatives and projects also needs to be made by lead organisations so that strategy can be informed.

### Targeted or universal provision

In the field of work with young people there has long been a tension between targeted and universal provision. In recent years the effective policy orientation has been toward targeted provision – especially work aimed at the needs of those deemed to be at risk in some way, or labelled as NEET (not in employment, education or training). With this orientation has come a focus on monitoring and measuring outcomes for individuals and an emphasis on accreditation. This shift has, in terms used by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), entailed a movement away from the forms of informal and non-formal learning that have tended to define youth work, towards more formal approaches to facilitating learning (Jefferies and Smith 2008). The projects in the **myplace** Programme have reflected this in their plans alongside the commitment to the broad provision of activity. In this Report a number of tensions have been highlighted, including:

- Centres being labelled as places where 'people with problems go'.
- Confusing 'branding' – the mix of services can create confusion around the identity of the project.
- The stigmatisation of young specialist service users.
- Conflicts of interest in use of the building by various 'client' services.

Tensions such as these have not been comprehensively analysed in practice in the model of co-location used in many projects.

A combination of current movements in policy and of the need in the current economic environment to look to increase revenues from users and from other sources may well act to refocus some **myplace** projects around a greater emphasis on universal provision. One of the clear implications of the 'Big Society' agenda is that attention needs to be given to generating certain forms of social capital. This both opens up a clear rationale for 'universal' forms of provision and requires some exploration of the

impact of enhanced social capital on the needs of those that have been previously targeted (Smith 2001a).

Historically, the bulk of funding for local work with young people has either come from young people and their parents in the form of subscriptions, entry and activity fees, and trading, or from donations by people involved in the organisation (Jefferies and Smith 1988; 2010). Larger centres and recreational facilities such as those offered by YMCAs have always looked to generate a significant proportion of their income directly from users and members. This has involved an attempt to appeal to as wide a group of people as possible in order to maximise demand. With pressure on national and local government budgets, it is inevitable that many **myplace** centres will have to go down the same route. A number already have. The problem with this model in terms of some of the key ambitions of **myplace** projects is that many of those young people that they would want to attract may well lack the ability to pay.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that projects:

- Review potential areas of tension in their mix of universal and targeted provision.
- Follow closely the emerging debate around local communities taking more responsibility for work and provision in their area, and around opportunities for enhancing social capital.
- Examine the impact of charging more for services and provision on young people – and possible models of practice that could safeguard access for those who do not have the ability to pay.

## Conclusion

In the various **myplace** projects examined here there are a number of innovative elements in design and organisation. There is evidence of good practice around participation in several projects and the issue of the long-term sustainability of the projects has been similarly addressed – especially where there is a thread of social enterprise running through it.

Not unexpectedly, the nature of the leadership in projects is of critical importance – although it is important to note that this is an area where one size does not fit all.

It is surprising that more schemes did not take advantage of co-location with schools and colleges – but it is apparent that there were factors particularly around timescale that may have militated against this.

Some advantages and problems associated with the hub model, and some of the issues facing projects with the changing policy and economic environment have also been highlighted.

It is apparent that projects need to look beyond the buildings that have inevitably become the focus of their attention in the planning and development stage. The recent evaluation of the *Building Schools for the Future* Programme stated clearly something that has been part of youth work practice wisdom for many years.

While our research indicates that pupils in open BSF schools are more positive about their buildings and its facilities, they are only marginally more positive (and in some cases, more negative) in their attitudes to learning, in comparison to pupils in schools going through the programme. Our research has indicated that changes in pupils' perceptions, attitudes and engagement with learning is influenced, not just by the buildings, but by the quality of teaching and learning, and leadership. (Price Waterhouse Coopers 2010: 78)

What will be of crucial importance to the **myplace** Programme once the buildings are open is the ability to carry forward the ambition, energy and enthusiasm characteristic of the developmental stage into the period of consolidation. This demands a shift in focus away from creativity associated with building design, to a continuous creativity of process.

## Appendix 1: *myplace* projects

### Fast track

**Access All Areas**, Bridgwater (£3.92m). This carbon-neutral youth facility in Bridgwater will have a focus on sport and outdoor activities and will include a health and fitness suite, a sports hall, indoor climbing, a water sports area and a MUGA. It will also offer activities such as a community radio station managed by young people, a cafe area and community recording studio. A wide range of advice and work experience services will also be offered. Lead partner: Bridgewater YMCA. [Third sector].

**Big Hub**, Leeds (£4.98m). The new centre will be an extension of what was the sports hall at Merlyn Rees High School on the Belle Isle Estate in Leeds will extend an existing building and include a multi-use games area, café, ICT, motorcycle repair, hairdressing training and creative arts studio. Lead partner: Leeds City Council. [Public sector].

**Bradley Youth Hub**, Pendle (£1.34m). This project will replace an existing youth centre with a youth-led facility designed by local young people. The centre will include a mini-MUGA sports activity area, IT facilities, basic literacy and numeracy skills courses, careers, training and employment information, and other advice. It will offer studio and performance workshop areas for arts, music and drama, and a café with Internet access. Lead partner: Lancashire County Council. [Public sector].

**Carlisle Youth Zone**, Carlisle (£4.98m). Carlisle Youth Zone will be a new youth facility in the city centre for young people, including a sports hall, climbing wall, games and social area, kitchen, arts/crafts zone, changing rooms, kitchen, hall and multi-purpose rooms. Run in partnership with the Richard Rose Academy Trust and University of Cumbria. Lead partner: Onside North West Ltd. [Third sector].

**Dawlish Integrated Youth Centre**, Dawlish (£1.7m). Facilities at this youth centre for 13 to 19 year olds will include a recording studio, a social and games area and a disco area with DJ booth. There will also be an IT suite, office area, and facilities where young people can learn vocational skills from building to hairdressing. Lead partner: Devon County Council. [Public sector].

**Green Rivers Centre**, Bloxwich, Walsall (£1.29m). This project involved building a new facility for young people aged 11 to 18 years old that includes a sports hall for racquet sports, volleyball, dance, boxing and martial arts. The canal side location means outdoor activities can be offered including fishing and raft building. Lead partner: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. [Public sector]. Project withdrawn, 2009

**Hinckley Club for Young People**, Leicestershire (£4.5m). This project will create a new club building at Richmond Park, including a sports hall, quiet rooms and chill out zone, computer workspace, climbing wall and fitness suite. Lead partner: myplace Hinckley Leicestershire. [Public sector].

**Minehead EYE**, Minehead (£3.156m). The facility in West Somerset will include a two storey, 550m<sup>2</sup> BMX/skate area, a café/shop/chill-out area with a viewing area over the skatepark and a computer area. It also includes a recording studio and DJ booth, a multi-media suite with rehearsal space and an exhibition area with an art-graffiti wall. Lead partner: Minehead EYE Community Interest Company. [Third sector].

**myplace Chesterfield**, Chesterfield (£3.19m). This project is to refurbish and add to an existing centre, to include sports halls, an art room, recording and dance studios, performance spaces and chill out area. Lead partner: Fairplay (Chesterfield). [Third sector].

**New Horizon Youth Centre**, Camden (£1.5m). This project will extend, build and refurbish a centre in Camden to benefit young people across London and particularly those who are homeless. Lead partner: New Horizon Youth Centre. [Third sector]. Opened March 2010

**New Life Centre**, Hartlepool (£4.52m). This project will create a specialist performing arts facility including all varieties of dance, music practice and recording. Operates in partnership with St Hild's Church of England School, on whose disused playing field the project will be built, Northern School of Music and Minto Music, an organisation that specialises in music recording. Lead partner: Headland Development Company, Hartlepool. [Third sector].

**OPEN Centre Project**, Norwich (£1.26m). This project will refurbish a listed building into a meeting place for young people. Facilities will include a live music venue, theatre, conference and other arts-based activities, a young people's nightclub, climbing wall, educational kitchen and café, music recording studios and video editing suites, plus a dance and performing arts space, health centre and education space with computers. The project will target young people aged 13 to 25 years but, more specifically, young people under the age of 18. Lead partner: Open Youth Trust Norfolk. [Third sector]. Opened October 2009

**Pegasus Theatre Project**, Oxford (£1.8m). This project create an innovative youth-led dance studio, workshop space, café and improved auditorium for young people. As well as performing arts they can also get involved in the technical aspects of theatre, including sound engineering, lighting, stage production and set building. Lead partner: Pegasus Theatre Trust, Oxford. [Third sector].

**Primetime**, Bournemouth (£1.30m). Youth provision covering performance, music, film, and radio across two sites. The project's hub at Pokesdown will include an acoustic shell and performance area, as well as a wide range of multi-media facilities. A separate wing will offer supported accommodation for vulnerable young people and a children's centre. A site at Boscombe will focus on community projects, planning and business support for youth enterprises. A youth bus will also undertake outreach work. Lead partner: Bournemouth YMCA. [Third sector].

**Salmon Youth Centre**, Bermondsey, London (£1.12m). This project will provide a training kitchen, ICT suite, counselling room, fitness studio, bicycle workshop and drop-in area for support and advice services. Lead partner: Salmon Youth Centre. [Third sector]. Opened March 2010

**Shoeburyness Youth Centre**, Shoeburyness (£2.99m). This project aims to build an inspiring, environmentally sustainable building offering high quality youth facilities, a large scale social enterprise initiative, a youth volunteering centre and the co-location of a range of youth support workers. Built on a school site. Lead partner: Southend on Sea Borough Council. [Public sector].

**Sutton Life Centre**, Sutton, London (£4.08m). This project will create a modern, multi-functional facility with youth advice services, a citizenship and life skills centre, rehearsal space for arts projects, coffee shop, Internet café, community rooms and a state-of-the-art library. Lead partner: London Borough of Sutton. [Public sector].

**TaB Centre Plus**, Enfield, London (£2.2m). This project in Enfield will refurbish an existing building to provide a sports hall with semi-sprung floor, gym space and a sprung floor dance studio. Lead partner: Trinity at Bowes Methodist Church. [Third sector].

**The Hub**, Barnard Castle (£4.95m). This project will provide a building comprising a café, music rehearsal facilities, dance and drama studios, a performance area, art and media rooms. There will also be 36-bed accommodation for visiting youth groups. Lead partner: Teesdale Community Resources. [Third sector].

**The Hub**, Dartford (£2.20m). This project will build new and refurbish an existing building to house facilities for young people aged 8-21yrs old including, a music studio, rehearsal room, multi-use activity area, IT suite and chill out lounge. Lead partner: YMCA Thames Gateway, Kent. [Third sector].

**Young Person's Village**, Stoke-on-Trent (£4.8m). This project will renovate and add to an existing YMCA building, to include a sports hall, library and basement areas beneath residential blocks to provide additional training and exhibition facilities. Lead partner: Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire YMCA Foyer. [Third sector].

## Standard Track (Round 1)

**Blackburn Youth Zone**, Blackburn (£5.0m) - With significant private sector backing, this new youth facility in the city centre will offer young people access to a climbing wall, boxing gym, fitness suite, arts, dance and football, and support and advice on a range of issues from support agencies including Connexions. Lead partner: OnSide North West Limited. [Third sector].

**Buzz**, Halton (£2.5m). Multi functional activity centre offering a cinema, exhibitions, performance and arts activities, gym, chill-out rooms, ICT facilities, meeting rooms, and one to one advice and guidance. The centre will be located at the heart of a developing "Youth Village" comprising Riverside College, local High Schools, the Leisure Centre, local library and children's centre. Lead partner: Halton Borough Council. [Public sector].

**Chesterton's Vision**, Newcastle-Under-Lyme (£4.4m) A project to replace an existing youth facility with a centre serving Chesterton and Holditch incorporating a new sports hall, fitness suite, dance studio, cinema/TV area, arts and crafts zone, IT suite, kitchen/coffee bar and meeting rooms. Young people in need of additional support services or at risk of exclusion from mainstream school will be catered for at the centre. Lead partner: Staffordshire County Council. [Public sector].

**Culture Fusion**, Bradford (£5.0m). The project will see the refurbishment and extension of an existing building to create a six-storey climbing wall, gym, dance studio, hostel accommodation, IT suite and rooftop café. Lead partner: City Of Bradford YMCA. [Third sector].

**Dream Street**, Havering (£4.7m) A new centre in the Harold Hill area, which will include a recording studio, cycle and motorbike workshop, IT suite and an urban sports area for skateboarding, blades and BMX. Lead partner: London Borough of Havering. [Public sector].

**ExtremeConnexions**, Hemel Hempstead (£5.0m). This project will offer young people an exciting range of extreme sports and access to advice and information on issues including employment, education, training, benefits, housing, sexual health, counselling, volunteering, parenting, bullying, substance abuse and diet. Lead partner: Dacorum Sports Trust Ltd. [Third sector].

**Hackney Youth Hubz**, Hackney.(£5.0m). An area-wide 'hub and spoke' approach to improving youth facilities. Includes two new buildings and three refurbishments. Lead partner: London Borough of Hackney. [Public sector].

**Hastings Youth Hub**, Hastings (£4.2m). Conversion of a church building into a youth facility. Features will include a live performance area, music studio and workshop, digital media and enterprise space. Lead partner: Hastings Trust Limited. [Third sector].

**Hornsey Road Baths Youth Centre**, Islington (£3.5m). The project involves refurbishing and remodelling the old gatehouse and laundry buildings into a facility including performance space, media centre, dance studio and café. Lead partner: London Borough of Islington. [Public sector].

**HUT**, Wakefield (£5.0m). This new building, situated in the Airedale Estate of Castleford, will feature a sports hall, bowling alley and sports courts, as well as a 'chill out' zone, computer lab, cinema, and conference areas. The project will also work in close partnership with schools to provide an alternative curriculum. Lead partner: Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. [Public sector].

**ICE Centre** (Inspiration, Creativity and Entertainment), Stockton (£5.0m). The centre will provide a range of activities and services for young people including sports, arts and social enterprise training. Lead partner: Stockton on Tees Borough Council. [Public sector].

**Integrating Youth Project**, Ladywood, Birmingham (£5.0m). This facility will include a sports hall, youth radio station, IT room, kitchen, social area, media centre, workshop area and performance arts room. Activities will include sports, fitness, arts, music, education and social enterprise. There will also be drug and alcohol support services, sexual health advice, training advice, and counselling services. Lead partner: Birmingham City Council. [Public sector].

**Leicester City Youth Hub** (£5.0m). The Hub will consist of six themed zones, each offering different activities and spaces where young people can meet. Activities on offer are anticipated to include a climbing wall, skateboard and BMX track, sports area, performing arts space, recording studio, dance and aerobics rooms and a library and research centre. Lead partner: Leicester City Council. [Public sector].

**Manchester Youth Zone**, Harpurhey (£5.0m). A new centre that will include a sports hall with climbing wall, two multi-purpose halls and changing rooms. Lead partner: OnSide North West Limited. [Third sector].

**Middlesbrough myplace at the Custom House** (£4.3m). The GRADE II listed Custom House will house a performance and dance hall, café, chill out space, crèche, climbing wall, media studio, interactive library, music facilities, gym and a bowling alley. Outdoors, there will be a multi-use sports pitch, allotments and wildlife gardens. Lead partner: Middlesbrough Council. [Public sector].

**myplace at Westfield Folk House Young Peoples Centre**, Mansfield (£5.0m). Westfield Folk House is a Grade II listed building that has been used as a youth facility for 60 years. It will be completely refurbished and extended, to create two large open spaces, multiple smaller rooms, a café, performance space and dance studio. The grounds will offer a multi-use games area and allotments. Support services for homeless young people and those with hearing impairments are also based there. Lead partner: Nottinghamshire County Council. [Public sector].

**myplace Bristol** (£5.0m). A city centre facility including a climbing wall, outdoor ball court and fitness suite, a health and beauty room, radio, film and music studios, retail outlets, exhibition areas and a café and kitchen. Lead partner: Young Bristol. [Third sector].

**myplace in Doncaster** (£5.0m). The Bentley Hub, near Doncaster town centre, will feature a skatepark, café, dance studio, outdoor games area and multimedia facilities including a recording studio. The Spoke, in Conisbrough, will have multi-use activity rooms and space for vocational training and accredited learning. Lead partner: Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. [Public sector].

**myplace in Solihull** (£5.0m). A youth hub including a multi gym, a multi purpose hall with telescopic seating, a climbing wall, a boxing area, a cyber café, a recording studio, a sensory room, a multi media facility and a quiet area. Seven support agencies will also be based at the centre. Lead partner: The Colebridge Trust Limited. [Third sector].

**myplace@Vine Lane**, Newcastle on Tyne (£4.9m). This centre's range of activities includes sports such as I-ball (a range of sports played illuminated by ultraviolet), music decks, a chill out zone, a café with free internet access and a hairdressing salon for training. Support services will include agencies providing sexual health education, counselling and mental health advice. Lead partner: Newcastle On Tyne City Council. [Public sector].

**NGY**, Nottingham (£4.9m). This project involves the refurbishment and extension of an existing building in the city centre over three years. It will include a music recording studio, DVD production area, dance studio, café and gym. Lead partner: Nottingham City Council. [Public sector].

**Oldham Youth Zone**, Oldham (£5.0m). Facilities will include a sports hall with a climbing wall, an external floodlit multi-use games area, fitness suite and a coffee bar. There also will be several flexible recreational and social areas for arts, music and dance, an atrium, training rooms, offices, a coffee bar and catering facilities. Lead partner: OnSide North West Limited. [Third sector].

**OurPlace**, Knowsley (£5.0m). The project will create a new youth centre based in Huyton, which will provide indoor facilities for a creative performance and media space, arts suite and recording studio. It includes a café with terrace and shop, IT area, offices, climbing wall, dance studio, gym space, games room and a wildlife and flower area. It will also open up exciting new spaces for adventure and environmental activities, including allotments and a BMX/skate park. Lead partner: Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council. [Public sector].

**Parkfield**, Torbay (£4.9m). This project will refurbish an existing centre and build a new facility to include a skate park, games area, performance space, recording studio, café, BMX dirt track and rope course. Two mobile centres in Brixham and Eltham will also be set up. Lead partner: Torbay Council. [Public sector].

**Peoples' Place**, Sheffield (£2.1m). This new build project will combine a multi-purpose indoor youth facility with an outdoor sports centre and all-weather football pitch, providing young people from the local community with a wide variety of activities. Lead partner: Sheffield City Council. [Public sector].

**Phoenix Centre**, Bognor (£1.5m). A new youth complex on the site of the brand new Bognor Regis Community College. Includes provision for the performing arts, sport and learning how to run a radio station. Lead partner: West Sussex County Council. [Public sector].

**Plashet Young Peoples Hub**, Newham (£5.0m). The new Hub will include a wide range of indoor and outdoor facilities including a computer suite, recording studio, chill out zone, abseiling tower, mountain bike track and allotment. Lead partner: Community Links Trust Ltd. [Third sector].

**Rotherham myplace** (£3.4m). The new youth hub, built on the site of a disused car park, will offer a range of facilities including a graffiti art room, IT suite, cinema, performance hall and rooftop café. The project will focus on social enterprise activity and recreational activities. An alternative curriculum will be offered to young people who have been excluded from mainstream schools. Lead partner: Chantry YMCA. [Third sector].

**Roundwood Centre**, Harlesden (£5.0m). The centre will include an IT suite, café, arts workshop, climbing wall and performance area and will enable young people to get involved in dance, theatre, cookery, sports, computing and radio broadcasting. Lead partner: London Borough of Brent. [Public sector].

**Showroom**, Lincoln. (£4.89m). The refurbishment of a disused car showroom into a two-floor youth centre. The building will comprise a gym, performing arts space, games areas, recording studio, indoor climbing wall, safer driving car simulator and cyber cafe. The centre will aim to reach isolated young people, such as those with disabilities and who have been excluded from mainstream education. Lead partner: Lincolnshire YMCA Ltd. [Third sector].

**Southpoint** - the Blackpool Youth Hub Centre (£4.0m). The new centre, being developed on an existing campus with a children's centre, primary school, sports college, leisure centre and library, will include a community kitchen, café, ICT suite and a gym. Lead partner: Blackpool Council. [Public sector].

**Southside Regeneration Youth Project**, Bath (£2.0m). The former Southside Youth Centre is to be transformed into a new venue with a community café, music studio, ICT suite and various sports facilities. Lead partner: Bath and North East Somerset Council. [Public sector].

**TeenSpace**, Shrewsbury and Oswestry (£3.9m). A rural 'hub and spoke' project including a new youth hub in Oswestry and the refurbishment of an existing centre in Shrewsbury, and further outreach through mobile provision. Lead partner: Shropshire County Council. [Public sector].

**Thamesmead Youth Leisure Zone**, Thamesmead (£5.0m). A mix of new build, extension and refurbishment that will transform The Southern Arches in Thamesmead offer young people opportunities such as sailing, climbing, dance, music and educational courses. Lead partner: Trust Thamesmead Ltd. [Third sector].

**The Pitch - A Place to Go**, Harrow (£4.2m). Led by Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust, the project will see a new centre built on the Cedars Estate, Harrow Weald that will include a multiuse sports hall, gym, café, IT suite art room and recording studio and will have a 3G multi-use pitch outdoors. Lead partner: Watford FC's Community Sports and Education Trust. [Third sector].

**Toxteth Youth and Sports Centre**, Liverpool (£2.3m). The new centre will expand a variety of leisure and social opportunities to include a climbing wall, an IT room, and a small cinema room and chill out area complete and snack bar. It will also offer opportunities for dance, drama and arts and crafts,

along with vocational, educational, volunteering and mentoring programmes. Lead partner: Liverpool City Council. [Public sector].

**Trafford Youth Village**, Partington (£5.0m). Based at Broadoak High School, the centre will feature a 400-seat theatre/cinema with retractable seating, a projection room with music recording and film editing facilities, a sports area with a virtual floor for hockey, gymnastics and other sports, a gallery/exhibition centre with studios, conference facilities, an ICT room, catering and refreshment areas as well as youth services. Lead partner: Broadoak High School. [Public sector].

**Tuned In**, Redcar (£4.9m). A seafront building that will comprise a central atrium, main hall, and stage surrounded by workshop areas, a green room, beauty suite, IT suite, multi-use area, quiet zone, café, kitchen, gallery, juice bar and reception. Outdoor areas include patio space and balconies. Lead partner: Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. [Public sector].

**XCHANGE Project**, Stowmarket (£4.8m). Includes multimedia centre, community radio station, creative arts zone, multi-use hall with facilities for concerts and performances, IT learning zone, conference rooms, community café, training kitchen and a life skills training zone. Outside there will be a sports court, horticulture project and barbecue area. There will also be emergency supported accommodation and youth advice and counselling sessions. Lead partner: Suffolk County Council. [Public sector].

**'Y'** - Stoke Aldermoor Inspiration Centre, Coventry (£2.2m). A single storey youth centre linked to supported accommodation, a multi-faith zone and a health centre. It was to contain training suites, a youth enterprise zone, computer suite, internet café, media lab and studios, large multi use hall, youth kitchen, chill out area, arts and craft centre as well as interview and counselling rooms. Lead partner: Coventry and Warwickshire YMCA. [Third sector]. Project will now not go ahead

**Youth Centerprise**, Longbridge (£5.0m). The building will include multi functional rooms, performing arts space, multi use theatre/sports hall/conference space, ICT suite, media centre, workshop area, MUGA, cafe and garden. Activities will include sports, creative and performing arts, education, active citizenship and volunteering, youth business and social enterprise. Counselling and health services will also be offered. Lead partner: Birmingham City Council. [Public sector].

## Standard Track (Round 2)

**Calderdale**, Halifax (£3.82m). This project comprises two sites. The main site will offer a performance space, recording studio, IT suite, enterprise start-up units, a roof garden and a rooftop skate park. The second site nearby will offer a climbing wall, skating, boxing, fitness, aerobics, football and a running track. Lead partner: The Square Chapel Trust. [Third sector].

**Enfield** (£3.01m). A project in Edmonton to create a local centre including music recording studios, radio and TV broadcasting studios and a driving simulator. Lead partner: London Borough of Enfield. [Public sector].

**Hull** (£5.00m). This project in the centre of Hull will create a five-storey building with activities including performing arts, skateboarding, parkour, music recording and film making. Lead partner: Kingston on Hull City Council. [Public sector].

**Lewisham** (£3.5m). Wells Park Youth Facility project including a training kitchen, recording studio, youth theatre and dance studio as well as activities like horticulture, skateboarding and graffiti art. Lead partner: London Borough of Lewisham. [Public sector].

**Luton** (£4.75m). A new build project that will offer a range of activities including media production, sports, art, music, street dance and cookery club. Lead partner: Voluntary Action Luton. [Third sector].

**Scarborough** (£3.98m). Project includes a multi-media suite, street dance, music, arts, sports, cooking and mini-cinema. Lead partner: Coast and Moors Voluntary Action. [Third sector].

**Tower Hamlets** (£3.87m). New building offering a range of sports, music, cookery, dance and MCing. Lead partner: Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association (HARCA). [Third sector].

**Weymouth** (£3.05m). A two site project. The main centre will offer activities including dance, cinema, football, cricket, netball and a café. The second site at the Weymouth Outdoor Education centre will offer canoeing, sailing, archery and climbing. Lead partner: Dorset County Council. [Public sector].

## Appendix 2: an overview of the methodology

### Introduction

Our earlier work sought to establish a baseline for the evaluation of standard track **myplace** projects, founded in a descriptive account of the types of projects that are emerging. For that work two elements of data were analysed.

First, application documents were examined to understand the range and nature of the **myplace** applications and to provide some basic descriptive quantitative information. Sources of variation were analysed by case to permit a detailed initial exploratory analysis of documents.

Second, and the major focus of analysis, the qualitative dimensions of documents were engaged with. These provided information about the ways that projects were being developed in the localities. From this analysis eighteen sites were contacted for telephone interview. The aim of the interviews was to learn how the issues, discussed in outline in plans, were manifest in interaction with structuring features of localities. Concurrent with the above process, five case studies were selected, approved by BIG/DCSF, to complete the case studies originally identified as forming the core of in-depth work.

Our focus in this work is focused on the eight case studies identified in the Baseline Report. These projects are based in Minehead, Shoeburyness, Stoke on Trent, Torbay, Bradford, Oldham, Hackney and Dartford. This work is supplemented by a survey of 59 of the 62 participating projects. A further eight projects have subsequently been announced.

### Case Studies

The purpose of the case study work is to gain a deeper understanding across a range of projects of the emergent issues in different local settings, each of which is developing their **myplace** project in the context of specific local issues and priorities using models of development and practice relevant to their circumstances. In this sense, each of the case studies is unique.

Those included in the evaluation are not intended to be representative sample. Within the constraints of the extent to which projects had made progress at the point of the interim evaluation, the cases selected each contained features which might be highlighted as a variable which would impact on the nature of development. This involved:

- Contextual considerations: historical; geographical; environmental; organisational.
- Systemic features: the nature of the partnerships; voluntary/statutory/third sector balance; management structures; participatory models; business planning.
- Organisational frameworks: hub-spoke; satellite; institutional location.
- Activities focus: aims and purposes; range; specialist and generic; fundraising.

With the significance of these differences in mind, the case studies are mainly an opportunity to study in-depth the ways in which the different projects develop around the key objectives and anticipated outcomes of **myplace**. The questions were constructed with primary reference to the four key planned outcomes drawing on interim indicators and key performance indicators as identified at an earlier point in the evaluation process.

The questions were further refined with around a set of leading practice themes which were identified at an earlier stage of the evaluation process. These themes are as follows:

- a) The development, implementation and measurement of an effective youth facility strategy;
- b) The nature of links established between local agencies to deliver joint action;

- c) The question of establishing a scheme as ‘world-class’ (what a world-class facility looks like and how it works);
- d) The planning and delivery of facilities against the perceived ideal of ‘world-class’;
- e) Methods used for engaging young people and communities in planning and delivery;
- f) Securing funding and generating income;
- g) Running a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people;
- h) The significance of leadership.

The final framework of questions relating to outcomes and leading practice themes can be found in Appendix 3. The questions devised for the cases studies also enable identification of appropriate respondents within each case study, including managers, partners, workers, young people and representatives of other interested groups from the locality.

At this stage of the evaluation, not all of the questions relating to each of the outcomes and leading practice themes can be fully answered. However the list of interim indicators and key performance indicators provides a reference point for the extent to which each case study has made progress at this point in time.

Because of the differences of developmental stages amongst the case studies, at this interim point, the level of information and the number of people who could make a contribution has varied between cases. Nevertheless, the questions have guided the information gathering processes and the organisation of the data for each study. Where there are gaps, these will be pursued in the subsequent case study work over the next twelve months.

The case study work at this stage involved desk research, one visit to each case study area and follow-up telephone interviews to clarify understanding and to speak to individuals who were not available for consultation during the visit.

The *desk research* involved gathering factual, contextual information about each area, and young people in that area, from five data sources: Tell Us Survey, Citizenship survey, British Household survey, CLG Places Analysis Tool, InstantAtlas. It also involved revisiting the applications and business plans of each case study.

The *visits* were intended in the first place to establish interpersonal contact between evaluators and participants in the scheme and to provide a basis on which future case study work might proceed. Consequently, researchers were sensitive to local situations and to the need to establish constructive working relationships with participants. They approached key individuals within each situation and negotiated a date to visit when that individual would be able to offer time to discuss *myplace*. This was followed up with a request that the individual concerned should identify other participants who might be available on the relevant day and to facilitate discussions with those individuals and groups. A specific request was made that young people be prioritised in this process highlighting the importance given to youth participation within the scheme.

In some situations, it was possible to undertake interviews, informal conversations and group discussions with a range of participants as well as to make observational notes. In other situations, only the key individual was available to talk to the researcher during the visit. Follow-up *telephone interviews* were conducted to address identified gaps emerging from the case study visits and case study questions. Again this did not cover the full range of those involved and continuing gaps will be followed up in subsequent visits to the case study projects.

Where possible, and in most cases during visits, conversations, interviews and discussions were recorded. Where this was not possible, research notes were made immediately after the discussion. It is intended that the qualitative data will eventually be organised, coded and analysed using Nvivo but at this point the recordings were simply transcribed and with the field notes and desk-research data, were organised using a simple manual approach around the key themes outlined above.

In order to encourage trust between evaluators and case study participants, and bearing in mind ethical considerations where possible, opinions and information offered to the researchers which is contentious or negative has not been attributed in the case studies outlined in this document and each case study outline has been sent to key participants for their comments prior to publication.

## Annual Survey

The annual survey covered all projects participating in the **myplace** initiative. It was intended to offer a snapshot overview of progress to date within the scheme and to highlight any significant developments, issues or concerns to date. In addition it offers a simple, but useful comparator for the case study information, while at the same time providing an extra layer of information for the case studies.

It was intended that the survey should be a supplement to the case studies. Because it was not a primary source of information, and because there is ample evidence that responses to complex and time consuming surveys can be intrusive, elicit a low response rate, and yield data which requires complex interpretive analysis, it was decided that this survey should be devised using a simple framework with a view to it being easy and quick to complete and that it should lend itself to simple factual analysis. As such the survey was designed using *SurveyMonkey*. It used a framework of four main headings devised primarily, but not exclusively, around leading practice, strategy and impact. The questionnaire employed mainly simple choice and ranked scale questions, although some space was made for comment where appropriate.

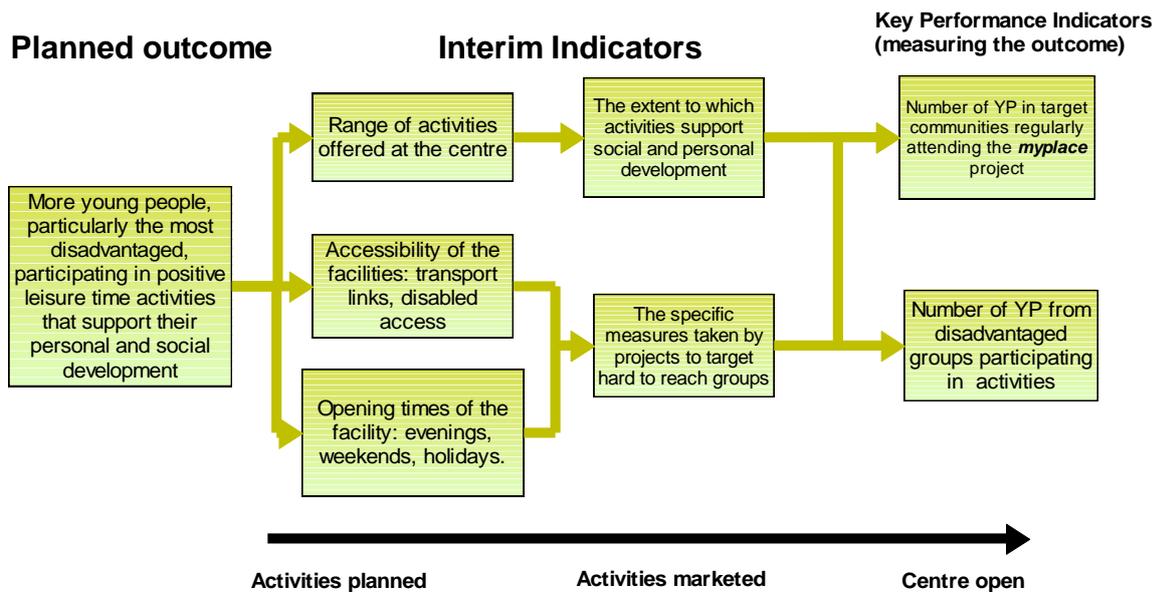
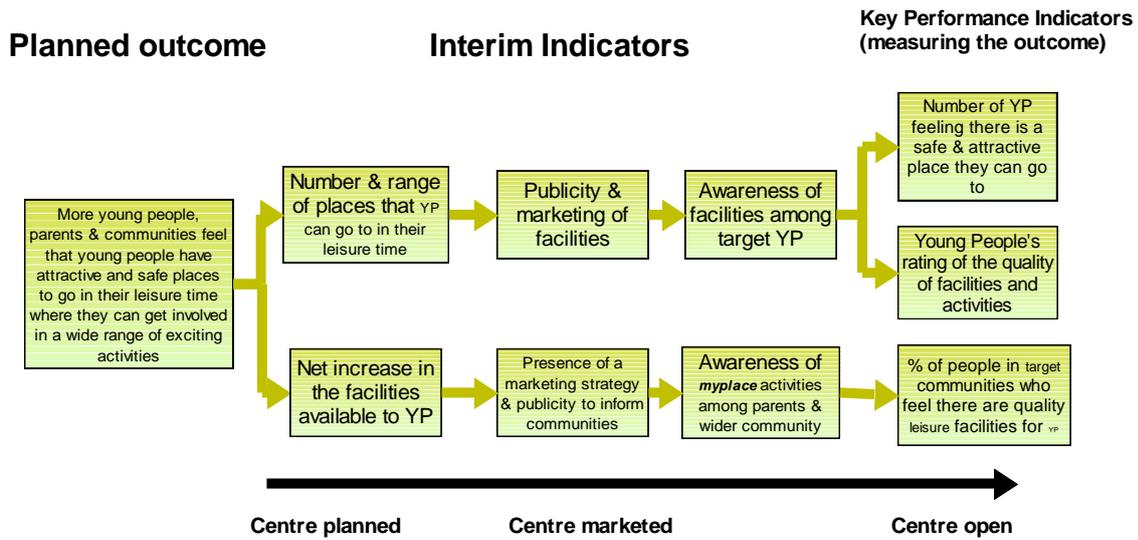
The four heading around which the questionnaire was organised were:

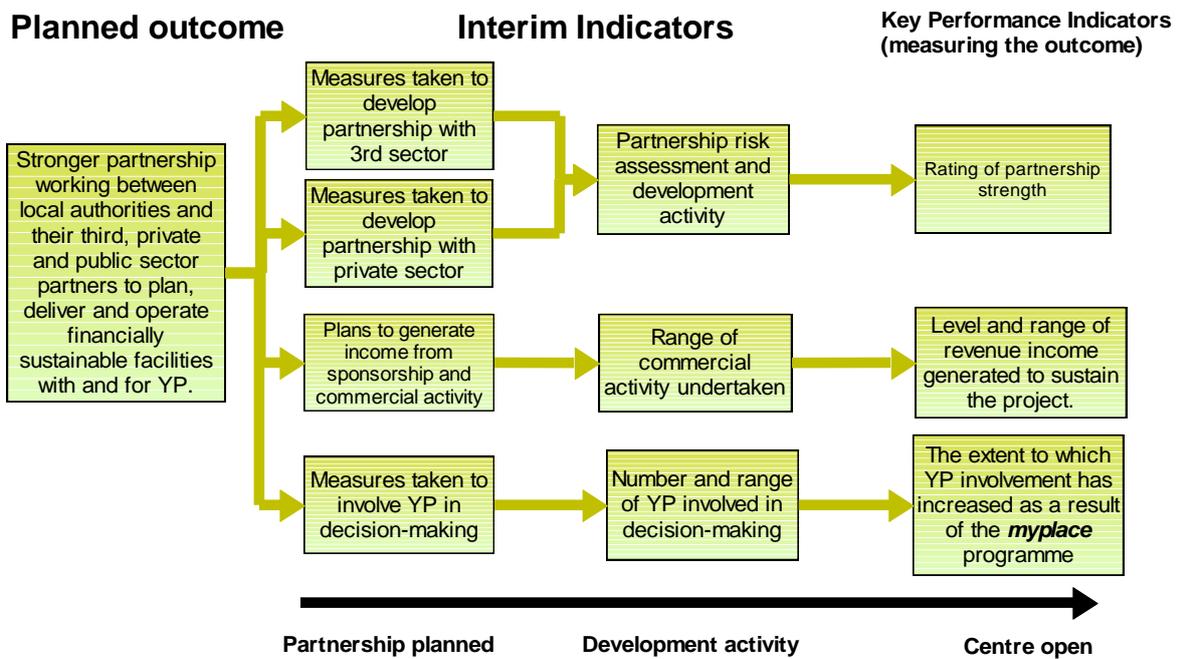
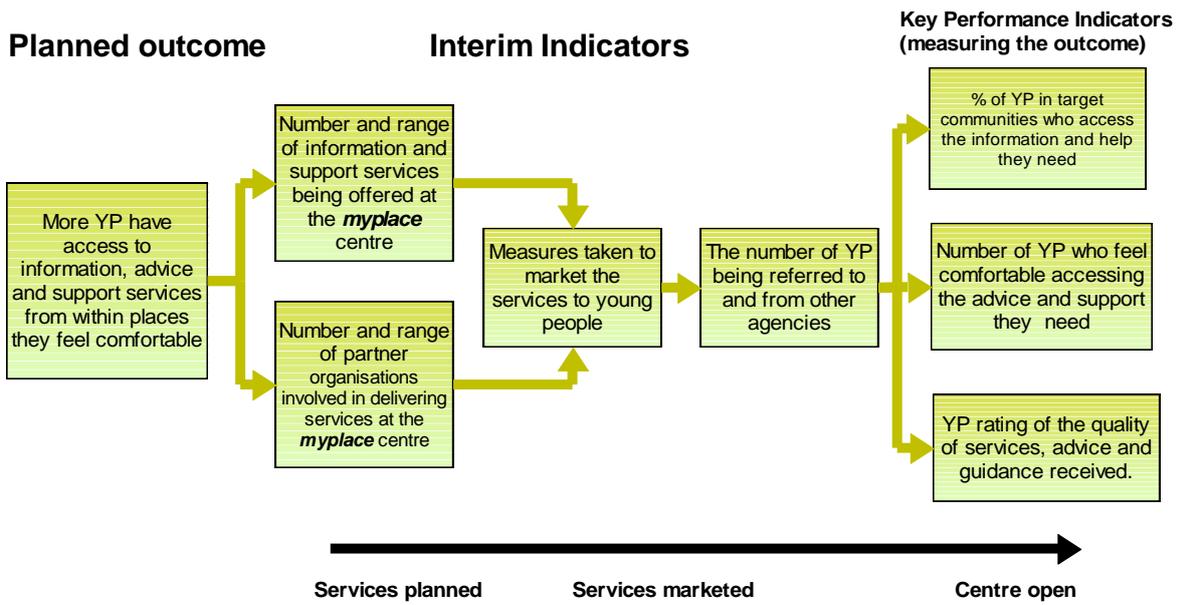
1. **Partnership.** The survey sought to gain a picture of the shape of the partnership and a judgement with on how it is functioning relative to the lead agency. Respondents were asked to identify any emerging or current issues based on initial statements from earlier Rowntree and other research on partnership working.
2. **The facility.** Here the survey questions relate strongly to the evaluation questions identified around leading practice.
3. **Participation.** The questions in this category sought some indication of the level of involvement of young people and local community members in the development of the new facility.
4. **Strategy.** These questions relate to the second broad area of the **myplace** evaluation - To what extent has **myplace** funding impacted on youth strategy, services and facilities provision more widely? (See Appendix 4 for full survey information)

The survey link was sent to a central contact with the request that they either complete it themselves or pass it on to the person most suited to complete it. Those who did not complete within the 3 week time schedule were subsequently reminded and asked to give it their attention. In the event, 48 responded in the given time frame, and after reminders a further 11 responded. Only three did not respond at all.

The responses to multiple-choice questions were analysed using standard procedures, and where appropriate using cross-tabulation. Responses to open questions were coded and grouped. As such they provide some indicative material worthy of further exploration.

## Outcome logic flows





## Appendix 3: methodology - case study framework

This Appendix reproduces the framework of questions that the researchers used when undertaking case study work.

### A. Context Indicators

Some base line information is available in the December Report.

We should systematise the information gathered for each of the case studies with a particular focus on under 25s.

The following information could be gathered:

- A brief description of the location and the history
- Population and age profile
- BME population by age
- Disability by age
- Unemployment statistics with some details for example age (under 25), gender, BME, disability
- Lone parent families
- Areas within the locality identified as suffering particularly high levels of deprivation
- Information about the numbers and status of youth facilities at the end of 2009.

The 'Summary of Indicators' document produced by the **myplace** Support Team in September 09 includes the following (with information about sources):

- Youth offending rates
- Anti-social behaviour
- School attendance and exclusion rates
- NEET
- Volunteering rates
- Involvement in positive activities

*It would be useful to discover this information for each case study.*

*Particular attention needs to be given to any particular target group identified in the **myplace** application for each case study.*

### B. Key Questions for Case Study Framework

There are four outcomes and eight Leading Practice Themes which frame and inform the case studies. These are as follows:

Outcomes:

1. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development.
2. More young people, parents and communities feel that the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities.
3. More young people have access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable.
4. Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.

#### Leading Practice Themes

1. Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy
2. Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action
3. What a world-class facility looks like and how it works
4. How to plan and deliver a world-class facility
5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery
6. How to secure funding and generate income
7. How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people
8. The importance of leadership.

The *Outcomes*, with their interim indicators have been taken as the framework for factual questions relating to the progress of the **myplace** initiative to date. Questions emerging from this are outlined under C below.

Occasionally the *Leading Practice Themes* overlap with some of these factual questions. However, mainly they are evaluative. As such, they can guide the qualitative questions in the case studies through observation/ interviews/focus groups. These are outlined under D below.

They will also inform and help to structure the analysis within the report.

#### **C. Outcomes Related Questions for Case Studies**

The following are designed against the ***Planned Outcomes, Interim Indicators and Key Performance Indicators***.

Some questions should be answered in the January to March period, to be addressed within the Interim Report. Other will be covered in the case studies in the post-March period.

There are some performance indicators which can be considered now, but they also have implications for projects themselves. We should establish whether or not tools are in place within projects to evaluate and assess their progress against these indicators. Where there is information already available within them, we should be able to access it.

## Outcome 1

More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development.

- a. Indicator: *Range of activities offered by the centre.*

*The range of activities identified as being offered by the centre in the case study have already been identified.*

Have these remained the same?

If they have changed, to find out details and reasons (to be analysed around the extent to which such activities are organised to meet the personal and social development of young people)

Is youth participation in decision-making considered to be one of the positive activities?

*If the centre is open:*

We need figures for attendance at each activity over the period of time since the opening.

The above can be undertaken through telephone interviews, desk research.

- b. Indicator: *Accessibility of facilities (physical). Transport links and disabled access. (Gender issues re facilities? Territorial issues re location?)*

*We need to assess how far action has been taken with regard to physical access.*

*How far were transport links taken into consideration in designing the centre?*

*Has there been any intervention in transport issues at a strategic level to ensure accessibility?*

*Are there any significant gaps?*

*How far have the needs of different groups been taken into consideration in the design of the centre?*

*Who was consulted about this?*

*Any problems or limitations? (the significance of this can be checked out later with the groups actually using the centres)*

- c. Indicator: *Accessibility of facilities (temporal): opening times, evenings weekends, holidays.*

*What have been the main considerations in constructing these times?*

*How do the times of opening relate to issues facing targeted groups (for example school, transport, other activities relevant to the lives of the young people targeted).*

*If the centre is open, are they working?*

- d. *Based on general theme so marketing, not on an indicator per se. Relates to all outcomes.*

In terms of evaluation, we need to think about how much progress has been made since the outset, whether any changes have been made and how far progress has been made with marketing the salient features

*Gather marketing material from each case study.*

*Has marketing material been circulated, and to whom?*

*If it has, has there been any feedback?*

*Is any evaluation of marketing planned?*

### Performance Indicators (Tools for projects):

- Evaluation methods for marketing strategy in place.
- Systems for recording numbers of people from 'target' communities regularly attending **myplace**. To access these as and when young people start using the projects.
- Systems for recording the nature of 'disadvantage' amongst young people participating in **myplace** activities. To access these as young people start using the projects.

### Outcome 2

More young people, parents and communities feel that the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities.

- a. Indicator: Number and range of places that young people can go in their leisure time.

*We need to make sure that we have some indication of the number and range of places that are available pre-**myplace** in each case-study. Check base-line reports. This information should be available either in the business plans or can be accessed via the local authorities.*

- b. Indicator: Net increase in the facilities available to young people.

*We need to ask if anything has closed since the development of the **myplace** initiative and also assess what has been added. Again, this needs to be checked against the base-line report and also with information available in Local authorities.*

- c. Indicator: Publicity and marketing facilities relating to young people (see Outcome 1.d above)

- d. Indicator: Awareness of facilities among target young people

*This will require some sort of sampling frame to find out how aware the targeted young people are of the facilities. It should happen at the point at which the facilities have already been marketed and should relate to the marketing strategy.*

*It seems to me to be a fairly large piece of work in itself and needs to be thought about carefully. April 2010 onwards unless centres already open.*

- e. Indicator: Presence of a marketing strategy and publicity to inform communities. (see *Outcome 1.d* above)
- f. Indicator: Awareness of **myplace** activities among parents and wider community:

*This can be undertaken as a random sample or as a stratified sample. Again this should happen at the point at which the facilities have already been marketed and relates to the marketing strategy. There are similar concerns and it can be linked to Outcome 2. D above. April 2010 onwards unless centres already open.*

### Performance indicators (Tools for Projects)

- o Systems for assessing the number of young people who feel that there is a safe and attractive place that they can go (participating and possibly non-participating)
- o Systems for enabling young participants to rate the quality of the facilities and the activities (possibly non-participants?)
- o Ways of assessing the percentage of people in target communities who feel that there are quality leisure facilities for young people.

*Some of this could be done within the internal **myplace** systems. However for targeted communities and non-participating young people, there would need to be some sort of survey done. Possibly a random sample.*

### Outcome 3

More young people have access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable.

- a. Indicator: Number and range of information and support services being offered at the **myplace** centre.

*This relates to Outcome 1.a above. The same sorts of questions can be asked specifying leisure activities separately from advice and support services.*

- b. Number and range of partner organisations involved in delivering services at the **myplace** centre.

*This should already be in the baseline report. Check and if it is not, find out.*

*Have been any changes in the partnership arrangements?*

*Have any new partners been brought in since planning stage? If so, for what purpose?*

- c. Measures taken to market the services to young people.

*Outcome 1.d above.*

- d. The number of people being referred to and from other agencies:

*April 2010 Onwards.*

*Jan to March 2010 – ask if tools are in place to measure the number of people being referred.*

## Performance Indicators (Tools for projects)

- Tools to measure the percentage of young people in target communities who access the information and help they need.

*Young people using the services need to be asked questions about where they live and the communities to which they belong. Numbers can be checked against available stats. This will become available to evaluation.*

- Number of young people who feel comfortable accessing the advice and support they need.
- Young People rating the quality of services, advice and guidance received.

*Evaluation tools needed by Advice and Support services to solicit views of young people using the services.*

## Outcome 4

Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.

- a. Indicator: Measures taken to develop partnership with third sector.
- b. Indicator: Measures taken to develop partnership with the private sector.

*This information should be already available in the baseline reports and information gathered.*

*What, if anything, has changed since planning stages?*

*Any particular issues to highlight?*

- c. Indicator: Partnership Risk assessment and developmental activity

*Ask how far the partnership arrangements with each sector are holding up.*

*Have there been any changes? If so why?*

*Are there any structural or process issues in the partnership arrangements? If so what? How have they been addressed?*

*This needs to be monitored across the year.*

- d. Indicator: Plans to generate income from sponsorship and commercial activity.

*This information should be already available. Check.*

- e. Indicator: Range of commercial activity undertaken

*Initial plans should be outlined in application and in baseline report*

*How far have these plans progressed?*

*What has been achieved?*

*What problems have been encountered?*

*Have there been any changes to plan?*

*Has any income been generated to date and if so, what and how?*

- f. Indicator: Measures to involve young people in decision-making.

*Basic information about formal measures should be available in base-line documents. Check.*

*Ask how these are working to date.*

*Have any changes been made and if so what and why?*

*Identify the capacity in which young people are involved.*

*What measures are in place to sustain involvement?*

- g. Indicator: Number and range of young people involved in decision making

*Who are the young people? (Age, gender, ethnicity, disability, where they live.)*

*How does this relate to wider profile of target group? (see context info)*

*Project affiliation of the young people (if any)*

*Which young people are involved at which level of decision-making?*

#### **Performance Indicators (Tools for Projects)**

- Rating of partnership strength around numbers of meetings, levels of attendance and participation in meetings; involvement of key people from different projects; clarity about roles, responsibility and leadership, documentation of decision-making.

*This can be assessed as part of the work, January to March with advice going back to projects about any issues and concerns.*

- Level and Range of revenue income generated to sustain the project

*Identification of systems in place for financial management, ongoing finance-generating activity and robust and regular monitoring of finances. Have any problems been identified at this stage?*

- The extent to which young people's involvement has increased as a result of the **myplace** programme.

*We need to ascertain levels of involvement at this juncture and check again both claims in application documents and against any levels of involvement identified in previous parts of the project. Continuous monitoring over the period of the evaluation.*

#### **D. Questions from Leading Practice Themes**

1. *Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy:*
  - a. *How does **myplace** fit into the Local Authority strategy?*

- b. *What other activities/facilities/services/ programmes are mentioned in the strategy relating to disadvantaged young people.*
- c. *What structures are in place for strategic decision-making and how does this relate to the **myplace** partnerships and decision-making processes?*
- d. *Is there any indication of change in the direction of the strategy relating to the progress of the **myplace** initiative?*

People to contact:

*Relevant local authority officers and members of strategic partnerships.*

Documents to access:

*Strategic plans and related relevant local authority documents.*

## **2. Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action:**

- a. *Which local agencies have been involved?*
- b. *What are their 'specialisms'?*
- c. *Who are the key individuals in different organisations responsible for **myplace** and what roles do they inhabit in their own organisations?*

This information should be already available

- d. *Where do agencies sit within the development of the **myplace** initiative (centre, periphery, outside) in relation to decision-making?*
- e. *Will joint action be facilitated by the location of the new project and if so, in what terms?*
- f. *Which agencies are excluded and why?*
- g. *What are the links and relationships between statutory and voluntary agencies?*
- h. *What systems of communication are in place to facilitate joint action?*

People to contact:

*Key members of partnership bodies*

*Key members of constituent projects (trustees, managers and workers).*

*If possible representatives of 'excluded' projects.*

## **3. What a world-class facility looks like and how it works:**

- a. *How do people understand 'world-class'?*
- b. *To which aspects of the project does 'world-class' refer?*
- c. *Is it simply understood as 'high quality'? If so, in what terms?*
- d. *How does that relate to the quality of the facilities which are currently available for young people in their area?*

- e. *Have the conceptions of people changed about world-class/quality since they became involved in the **myplace** initiative?*
- f. *In what areas is world-class/ quality located? (for example buildings, management, youth participation, programming).*

People to contact:

*Key members of partnership*

*Key people in constituent projects (trustees, managers and workers)*

4. *How to plan and deliver a 'world-class facility':*

- a. *How important to them was 'world-class'/quality at the outset of people's involvement?*
- b. *Does the concept of 'world-class/quality' feature in ongoing discussions and decision-making amongst partners? If so, how and if not, why not?*
- c. *Are any problems anticipated in achieving world-class or quality as defined in the application and/or in the understanding of participants?*
- d. *What particular features of their own scheme would participants identify as of world-class or high quality, and where do they think this is not being achieved?*
- e. *What do people think might be the impediments to achieving the highest quality in their scheme?*
- f. *What advice would people give to others wishing to develop a world-class facility?*

People to contact:

*Key members of partnership*

*Key people in constituent projects (trustees, managers and workers)*

5. *How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery:*

- a. *What is the relevant community of interest?*
- b. *Is the location of the new/refurbished building relevant to this interest?*
- c. *In what ways and at what levels are young people/communities currently involved in the local initiative?*
- d. *How were they involved in the initial planning and development processes?*
- e. *At what level are they involved in decision-making?*
- f. *What sort of young people/Community representatives have been and are involved (ethnicity/gender/(dis)ability/class/age/educational levels/organisational affiliation)*
- g. *Are the young people/community members who have been/are involved representative of local young people/community in general?*
- h. *Have any training/developmental training needs been identified and/or offered?*

- i. *Are there any tensions/conflicts of interest or emphasis between the young people and community representatives engaged in planning and delivery?*

People to contact:

*Key members of partnership*

*Key people in constituent projects (trustees, managers and workers)*

*Young people, parents and representatives of communities.*

6. *How to secure funding and generate income:*

- a. *Who was/is responsible for the business plan?*
- b. *Are income generating activities built-in to the business plan?*  
*This information should be already available.*
- c. *How realistic are such activities in terms of achieving level of funding required?*
- d. *Have any specific external sources of future funding been identified?*
- e. *Has any additional funding been received and if so from where and in what terms?*
- f. *What might need to be emphasised to secure future funding from external sources?*
- g. *How adequate is the funding currently available perceived to be in the short term/long term?*
- h. *What are/might be the consequences of funding decisions for the continuity and or success of existing work within partner agencies?*
- i. *Does the business plan include funding to employ a dedicated fund-raiser?*
- j. *What recording and evaluation processes are in place to support future funding bids?*
- k. *Is it realistic to expect future funding to meet the needs of maintaining the building and programme at the level anticipated in the light of the current economic situation?*

The factual questions relating to finance and outlined under 'Outcomes' should provide adequate information for the purposes of the March report.

More detailed information can be asked of treasurers and financial managers at a later stage of the evaluation.

7. *How to run a 'world-class' facility to achieve real advantages for young people:*

- a. *What is the current profile of young people in the locality of the **myplace** initiative?*
- b. *What issues is the project designed to address with young people?*

This information should be already available and is outlined under 'outcomes'.

- c. *What perceptions do those involved have about what the needs of young people in their locality are?*
- d. *How do those involved think that the **myplace** scheme meets those needs?*
- e. *What sort of programmes are being constructed to address those needs?*
- f. *What sort of workers are considered necessary?*
- g. *Are there any issues relating to the location of the project?*
- h. *How are management and decision-making structures designed to meet the needs of young people?*
- i. *How do participants think that 'real advantage' might be measured and are there any plans in place to do so?*
- j. *What are the problems and issues that are anticipated in offering real advantages for young people?*
- k. *How have young people themselves responded? Are they engaged in activities that were previously unavailable to them? Has their activity level increased?*

People to contact:

Constituent project workers and managers

Relevant Young People.

8. *The importance of leadership:*

- *Who is effectively taking leadership and primary responsibility for strategy and delivery of this scheme? Is it an individual, a group, a project?*
- *Is this the same as the 'named' leader?*
- *What leadership qualities are important to achieve the aims of the scheme?*
- *Are these qualities in place?*
- *Are there any leadership gaps/tensions/conflicts at present.*
- *Are there any opportunities available for young people or representatives of local communities to express and develop leadership?*
- *What is the style of decision-making? Democratic? Centralised? Diffuse? Charismatic?*
- *Are people encountering any frustrations in attempts to lead?*
- *Are there any particular individuals/groups thriving because opportunities are now being offered for leadership?*
- *What is the impact of leadership on the state of development of the particular scheme?*

People to contact:

The opinions of all individuals connected with the **myplace** initiative could be solicited with these questions but they would need to be asked selectively according to the position and role of the respondent.

Some observations made by researchers would also be useful here.

#### 9. *General Information.*

1. *At the outset, some basic information should be recorded about people who speak to us directly in relation to the evaluation. This includes participants in interviews and focus groups:*

- a) Name of respondent
- b) Some identifying features for example Gender, ethnicity, age-group.
- c) Organisational affiliation and role
- d) Position regarding the **myplace** initiative
- e) Date of conversation
- f) Nature of conversation (for example Face-to face Interview/telephone interview/informal one-to one discussion/discussion in a group environment/other)
- g) (Possibly) signature of the respondent to indicate that they consent to the information being used for the purposes of evaluation.

### **Case study Notes**

Each visit to a project should be recorded in terms of general information as follows:

1. Date
2. Place
3. Researcher
4. People contacted
5. Nature of contact (for example general discussion/interview/observation at meeting)
6. Nature of data gathered
7. Any key points arising and worthy of note (impressions, thoughts, comments).

Notes from conversations/interviews observations should be typed for easy access to the information and/or processing into Nvivo.

Telephone interviews can be recorded using a simple device which links phone to recorder.

### **Interview schedules.**

Each interview schedule should be constructed around the questions indicated prior to 'People to contact'.

The interviews should be semi-formal with questions above to guide.

At the outset, each participant in interviews and/or within focused discussion within each case study should be asked to discuss with the researcher their understanding of the origins and development of the **myplace** initiative in their location.

They should be asked, in other words, to 'tell the story' in a general sense and relating to their own particular interest.

The format should be informal and open-ended in relation to this, but as prompts, respondents should be asked to say something about:

- a) How and why they came to be involved
- b) What sort of contribution they have made to the development of the application and the strategy
- c) What they think of developments to date
- d) How important they think the initiative is for young people in their area.

Most interviews should then be pursued developmentally on the basis of the Leading Practice Themes in (D) above.

The questions can be further used as a checklist to help in the analysis of the data.

At the end, interviewees can be asked what type of support if any, they have accessed.

Have they attended any support events?

Have they sought specific support in relation to specific issues (for example planning)/Do they use the **myplacesupport.co.uk** website?

How do they rate the support structures and the support they have received?

## Appendix 4: methodology – annual survey questions

| 1. Welcome   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Welcome to the 2010 <b>myplace</b> annual survey. It has been designed to give a snapshot of some of the key areas of work you are involved in - and should only take a few minutes to fill in. It is being carried out as part of the evaluation of the <b>myplace</b> Programme - which is being delivered by The Big Lottery Fund on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).</p> <p>The survey has been sent out to people identified as 'lead contacts'. If you are not the right person to complete the survey could you please let us have contact details for who we should be writing to – mail m.smith@ymca.ac.uk).</p> <p>The survey needs to be completed by February 22, 2010.</p> <p>There are five short sections. For many of the questions all you need to do is to choose one answer and press the button to the left, or tick a couple of boxes. In others you will simply need to tick a point on a scale.</p> <p>Your answers will be aggregated. Any reporting on the survey will not identify specific projects.</p> <p>This work is being undertaken by researchers based at the University of Durham (Jean Spence and Tracy Hodgson) and the YMCA George Williams College (Mark K Smith and Simon Frost).</p> <p>Thanks for helping us.</p> |   |   |
| What 'round' of <b>myplace</b> projects were you funded under?   | mc – 1 answer   | Fast track (November 2008)<br>Round 1 (March 2009)<br>Round 2 (December 2009)   |
| In what sector is the lead partner located?  | mc – 1 answer   | Public sector<br>Third sector<br>Private sector   |
| Please identify the role you have in taking forward the <b>myplace</b> project. You can tick more than one box. Is your role mainly related to:  | mc – multiple answer  | The capital build project.<br>Youth engagement.<br>Developing the funding/business plan elements.<br>other (please specify)   |
| 2. Partnership   |   |   |
| How would you describe the shape of the <b>myplace</b> partnership you are involved in?  | mc – 1 answer   | One agency is the lead partner undertaking most of the work.<br>Two broadly equal agencies are the main partners.<br>Three or more agencies are broadly equal partners.   |
| Please identify any gains made by your agency from being involved in local partnership working within the <b>myplace</b> Programme. The agency has been able to:   | 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (with neutral midpoint) | Gain additional resources for the facility.<br>Access additional support and training resources.<br>Influence the policy and practice of partner agencies.<br>Access resources and help for other projects or pieces of work by the agency. |
| Please identify any issues in the work of your local partnership. You may choose more than one of the statements.  | 5 point Likert scale from strongly  | Key staff in one or more of the partner agencies are over-extended.<br>There is a lack of trust between two or more partners.   |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | disagree to strongly agree (with neutral midpoint)                                    | There is a clash of organisational cultures between partners.<br>It is difficult to get adequate responses or decisions from one or more of the partner agencies.<br>The administrative systems and structures of the partnership need developing.<br>There is a lack of clarity with regard to the purpose of the partnership.  |
| Please comment on any other aspects of partnership working within the <b>myplace</b> Programme that have pleased or concerned you.                    | comment   |  |
| <b>3. The facility</b>  |   |  |
| <b>Location:</b> Please reflect on the location of the <b>myplace</b> development with which you are involved. Rate your facility on the scale below. | 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (with neutral midpoint) | The building is located in close proximity to a range of good transport links.<br>The building is in a central and busy location within the city/town/neighbourhood.<br>The building is located in what local young people see as 'neutral territory' i.e. it is not in an area that is seen as 'belonging' to a particular group who might be hostile to them.  |
| <b>Design:</b> If your facility has completed the design process please rate your building on the scale below.  | 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (with neutral midpoint) | The design of the building allows for the planned range of activities to be offered.<br>The design of the building includes a comfortable social space that can accommodate 20 or more young people close to the main entrance.<br>Careful attention has been paid to how safe young people may feel in different areas of the facility for example. the toilets.<br>The design of the building allows for easy access for young people with different needs.<br>The design of the building encourages access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable.<br>The design of the building appears to allow for significant flexibility in use. |
| <b>Implementation.</b> Please make a judgement as to the following. We have been able to develop for the new facility:                                | 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (with neutral midpoint) | A clear strategy for generating and sustaining participation by young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, in positive leisure time activities in the facility.<br>A robust and sound monitoring system that allows us to make judgements about usage, and benefit.<br>Different income generation activities and secure funding to support the running costs.<br>A clear plan for the staffing of the new facility in order to offer the range of activities we planned at times convenient for young people.<br>A robust system for gathering data and   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  |   | making judgements about how young people, parents and communities feel about the facility.   |
| <b>Emerging issues.</b> Please comment on any significant issues that you have had with the location, design and/or execution of the facility.   | Comment box   |  |
| <b>4. Participation</b>  |   |  |
| <b>Young people:</b> Please make a judgement about the involvement of young people in decision-making around the purpose, design and operation of the new facility. A significant number of young people have been centrally involved in making decisions about:   | 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (with neutral midpoint) | The specific activities to be offered.<br>Opening times.<br>The design of the facility.<br>Income generation and funding to run the facility.<br>The conduct of partnership meetings.<br>The awarding of contracts.<br>The development of the business plan.   |
| <b>Local community:</b> Briefly describe the level of involvement of community members (other than young people) in decision making on the purpose, design and operation of the new facility.  | Comment box   |  |
| <b>Emerging issues.</b> Please comment on any significant issues that you have had with the involvement of local young people and other community members.   | Comment box   |  |
| <b>5. Strategy</b>   |   |  |
| Please make a judgement about the current situation in your local authority area with regard to:   | 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (with neutral midpoint) | Youth strategy. The authority has a coherent and clear overall strategy with regard to offering places to go, activities and learning opportunities for young people outside of normal school hours.<br>Opportunities. The authority currently funds or offers a good range of facilities, activities and learning opportunities for young people generally.<br>Support services. The authority currently funds or offers a good range of support services for young people who face particular difficulties or who suffer significant disadvantage. |
| What impact do you think the <b>myplace</b> funding has had – and might have - on the local authority's youth policy?  | Comment box   |  |
| What impact do you think the <b>myplace</b> funding has had – and might have - on the deployment of staff and on other provision for young people funded by the local authority?   | Comment box   |  |
| <b>Thank you</b>   |   |  |
| Thank you for completing this survey.<br>We will be collating responses during March for inclusion in an evaluation report for the Big Lottery Fund and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).<br>Once that report has been approved the results of the survey will be available to all the projects involved in the <b>myplace</b> Programme.<br>If, in the meantime, you have any questions about the survey or the evaluation just contact Mark Smith (t) 020 7540 4929 (e) m.smith@ymca.ac.uk |   |  |

## Appendix 5: TellUs survey material

Prepared by the **myplace** support team

The TellUs survey is a self completion survey for children and young people. It is designed to collect views on the local area and includes questions which cover the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The survey covered schools chosen to cover a representative sample of the types of schools in each local authority area. These schools were provided with guidance detailing how to select pupils to take part in the survey.

While we realise that the **myplace** projects will only be one factor influencing the Every Child Matters outcomes, the survey findings will nonetheless provide a useful baseline contribution to the local context of each case study area. The survey focuses specifically on the issues that **myplace** aims to influence and therefore provides useful insights into the specific issues that face the different communities we are looking at.

Following feedback from schools and Local Authorities DCSF changed the survey to the Autumn term of 2009. This differs from 2008 where the survey took place in the summer term. There have been a number of changes to questions and weighting of Tellus4 compared to Tellus3, and this means that some data is not comparable over time. A further explanation of the changes is outlined below.

Data was available at the lower tier authority level for six of the eight areas. However for the Dartford and Minehead case study areas information was only available at County Council. So we have shown information for Kent and Somerset.

### Changes since the Tellus3 survey

Tellus4 survey was managed by the DCSF for this first time and changes were made to improve the response rate to the survey. The changes include:

- Timing – Tellus4 survey was issued in the Autumn term;
- Weighting – Tellus4 has been weighted to reflect the extent of local deprivation using the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) scores and by academic year population. This is a change from Tellus3 that used the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals and school type respectively;
- Questions – some questions have been changed to improve the respondents' understanding. This applies in particular to NI69 on bullying – time limits have been clarified and this means that the questions are not directly comparable from one year to the next.

Given these changes DCSF have re-weighted the Tellus3 survey responses for comparison to the Tellus4 survey. However this has only been provided for the national indicators, and the results are shown in the section below. It is not possible to make direct comparisons for other questions as Tellus3 re-weighted data has not been provided below national level.

### Key findings

Figure 1 shows the changes in the national indicators for all survey respondents. On the whole emotional health and well-being has decreased and further analysis shows this is because fewer young people felt they could talk to another adult other than their parent. There were also decreases in the percentage of young people taking part in positive activities and a slight increase in the proportion frequently using drugs, alcohol or volatile substances. The only indicator with a positive

increase was the satisfaction with parks and play areas, increasing from 46% to 54%. As previously stated data on bullying has been reported but is incomparable from 2008 to 2009 due to changes in the questions.

**Figure 1 Changes in the national indicators from Tellus3 to Tellus4**

| National Indicator | Description                          | Tellus3 (re-weighted) | Tellus4 |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| NI50               | Emotional health and well-being      | 62.6%                 | 56.0%   |
| NI69*              | Experiences of bullying              | 50.1%                 | 28.8%   |
| NI110              | Participation in positive activities | 68.2%                 | 65.8%   |
| NI115              | Substance misuse                     | 9.3%                  | 9.8%    |
| NI199              | Parks and Play areas                 | 46.4%                 | 54.1%   |

Source: Tellus survey responses, DCSF Statistical Release. \*Question changes mean that data for this indicator are not comparable between Tellus3 and Tellus4.

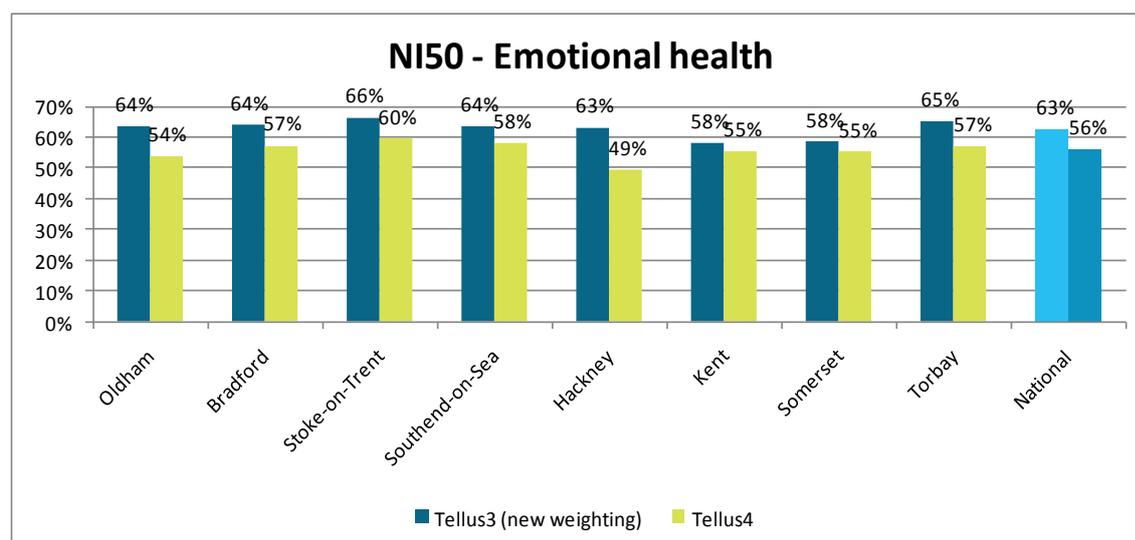
The following charts show changes from Tellus3 (re-weighted) to Tellus4 for the national indicators for all eight of the case study areas. Due to the inconsistency of the results for bullying we have not included the chart for this indicator in the analysis.

### Emotional health

Emotional health and well-being is measured on the percentage of children with good relationships. This is defined as having one or more good friends and at least two of the statements on being able to talk to parents, friends or another adult. Analysis shows that it is a reduction in being able to talk to another adult other than your parent that has caused the decrease in this indicator (Figure 2).

Indicators in all of the eight case study areas have decreased, most notably in Hackney where emotional health reduced by almost 14 percentage points. The smallest decreases of around three percentage points were in Kent and Somerset.

**Figure 2 NI50 - Emotional health**



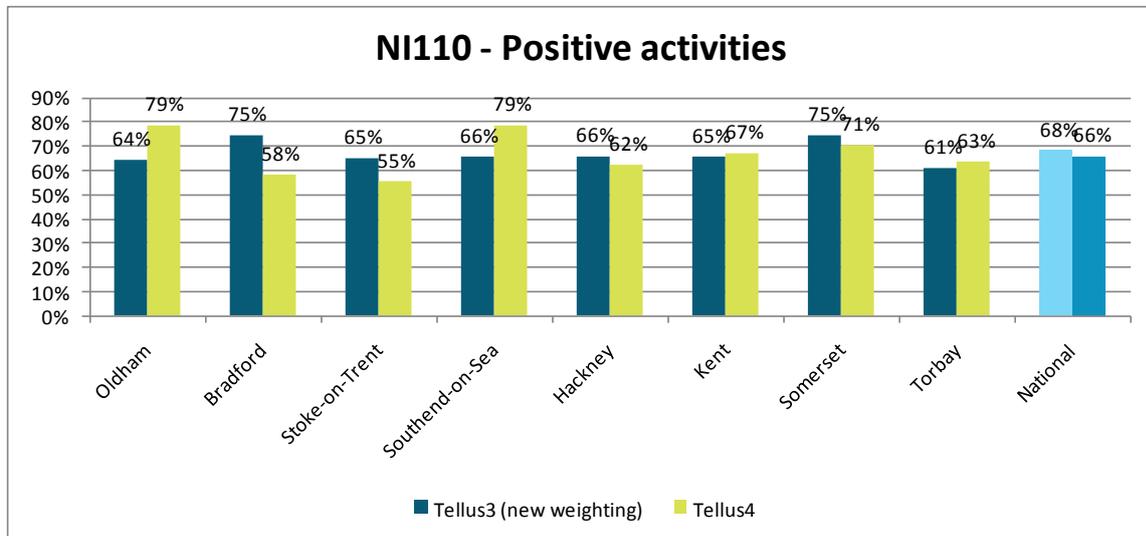
Source: Tellus survey responses, DCSF Statistical Release.

### Positive activities

Overall the percentage of young people taking part in positive activities reduced slightly from 68% to 66%. Half of the case study areas saw increases in the percentage of young people attending

positive activities (Figure 3), the largest increases were in Oldham and Southend-on-Sea. In contrast Bradford and Stoke-on-Trent experienced the largest decreases.

**Figure 3 – NI110 Positive activities**

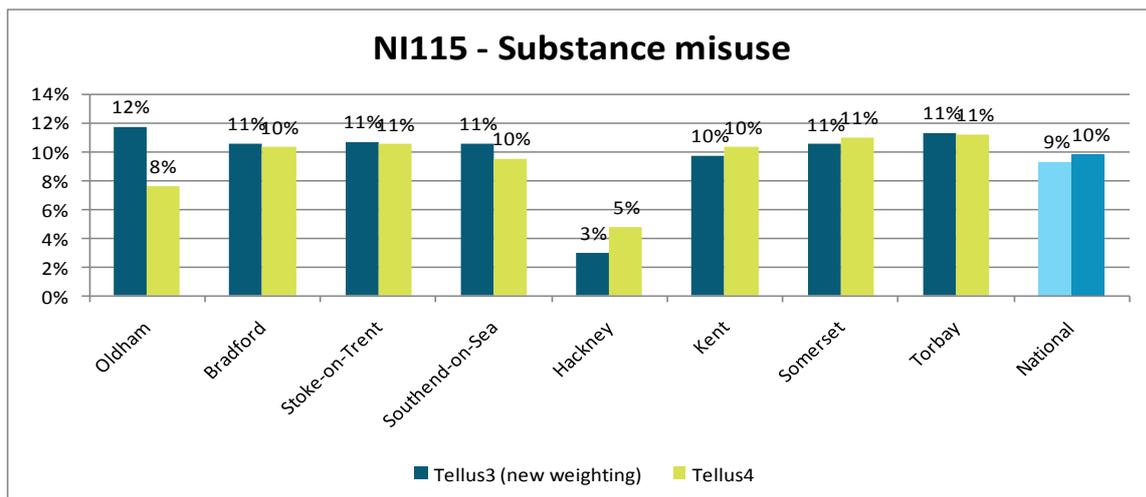


Source: Tellus survey responses, DCSF Statistical Release.

### Substance misuse

Self reported substance misuse has increased slightly from 9% to 10%. Figure 4 shows the changes for the eight case study areas. Most of the areas have seen only small changes within one or two percentage points. However Oldham saw a decrease from the highest level in Tellus3 of 12% to 8% in Tellus4. Hackney still has the lowest level at 5% in Tellus4 increasing from around 3% in Tellus3.

**Figure 4 NI115 Substance misuse**

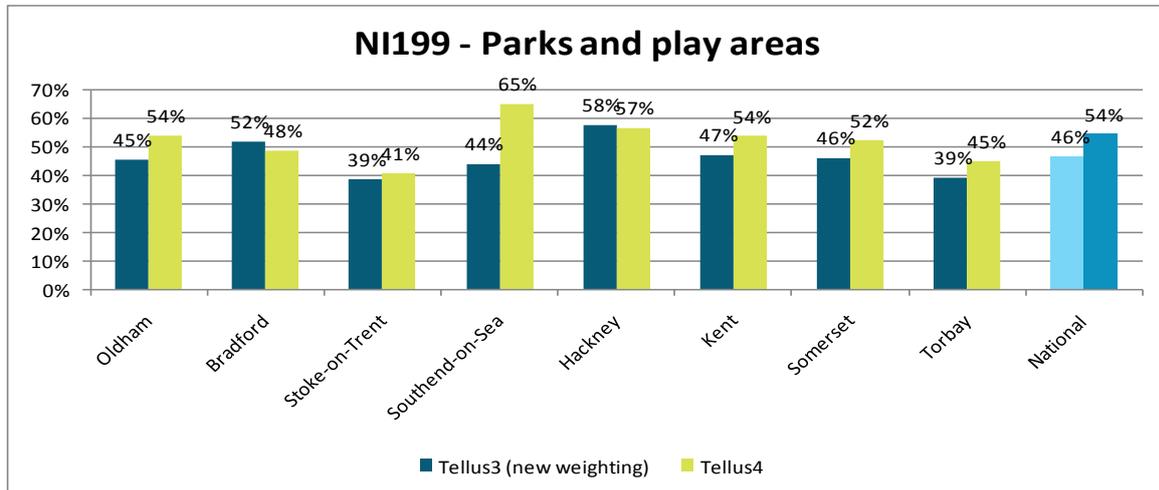


Source: Tellus survey responses, DCSF Statistical Release.

### Park and play areas

Satisfaction with parks and play areas saw the biggest increase of all the indicators from 46% to 54%. Of all the eight areas Hackney and Bradford experience decreases in satisfaction. Hackney only marginally, and reducing from 52% to 48% in Bradford. The rest of the areas saw increases in satisfaction with parks and play areas, with Southend-on-Sea seeing the largest increase at around a twenty percentage points, from 44% to 65%.

**Figure 5 NI199 Parks and play areas**



Source: Tellus survey responses, DCSF Statistical Release.

## Appendix 6: the 2010 *myplace* annual survey

### Introduction

The *myplace* annual survey (of which this is the first) is designed to give a snapshot of some of the key dimensions of the programme. It covers five main areas:

- Basic information about the programme, lead partners and who was completing the survey.
- The nature and experience of partnership working within the *myplace* programme.
- The location, design and development of the facility.
- The nature and scope of participation and involvement by young people and local community members in the design and operation of the facility.
- The impact of the *myplace* project on local services and strategies.

The survey was completed by one person identified as a 'lead contact' in each project.

### Survey design

The survey was designed in consultation with the lead partner in *myplace* support team and the evaluation team at the BIG Lottery Fund. The questions concerning partnership, design and participation were further informed by a literature review and discussion within the evaluation team.

Participants were assured that answers would be aggregated, and that reporting would not identify specific projects. However, they were also aware that their responses were feeding into a public document clearly identified with a programme through which they were receiving funding. It is reasonable to assume that this may have resulted in some 'positive' reporting. However, it is also reasonable to assume that respondents may also have used the survey as an opportunity to give feedback around the operation of the programme in order that adjustments could be made.

The later sections on participation and the impact on local services and strategy used more open-ended questions. In part this was because the majority of the projects were at a reasonably early stage of implementation. Some of the processes and impacts that would have been useful to explore would not, thus, be necessarily in play. A further factor, particularly with regard to the impact on services and strategies, was recognition that following the banking crisis of 2008 significant changes could be occurring and that a standard multiple choice approach might not surface these.

### Survey implementation

The survey was completed on-line (using SurveyMonkey). The invitation to take part in the survey was mailed on February 5, 2010; the final response was received on March 4, 2010.

Of the 62 projects involved in the fast track and standard track round one stages of the *myplace* programme, 59 took part in the survey – a 95% response rate.

## Survey analysis

The responses to multiple-choice questions were analysed using standard procedures and where appropriate using cross-tabulation. Responses to open questions were coded and grouped. As such they provide some indicative material worthy of further exploration.

### This report

In this report we have set out the responses to each question. Discussion of the findings can be found in the main body of the **myplace** interim evaluation report. Quotations from respondents are in italic. We have altered some material to protect anonymity. Our replacement text is in square brackets.

## 1. The participating projects

Survey responses were received from all 21 fast track projects, and from 38 (out of a possible 41) Round 1 standard track projects.

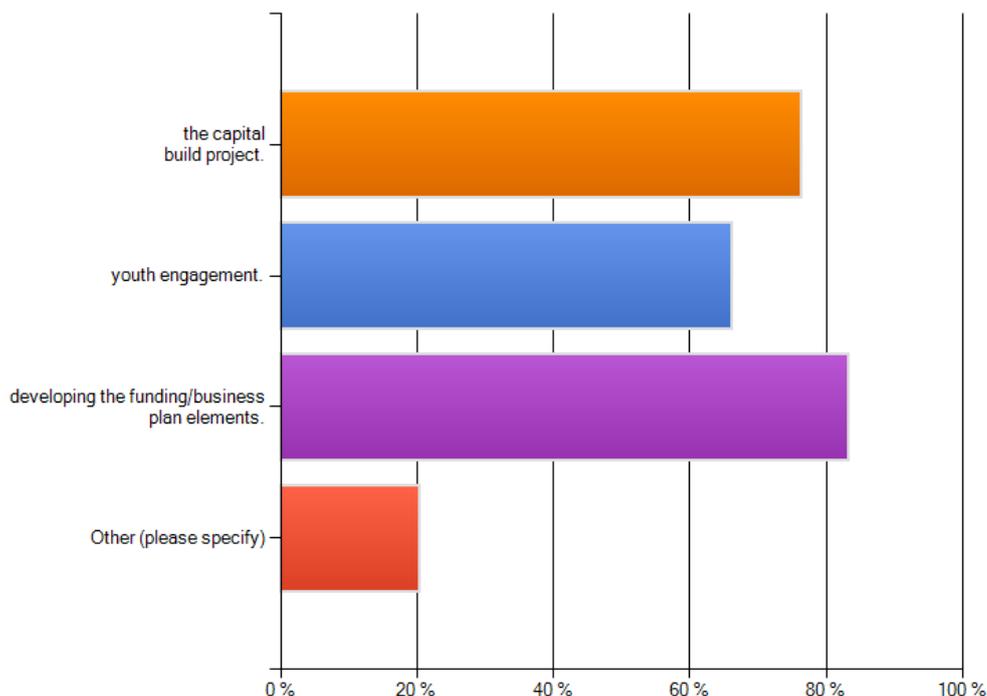
29 of the projects reported that they had lead partners located in the public sector, 30 in the third sector. There were no private sector lead partners.

Respondents were asked to identify the role they had in taking forward the **myplace** project. They could make a multiple response and add their own comment.

As can be seen from *Figure 1*, over 80% of respondents described themselves as being involved in developing the funding/business plan elements of the project. It is noteworthy that a high proportion of respondents had multiple roles with regard to the **myplace** project.

**Figure 1**

**Please identify the role you have in taking forward the myplace project. You can tick more than one box. Is your role mainly related to:**



Whether the project's lead partner was in the public or third sector did not make a significant difference as to what roles were taken, although a larger number of public sector respondents completed the 'other' box (9 of 12 respondents). The most common additions here involved having some responsibility for partnership working and for project management.

## 2. Partnership

### The shape of the partnership

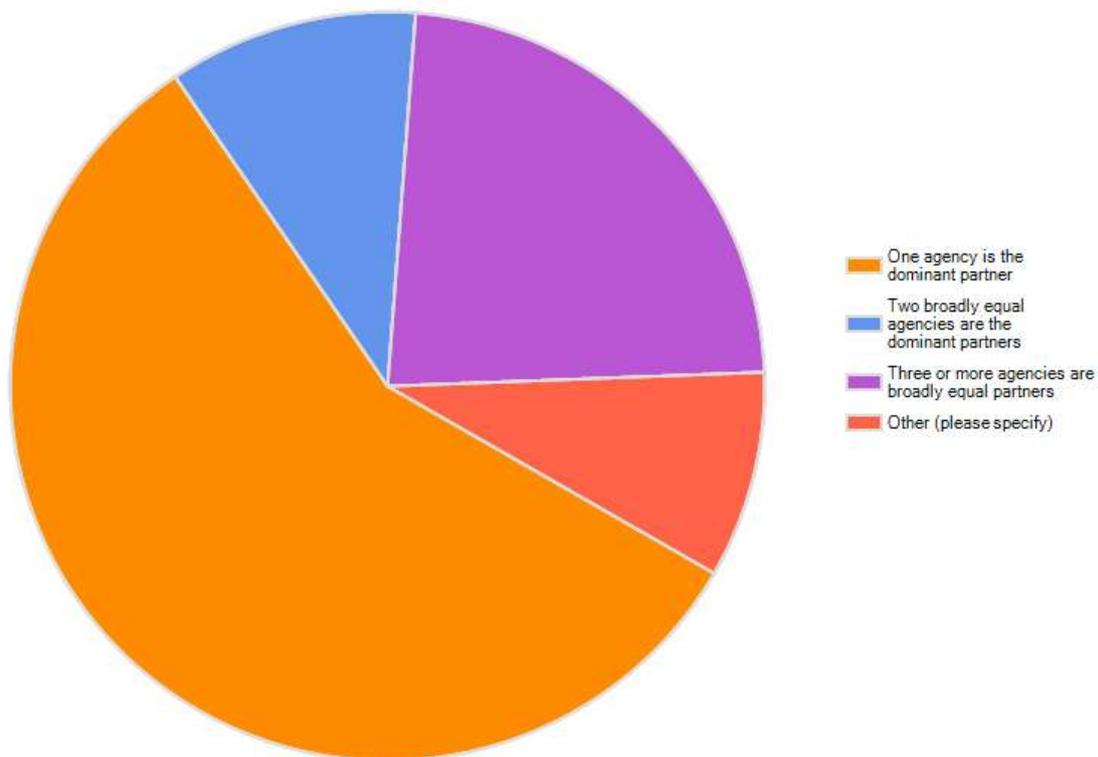
When asked to describe the shape of the **myplace** partnership they were involved with, just over half of the respondents (57%) said that one agency was the dominant partner. This rose to 64% when 'other' comments were taken into consideration.

Just over 10% of the respondents described the partnership as involving two broadly equal agencies as being the dominant partners. When this is examined in terms of the public/third sector split, all but one of the projects so described have a notional lead partner in the third sector.

23% of the projects are described as having three or more agencies as broadly equal partners. Of these projects more have a notional lead partner in the public sector.

**Figure 2**

**How would you describe the shape of the myplace partnership you are involved in?**



One respondent reported that their partnership had experienced problems in developing their project due to a number of challenges that have not been resolvable. As a result the partnership was 'no longer'.

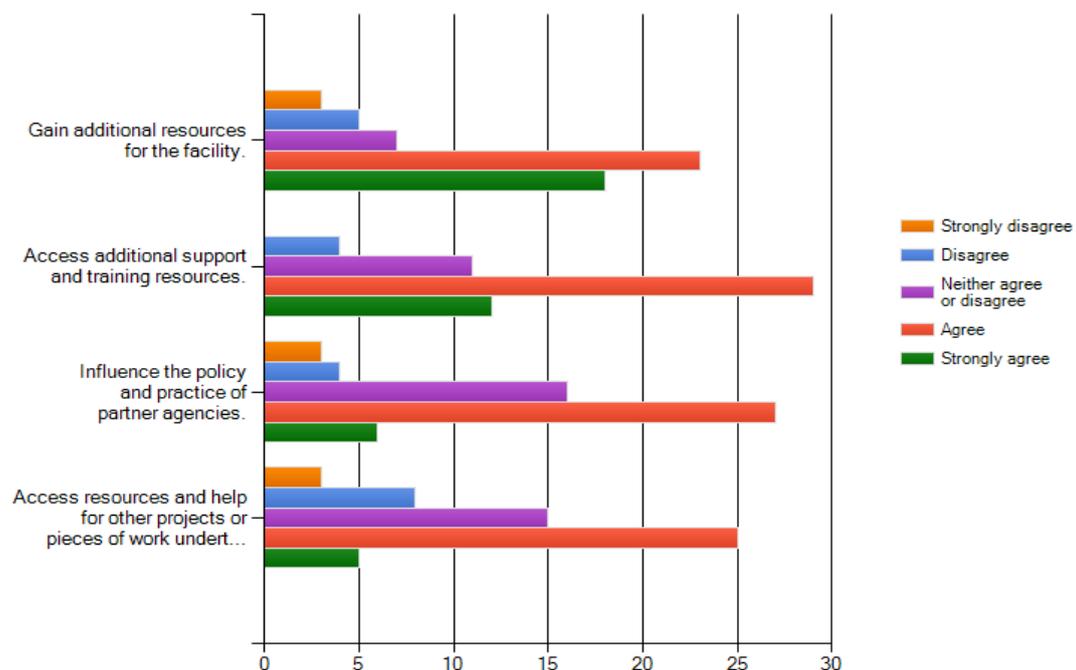
## The gains from partnership working

As can be seen from *Figure 3* there is broad agreement from within *myplace* projects that there are gains for the individual (lead) agency from partnership working. The strongest of these concerns the ability to access additional support and training resources, and the ability to gain additional resources for the facility. Significantly, the latter gained the largest number of strongly positive responses.

The number of negative responses to questions around the benefits of partnership working to the individual agency was relatively small. Similarly, but less markedly, strongly positive responses were relatively rare, especially with regard to the ability to influence policy and access resources and help for other pieces of work.

**Figure 3**

**Please identify any gains made by your agency from being involved in local partnership working within the myplace Programme. Your agency has been able to:**



## Issues

The picture painted by respondents of the partnerships they were involved in was relatively positive. In part this may arise from the large number of projects that have one agency as a dominant partner. Over three quarters of respondents report that there is trust between partners, and clarity with regard to the purpose of the partnership.

As can be seen from *Figure 4*, there are three key areas where tensions or issues appear to be arising in a significant number of partnerships.

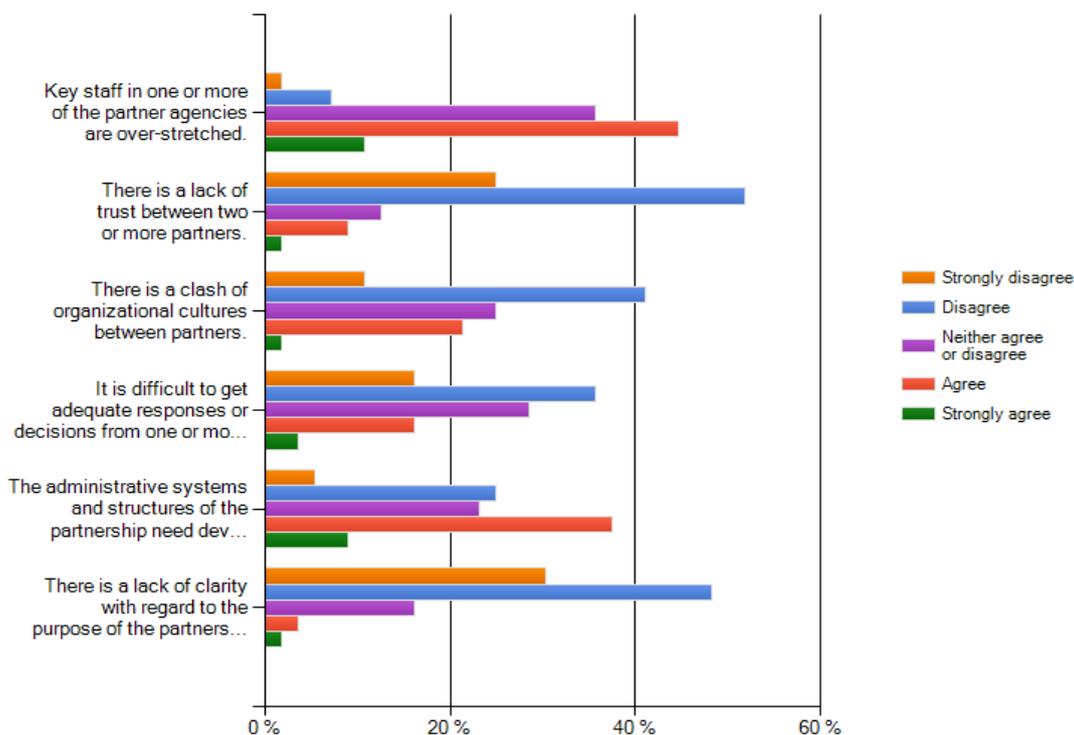
The strongest issue is that key staff in one or more of the partner agencies are over-stretched. 56% of respondents report an issue in this area.

A less strong, but still very significant issue concerns the need to develop the administrative systems and structures of the partnership. 46% of respondents highlight an issue in this area.

Just over 23% of respondents report that there is a clash of organisational cultures between partners.

Figure 4

Please identify any issues in the work of your local partnership.



### Additional comments

Where respondents made additional comments about the **myplace** partnerships they were involved in what they had to say was broadly positive. For example:

*As Project Manager for our **myplace** project I have benefitted from working with such a diverse and talented group of partners. As a team we have exchanged ideas come up with solutions that would not have been evident if there were not such a wide range of skills grouped together.*

*The partnership helped to cement us, as a third sector organisation, with the LEA.*

*All partners have taken a positive approach to working together on the project as a result of which new partnerships and projects have developed which is positive.*

*This has been an excellent opportunity for a wide range of service providers in youth provision to come together to look at current resources, future facilities, service and access for young people. It has been a challenging process but it has also been very rewarding. We hope the partnership will continue to grow and develop over the next 5-10 years.*

*It would not have been possible to see this Partnership working effectively or Third Sector led as little as 2 years ago.*

Other issues were highlighted by individual respondents. For example:

*'Political' issues between County and Borough Councils have led to some issues as to which agency bears main responsibility for children and young people.*

*Difficulty in gathering all stakeholders together. Eliciting meaningful responses to requests for information within timescales available.*

**myplace** need to remember when working with the Third Sector on large scale capital projects that the Committee members are volunteers and therefore do not have all of the tools, skills and knowledge to drive these projects through. Hence, the reason/need for the partnership and in our circumstances the support of the Local Authority and [a third sector agency] is key. Some **myplace** Officers need to remember this when engaging with Volunteers.

**myplace** offered support from a design company however it was impossible for them to bid for the work once their support period had finished as the local authority operate a framework agreement. This led to the company claiming copyright on the design concept as a result we were unable to use the work which was developed with young people and as a consequence had to begin the whole process again which delayed progress on the project.

### 3. The facility

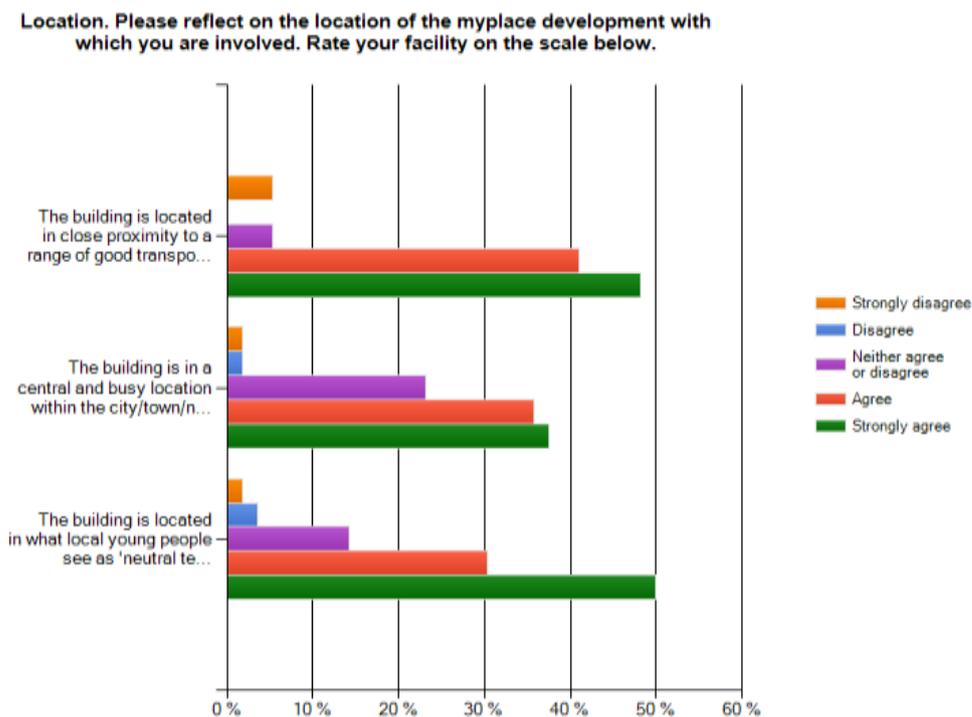
#### Location

Respondents were very positive about the location of their new facility. Over 80% of respondents judged that it is located in:

- close proximity to a range of good transport links.
- what local young people see as 'neutral territory' i.e. it is not in an area that is seen as 'belonging' to a particular group who might be hostile to them.

Fewer agreed that the building is in a central and busy location within the city/town/neighbourhood. (See Figure 5).

**Figure 5**



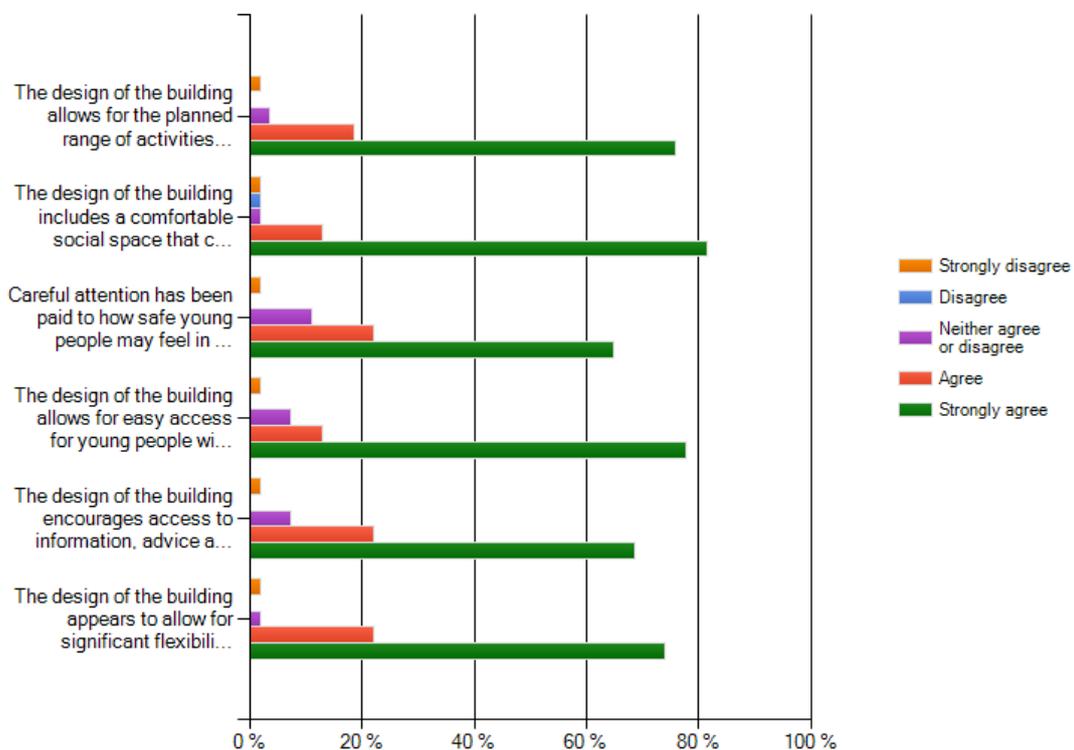
## Design

Responses to the design of the new facility were strongly positive. This may well be the result of the relatively high degree of involvement by young people in consultations around this area and the expertise (both internally and externally) that projects were able to call on. It could arise from the general optimism associated with building projects of this sort. Whatever the case, the numbers of respondents strongly agreeing is particularly noteworthy.

There is, however, one area that has a less strong response. It concerns how much attention has been paid to how safe young people may feel in different areas of the facility. For example, the toilets.

**Figure 6**

**Design. If your facility has completed the design process please rate your building on the scale below.**



## Implementation

The survey asked respondents about:

- Strategies for generating and sustaining participation by young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, in positive leisure time activities in the facility.
- Monitoring systems that allow projects to make judgements about young people's usage, and benefit.
- Income generation activities and the securing of funding to support running costs.
- Plans for the staffing of the new facility in order to offer the range of activities we planned at times convenient for young people.

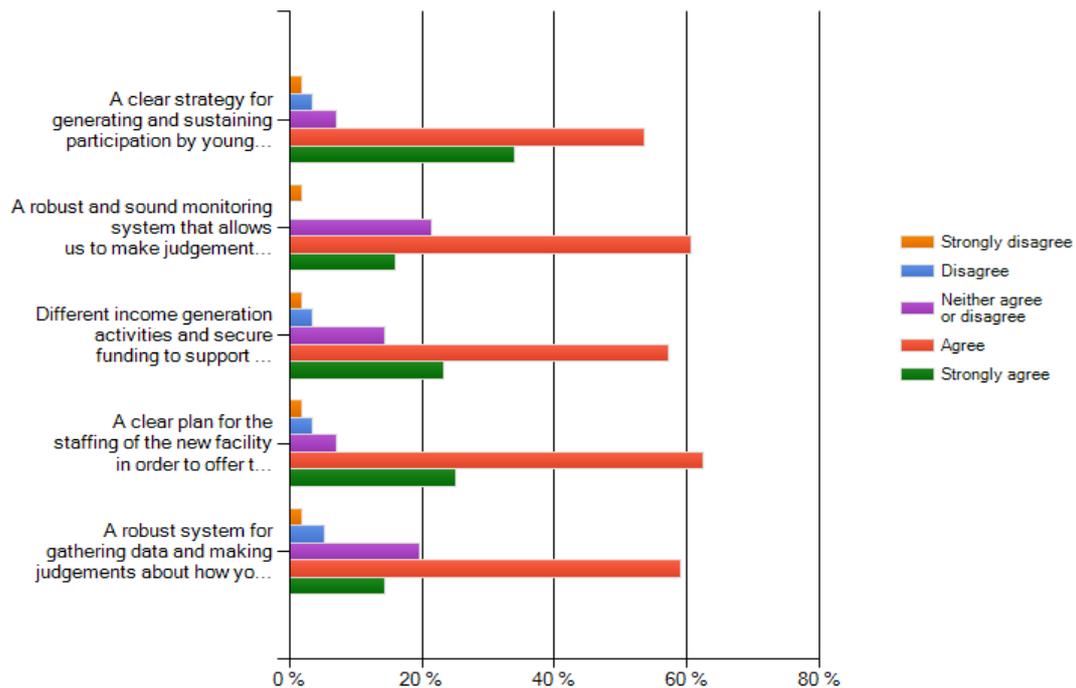
- Systems for gathering data and making judgements about how young people, parents and communities feel about the facility.

These questions relate to the goals of the *myplace* programme and the extent to which projects will be able to demonstrate they are meeting them.

On the whole, the responses indicate that respondents believe significant progress has been made in these areas (see *Figure 7*).

**Figure 7**

**Implementation. Please make a judgement as to the following. We have been able to develop for the new facility:**



Two areas achieved a higher 'neither agree or disagree' response and these concerned the establishment of robust systems for making judgements about:

- young people's usage, and benefit from, the new facility; and
- how young people, parents and communities feel about the facility.

As one respondent commented, 'some of the above items are still work in progress - especially system for gathering data'.

### Emerging issues

Respondents were asked about any emerging issues about with location, design and/or execution of the facility.

The dominant response concerned **sustainability and funding**. Here is a sample:

*Obviously in the current climate the long term sustainability has caused some issues. While we have full commitment to this **myplace** building (being at the vanguard of our IYSS strategy and therefore cemented in our plans to sustain) it is still difficult to get partners to commit to funding five years hence.*

*The main challenge is financial sustainability in the currently challenging economic climate.*

*While our original **myplace** project had a sound building design and we had a strong design and build contractor working with us to deliver the project within the required timescales, the problems and questions raised by match funders surrounding the projects long term viability and sustainability as reflected in the business case (plan), the governance structure and the land assembly for the site resulted in the capital element of the project being undeliverable*

*Accurate funding projections due to uncertainty of future budget allocations/services level agreements.*

*The centre is not due to open until ... 2011. It is clear that while the capital contribution is crucial, the lack of additional revenue support will place strains on the operation of the centre.*

*Revenue funding, relationship with BIG.*

The main concern has been capacity of partner organisations and the concerns facing all of including local authorities re future funding.

A further set of issues have appeared in some projects around **location**:

*Co-location with the ... school offers huge potential and opportunities for future joint working and targeted support but also presents challenges in establishing clear independence and a concrete identity to ensure participation by young people...*

*Building challenging - offered to us as 'the only' available location in the town - young people love it, older residents more hostile due to the iconic nature of the building and a feeling that the local authority has fobbed us off with a building they struggle to make work. However this has created opportunity for more collaboration and cross-generational working.*

*Satisfying local residents concerned about a concentration of young people.*

*Although the facility is within 5 minutes walk of the main bus and train terminal there is still an issue for young people in accessing the facility directly by bus.*

There were also issues relating to the nature of the site and the work involved in carrying a complex build project forward.

*We need confirmation before we undertake some further key work on Governance, committees and monitoring. There are partners such as the Youth Parliament who will have strong input here. These procedures will be developed following funding confirmation and during the 44 week build period.*

*We have only just finalised the design and Contractors are due to commence work in March. Our partners are very keen to deliver activities but the logistics have yet to be finalised. A lot of extra work had to be put into the design of the music and media facilities to ensure that they were world-class was a direct result of young people's consultation.*

*Some planning and access issues that have been or are being resolved.*

*It has all taken longer than planned!*

## 4. Participation

### Involving young people

Respondents were asked to make a judgement about the involvement of local young people in decision-making around the purpose, design and operation of the new facility. Specifically they were

asked whether a significant number of young people had been centrally involved in making decisions about:

- The specific activities to be offered.
- Opening times.
- The design of the facility.
- Income generation and funding to run the facility.
- The conduct of partnership meetings.
- The awarding of contracts.
- The development of the business plan.

Their responses can be seen in *Figure 8*.

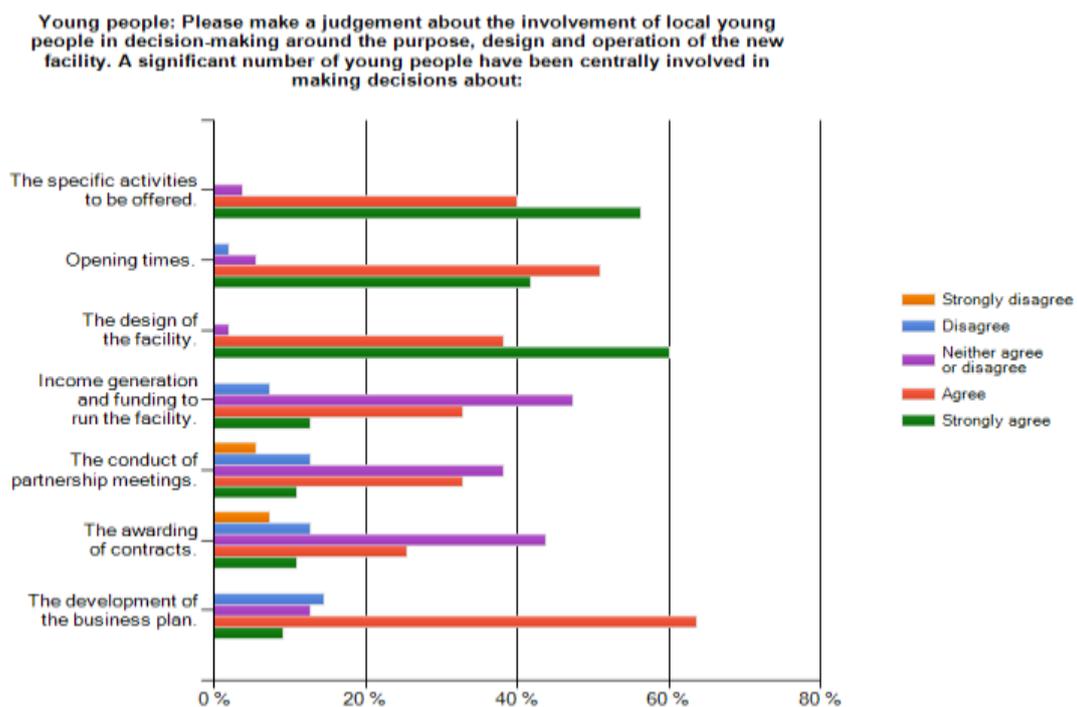
In a number of areas respondents describe a situation where there has been significant discussion and exploration with young people. This is especially marked around opening times, activities on offer, and the design of the facility.

Other aspects of the project have been less of a focus for exploration:

- Income generation and funding to run the facility.
- The conduct of partnership meetings.
- The awarding of contracts.

While respondents have not necessarily disagreed in these areas there are a significant number of 'Neither agree or disagree'.

**Figure 8**



## Community involvement

The responses to the question 'Briefly describe the level of involvement of community members (other than young people) in decision making on the purpose, design and operation of the new facility' were varied. 93% of survey respondents addressed this area. The vast majority of respondents describe some activity in this area within the **myplace** project. The approaches utilised fall into six broad categories.

The first, and most widely reported, approach uses **community forums, community meetings and public consultations** as a means of getting feedback on the proposed provision.

*Number of consultation events held within community.*

*Eight Public Meeting have taken place in 2009 regarding our development. The local residents have been involved in the design and operation of the new facility. Without us engaging the local community the facility would not have been supported through the planning process.*

*Open meetings were held to engage community members at the planning submission stage. Objectors to part of the combined project were invited to discuss their concerns; they have been encouraged to remain closely involved in the development of provision.*

*Community Forum meetings held - identified an emerging number of community champions.*

*Drop-in facilities for Ward Members to discuss/feedback.*

*We have undertaken three rounds of public consultation with our neighbours and local community. Also we have had a stand at the local summer fair and visited schools in the area to promote **myplace**. We regularly undertake press releases and as the project is part of a larger regeneration scheme for the whole neighbourhood **myplace** is seen as an integral part.*

The majority of projects used this approach as part of their local engagement. A significant number appeared to have relied on this alone.

Second, a significant number of projects look to **involve local people and groups in the governance of the project**.

*Some local Third Sector groups are involved as partners and others have been included in consultation processes. There have been public consultations and exhibitions. The local Parish Council has also been involved. Governance arrangements for post opening are yet to be finalised but will include local community members and local young people.*

*Member of local community sits on project board and will be sitting on management committee when the facility is open.*

*The recruitment of a fully representative board of directors/trustees for the ongoing management of the [project] ensures community involvement in all key decision-making.*

*Local community members have been involved over many years as the project developed in its infancy through open days and community meetings. Members of the local community sit on the board.*

A third approach is to **engage directly with local community groups and organisations** and, in a number of cases, to ask them to become part of the process of informing the development of the project.

*Three local community groups have been central to the process.*

*Key partners – i.e. local community groups – have regularly been consulted on the development of the project.*

Fourth, a small but significant number of the projects are local organisations engaged in a process of community development and participation.

*One of the lead agencies is a charitable trust which has a board of 16 community members. These have been involved in the decision making. There has also been extensive research with potential users, parents and local residents regarding the new facility and the activities.*

*We are a development trust and have a healthy flow of community members the majority of whom are supportive of the project. As for direct input into decision making, the building had some development elements structure for nearby residents.*

Fifth, a small number of respondents discuss **making use of elected members** both in terms of articulating local concerns and in 'selling' the project to local people.

*Elected members are fully informed of the project.*

*Councillors and MPs to comment on plans and activities. Consultation meetings with Councillors and Residents Associations*

Last, there is some evidence in responses of **everyday conversation and contact** playing a part. This may take the form of conversation with current users of a centre or, in the case of those organisations already working in the local area through the normal course of engaging with local people. The process has not been without tensions. As one respondent commented:

*The project did have a strong community representation on the project steering group, and it was proposed that the governance arrangements between the two community groups involved would become the management committee for the building. However the match funders through their due diligence on the project proposal questioned the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and were fearful that the community groups did not have the capacity to manage the facility longer term. Support and training was offered to the community groups to build their skills and capabilities but this was turned down as the group (and individuals within the group) believed they did have the skills.*

## Emerging issues

Respondents were asked to comment on any significant issues that they have had with the involvement of local young people and other community members. 63% of respondents addressed this request.

The main set of issues identified by respondents concerned the **timeframe** of the **myplace** programme and the impact on different stakeholders. First, there is the classic problem of sustaining young people's involvement over a sustained period of time, especially at a time when they are likely to moving on to other things:

*It is not always easy to keep young people engaged as they see the project being 2 years in total being a 'long way off'. Therefore we have incentivised the young people to attend. i.e. visiting the architects in London, being involved in the hoarding design, allowing them greater freedom to the project and all the project team.*

*Due to the scale and timeframe of the build project the dynamics of the youth panel have changed frequently. During the design process of the build young people were fully engaged in the decision making process. Continuity has been maintained through a few members. Two original members of the youth panel have now been employed by the project. The Youth Panel is now in the process of being relaunched so that the programme to fill the venue is youth driven to meet needs.*

*Time! Young people have been waiting so long for appropriate facilities and have been consulted to death only to find nothing changes. This time it's here, it's real and they have been fully engaged in the end result. The only down side being that some of the original young people involved are no longer around. However, their commitment and contribution has left the legacy that is the `Hub` and this will benefit many children and young people for years to come, and many of their children too.*

*Young People live for today and they want everything to happen overnight, it's been difficult for them to take on board the long processes involved*

Second, respondents were reporting issues around the timescales being demanded by the **myplace** programme. In particular there were concerns around the nature of the participation this allowed, and the impact on the organisation and on meeting local needs.

*The time scale for the development of this project has meant that young people have been reactive during the first stages and not proactive. The real engagement and decision making for the future is now occurring. This does not fit with the time scales and details required for the business plan and youth engagement.*

*Young people need to be further engaged once funding is confirmed in the consideration of tenders and conduct of partnership / governance meetings but we can only finalise the board and initiate the board meetings once we know the project will be funded as some large corporate organisations.*

*Time... We are a small Third Sector charity with only one person tasked with the whole project and its requirements.*

*Conflict of timescales, meeting local needs verses national government agenda. Managing people's expectations.*

A further set of issues concerns managing expectations and handling different local concerns and needs:

*Managing expectations is a constant issue. Most young people do not understand why the Business Plan has taken so long to get approved. They also often have unrealistic ideas about the cost of different designs which results in changes they do not always welcome - they can't have a rooftop swimming pool - it's too expensive!*

*The local community and Councillors have been concerned about late openings Friday night/Saturday night and that activities continued during the build. The centre will be built in 2 phases.*

*Making sure all of the community are listened to and have a voice.*

*The balance between meeting young people's aspirations and the ability of partners / community organisations to meet the needs presents challenges. We are optimistic that a good balance can be struck.*

*Community members were mistrusting of the local authority and were resistant to help and support that was offered to them by the LA and its funding partners. Dominant members of the community group and their reluctance to work in partnership started to undermine the good work of other community members and ultimately this meant that engagement with young people became particularly difficult.*

*Some local people (immediate neighbours) are concerned about the impact of a youth facility on their doorstep. Significant outreach work has taken place, much more planned.*

*Localised complaints due to build programme and intended purpose; positive communication the result.*

*The predictable 'three men and a dog' who perpetually complain that such a facility will 'attract too many young people'.*

There was some mention of the **logistics** – issues arising out both handling building work and sustaining current operations:

*The logistics of keeping current activities operational while the building work is taking place. Issues of noise, little car parking and space which differs from their norm.*

Mention was also made of **sustainability**:

*Ensuring sustainability is often seen as being at odds with all that young people wish to see in the project.*

While the question asked about 'issues', it is worth noting that a number of respondents talked about the positive impact of myplace around **participation**:

*The local community has been very supportive and the way the building is designed allows young people their own space and meets the needs of residents that 'young people are not hanging around'*

*Diminishing stereotypes of different generations*

*Really has gathered all together and galvanised a wide age range*

## 5. Strategy

Within this final section of the survey, respondents were asked to make judgements around the current situation in their local authority with regard to strategy and services.

They were also asked about the impact **myplace** funding has had, and might have, on the local authority's youth policy; and on the deployment of staff and on other provision for young people funded by the local authority?

### The current situation

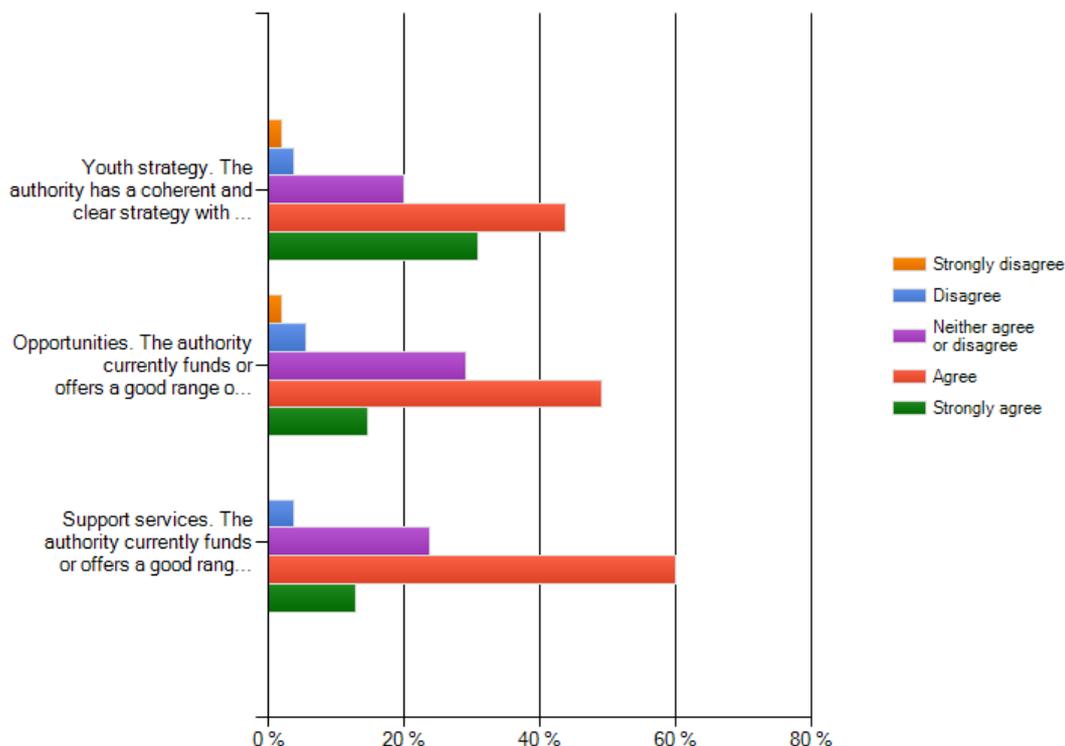
Taken as a whole, respondents appeared reasonably positive about the state of youth strategy, the opportunities available to young people, and the range of support services on offer. However, as soon as we distinguish between the responses of those in the third and public sector, the picture changes.

The starkest contrast arose when people were asked to comment on the statement 'The authority currently funds or offers a good range of facilities, activities and learning opportunities for young people generally'. 89% of respondents from the public section agreed or strongly agreed with this; just 37% of respondents from the third sector agreed or strongly agreed. Judgement with regard to the statement 'The authority currently funds or offers a good range of support services for young people who face particular difficulties or who suffer significant disadvantage' ran it close though. 96% of respondents from the public section agreed or strongly agreed with this; just 48% of respondents from the third sector agreed or strongly agreed.

Opinion on youth strategy displayed a lower degree of contrast with 86% of respondents from the public section agreeing or strongly agreeing that the local authority had a coherent and clear strategy; and 62% of respondents from the third sector agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Figure 9

Please make a judgement about the current situation in your local authority area with regard to:



### The impact of *myplace* on local authority youth policy

A number of respondents commented on the degree to which **myplace** has acted to concentrate **thinking** with regard to local authority policies concerning provision for young people. For a number it appears to be providing an exemplar both in terms of provision and partnership.

*It has provided a focus for debate around the changing nature of provision for young people which has been happening at the same time as the development of the Authority's new Integrated Youth Support Strategy and consequently **myplace** forms a key element of that strategy.*

*It has set standards for other capital developments - and inspired other groups of young people to strive for similar/enhanced facilities in their neighbourhoods. We are currently working (with partners) on a number of suggested improvement/development projects including one estimated to cost up to £7m.*

***myplace** will be the flagship of the IYS strategy and a key aspect of the Youth Offer. **myplace** has prompted a great deal of positive thinking leading to a review of existing buildings and methods of delivery.*

*It will help underpin the integrated youth services strategy providing a tangible example of services and activities reflecting what young people want and need delivered in partnership.*

*It will lead the authority to develop a clear strategy for the provision of appropriately resourced centres for young people.*

*The project will have a significant impact in strengthening provision in the specific area of focus for the project and contribute to reducing the significant inequalities across the LA area.*

*It will help the Authority to develop further provision to compliment the **myplace** facility.*

However, for some it is early days:

*I think once they see the success of co-ordinated provision within an area the model will be replicated in other parts of [the authority].*

*A positive [impact], and we are hopeful that it will improve further as the project enters its next stage i.e. physical development.*

And for others the impact has yet to be seen:

*[The Council] do not appear to see the significance of the facility in creating a step change in youth provision - however they are very supportive of the project.*

**myplace** has also, in the view of some respondents, raised the profile of young people and work with them and become a key part of local strategies:

*To have a world-class facility situated in the heart of the community will assist with a range of developments. These include our campaign to promote positive images of young people to accelerating our progress regarding integrated locality teams.*

*Raising of the profile for young peoples facilities - and supporting others to raise the standards.*

*The project and its funding will play a pivotal role in helping the Local Authority deliver its outcomes.*

*The funding will significantly improve the offer in area of poor youth outcomes.*

Alongside this it has, according to a number of respondents, **promoted a particular way of working – the hub and spoke model**:

*It will change the way that services are delivered creating a hub and spoke model for future investment and development around key centres.*

*I believe that the `HUB` (and spoke) as model, as is now being rolled, is a direct result of the impact this project has had during its development. I think that a precedent has been set that will lead to operational planning using the Hub as an exemplar project.*

While respondents generally identified positive impacts there **was an appreciation among some of problems to come** – and the cost of such initiatives.

*It has contributed to triggering the continued investment required. That said, the current climate will probably mean that many planned facilities may not see fruition.*

*Large impact in terms of the revenue support demanded. This will require resource for at least 5 years. Requirement to invest human and financial resource in centre in short term. Lessons learned from **myplace** will be used to develop similar ventures in other areas of the city.*

## The impact of *myplace* on the deployment of staff and other provision funded by local authorities

Respondents identified a number of ways in which *myplace* has, and will, impact on the deployment of staff and the operation of other provision funded by local authorities. First, ***myplace provides an improved setting where existing work and staff can be relocated.***

*The [project] will provide a much better base for the local authority to focus on key areas of its targeted work. It will also provide the opportunity for the local authority and other delivery agents to reach large numbers of young people in an environment in which they are comfortable, building on the strength of voluntary relationships which the young people will form with the project staff and volunteers.*

*Deployment of staff will be enhanced through this project and will provide a great base which in conjunction with our assertive outreach model will improve access to services.*

*The Local Authority youth service is currently undergoing a re-structure which is now designed to reflect the structure of the new facilities being provided by **myplace** funding.*

*The development of **myplace**, linked with the working taking place around the Youth Offer has led to a review of current staffing deployment across the [area]. **myplace**, the mobile units and the wide range of other positive activities will all contribute to the menu of activities available for young people... Discussions are continuing in relation to late night opening and weekend work...all resulting from the successful **myplace** bid.*

Second, in a limited number of cases, the **myplace** project has been a vehicle to release the benefits of co-location.

*It has allowed co-location and therefore will reduce duplication from a variety of services and agencies and more closely focused support. There will be economies of scale in terms of staffing (without reduction it brings more coverage), resources and equipment. Co-location will extend the number of operational hours*

Third, and more commonly, respondents reported that the **myplace** project has either encouraged, or been a part of, efforts to integrate workers and services.

*As part of the integration a full team of support workers will be based in **myplace**.*

*Given the range of activities, services and its location the [hub] has already attracted interest from other departments and is having a positive effect on the development services including co-location and integrated services. Creating and sustaining "social capital" and developing the [hub's] profitability to further contribute to the offer to children and young people is our continuing strategy. Other services having access to the [hub] and its facilities creates a synergy providing greater value for money.*

*We can be a model of Integrated Youth Support.*

*Increased priority for integrated provision, including with Third Sector partners*

Fourth, respondents suggested that **myplace has been a factor in service development.**

*It has helped the steer towards more Friday and Saturday night work. It has always been a tradition, **myplace** has given it more momentum.*

*We can provide school-time enrichment for those in mainstream education and additional support for those struggling in or excluded from formal education.*

*We are looking at developing youth hubs in other areas*

*It is challenging the boundaries on how we work with young people - improved relationships with social enterprises is a key development*

*Will hopefully result in new funding coming into service.*

Last, there was some recognition on the part of respondents that further work is required – and that in a situation of limited and/or declining resources **myplace** projects will alter or damage other provision.

*More staff will be required for a 7 day week service.*

*The LA provision seems to be uncertain so we are not sure at present*

*Further work is needed to fully exploit the facility so that the synergy between the Local Authority and the project is fully functional and exploited. The Local Authority are however fully aware about the project's profile and impact and meetings have been scheduled to explore how this partnership can be further developed with regards to the commissioning of services.*

*Funding will be focused on this site – [and it is] possible others sites may lose funding.*

*As the bulk of revenue funding for the **myplace** building will be committed by the local authority it is inevitable that there will be some impact on existing service delivery and potential de-commissioning of existing youth facilities. This will be a positive process however and will lead to an overall increase in the facilities and activities on offer to young people across the borough.*

*Staff will need to be re-deployed to this building but due to cuts within the service this would have had to have taken place anyway. As a resource this building further develops our building stock and provides places to go that are modern and relevant to young people. The buildings will lead to the closure of older buildings that are looking dated may not have been originally built as youth centres.*

## Appendix 7: case studies

In this appendix we report on each of the chosen case study sites:

1. Culture Fusion (Bradford YMCA) (Standard track, round 1)
2. Hackney Youth Hubz, Hackney (London Borough of Hackney) (Standard track, round 1)
3. The Hub, Dartford (YMCA Thames Gateway) (Fast track)
4. Minehead EYE (Minehead EYE Community Interest Company) (Fast track)
5. Oldham Youth Zone: MAHDLO (OnSide North West Limited ) (Standard track, round 1)
6. Parkfield, Torbay (Torbay Council) (Standard track, round 1)
7. Shoeburyness Youth Centre (Southend on Sea Borough Council) (Fast track)
8. Young Person's Village, Stoke-on-Trent (Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire YMCA Foyer) (Fast track)

We review progress against the leading practice themes identified in the baseline reports and make some comment around the progress made towards the four outcomes at the heart of the **myplace** programme. That:

- more young people, parents and communities feeling that young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities;
- more young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development;
- more young people having access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable; and
- stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.

## Case study 1: Culture Fusion, Bradford

Lead Body: City of Bradford YMCA

Total Award: £5,050,000

Main Contact: Ms Bernadette Gahan

### Overview

Bradford is a manufacturing city that has shared the industrial decline of textile industry across the North West in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The city exhibits many of the characteristics that are consistent with that profile. It has a declining population, but population decline is less than in other comparable manufacturing areas, dropping by just 1,100 between the census dates of 1991 and that of 2001, from 468,800 to 467,700 compared with a decline of between 5 and 10% in other northern cities. Population size is affected by migration and settlement, particularly in relation to community ties with Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, and 20% of its residents are members of BME populations. The Muslim population, at 16% is the fourth highest in Britain and the Christian population at 60% is significantly lower than the national average of 72%. The recent history of ethnic relations in Bradford has been marked by tension, separation and conflict with significant civil unrest during the summer of 2001 in response to overt BNP activity in the city. Policy since then has included efforts to address tensions and celebrate the diversity of the city.

Young people make up a larger proportion of the population than the national average, and the number of 'Bradfordians' born outside the UK at 10%, is slightly higher than the national average of 7%. The number of lone parents almost doubled between 1991 and 2001, from 7,900 to 13,000.

Bradford has some significant indicators of deprivation, including a lower economic activity rate than other parts of West Yorkshire, high male unemployment and a shift away from full time towards part time employment ([www.bradfordinfo.com](http://www.bradfordinfo.com)). Other indicators of deprivation include higher levels of long term ill health and educational qualifications which show lower levels than England as a whole. In 2004 for example while 53.7% of English pupils achieved 5 A-C grade GCSE in Bradford this stood at 39.8%. The city stood at 60<sup>th</sup> of 376 local authorities for no car ownership and 74<sup>th</sup> for lone parents with dependent children.

### The project

Bradford *Culture Fusion* is a YMCA led project whose primary focus of inclusion and cohesion is a response to young people's determination to put such differences aside and to relate to each other on the grounds of shared interests rather than ascribed identities. The project contributes directly to the regeneration plans for the city centre.

The plan is for an 'ambitious' facility designed as a 'neutral central hub' where people from different backgrounds can meet on neutral and safe territory. The vision for the project is for a space which comprehensively addresses young people's concerns about issues such as territoriality, isolation and danger in public places. The facility will offer a wide range of activities, for leisure, association and skills development and also provide support services and advice.

The scheme involves the refurbishment of a derelict mill in the city centre, and the addition of a modern extension. The total cost is a projected £9.8m of which £5,050,000 has been allocated from the **myplace** fund.

All projects funded through **myplace** have actively involved young people in their design and development, and will continue to involve them in their future running ensuring they are open at times requested by young people.

Wasiq Khan, 15, a member of the Young People's Steering Group who helped develop the project, said: "I couldn't believe it when I found out we'd got the grant. *Culture Fusion* will bring the young people of Bradford together and make a real difference to their lives."

## The developing situation

### Organisational Arrangements

The lead organisation for *Culture Fusion* is Bradford YMCA which is working with Bradford Metropolitan District Council as the core partner, mainly through the Council's Integrated Youth Support, Aspire-i.

A second level of partnership comprises those organisations who intend running their services from the new premises. These include Connexions and BYDP (Bradford Youth Development Partnership) a local third sector organisation.

A third tier, including NHS provision, would be delivering services within the building but would have no established presence there.

Fourth level partners will include organisations bringing young people in from neighbourhoods.

While this appears to provide a clear framework for establishing an organisational structure, there are other bodies that might be identified as partners who fall outside these different levels. These include Bradford University which is involved in specialist evaluation; the police, with whom young people wanted to establish a partnership but whose presence it is thought might create anxiety, and young people themselves who have been, and will remain engaged at some levels of decision making, and a range of individuals and organisations who are making a specific contribution, for example a local artist who is involved in the development work with young people.

At present development is supported by a working group of partner organisations supplemented by invited members from organisations such as the police and individuals such as the artist. It is intended to constitute this group as a Board as the programme develops, incorporating a range of service providers, community groups and strategic partners.

In addition, a young people's steering group has been created from the membership of the Bradford and Keighley Youth parliament.

In March 2010, key partners, as well as the BMDC, were identified as: Bradford College, Bradford University, Metro, NHS, Bradford Peace Museum, Aspire-I, Bradford Youth Development Partnership and City Centre Project (BMDC media and communication, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010).

### Youth Participation

On receiving news that the Business plan for the development of *Culture Fusion* had been approved in March 2010, the operations manager of Bradford YMCA, Bernie Gahan, who is co-ordinator of the scheme, was quoted in the local newspaper as saying:

No one organisation could have done this. I want to thank all partners who have helped make this happen but mostly I want to say that the young people of Bradford have been inspirational throughout. They deserve this amazing centre. (Telegraph and Argus 12 March, 2010)

Young people have been consulted from the birth of the idea, when a district-wide consultation of young people was undertaken to enable the design of a blueprint for the development. The strategic planning exercise for the YMCA began in 2007 and involved working closely with young people and Children's Services. Over 1,000 young people were consulted. Specific need groups were identified in the process including disabled young people, BME young people, young offenders, new migrants and young people involved with voluntary sector organisations

The **myplace** steering group established from the Bradford and Keighley Youth Parliament involves young people known to the youth service and to Bradford YMCA. Its composition reflects a range of abilities and identities. For example, two members have degrees in graphic design and Human Resources, another is a full time qualified community and youth worker while there have been efforts made to ensure representation across gender, sexuality, age, locality, ethnicity and faith. The steering group intentionally meets at the library as opposed to the YMCA and has been involved in developing the outcomes for the centre. Members have undertaken external visits to learn about design elsewhere in order to help in briefing the architects on the design of their centre. It is intended that the steering group will be involved in the management of the centre and it is believed that it instils a sense of 'ownership and awareness' amongst young people (Stakeholder Interview Feb 2010).

On receiving the news that the bid had been successful, a 'Community Care' article published in April 2009 quoted two young people who had been involved in developing the scheme:

Humair, aged 19, is one of the young people involved in thinking up how Bradford would benefit from a new youth centre. He admits that when he first heard about the **myplace** scheme through his youth worker he was sceptical Bradford's bid would be successful: 'I thought it wasn't going to happen to us, there were so many projects applying.'

In spite of this, he spent five weeks with other local young people deciding what their **myplace** project should be like. For Humair, it was important the centre was open to, and welcoming of, those from different backgrounds. He says: 'There is not a lot of cohesion between different communities, cultures and faiths. That's the reason why it's called *Culture Fusion*, to mix it all up.'

Sophia, also 19, was also involved in the *Culture Fusion* bid. Her motivation for taking part was to help young people with the transition into adulthood. 'I just had to be involved, because in my area there is not a lot going on.' (Community Care, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009)

The Young People's *Culture Fusion* advisory group are involved as individuals at varying levels and for varying periods of time. The group have participated in residentials to develop teamwork skills, and attended local fundraising events such as the Dragons Den and the **myplace** Festival for the North where they attended workshops on governance, body language and communication, branding and public speaking.

A particularly lively feature of the communication networks with young people has been the use of Facebook and texting which is considered to work well at this level of participation and with an immediacy attractive to young people.

The involvement of METRO, the local transport service is intrinsic in promoting the involvement of potential users through its planned sessions for all local students to attend transport system training as they move onto secondary school. This initial introduction to the centre will enable familiarity for users who may not have thought the centre was for them (West Yorkshire Passenger Authority Minute, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2009: [www.wyita.gov.uk](http://www.wyita.gov.uk)).

## Activities

*Culture Fusion* is planned to offer a 'wide range of high quality activities and facilities to young people from across the district and further afield' (Councillor Michael Kelly). Numerous activities have been mentioned in various reports. These include: a rooftop café, a dance and music studio, an IT suite, a gym, and hostel accommodation for educational residential trips.

In March 2009, the local *Telegraph and Argus* indicated that 'the centre will be open daily for free health and support services, Connexions personal advisers, training and alternative education. On evenings and weekends it will be a members-only, recreational facility' (12<sup>th</sup> March 2009).

Insofar as the aim of *Culture Fusion* is to 'celebrate diversity of all kinds' among young people, recognising differences of ethnicity social background, ability, faith, sexuality and interests it is essential to offer a range of activities that will appeal to this diversity and also work to encourage co-operation across difference. These aspirations are reflected in some of the more unusual features of the plans including a wildlife garden and an atrium exhibition space for exhibitions focused on peace and cultural diversity. Making this focus visible is a core idea of the centre which foregrounds its rooftop attraction as a particular feature in which they will display this diversity, 'leading by example, transforming young people's cultural experiences, improving their image and acting as a catalyst to harness their energy, ambition and enthusiasms for their city (Interim Report s.2.3).

In late 2009, the Yorkshire Post reported that:

Plans include a six-storey climbing wall, an urban meadow, music studio, internet cafe, rooftop garden, media tower with an LCD screen to promote events and activities, exhibition space, multi-faith prayer room, gym and dance studio, teaching, information and workshop space.

The centre will also be used as a live music venue and provide accommodation for disabled young people and international youth groups to visit for short breaks.

Bernie Gahan, Bradford YMCA, project co-ordinator, said: 'By day, the centre will be open access with a range of advice and information services for children and young people. In the evenings and at weekends it becomes a much more social place where young people can try out different activities' (Yorkshire Post, 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2009)

## Building Design

*Culture Fusion* will be located in a refurbished six-storey youth centre provided by Bradford Metropolitan district council for the YMCA. The building is situated in Thornton Road, opposite the Wow Academy which as a discovery centre for schools. It includes a total of 32,000 square feet of space. The renovation work on the once-derelict mill will include the addition of a new, five storey extension designed as an 'events' space. The extension will incorporate a 'weave' patterned exterior inspired by Bradford's textile heritage.

Numerous sites were considered and refused by the young people such as a site more centrally located near the bus station and new Police Station before the final location of an old mill near Bradford College was felt to be appropriate by the young people for the *Culture Fusion* development. 'The important thing is it's not in anybody's territory, its completely neutral, it doesn't belong, its got no neighbourhood, it doesn't have any citizens living around it' (Stakeholder interview Feb 2010).

Young people between the ages of 13 and 25 have been consulted over design since the early days of the project and plans were drawn up based on the young people's ideas by architects whose selection also involved young people. After presentations by three companies to the young people, Skipton-and-Leeds-based Bowman Riley Architects were chosen to take the scheme forward.

Bowman Riley architect Laurence Teeney said that: “The decision-making process was something new and different for us” BMDC Information and Communication, 14 July 2009).

In November 2009, the Yorkshire Post reported that a spokeswoman for Bowman Riley Architects said:

This is an exciting project for the practice, not only as it calls for an innovative design in order to respond to the diverse range of features required by the brief, but also for the fresh, pioneering way that the young people of Bradford have been involved in the project from the outset.

Laurence Teeney, director at Bowman Riley Architects, said: ‘*Culture Fusion* has really given us an opportunity to think outside the box – to get the maximum impact from a challenging brief, budget and timescale (12th November 2009)

The newspaper also offered an artist’s impression of the proposal:



*How the £7.7m Culture Fusion youth centre in Bradford will look. (Yorkshire Post 12 Nov 2009)*

In November 2009 it was anticipated that plans for the work to proceed would be approved in the following month. Originally, it had been hoped that work would start on the building in September 2009 to enable an anticipated opening date in 2011. However, this timetable has been delayed as the scheme organisers dealt with financial issues and awaited approval of their business plan which was approved in March 2010. Construction has subsequently been postponed to September 2011.

## Governance

Governance arrangements will fall within the remit of the YMCA as the lead body. Some work has taken place towards the creation of structures of decision making with partner organisations, but this development remains dependent on the progress of the building project.

One plan is that ‘Outcome subgroups’ will be formed comprising those partners working toward the particular outcome identified and that this group will link with the relevant locality level strategic group. Some outcomes would require specialist evaluation and Bradford University is to be involved in developing methods for tracking, for example, more positive and tolerant attitudes to other groups. [Baseline Report p.48]

## Income Generation

Alongside the *myplace* funding of £5 million, match funding of £1.4 million was successfully sought from the DCSF Co-Location fund designed to support projects that bring services together through the Local Authority. Funding has also been provided by Bradford YMCA as part of its own capital

development programme. The estimated £7.7 million cost of the building work is now secured. This appears to be a re-estimate of the costs which were originally set at over £9 million.

Nevertheless, there is an anticipated shortfall of £100,000 required to establish the project and those involved have embarked on a major fundraising exercise to meet this shortfall. A public appeal to raise this sum was launched by the young people involved in the development at a launch event for *Culture Fusion* held in March 2010 and organised by Bradford Council's Integrated Youth Support Localities team. It was reported that more than 1,000 young people flocked to a day of fun and activities held in Centenary Square with the purpose of highlighting what will be available for them in the new *Culture Fusion* centre (BMDC< Information and Communication, March 17<sup>th</sup> 2010).

In relation to the fundraising efforts, participants were quoted as follows:

Humair Shahid, 20, a *Culture Fusion* advisor, said: "Anyone who can make a donation will be helping a good cause and community cohesion in Bradford."

Fellow advisor Khalid Ali, 24, said: "*Culture Fusion* is fresh, it's new and this is a chance for individuals and businesses to have their name attached to something that's so exciting. This building will get attention from young people everywhere."

Bernie Gahan, *Culture Fusion* co-ordinator for the project's lead agency, Bradford YMCA, said the centre would not have to rely on a loan if the fundraising target is met.

She said: "We understand there isn't a lot of money out there but if people take this project to their hearts and want to contribute, we would welcome their support."

## Leading Practice themes

### **1. Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy.**

The *Culture Fusion* Project will build on the expertise and experience of Bradford YMCA adopting monitoring procedures developed internally which will develop further with their partners as the centre moves towards opening.

There is a plan to work in partnership with the local University to develop robust recording and monitoring systems to analyse the effectiveness of the youth facility provided over time.

Structures and ideas for development are in place but their realisation and concretisation is awaiting the construction of the building.

### **2. Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action**

The different levels of participation and partnership suggest that the reality of implementing a representative and effective decision-making process might become more complex when this large development is operationalised in practice. At the moment, alongside the *Culture Fusion* Advisors, a working group consists of core stakeholders and invited local members meeting every two months. A Board will be formed as the programme develops incorporating representatives from the range of service providers, community groups and strategic partners.

### **3. What a world-class facility looks like and how it works**

World-class is seen by those involved as space to enable people to come together as a community, overall a safe, neutral space.

For one stakeholder world-class means 'something that stands apart and it will certainly stand out in Bradford'. (Interview). Alongside the physical regeneration of an area and old mill there has been a

shared consensus that the design alone would not fully achieve the notion of 'world-class': 'The wow will be the wow that somebody finds when they've been involved with the centre for six, eight weeks, eight months or whatever, to say "this is making the difference." I think that will be a measure of it; the place has to look well, and function well, the world-class has to be what the difference it will make to the young people.' (Interview Feb 2010).

Significantly the participation of young people in decision-making is crucial to the quality of the project:

The ethos and values of the building are going to be determined by the young people so anyone that works with young people in that building will have to work in a certain way...I'm hoping that it's going to create a lot of power for young people in terms of how things happen for them." (Stakeholder Interview, Feb 2010)

There are notions of world-class intrinsic in the idea of creating a facility which will encourage community cohesion across differences of identity, heritage and belief systems, and there is evidence that a great deal of thought has gone into concerns relating to access, ownership, safety and representation of interest.

#### **4. How to plan and deliver a world-class facility**

The idea of Bradford as a multi-cultural city where difference can be a source of strength rather than conflict or weakness is at the heart of the vision for *Culture Fusion*.

This understanding permeates the marketing, public relations and the discussion of all participants and is creating a positive commitment amongst all those involved.

The scheme is necessarily ambitious and complex and this will require sustained attention to the detail of organisation in practice. At present this is in an embryonic stage as the project has been awaiting final approval for its plans.

#### **5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

Young people have already been engaged using the Youth Parliament, their participation in other work – notably through youth workers, and the effective operationalisation of electronic media.

In the new facility, it is planned that young people will own and run the rooftop attraction and will be supported to develop business opportunities that contribute to revenue. Ownership of *myplace* by young people is dealt with in *Culture Fusion* in terms of gradual increase in young person's sense of identification and engagement with the building and the work undertaken there. At lower levels of participation, office space will provide service delivery and be part of the sustainability of the building while at the upper levels of engagement, young people will own and run the rooftop attraction.

The process of cultural and community integration has so far been present at all stages of development. The young *Culture Fusion* advisors meet once a week and make significant decisions for example, questions for project manager, planning the process for appointing the architect, design. One member of the group states that 'I would never have spoken to someone from that culture if it wasn't for this' (Young person) another feels that "*Culture Fusion* is already happening." (Young person).

Bradford YMCA has an existing programme of involvement in the local community including attendance at neighbourhood forums. *Culture Fusion* is also embedded in the strategic Bradford Children and Young People Plan and regeneration plan. However the community in this sense is broadly defined as the plan is to reach out across local boundaries and to be of relevance across the whole geographical area of the city.

## **6. How to secure funding and generate income**

Funding requirements have been based on 'value engineering' and organisers are confident that revenue from private sponsorship, membership and service use will sustain the project in the long term.

At present, the priority is to raise the shortfall required for the scheme to become reality and alongside the launch event in March 2010, a sponsorship leaflet was being designed to encourage local private sponsorship of specific areas within *Culture Fusion*.

It is believed that 'this scheme is important because of its size. It's an important economic stimulant for the district. It involves the regeneration of key area of the city and maintaining local employment by employing school leavers for work based experience' (stakeholder Interview Feb 2010). This suggests an anticipated expectation of continuing support from the public sector.

## **7. How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people**

A main consideration is to address the divisions and differences between young people in the city. This is being achieved through a number of features including the breadth and the uniqueness of the activities included in the scheme, its situation in a city-centre location, and the use of a range of methods, including electronic media to engage young people.

Young people's involvement at these early stages has included decision-making, skills development and the organisation of fund-raising activities and 'fun' events on a borough wide scale.

In the current developmental stage of the programme it was felt that decision making around the build and the utilisation of local skilled workers was important to both the area and the development. An example of another local regeneration project was cited as a model: contracts were awarded to enable sustainability, sub-contract work is placed locally wherever possible and it has an additional requirement to deliver training.' This was held as a goal for the *myplace* programme with an emphasis on the local economy and young people.

## **8. The importance of leadership**

This project has been characterised by shared leadership beyond the processes of the YMCA as the lead organisation. Those involved believe in the importance of shared and clear responsibilities of the partners involved and it is anticipated that this will emerge more definitely over the life of the project, especially once the building has been opened. A longer term consideration regarding leadership was that of maintaining effective partnership working with diverse stakeholder groups, ensuring all needs are satisfied and work towards the success of the programme which all were keen to see.

A wide range of leadership skills have been demonstrated within the partnership around issues such as planning, design, project management; finance, cost control, as well as the core skills associated with Community and Youth Work and the principles of involving young people.

It is felt important that while plans can be aspirational they must also be realistic. The young people had a strong focus on the reality that ideas of planning are not guaranteed to happen in reality and there is a desire not to mislead other young people or cause disappointment.

One adult interviewee felt it important that the 'whole thing is underpinned with good cost control. The programme may stretch but the budget won't be stretched to accommodate.' The importance of identifying potential risks and planning to avoid such issues was considered vital in the success of the Bradford *Culture Fusion* Project.

## Outcomes

### **1. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure activities that support their personal and social development.**

Already through its participative processes and range of activities young people have become engaged in new activities. This is apparent in the numbers, reported as 'more than 1,000,' who turned up to the launch event in March 2010.

It was really good, even the sun came out, it started at two officially and people were turning up half an hour before and there was this steady stream, a real steady stream of particularly young people coming right the way through until the end at about 6.30.

It was very heart warming, it really was, an amazing mix of ages and types of young people you know there were loads of performances from young people on the main stage and they were brilliant. It was really, really good so I was so happy when I went home. It was great.

Considerations have been given to access in terms of opening times, public transport and the design of the building and it is anticipated that this will enable a wider range of young people than usual to access the facility.

Marketing of *Culture Fusion* has begun and operated at a number of levels including basic coverage in the local press, information and consultation sessions in local schools and youth groups. It was felt that the 'infrastructure is there, and while the market moves, once links are built with schools etc they're there'. The project has an extensive network and appears to have good working relationships with other agencies which will facilitate wide use by young people. It seems well connected and ready to take advantage of these links once the building is completed.

### **2. More young people, parents and communities feel the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a range of exciting activities.**

This outcome is intrinsic to the thinking of those involved in planning *Culture Fusion* insofar as it is addressing questions of cohesion as well as disadvantage amongst the city's young people. Young people were central to the location decision for *Culture Fusion* and as such feel sure that it will appeal to other young people and be seen as an attractive and safe place to go over time. One of its crucial attributes is that at present it has no apparent links with any specific identity or interest group.

The reputation of the YMCA as a lead organisation is important in the matter of trust. One stakeholder and parent felt that there are "Limited opportunities for young people, local sports clubs and through the church. This work very important and tapping into an existing network seems the right thing to do. The YMCA really does what they set out to do, so I think it's important to make sure it's a success." (Stakeholder Interview Feb 2010). While the development is widely supported it was felt important that this had been within a framework of "supporting something that already exists, a good idea that can be made better" (stakeholder Interview Feb 2010) rather than parachuting a new development or services into the area.

### **3. More young people have access to information, advice and guidance from within places they feel comfortable.**

Support services for young people in the centre of Bradford are currently provided on two separate sites through the Youth Information Shop and Connexions, both of whom will re-locate to the new *Culture Fusion* venue. "We do a lot here under one roof and it's that bit of what we do that really works for young people, we know that." (Stakeholder Interview Feb 2010).

Young people currently receive advice, guidance and support from two main sources in Bradford; The Youth Information shop and connexions. The Integrated Youth Service also provide a range of localised youth groups and activity programmes throughout the Bradford area and surrounding districts but inevitably given the degree of separation between different localities, these serve specific groups.

The new building will involve the relocation of support, advice and guidance services for young people such as connexions, and the delivery of specific youth services from other agencies such as the PCT. The needs of these services have been considered as part of the overall design of the building and therefore it is anticipated that they will become streamlined, more fully integrated and more easily accessible to young people.

***4. Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.***

The YMCA has been working across the youth sector organisations within the city as well as with the young people themselves in order to ensure the successful fruition of this scheme. It is anticipated that the plan of co-location and service delivery will enable stronger partnership working and also provide the basis for raising revenue. It is not clear at this stage at what levels costs and contributions from participating organisations will be set.

The newly launched appeal to raise £100,000 is designed to broaden interest within the private sector. There is a strong motivation between the partners to enable this development to be a local development at every stage using local tradesman and agencies throughout the build. A local architect firm, Bowman Riley Architects and a local Project Manager (Rex Proctor and Partners) have been sourced for the development and this theme will continue with the tendering for the building contracts for the project.

## Case study 2: Hackney Youth Hubbz

Lead Organisation: London Borough of Hackney

Main Contact: Pauline Adams (London Borough of Hackney), Mark Newland-Smith (Regenfirst)

Total Award: £4,990,902

### Overview

#### The Place

Hackney is a London borough characterised by diversity. Over 40% of the population and around 80% of school age children are members of BME groups. A significant number also come from refugee backgrounds (Hackney Borough Profile 2006).

It is also ranked as the most deprived borough in England and Wales (IMD, 2007). Every ward is in the top 10% nationally in relation to deprivation. Hackney's unemployment rate at 6.9% is the highest in England and Wales (Census, 2001) and 16-24 year olds represent the largest group of unemployed, at 19.39%.

Over a quarter (approximately 56,000) of Hackney's population are under 19 years of age with between 17,500-18,500 in the 13-19 age group. Over half of 16-19 year olds live in overcrowded homes. There is a significant caseload of looked-after children, and children on the child protection register.

Hackney has lower than average educational achievement and the highest number of young people (11.6%) recognised as not in education, employment or training (NEET 2008). Hackney police report high rates of youth disorder and gang activity. Anecdotal evidence claims that youth disengagement and disaffection are becoming critical issues leading to an increase in violent gang culture. (Team Hackney: FTAP Gun and Gangs).

Meanwhile, many young people have no access to affordable sports and leisure facilities or anywhere to go after school. Parents and young people have expressed concern that existing facilities are too far away and therefore not safe for young people to access and the 2006 Ofsted report criticised the Borough's Youth Services for having inadequate and poorly equipped facilities for young people. In the Youth Service Survey (March, 2008) facilities and buildings were highlighted by young people as their greatest concern.

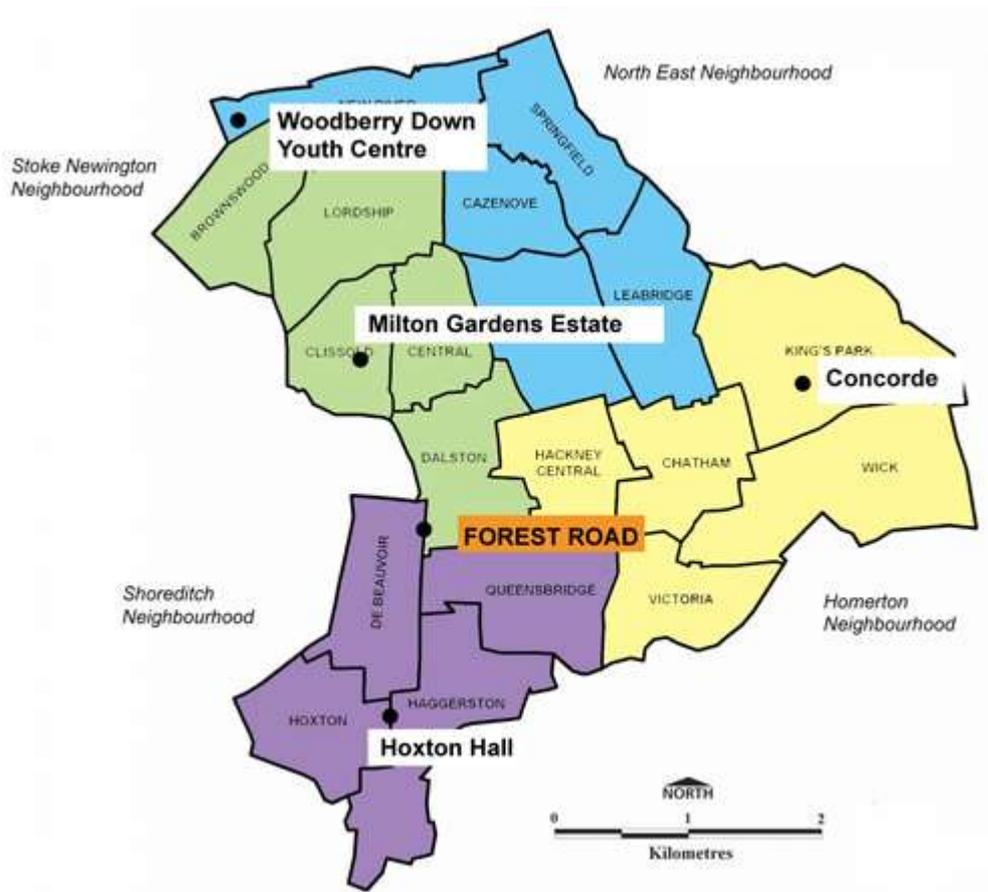
Nevertheless, there have been some recent noticeable achievements in the borough. This includes an increase from 47% to 52% in the number of young people achieving GCSEs grades A – C and a decrease in the number of young people categorised as NEET in 2008: at 11%, this is below the Local Area Agreement target of 11.5%. Despite its difficulties, following a revised comprehensive performance assessment, Hackney is now seen as a rapidly improving council.

#### The project

**myplace** funding for Hackney's Youth Hubbz project will enable two new buildings to be constructed and three others refurbished in the borough with the aim of enhancing the borough-wide service. The twin aims are to target young people who are generally considered to be at the greatest risk of experiencing crime and anti-social behaviour due to their socio-economic circumstances and at the same time to ensure that high quality youth facilities are accessible to all young people in Hackney.

The new facilities will be located at:

- Dalston: Forest Road, E8 3BY
- Shoreditch: Hoxton Hall, N1 6SH
- Homerton: Concorde Centre, E9 5QG
- North East: Woodberry Down (postcode to be confirmed)
- Stoke Newington: Milton Gardens Estate, N16 8PU



The **myplace** centres will not replace existing provision, but rather complement and enhance services already provided by the Youth Service and other organisations. There are already a number of projects and voluntary sector youth clubs in Hackney – 52 are recorded in the local directory, 12 of which (not including the new **myplace** buildings) are provided by the Local Authority.

A wide range of work takes place in existing provision, including sports projects, performing art/theatre groups, supplementary education projects, a citizenship group, a magazine project, homework clubs, personal development training, a community development project, ESOL, legal advice, a boating club, media/music projects, two purple bus mobile youth clubs, mentoring groups, refugee support groups, a peer led social inclusion project and a LGBT group. However, the quality of existing provision is problematic with a great deal of youth work taking place in community centres and rented hall space which is described as not fit for purpose. The five new **myplace Hubbz** are intended to create a significant and positive contrast in terms of resources, design and architecture.

The application to work on five buildings relates to the strategy of the youth service which has been to invest in each neighbourhood area in order to create parity across the borough, although one of the new buildings, in Forest Road, will be designed as a central facility, thus implementing a 'hub and spoke' model of youth provision.

## The Developing Situation

### Organisational Arrangement

*Hackney Hubbz* is a local authority driven project working through a firm of regeneration consultants, Regenfirst, who have worked with the London Borough of Hackney on a number of other projects in the past. The role of the consultants as they understand it is to interpret and implement the local authority strategy for **myplace**, managing the development on a day to day level. In addition there are two key partners known as 'preferred providers' - Hackney Marsh Partnership and Hoxton Hall. Through a formal partnership agreement, all partners are committed to delivering a minimum core level of activity within the hub and spokes.

The design of the Hackney hub and spoke structure is intended to form a broader framework for Hackney Youth Service through a new youth hub and four supporting spokes each known as *Hubbz*. The primary purpose of the spokes will be to provide a focal point for more locally based provision in the areas of greatest need. These services will be maintained, commissioned, and managed by the Youth Service and its preferred voluntary/community sector groups and organisations (VCS). This new approach has been designed to improve the coordination of what has been described by Regenfirst as a fragmented service for young people.

The Central Hub, in Forest Road, Dalston, to be managed by the Youth Service will build on existing work undertaken by the Holly Street Partnership and Circle Anglia and will have Youth Leadership as its theme. The Hub will provide a youth centre and a base for the central youth service comprising the Youth Inspection Team, the Youth Parliament, the Grants Panel, Youth Ambassadors and Youth Volunteering Programmes. The Youth Service will also manage the Stoke Newington and Woodberry Down *Hubbz*.

The Stoke Newington development involves the refurbishment of a youth centre on the Milton Gardens estate owned by Hackney Homes. A working partnership will be created with the Crib, a preferred provider for youth activities and the local Tenant Residents Association. The site is close to both Stoke Newington School, which has Technology status, and Clissold Leisure Centre, which together provide a cluster of facilities. Activities spread across this cluster could be based around either an ICT or healthy living and healthy eating theme.

A new purpose built facility is planned for the Woodberry Down Estate. This centre will be managed by the Youth Service in partnership with Hackney Homes and provide a full range of services built around an agreed specialism. It will focus on the older youth population in this area and be designed to take advantage of a Youth Enterprise and Employment shop that it is envisaged will be provided as part of local regeneration.

Hackney Marsh Partnership (HMP), who is one of the Youth Service's 'preferred providers' will continue to run Concorde Youth Centre which is an established community development organisation in the Homerton area which they lease from the Council. This centre will be refurbished through the **myplace** scheme and the range of services already offered will be expanded around a fitness and sport theme.

The Hoxton Hall partners manage the Grade II listed Music Hall of the same name. Currently Hoxton Hall runs a range of services aimed at young people based on theatre, dance and media. Through **myplace**, these art services will be expanded to include statutory and other youth services as well as making links with the Hoxton Works trading arm to build around a creative industries theme.

Each of the spokes in the Hackney model is intended in itself to become a local hub, working with a range of local organisations and partners, as well as in partnership with young people to plan and deliver services. As well as pursuing the focus of their own specialist area, each of the *Hubbz* will be supported with youth service staff as part of a strategy for offering positive activities.

## Youth Participation

The whole youth offer for young people in Hackney is youth led, with strong levels of activity by the youth parliament and neighbourhood youth panels. A communication strategy for young people in the borough is designed to ensure that they are able to access information and processes of participation. The new website, [www.younghackney.org](http://www.younghackney.org), is being run as a youth project with young people owning and managing the content and development of the site. By entering a postcode, young people are now able to see the extent of the local and borough wide youth offer. In addition the communication strategy will include targeted media publicity, social networking sites, promotional material in schools, youth centres and referrals from outreach workers.

Young people have been involved in *Hackney Hubbz* throughout the process of **myplace** development, from the initial bid through to developing the plans for the centres. A team of ten young people, the *Hubbz* team, has led on this process, planning and running consultation sessions. They were involved in decision making about where **myplace** funding should be awarded and helped to organise the youth-led launch event at Hoxton Hall attended by former MP Beverley Hughes.

## Activities

The range of activities will vary across each of the *Hubbz*. In addition to the core activities and full range of support services, each of the neighbourhood centres will offer its own unique specialism, such as IT, media, sport, enterprise or drama. Within this, young people will be offered world-class sport, music, art, fashion, photography, media, dance, youth club and informal drop in activities.

Support services will provide guidance and information on life skills, sexual health, education, training and careers advice. It is hoped that the focus on different specialisms in particular centres will act as a draw for young people across perceived territorial boundaries.

Each centre will be designed to provide a positive environment and focus for young people. This is defined as somewhere they can go to participate in specialist activity, to access advice or to just to hang out with friends or

All of the centres will provide a full programme of high-quality, structured youth activities, including:

- basic and life skills
- homework support
- sport
- music
- media and creative arts.

Advice and guidance will also be available on:

- education
- training and employment
- health and relationship matters.

## Building Design

In working with the architects, Regenfirst concluded that the **myplace** projects should be open inviting places, with plenty of light open space where young people could freely associate with their peers or engage in the activities available.

Against this, the police expressed concern about this type of design from a security perspective, arguing that it is essential to contain access within the centre. With this in mind it is necessary to achieve a compromise between design quality and security for the buildings.

At Milton Gardens, Stoke Newington, the first centre to be developed, Matthew Lloyd, the appointed architects, have already held two consultation events at which young people were able to choose external materials and colours for the building and agree the particular specialism and activities required. These have since informed and been incorporated into the current design which was then consulted on again to ensure it reflected local views. A number of sessions have now been agreed, that will take place at the Architects' offices, so that young people can research interior colours, planting and seating for outdoor space and equipment requirements.

The exterior designs for Forest Road designs were publicised for public consultation in February 2010 (Hackney.gov.uk 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2010). These consultations focus on the type of materials to be used:



Hoxton Hall, built as a music hall in the 1860s is to be refurbished so that young people will have access to a full range of performing arts activities and support services on one site. The £1million + from **myplace** will be used to refurbish the charity's Victorian music hall building in East London, develop a youth theatre programme and open the building to heritage activities and social receptions. Finalised architect plans are still in development for all centres.

## Governance

A Programme Working Group is currently responsible for developing the hub and spokes programme. The Working Group reports to a Strategic Board that provides oversight and direction for the project and recommends decisions for Council Cabinet approval.

On a day to day basis the *Hubbz* project will be managed by the formal partners working in informal partnership with young people, the Voluntary/Community Sector (VCS) organisations and delivery partners. All partners will report to the *Hubbz* Advisory Board which will oversee the performance of the hub and spokes and shape planning and delivery within them.

The Head of Youth Services (Positive Activities) will be responsible for the day to day running of the *Hubbz* as well as the wider positive activities offer including the directly maintained and commissioned services, detached outreach including the Purple Buses and estate based provision. This post will report to the Assistant Director of Youth Engagement. Full-time Centre and Deputy Centre Managers for each of the Youth Service managed *Hubbz* will report to the Head of Youth Services (Positive Activities). More broadly each centre will belong to a local steering group or panel which might typically include:

- Head of Positive Activities (Chair);
- Voluntary and Community Groups through the Neighbourhood Youth Networks - these are already established and bring together all those agencies involved in providing activities for young people. They provide a voice for Hackney's many community, voluntary and faith and other direct provider groups as well as local residents;
- Housing partners;
- Neighbourhood police;
- Young People through the Neighbourhood Young People's Forum - Each forum comprises young people drawn from youth clubs, schools, voluntary youth providers and organisations interested in the welfare of young people. Any young person resident or attending provision in the forum area is able to join;
- Tenant and Resident Association representatives;
- Youth workers;
- Targeted Youth Support Workers;
- Local Councillors;
- Lead partners (for externally managed hubs).

## Income Generation

The £5m *myplace* funding is contributing to a project which is estimated to cost £8.3m.

The Council's Integrated Capital Strategy (ICS) for improving places for young people to go has now been finalised and highlights the youth hub and spokes as one of its investment priorities thereby ensuring that they will remain a priority for the Council and its main partners. The Youth Service is committed to meeting the on-going revenue costs for the buildings through existing resources in the Children and Young People's Service budget.

Hoxton Hall is a well established local youth arts centre and theatre. Their current Business Plan 2008-2011 'Bridging the Gap', written before they became a 'spoke' in the delivery of the *Hackney Hubbz* programme, demonstrates their substantial progress in creating a sustainable business model utilising both their charitable arm 'Hoxton Hall' and their trading arm 'Hoxton Works'. They have a strong track record in generating income and fundraising from both the public and private sectors. As one of Hackney Youth Services preferred providers, Hoxton Hall is in receipt of LAA funding for commissioned services until March 2011. They are now in discussion with the Youth Service to determine whether an extra level of support is required to enable them to deliver the wider range of services and to remain open for longer hours including weekends. Given the priority of the Hub and spokes programme, it is a reasonable expectation that LAA funding will continue beyond 2011 and will include sufficient funding to cover required resources.

Hackney Marsh Partnership (HMP) is also an established community development organisation in the Homerton area with a long and successful history of fundraising. They lease the Concorde Youth Centre from the Council and are also one of the Youth Service preferred providers. Along with the

Shoreditch spoke, they are in receipt of LAA funding until March 2011 and will be encouraged to bid for funding beyond this period to enable continued delivery of the hub and spokes level of activity. The new purpose built facility on the Woodberry Down estate will be built with match funding from the Woodberry Down Regeneration Programme. The centre will be managed by the Youth Service in partnership with Hackney Homes.

## Leading Practice Themes

### 1. *Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy.*

The holistic, universal approach to integrated youth services in Hackney is summarised as follows:

- *Hubbz* that house existing programmes of youth work either provided by the youth service or VCS with targeted youth support for young people at risk;
- satellite estate based youth provision provided in partnership with housing providers that supports fulfilment of the Mayor of Hackney's manifesto pledge of a ½ mile youth offer;
- a range of complementary, commissioned, structured positive activities targeted at gaps in service delivery;
- detached and mobile provision via the Purple Buses and detached team to provide services on estates lacking provision and targeting disengaged young people currently not accessing youth service provision;
- a comprehensive youth participation strategy and programme, including an elected Youth Parliament plus forums and activities to engage young people in decision making across council services based in the central hub;
- integrated information, advice and guidance services to young people - primarily through the *Hubbz* alongside the Connexions delivery for schools, colleges and the YOT;
- a seven day offer in each of the *Hubbz*, alongside increased Friday and Saturday night provision;
- clear pathways for young people in accessing specialisms and different levels of service;
- a volunteering programme which supports young people to gain new skills and experience to enable them to access EET, and/or enables young people to develop into paid youth work positions within the service;
- accredited youth achievement that is recognised and celebrated;
- awareness and promotion of the wider youth offer (smaller VCS, uniformed organisations alongside libraries, leisure etc);
- a service which develops effective partnerships with key stakeholders for the benefit of young people;
- a service which reflects and responds to the diverse youth population of Hackney.

As far as possible the plan is to have each of the *Hubbz* open seven days a week, focusing on targeted intervention/support based work during the day and open access positive activities in the evenings and weekends. It will be possible to compare this offer with existing provision for young people.

Current Youth Service targets for contacts as a percentage of the local 13-19 population are 33% for 2009/10 increasing by 1% per annum thereafter. This equates to approximately 5,700 contacts.

Targets for participants as a percentage are 19% again rising by 1% per annum. This equates to over 3,250 participants. (Figures are based on 2007 mid-year estimates for the 13-19 population in Hackney and the targets for 2009-10 are calculated accordingly.)

The longer term impact of the project will be measured by tracking outcome targets. For example, Recorded and Accredited Outcomes will be monitored on a regular basis through quarterly and monthly performance reports, providing an in-depth picture of activity across the service. Outcomes and NEET figures are compared, trends established and a sample is taken from the NEET to EET cohort and compared to the list of young people who have achieved Recorded and Accredited Outcomes to establish a direct relationship between achieving a Recorded or Accredited Outcome and a successful transition from NEET to EET.

Attendance will be measured through attendance monitoring sheets which will be input to the youth service's information management system and regular reports produced. The system holds personal and demographic information allowing the identification of disadvantaged groups such as young women, Turkish/Kurdish young people and young people with disabilities. Reports are produced at regular intervals and circulated across the service and beyond to show continuous progress.

Information about new entrants into the criminal justice system will be provided by partners from the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and analysed by the Youth Service's Information Team, with a particular focus on developments near and around the Hub and spokes. This will be complemented by information received from young people about their perception of crime and personal safety, gleaned through the annual survey and through verbal and written suggestions made by young people attending services.

## **2. *Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action***

The model of formal partnership between the local authority, Hackney Marsh Partnership and Hoxton Hall, is supplemented by the relationship of each body with a further range of partners and working relationships with different agencies involved in the provision of youth services and facilities. This encompasses a complex network of working relationships and practices including other organisations such as 'Hackney Housing' and Hoxton Works, the trading arm of Hoxton Hall. The dynamic of these relationships works towards the central theme of regeneration and improvement of services for young people in Hackney pursued by Regenfirst. The model includes the public, private and third sector in a partnership web which is ultimately responsible to the Local authority through the formal partnership agreement.

In addition, young people are considered to be partners throughout the decision making processes and their needs and interests are integral to the planning and operation of the **myplace** developments.

## **3. *What a world-class facility looks like and how it works***

Regenfirst are a firm of regeneration consultants leading on this particular **myplace** project. In discussing the concept of world-class, their representatives agreed that the term was useful in creating aspiration, but at the same time difficult to quantify in the context of Hackney **myplace**.

The architects who are currently working on the project might be defined as world-class insofar as they are award-winners within their own fields, while the new buildings could be described as world-class in terms of a very high standard of architecture, being thought to be impressive and of high quality.

## **4. *How to plan and deliver a world-class facility***

Whatever the difficulties of defining 'world-class', Hackney's Sustainable Community Strategy has a stated priority of raising the aspirations of its residents especially children and young people and has

highlighted the improvement of facilities for young people outside school as an area for accelerated improvement over the next two years. World class in these terms is related to a strategy for significant improvement. Of particular note in this regard is the level of involvement of young people.

From a youth service perspective a more familiar term used to describe the project is high quality. The hub and spoke model in which *Hackney Hubbz* is a key feature, is designed to ensure high quality provision across the whole borough. In seeking *myplace* funding Hackney Youth Service has been keen to ensure real parity providing one high quality facility in each of the neighbourhood areas which in turn is able to add a level of coordination to the existing range of services for young people. In this sense quality is seen in the strategic impact on existing services for young people and it could be argued that *Hackney Hubbz* are a group of world-class/high class facilities working together strategically under the umbrella of the youth service.

##### **5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

According to the business plan, the Youth Service is aware that there is often a lack of awareness amongst young people, parents and residents about the range of youth activities that are available in Hackney. It is expected that frontline staff will be pro-active in communicating information to young people using both print and electronic systems and a youth communication strategy is in place.

Hackney has a Youth Charter developed by young people which sets out clear principles and guidelines to ensure that their views are heard and included in decision-making processes. The elected Hackney Youth Parliament (HYP) is the main locus for consultation, policy review and development and is fed by four neighbourhood youth forums which meet weekly to discuss local issues and to inform decision makers.

The ten young people involved in the *Hubbz* team, have led on the process planning and running consultation sessions with their peers in each neighbourhood (and particularly with users of the proposed hub and spoke buildings) to tell them about the plans, get their views and encourage them to get involved (although there have been issues getting boys to participate in neighbourhood consultations through fear of travelling to certain parts of the borough).

A number of site visits were facilitated by a specialist from Hackney's local architecture centre, the Building Exploratory, to allow young people to see what was possible, to raise their aspirations, generate enthusiasm and inform their ideas.

The young people then developed their own recommendations for the hub and spokes covering the range of services and activities, building design and facilities, marketing, safety and questions about how young people should be involved. These were presented to the Youth Service Senior Management Team, incorporated into the *Hubbz* model and were reflected in the current architects' briefs for Milton Gardens and Forest Road. Young people will be part of the client team throughout the design and construction period and involved in judging panels for the mini architectural competitions for the selection of the architects. All appointed architects will be required to directly involve young people in the design of the buildings through a series of hands-on workshops and work experience opportunities. A consultation and engagement of young people plan has been developed to ensure continued involvement.

Following the completion of the building project, it is expected that the ongoing involvement of young people will be an intrinsic part of the management structure of the hub and spokes. The central hub as a centre for Youth Leadership in Hackney will provide a base for young people-led projects including the central Youth Parliament and office space and facilities will be available to support young people in these roles. Young people will also be involved in the management of both the hub and spokes through the local neighbourhood youth forums with at least two representatives on each steering group. Delivery of services and provision will also be regularly assessed by young people themselves through the Youth Inspection Team's 'mystery shopping' exercises.

It is anticipated that community involvement will be maintained through existing structures. Hackney is divided up into 5 neighbourhood areas, Central, North East, Homerton, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington. There are 85 local authority registered Tenants and Residents Associations which are spread fairly evenly across the borough with the exception of the north east area which has 29 TRA's. Neighbourhood Panels are made up of Tenants' and Residents' Association (TRA) representatives from each neighbourhood who meet regularly to discuss service performance and neighbourhood issues. These groups feed into the Resident Liaison Groups and then the Hackney Homes Housing Board who work with the London Borough of Hackney. This mechanism for the inclusion of local residents is significant as part of an integrated approach to working with young people. It has meant that the youth service have been working with groups and organisations like registered social landlords the police and Hackney Homes alongside local residents, consulting with them on their perceptions of young people. Public consultations have taken place on the Milton Gardens (Stoke Newington neighbourhood) and Forest Road Hub centres. The TRAs in these neighbourhoods have been invited to the consultation events and representatives did attend. The TRA's closest to the sites have been fully engaged in the process, with visits from Regenfirst and also attending public exhibitions.

One of the difficulties of engagement highlighted by representatives from Regenfirst has been the longevity of the *Hubbz* project from initial consultations and planning through to service delivery. With this in mind motivating and maintaining interest is something that Regenfirst considers will be a challenge over the coming months.

#### **6. How to secure funding and generate income**

Although the *myplace* development is underpinned by local authority and successful private partnership funding, those involved in the development agree that there is a continuous need to think creatively about funding, drawing in working partners with their own funding streams to deliver as part of *myplace*.

There is also the potential to generate additional income for the service across three areas:

- The hiring of facilities available within each hub and spoke.
- Sponsorship Funding
- Charging for the use of the Music/IT rooms

The plans from the original Feasibility Study suggest each centre is likely to be equipped with the following:

- Hall
- Kitchen/Chill-Out Area
- Music/Media room
- IT Room

The Hall and Kitchen/Chill-Out Areas are considered main areas for hiring; generating potential income through letting for private functions such as local fitness classes, local uniformed groups and potentially birthday parties, weddings etc.

The Forest Road Hub and Woodberry Down spoke are the only sites considered for hiring at this stage. Milton Gardens has not been included as this is closely situated to an existing local community hall which is also available for hire. It is felt that providing competition may not help towards successful working relationships with this neighbouring organisation and any potential income generation would need a detailed analysis.

Estimated levels of external income from the Forest Hub and Woodberry Down spoke have been calculated by comparing local hiring rates mainly obtained from local leisure centres and then adjusting downwards to provide a more competitive rate.

## **7. How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people**

Each of the neighbourhood areas which will host a **myplace** facility are described in the business plan as having a high density of young people, crime and deprivation and location is significant in terms of directly targeting areas where young people are thought to benefit from positive activities. The aim is to provide young people at risk with targeted support where necessary but in an accessible environment that provides opportunities to engage and divert from crime. The aim is early intervention and targeted support from universal settings.

Young people categorised as NEET will be engaged using Connexions tracking and detached youth work on estates, followed up with the provision of an integrated youth support package, using expertise in social care, drugs, sexual and physical health, mental health and family relationships, careers and training. They will also have the support to access structured activities and opportunities available through the mainstream offer. Recorded and accredited learning opportunities will be core.

The head of the youth service recognises that there are real gains when young people who are facing disadvantages are given opportunities that would not normally be afforded them in their everyday lives. At the same time there is an understanding that positive activities alone are not sufficient to address the impact of disadvantage. With this in mind it is important that the youth offer, and **myplace** within that, is considered in the context of a strong joint local partnership. Included in that, links between Youth Support Teams and Hackney Schools are important so that young people with additional needs can access targeted support, and that youth provision provides alternative routes for young people to gain accredited outcomes. The *Hubbz* programme is seen as a key factor in the delivery of educational targets and will form part of the outcomes for the success of the programme.

## **8. The importance of leadership.**

While recognising that there are economic pressures on sustaining a high quality service in the current climate of economic uncertainty the Head of Service was extremely positive about what could be achieved, choosing to see the future in terms of its challenges rather than impediments to delivering a high quality service

Representatives of the Local Authority and Regenfirst have established collaborative relationships and there is no evidence of any tension or disagreement between them. Working on the same principles, and agreeing means and ends is an important part of establishing credible leadership in the context of the **myplace** developments. However, Regenfirst acknowledged that the process of building trust locally had been a long one. However, having worked with Hackney Borough Council over the last 3 years there is a sense that they have already brokered relationships locally and their leadership of the **myplace** project has been accepted. The majority of consultants working for Regenfirst come from a local authority background, and in one case the London Development Agency. With this in mind there is a level of understanding of how local authorities work. They see themselves as part of the local authority, for a discrete period of time providing what is needed in the local authority.

## **Outcomes**

### **1. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development.**

The hub and spokes model, in which *Hackney Hubbz* is central, is a whole systems approach to youth provision in the borough. It is intended to provide pathways for engagement within and across local neighbourhoods and to comprehensively address the issues affecting young people in a borough characterised by problems associated with deprivation.

The main objective for the Hubbz project is to increase the number of young people participating and benefiting from positive activities provided by youth work interventions in Hackney complemented by information, advice and guidance services and detached and mobile provision targeting disengaged young people currently not accessing youth service provision. The aim of Youth Services is to provide, as far as possible within each centre, a wide range of services 7 days a week including extended provision Friday and Saturday evenings. An ideal timetable would be based on the something like the following model:

- 11am-4pm: Information, Advice and Guidance, Connexions, YOT programmes, parenting groups, Princes Trust programmes, alternative education programmes, and key worker sessions,
- 4-7pm: after school activities, homework clubs, after schools clubs,
- 7-10pm: Youth provision, sport activities, healthy living programmes, dance, music/media/IT sessions, topic based programmes and performing arts projects.

Ambitious annual targets of 1,000 genuine contacts have been set for the Hub and 500 for each spoke making a total of 3,000 young people accessing positive activities.

**2. *More young people, parents and communities feel that the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities.***

In a meeting with the tenants and residents association on the Rhodes estate the point was made that the current youth centre is in dire need of investment. In addition, it was suggested that because the existing centre did not create any aspiration locally it tended to attract a difficult group of young people. The same residents were concerned they will get more of the same with the new **myplace** building. However when the scale and quality of the new building were presented to this group, the TRA became much more excited about the new development.

It is believed that the numbers of young people being prepared to travel outside of their own area to attend new buildings could be an indication of feeling safe. However, there are some issues associated with the designs of the new buildings which need to achieve a compromise between open space and security. Some young people, particularly boys who see the existing spaces as their own; have raised objections regarding designs in that the feature of light and space means that they are more visible and in this situation they feel less safe. This ties in with anecdotal evidence about territorialism. If an effective design compromise is not achieved, the new buildings could effectively undermine work which is already underway with local hard to reach young people who currently use the centres as their own club. Regenfirst are aware of this issue, but at the same time want to develop new projects with universal appeal, not just for those who are defined as 'hard to reach' who use the existing clubs to mark out their own territory. From a regeneration perspective strong leadership will be required to facilitate this process. From the perspective of Regenfirst this needs to come from the Youth Service. At the same time it is also conceivable that in the interim build period, local gangs will move to new territory, with the possibility of not returning.

This should be monitored in future case study work alongside existing tensions between local residents and young people. Having an idea about who was attending the projects before they were refurbished/ rebuilt will give a clearer indication of the impact of the **myplace**.

**3. *More young people have access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable.***

The buildings will be designed to be comfortable, accessible and to offer a range of relevant services. Timetables for each of the centres are still being worked out, although typically there will be a range of targeted services running in each of the centres during the day including IAG, Connexions, sexual

health, alternative curriculum programmes, YOT projects and so on with positive activities and after school programmes running in the afternoons evenings. Key to the achievement in this area will be the ability to address problems associated with territoriality and 'ownership' of local buildings.

**4. *Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.***

The *Hackney Hubbz* initiative is designed to build on and enhance a complex network of partnerships across sectors which are already in place and part of the work to improve Hackney Local Authority in general, and services for young people in particular.

The financial security of the work appears to be assured at a fundamental level although some creative use of building space will enable the projects to raise additional funds.

## Case study 3: The Hub, Dartford

Lead Body: Thames Gateway YMCA

Grant: £2,250,000.

Contact: Denise Hatton

### Overview

#### The Place

Dartford ranks within the top 20% most deprived areas of Kent and Medway. Three districts in the area have been identified as priority areas. Dartford has a slightly higher than average population of young people compared to the national figure. Particular wards in Dartford have higher NEET figures compared to the Kent County Council (KCC) average of 5%. For example, in the Joyce Green Ward of Dartford, 10% of 16 to 18 year olds are characterised as NEET. Between 1998 and 2006 there was a rise in under-18 conceptions of 10% against a reduction of 11.9% in KCC overall and 13.7 nationally. The rate of youth offending is also noticeably higher in certain wards of Dartford. Again the Joyce Green ward is notable, being ranked sixth out of 283 wards in Kent for youth offending.

#### The project

The £2,250,000 allocated by **myplace** will refurbish and extend the YMCA Thames Gateway building situated at Avery Street, Dartford.

The YMCA currently runs drop-in sessions and club nights for young people coming into Dartford town centre in the evening and the **myplace** development is designed to create a Hub with extended youth activities and services operating on a seven-day week basis.

Other facilities currently exist in the area. These include Dartford Detached Project which operates from the local library and an Adolescent Resource Service (ARC) which offers support and advice around the areas of education, health and social support. Both these services would be based in the refurbished building.

As a clear focal point for all youth providers, the Hub is intended to offer a range of positive activities and at the same time to co-ordinate and extend existing services, enabling effective signposting and referrals, paying particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged young people around the Dartford area. In addition, it has a remit relating to the strategy for the whole of Kent with reference to integrated services for children and young people. The aims of the project are listed as to:

- increase participation;
- improve access to high quality positive activities for young people;
- deliver an integrated multi disciplinary approach to supporting young people.

## The Developing Situation

### Organisational Arrangement

The project has evolved over three years out of a shared vision between the YMCA, Kent County Council, Dartford Borough Council and young people.

The intention is to develop co-located provision, providing space for a number of projects to work to provide a range of innovative activities in a safe and vibrant environment that has been designed by young people for young people.

As currently constituted, YMCA Thames Gateway fits in with the Integrated Support Services model operating at county level, where strategically a range of services are identified and integrated to provide a collective approach to working with young people.

At an executive level YMCA Thames Gateway is strategically well networked with representation on the Local Services Partnership and Dartford Children's Centre Management Board and representation on the boards of Kent Children's Trust and the Kent Partnership Board. The YMCA Chief Executive is Chair of the Dartford and Gravesham Youth Sub Group that led to the development of the Dartford and Gravesham Youth Strategy, and Chair of the Third Sector Forum in Dartford.

### Youth Participation

It is claimed that The Hub project at YMCA Thames Gateway in Dartford town centre 'has been designed by young people for young people and will benefit eight to 21 year olds all over Kent.'

Earlier interviews (Feb. 2009) indicated that the participation of young people has in the main taken the form of consultation. Young people have been asked about their views on the types of services they would like to see. Those consulted have tended to be those using the services of YMCA Thames Gateway.

In the previous Evaluation Report (Dec. 2009, p21) it was noted that in Dartford, YMCA Thames Gateway, there is a concern that the range of young people consulted needs to be broader if a universal service is to be provided. In part this is being addressed through extended schools work and the YMCA's national strategy for youth participation. Support is also being provided to young people to work with their peers in developing ideas and interest. Through the alternative curriculum programme on offer for targeted young people there is clear pathway for young people themselves to train as youth workers to go on and to volunteer/lead on activities in the universal service.

At the same time consideration has been given to Kent County Council's (KCC) consultation of young people regarding what type of provision they would like to see. The ideas expressed by young people at a county level are almost identical to those expressed by the young people who currently access services at YMCA Thames Gateway.

In the past it has been difficult to engage young people. However, residents in the YMCA are involved through various committees. The purpose of their participation has been to contribute to and inform day to day operations. As residents the link between their involvement and tangible outcomes has been easily identifiable, which in turn has provided motivation to participate. As an organisation the YMCA has a strong culture of talking to its residents and young people. When interviewed the CEO often highlighted the ease with which she is able to speak directly with young people on a frequent basis. There is an ongoing dialogue within the organisation albeit more informal than formal, but at the same time it means that as an organisation YMCA Thames Gateway are able to respond very quickly to new ideas. Structurally young people are involved in the management of the YMCA at every level, as members on the Board of Management and its sub committees. Residents, parents and partner agencies are also represented on these committees which have responsibility for each of

the specialisms. However, there are areas where young people could be encouraged to participate further, for example, stake holder meetings and planning committees.

YMCA Thames Gateway is responding to the issue of participation as part of a national YMCA strategy. The strategy is twofold: firstly building a vision for youth participation and secondly building an infrastructure which will ensure that young people are encouraged to participate. It is envisaged that participation will become an objective for the **myplace** project as much as any other objective, for example providing affordable accommodation.

## Activities

Activities will reflect feedback from KCC's consultation with young people which will include: media, sport and music. At the same time there will be office space in the building for third sector agencies to support young people. At the Dartford West Executive Learning Committee (6<sup>th</sup> May 2009):

Denise Hatton (Chief Exec-YMCA Thames Gateway) advised the committee of plans to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century provision for CYPP within Dartford town centre which will provide a nursery, Children's Centre, Adolescent Resource Centre, Power Project, Alternative Curriculum programme, E2E foundation learning as well as a music studio, radio station and positive activities at weekends and in the evenings (Minute 6.1)

In other publications the following specific activities have been suggested:

- a Children's Centre on site,
- a youth café/chill out area,
- a football club,
- new music studio,
- rehearsal room,
- multi-use activity area,
- IT suite,
- chill-out lounge.
- Training kitchen (cookery barn).

It will include

- E2E schemes for NEET young people aged 16-19;
- youth led initiatives such as the youth café which already runs in the Greenwich branch of YMCA Thames Gateway;
- an outreach programme which will provide referral routes to Hub activities and other local providers; and also
- the Adolescent Resource Service (ARC) which offers support and advice for adolescents around the areas of education, health and social support.

The project will also undertake outreach work throughout Kent and bring IT, music and sports equipment to young people in more isolated, rural areas.

Feedback from young people associated with YMCA Thames Gateway has indicated that they do not want structured activities on Friday and Saturday evenings. While there has been interest in sports activities during the day at weekends, young people see Friday and Saturday evening as a time where they want to 'hang out'. This reflects data from other **myplace** projects which indicates that

they are finding it hard to attract young people to participate in structured activities during these periods.

## Building Design

The redevelopment of the YMCA town centre building is intended to create a world-class youth facility. The location of the site in the town centre is significant given that there is no other club provision there and this is an area where young people congregate. According to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for the area, young people are coming into the town centre to access clubs and pubs or to hang around in the local park. YMCA Thames Gateway have identified the area as a focal point and as neutral territory through their work with young people. Through working with young mothers in Dartford, YMCA Thames Gateway are aware that service users are coming into the town centre anyway and are therefore more likely to access services while they are in the town rather than travel to a location that is relatively isolated.

It was anticipated that building work would start in late summer 2009 with a completion date of summer 2010.

## Governance

The co location of services has been designed to raise awareness of the opportunities available for young people. This structure will also be supported by a meeting structure which will facilitate joint working with partners.

To date, it has not been clarified how the partnership arrangements will be operationalised in practice.

## Income Generation

The total cost of the project is £3.2 million. **myplace** will fund £2.2 million and KCC will fund £500,000 through the Youth Service, Social Services and Early Years budgets streams. The remainder will be financed by the YMCA. Revenue sources are the KCC grant for the delivery of youth and outreach provision, the Learning and Skills Council for Entry to Employment, Dartford Schools Cluster who commission ARC (see Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action) and lettings based on rent received from other local agencies and ARC, who will contribute to central costs on a percentage of the occupancy of the building as well as revenue raised by the YMCA's own fundraiser.

## Evaluation

### Leading Practice Themes

#### 1. *Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy.*

In discussion with the CEO during the previous round of interviews the idea of measuring increase in the numbers of young people accessing the range of services was highlighted. While this is seen as a big task given the lack of coordination amongst existing providers it is an area that the YMCA have and continue to shown an interest in developing as part of the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of this project.

The **myplace** project fits in with the Local Children's Partnership District Youth Strategy for Dartford which highlighted the need for a town centre building in Dartford to deliver services for young people. Similarly the Kent Children's Trust in its three year CYPP included the development district based

youth strategies that young people can influence and have access to opportunities and services that can support them.

As seen in the area of organisational arrangement, the YMCA plays a significant role in a number of networks. As an organisation they are well placed to encourage an integrated approach to supporting young people. Interestingly the CEO felt that the approach of the YMCA has always been one of integration compared to the relatively recent implementation of Integrated Youth Support Strategies.

## **2. *Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action***

The YMCA has a reputation for building successful partnerships. The main providers in Dartford are the YMCA and Dartford Youth Service. Over the last five years both organisations have worked successfully together to deliver complementary services to young people.

The Hub as it will be known will provide a focal point for the many other existing projects working with young people. Both Kent County Council and Dartford Borough Council have noted that in order to improve outcomes for young people facilities and services need to be better networked. The Hub will form a central referral and networking point for other providers in Dartford. In addition joint initiatives will continue building on existing partnership work such as Sure Start, KCC's alternative curriculum programme and Entry to Employment (NACRO). A number of new initiatives will be developed and existing initiatives enhanced. There will be a new youth club run in partnership with Dartford Borough Youth Service, open from 4-10pm 6 days a week.

The named **myplace** leader, CEO of YMCA Thames Gateway, has a strong reputation for partnership working. This is an area in which the YMCA has developed over the past five years, growing significantly through the expansion of facilities across four adjacent boroughs. Prior to **myplace** the CEO was already working with other service providers such as the youth service, social services, ARC and local secondary schools to provide an integrated high quality offer for young people. Having someone who is prepared to lead has according to the CEO been welcomed by other groups. The YMCA has a strong reputation for supporting other organisations, they are respected for the work they do. Working under the **myplace** brand has also helped insofar as it has provided a unifying effect as opposed to having one dominant organisation calling the shots all the time. In terms of programme delivery the CEO is keen to develop reciprocal relationships with other providers for example the local grammar schools. The idea being that teachers will come into the Hub and deliver lessons during the day and in return the Hub will be able to provide a youth offer in the schools. At the same time there is an expectation that having staff delivering provision in a range of settings will help to tackle boundaries between targeted and universal service users.

## **3. *What a world-class facility looks like and how it works***

The term 'world-class' is used in the business plan to refer to the high specification levels in the new building as well as the building design and the contribution of young people.

The term quality has been described as being a key factor in engaging and sustaining young people's interest. This is particularly noteworthy as the turnover of young people in YMCA hostel accommodation can mean it is difficult to sustain interest over a period of time. The concept 'High Quality' has impacted on partnerships with an increase in sought-after partnerships over the last five years. As a team, as consequence of the influence of **myplace**, YMCA Thames Gateway staff now use the term 'world-class' to describe services as much as building design whereas previously they would have used the words 'high quality'. When presenting updates to local partnerships there has been a shift towards thinking about the standard of services more than having a world-class building. Young people do not use the term world-class.

**myplace** is part of the three phase capital build project that first started in 1998 with the second phase being completed in 2003. Both phases have fulfilled their aims and objectives. High quality has played an important part of this success in terms of being able to engage and sustain young people's involvement. Residents see **myplace** in terms of quality of building. There is a sense that young

people will be able to access services they may not otherwise have been able to afford. Through **myplace** it will be possible to offer subsidy through a discretionary fund, bringing quality provision possibly through private sector delivery.

With regard to how world-class facilities work, the CEO indicated that aspiration is something that should not be limited. A number of examples are available to demonstrate how, through sustained intervention, young people have gone on to develop in terms of their education right through to studying for professional qualifications. In many cases support is required over five years or longer to take young people forward. With this in mind world-class is seen as a service that can take young people as far as they are capable and not limiting aspiration to low level accredited outcomes. In the alternative education programmes offered by YMCA, there is an emphasis on GCSEs in Maths, English and IT as essential requirements to enable young people to progress academically and professionally.

#### **4. How to plan and deliver a world-class facility**

In previous discussions with the participation worker at the YMCA who is now the Hall Aitken advisor for this project, the significance of successfully creating a trusting and supportive network amongst peers at an executive level was noted. There is a sense that people are working together towards a bigger objective rather than simply working to fulfil individual objectives. This is seen in the way that some managers across the partnership will turn to each other for support and advice when needed.

The long standing approach of integrated support has been identified as encouraging those working face to face with young people to work together, looking at what is happening in the local area and deciding how to best respond. Integration is seen from two perspectives. Firstly, integrated teams working together support individuals and groups of young people. Practitioners from different disciplines are enabled to see the bigger picture. For example, housing support workers might deliver sessions on housing in the youth centre and they might also support young people to access the youth work sessions, but they wouldn't be expected to be youth workers. Similarly youth workers might provide positive activities for young people in housing but at the same time wouldn't offer housing advice. Having an appreciation of the way in which others work has influenced the YMCA CEO and the head of the youth service to consider the potential of the Finnish model of the social pedagogue as a professional who is able to deal with the processes and problems of human development and education in terms of citizenship, social identity, life capacity, participation, and inclusion, covering all areas of social education with a focus on early, youth and adult education. Having a broad understanding is seen as an important aspect of integrated working.

#### **5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

There is a clear management structure in the YMCA which is inclusive of its members and the wider community at all levels but so far the evidence is that young people have been involved mainly through consultation. Given the location of the YMCA right in the town centre there is no real residential community to work with in terms of how **myplace** will impact. There are a number of forums such as the parents' forum in Dartford who have had a say in the design and resources that will go in to the new building, but beyond this there has not really been any community participation. At an organisational level there is a strong third sector forum which represents a range of organisations across Dartford, many of who are working with people in a local context. Through this forum it has been possible to engage with local people and at the same time consider how the YMCA and **myplace** might best support and work together with the third sector organisations working across the Dartford area.

#### **6. How to secure funding and generate income**

Funding will come from the budget streams of contributing services and from the rent for hire and letting.

## **7. How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people**

Of the 10% of young people in Dartford that the **myplace** project will be working with it is estimated that 75% are disadvantaged and likely to be at greater risk of exclusion. For this group the activities will be targeted towards reducing teenage conceptions, improving educational outcomes, reducing the incidence of harm as caused by substance misuse, reducing the impact of domestic violence, increasing the number of young people feeling safe, improving emotional well being, reducing childhood obesity and increasing the number of young people in education, employment and training.

The co- location of services has been designed to raise awareness of the opportunities available for young people. This structure will also be supported by a meeting structure which will facilitate joint working with partners. Apart from the range of services which will be co-located and the range of activities on offer, questions of access have been considered. For example, at the Dartford West Executive Learning Committee Meeting (6<sup>th</sup> May 2009) the question of transport was raised. It was noted that:

Although convenient for trains and buses the outlying districts of Dartford have weak transport infrastructure. DH agreed to consider further (Minute 6.5)

## **8. The importance of leadership**

Leadership is underpinned by a clear value base around valuing people equally, the importance of partnership, community engagement, innovation and excellence, and sustainability. The CEO identified the importance of being able to sell ideas in an open and non threatening way while at the same time being able to push for the best in terms of quality and outcomes as useful attributes for a leader. Historically this approach has worked well with Sure Start; looking at what each organisation is able to offer. Being prepared to lead rather than simply attend meetings has resulted in other organisation feeling involved and supportive thus alleviating suspicions of altruistic motives. While it is difficult to quantify the impact of having an open and inclusive approach to working with others, the CEO has been amazed at the number of people and organisations that wish to be a part of **myplace**.

### **Outcomes**

#### **1. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development.**

The new **myplace** project will provide a dedicated youth provision for young people offering integrated support and positive activities in an area where these resources are currently unavailable. While the new provision is a universal offer, the significant rates of social and economic disadvantage in local wards indicate that a high proportion of young people will access the new project from disadvantaged backgrounds. Having a clear focal point for all youth providers in the town centre is intended to bring together and coordinate services better, enabling effective sign posting and referrals.

The co location of services has been designed to raise awareness of the opportunities available for young people. This structure will also be supported by a meeting structure which will facilitate joint working with partners. There will also be a Children's Centre on site, a youth café/chill out area, a football club, E2E schemes for NEET young people aged 16-19, and youth led initiatives such as the youth café There will be an outreach programme which will provide referral routes to Hub activities and other local providers and also Adolescent Resource Services (ARC) who offer support for adolescents with support and advice around the areas of education, health and social support.

**2. *More young people, parents and communities feel that the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities.***

Thames Gateway YMCA is located in the town centre which sits on the edge of Dartford. This creates a particular type of relationship with the surrounding areas. The town centre provides a focal point for communities across Dartford who come in to access services, shop, socialise and for the nightlife. With this in mind it is difficult to identify the impact of the project on local communities. The young people themselves have clearly stated that they want somewhere that is safe, a place where they can integrate with different groups, a place to relax and a place to be creative. Through informal relationships with the parents of young people who currently access the YMCA facilities there is a concern that young people coming into the town centre need places to go and things to do. This further reiterated by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership who cite a number of young people hanging out in the town centre and the local park. Given these concerns one of the main objectives is to improve access to attractive high quality, positive activities and services for young people.

Within this project there is a commitment to measuring the increase in the numbers of young people accessing the range of services that have already been highlighted. While this is seen as a big task given the lack of coordination among existing providers it is an area that the YMCA have shown an interest in developing as part of the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of this project.

**3. *More young people have access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable.***

The intention is to develop collocated provision, providing space for a number of projects to work on site as part an IYSS strategy. Co-location is seen as being important insofar as it will be easier to sign post and refer young people across services. At the same time there is a desire to support young people to access services across the borough, improving social mobility across the area rather than expecting young people to access services centrally all the time.

**4. *Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.***

The Hub, as it will be known, will provide a focal point for many other existing projects working with young people. Both Kent County Council and Dartford Borough Council have noted that in order to improve outcomes for young people facilities and services need to be better networked. The Hub will form a central referral and networking point for other providers in Dartford. In addition joint initiatives will continue building on existing partnership work such as Sure Start, KCC's alternative curriculum programme and Entry to Employment (NACRO). A number of new initiatives will be developed and existing initiatives enhanced. There will be a new youth club run in partnership with Dartford Borough Youth Service, open from 4-10pm 6 days a week.

## Case study 4: Minehead EYE

Total Award: £3,205,856

Lead Organisation: Minehead EYE Community Interest Company

Contact: Miss Naomi Griffith (director)

### Overview

The West Somerset area which the Minehead EYE project is designed to serve is largely rural, with a population of 35,000. It has an ageing population with almost half (48%) over the age of 50 compared to the English average of one third. People aged 10-24 account for 15% of the West Somerset population compared to almost 19% across England. The area of West Somerset is significantly more deprived than the rest of Somerset, with significant areas of high deprivation. As a rural community there are a number of issues, including financial poverty relating to income and employment, but also what the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) describe as access poverty relating to transport and other services and network poverty relating to contact and help from friends, neighbours and others.

Minehead EYE was among the 21 **myplace** applications to receive Fast Track funding. In the public announcement of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008 (<http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pr-281108>) it was indicated that the initiative was to receive £3.2m for a new centre and skate park to be situated on the Market Site next to West Somerset Railway (Mart Road).

The bid for funding for this development for 13 – 19 year olds was put forward by Minehead EYE Community Interest Company (CIC). The formal partnership arrangement comprises Minehead EYE, the children's outreach charity, 'CLOWNS' (Creating Learning Opportunities in Western Somerset), Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council.

The councils have been particularly significant in the partnership. For example, the land for the building has been allocated by Somerset County Council which has agreed to lease it to the project on a long term basis at a peppercorn rent. West Somerset Council meanwhile pledged £250,000 towards the scheme.

From the start there has been a great deal of enthusiasm for the Minehead EYE project from those involved. It had been under consideration for ten years prior to winning the bid for **myplace** funding, and continuous efforts have been made toward it by professional workers and their organisations, and local councillors with consistent reference to engaging and involving local adults and young people in the developmental process. Substantial financial and practical support has been forthcoming from the Councils. The scheme supports Somerset's Children and Young People's Plan for young people's participation and the development of positive activities ([http://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie/documents/Plans/CYPP2009\\_SOME.pdf](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/emie/documents/Plans/CYPP2009_SOME.pdf)). It has also been cited with reference to Somerset's Cultural Strategy Action Plan ([www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk)). On hearing of their successful bid, Naomi Griffith, director Of Minehead EYE was quoted as saying:

We are absolutely thrilled that we have been successful in our bid. Many, many people have worked for years on Minehead EYE and it is amazing that we will now see this dream become a reality. There is a lot of work ahead of us but we are ready and raring to get started so we can finally deliver this project which is vital for the young people of West Somerset.

This enthusiasm must be understood with reference to the fact that there is currently no dedicated youth provision for young people in the Minehead area and young people are served mainly by a number of small local youth clubs in local villages spread out across rural Exmoor.

Over a number of years there have been a number of public consultations carried out by West Somerset Council, Somerset County Council, West Somerset Strategic Partnership and Minehead EYE. The conclusions of these consultations have highlighted the lack of facilities and activities for young people in West Somerset and the need to tackle anti-social behaviour. Significantly, with reference to the engagement of local people, a 'lack of understanding and acceptance of young people by the wider community' was cited by one respondent as a finding of the consultations. There is some evidence too that in the context of competing priorities for public expenditure, **myplace** does not always attract unqualified support (Watchet Council Minutes, 2/10/09). Whatever the detractors, the project is reported by those involved to have attracted significant local support.

Work on the building, undertaken by contractors Russell Construction, started in the middle of June 2009 (with an anticipated completion date of May-June 2010). At this point it was described in the Somerset County Gazette (19 June 2009) as a 'state-of-the-art multi-million pound facility [which] will provide a dedicated, purpose-built extreme sports and youth and community centre' and as 'the culmination of many years of work by the dedicated project team and young people from the area'. A report on the progress of the building in October by West Somerset County Council indicated that the building work was on target (<http://westsomersetonlinefor exampleov.news> 6 Oct. 2009).

## The Developing Situation

### Organisational arrangements

Minehead EYE CIC as the lead organisation in the initiative has sustained its positive partnership arrangements and the evidence from the case study visits suggests that the project is working well at a formal level. The project team includes representation from a number of disciplines including finance, project management, social research, education, government policy and community development and support is available from a management coach provided by the County Council. This is facilitated by the Local Services Manager who is also a director of Minehead EYE through regular meetings and conversations with the project manager.

The County and District Councils continue to play an important part in the development of the scheme. Apart from the allocation of land and the financial commitment, the councils have given and continue to give officer time and advice on a variety of areas from appointing architects, to business planning, funding opportunities and external support options. Significantly, Somerset County Council has stated a willingness to support the initiative by providing youth workers to work from the centre when it opens.

CLOWNS is also an important partner and it is intended that this organisation will establish itself on the ground floor of the new **myplace** building. CLOWNS has been in existence for over 30 years and has an established reputation in the area, including strong community relationships. The organisation works with families, combining 'fun' activities with family intervention and support. It is believed that not only does CLOWNS help add 'gravitas' to the **myplace** project, but also that its intervention work provides a link for young people who come from disadvantaged background into the provision that Minehead EYE is able to offer. In this sense the range of young people is extended into those families of hard to reach teenagers.

CLOWNS is working in active partnership with the following organisations and there are plans to extend their involvement to the wider Minehead EYE project.

- Avon and Somerset Police Authority

- Barnardos
- Homestart West Somerset
- Job Centre Plus
- National Play Bus Association
- Pre-school Learning Alliance
- Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership
- Somerset Play Forum
- Somerset Primary Care Trust- Health Visitors
- West Somerset Advice Bureau
- West Somerset Parish Councils
- West Somerset Play Partnership (West Somerset District Council)

Organisations identified as playing a direct role in the establishment of the Minehead EYE, though not part of the formal partnership arrangements, include:

- Minehead Town Council
- Watchet Town Council
- ArtLife
- Avon and Somerset Police
- West Somerset Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Timber Reuse
- Somerset Coast PCT
- Active Exmoor.

These organisations vary in their level of commitment and the links with some of these groups have been stronger than others. They have tended to come on board as the project has started to develop and in response to the high profile and high levels of political and community support which the Minehead EYE has attracted.

Minehead EYE CIC itself maintains its central commitment to an ideal of community involvement and those who are involved in developing the initiative emphasise the significance of the community ownership of the company. This is defined with reference to local people who themselves have grown up in the area without access to any dedicated youth provision, and understand how important such provision might be. Respondents claimed that a significant number of people want to volunteer their own time to the running of the project and it was suggested that with current levels of volunteers it would be possible to cover 50% of casual staff hours through volunteers alone.

One of the project team members is a teacher based in Minehead's only secondary school. The school has been keen to support the project in terms of raising its profile. It has created promotional opportunities through its standing in the community via the different groups that access the school and in its relationships with parents and carers. Having a presence in the only secondary school in Minehead has also facilitated access to a range of young people who have been encouraged in this way to be involved in the development of the scheme.

## Youth Participation

Young people have been a part of the project since its inception and the adults behind the Minehead EYE project are keen to ensure that the project is viewed as non-institutional, friendly to young people and accessible to those in more remote districts.

The school has provided an important focal point for young people to engage in the development of the project beyond the typical young person you might expect to get involved. There is an expectation that young people themselves will play a central role on the running of the project through peer mentoring, training and supporting users of the project.

In June 2009, Naomi Griffith was quoted as saying that

We are doing loads of work with young people and have recently set up a youth board, as well as doing lots of consultation work with students at West Somerset Community College (Somerset County Gazette, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

Young people have a clear presence in the project. They appear in photographs and have been quoted in the publicity. For example:



*MINEHEAD EYE director Molly Studley, back second from right, with members of the Minehead EYE Youth Board and Cllr Neil Parbrook, front right, and Phil Keith and Richard Life of Russell Construction. (Somerset county Gazette June 19 2009)*

An update on the progress of the building in October by West Somerset County Council-quoted a 'local student', Albert Hocking, who was involved in the project: 'After so many years, I can't believe it's really happening and we are getting such a great youth centre in Minehead' (<http://westsomersetonlinefor exampleov.news> 6 Oct. 2009).

During the case study visit, it was possible to speak to two young people who had been involved in the youth board although the youth board is not currently in operation. This is because the board comprised of young people of a similar age and interests, particularly around skating and music, who have left to go to university or are planning to go to university in the next academic year. The project team is now in the process of recruiting a new youth board which should hopefully represent a broader range of interests and as well as a wider age range. The youth board have been active in consultation with young people, taking part in promotional events and consulting with architects and the project team around design and resources. More broadly, young people's participation seems to have emerged via their participation in other organisational contexts (such as the school). There is evidence that they have been and are consulted, but that central to this is their ideas about the activities that will be on offer and the terms in which they will be offered. Since 2002 a range of

surveys and consultations have been undertaken by Minehead EYE , West Somerset Council, Somerset County Council and the West Somerset Strategic Partnership providing information about the kinds of things young people would like to see, how often they would use facilities and how much they would be prepared to pay. It is believed that these consultations prove the need for this facility, and they have been used in determining the priorities of the project. They have also formed base data for calculations relating to the annual income of the project.

Significantly, young people who contributed to the discussions during the case study visit indicated that they do not want to be 'targeted'. While having access to a range of services was seen by them as important, it was felt by some young people that there were other places to seek advice and guidance, but not in a youth facility like Minehead EYE. However there was also some agreement that Minehead EYE could provide a link in to other services like health, education, employment and training through signposting.

Given the lack of provision elsewhere in Minehead, having a new centre for all young people has had something of a unifying effect and this has enhanced the representativeness of the young people directly involved.

## Activities

The most popular activities identified from the consultations were music facilities, skate/BMX area, IT/media facilities and a café/chill out area. This information directly informed the development of the Minehead EYE scheme and the design of the building and there is a sense among those involved that the plans are highly responsive to young people's interests. While the main themes of the project will be skating and music it is considered that there is enough variety within these themes to attract a wide range of interest groups.

The list of activities to be offered by Minehead EYE were summarised by West Somerset Council In October 2009 as follows:

As well as catering for extreme sports, Minehead EYE will provide access to facilities which encourage creativity in sports, art, music and media. It aims to give young people a place of their own where they can feel at ease to meet up, relax and interact.

Accessibility to the wider community is central to the project and everyone will be welcome. It is being built and run on environmentally sustainable principles...

[www.westsomersetonlinefor exampleov.news](http://www.westsomersetonlinefor exampleov.news)

More precisely, current plans include the following:

- A substantial multi-purpose skate/BMX/Inline arena
- A café/shop chill-out area
- Information technology and internet access
- Multi-media suite, rehearsal space, recording studio and DJ booth
- Pool and games area (pin-ball, table football, arcade games)
- Exhibition space and art wall
- Minibus outreach service to bring in young people from peripheral and rural areas (access without reliance on the private car)
- Where appropriate utilising the building for use by other sectors of the community (for example daytime crèche, bingo etc.)
- Innovative skills and IT training in partnership with local organisations (i.e. TRUCE)

- Information and facilities to encourage reducing, re-using and recycling.

It is intended that the programmed sessions will range from informal open access to more structured teaching sessions, with the purpose of offering positive activities in a healthy and safe environment.

As well as the 'positive activities' for young people, Minehead EYE will also provide help, support and guidance in a non-institutional environment (Youth Service, health clinic, counselling, anti-bullying). The project team are keen to provide a range of opportunities by acting as a focal point and a gateway to a range of services, some of whom will be able to offer resources as part of the Minehead EYE timetable and in other cases it will be a matter of signposting.

It was pointed out during discussions that there are already a number of existing panels where a range of organisations meet to take a strategic view on targeting disadvantaged young people and providing positive activities for young people, for example the Anti -Social behaviour panel and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Despite these and other forums there is no single practice context to act as the base for a strategic approach for working with young people across Minehead. It is anticipated that in addition to the activities already planned, the new facility might meet this need.

## Building design

In February 2006 the Executive Board of Somerset County Council voted to give Minehead EYE first option on the land for a period of 3 years to allow sufficient time to work up the business case and apply for funding.



*Artist's impression: West Somerset Post, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009*

The designs for the new building as described in April 2009 featured a two-storey skate and BMX park with a viewing gallery overlooking the 6,000 sq ft facility. The centre itself is planned to include a recording studio and DJ booth, a multi-media suite with rehearsal space, a computer area, an exhibition area with an art-graffiti wall, a café, and a shop.

The design of the building has been carefully considered in terms of the type of experience it will offer for young people. In this sense project planning has addressed questions relating to the type of environment that allows space for young people to interaction and engage in free association. The building has been conceptualised as a creative space which might be adaptable to new opportunities and ideas. It is more than simply a service resource for young people to consume. It is intended to encourage active participation and is anticipated as a 'place that can make things happen'. There is as hope that when the building opens people will be inspired by the quality and resources that have been invested in the project.

The environmental impact of the building and the project as a whole has also been addressed. The new facility is located on an industrial site and it is included in the economic redevelopment plan for that area (Portfolio-holder Decision, 20th April, 2009, Somerset County Council). Somerset County Council dealt with contamination issues on the site as part of their works on the wider Market Site.

The intention is to develop facilities to encourage waste reduction through re-using and recycling. On completion the building should achieve a very high level of environmental sustainability, taking a holistic approach to the building in terms of sustainability, education and usability.

## Governance

Minehead EYE is a Community Interest Company (CIC). This is a new type of company for those wishing to establish social enterprises and work in the familiar limited company framework while restricting the distribution of profits and assets to their members and without the stricter regulations associated with charities. Being constituted as a CIC does not preclude Minehead EYE from becoming a charity in the future if this should be deemed more appropriate (although a company cannot be both a CIC and a charity). However the decision had been made that the CIC form was currently the best way to move forward with the project.

The Minehead EYE CIC has a number of Directors, (a third are put up for election each year) and a Management Committee with representation from the partners as well as young people. The election of Directors rests with the members who include users of the project, funders, community members, advisors, and partner organisations.

The intention is to involve of as many relevant individuals/groups as possible in order to ensure that Minehead EYE is a 'community led' project, although it is unclear how 'community' is defined in this context. As full members of the company, young people will have an opportunity to vote and to become part of the management committee.

## Income generation

Income will be generated through a number of streams. These include daily admission charges, annual membership fees, equipment hire (young people will be able to rent boards, skates and protective clothing), and private hire (the skate park has been designed to provide flexible use of the main area creating space for rental income from other community groups, classes and activities). There will also be a shop on site where young people can buy equipment and a café both of which are expected to generate a profit. It is expected that incidental income will come from special events, competitions and community event. These are yet to be formally established.

## Evaluation

### Leading Practice Themes

#### **1. *Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy***

Minehead EYE benefits from a long term history of planning towards the development of a significant youth facility in Minehead. This has contributed to the clarity and integrity of vision that is attributed to the project by those involved.

Those involved have focused significant attention to establishing a core partnership of agencies which can contribute resources in terms of finance, expertise and skills, local reputation and goodwill, and a network of additional contacts in terms of both relationships with other agencies and with what might otherwise be 'hard to reach' families and young people.

In terms of measuring and evaluating the work, attention has clearly been given to the **myplace** outcomes in terms of targets. There is now a formal plan for measuring targets, gathering information on **myplace** outcomes, Minehead EYE outcomes and social audit factors such as environmental impact.

Measuring the effectiveness of the facility is straightforward at one level, insofar as there is no existing provision. Counting the number of young people accessing the facility will indicate at a very simple level the extent to which there is an increase in the number of young people engaged in positive activities.

Respondents also mentioned the incidence of anti-social behaviour as a possible measure. At present, up to 800 incidences of anti-social behaviour occur in the district every year. It is perceived that any noticeable change in this figure might be considered with reference to the introduction of this new facility.

### **Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action**

There are clear formal partnership arrangements involving the Minehead EYE CIC, CLOWNS, Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council. This is the core of a network of organisations and services which are to varying degrees committed to participating in the overall scheme. Clearly, in the light of the programme planning, working relationships are necessary with a range of agencies. At present, the other agencies are involved to varying degrees. Some are associated simply by virtue of their historical association with the partnership organisations, and in this regard, CLOWNS is particularly important. Some are participating directly and independently through a direct commitment to contribute to the programme development of the projects. Their participation is facilitated by the organisation of Minehead EYE as a CIC.

Membership of the CIC is open to representative organisations as well as to individuals from community groups and young people themselves. In this way the partnership organisations and other organisations are interlocked in a management structure which is accountable both to the formal partnership and to the membership.

The arrangements are helped by the support given to the management committee by the County and District Councils who appear to be crucial to the efficient working of the system. In addition, the Councils have given, and continue to offer officer time and expert advice in a variety of crucial aspects of the scheme. This includes appointing architects, business planning, developing funding opportunities and identifying external support options as well as mentoring.

The links are working effectively and efficiently in the current situation.

## **2. *What a world-class facility looks like and how it works***

The idea of world-class is largely a matter of interpretation. Those involved in Minehead EYE stressed that it needed to be defined as more than quality of buildings and resources, but should also include an ongoing sense of inspiration. The local services manager described the need for 'a buzz, a good feeling, a sense that the people who have made the project happen have got it right in terms of the expectations of all involved'.

It is claimed that the expectations of the project team have been characterised by integrity and by clarity in their expectations right from the start of the development of the scheme. This has included a commitment from those involved to 'be the best they can', to recognise when they need support and to refuse to compromise on quality.

There has been consistent determination throughout the planning and early developmental stages of Minehead EYE. The principles of the scheme have been clearly communicated to the public and to all participating bodies and the response has been 'a real public swell of interest across all areas of the community'. Respondents reported that there is a general belief that 'something world-class' is about to happen in the area. Participants believe that a combination of an ability to articulate their vision, to listen, to learn and a commitment to understanding what is wanted and what is needed have been important factors in gaining support for this project so far.

It was suggested that the impact that the project has on the behaviour and attitudes of the young people as they come and go from the centre, and in the environs of the centre will be one of the criteria used to determine the project as world-class.

### **3. How to plan and deliver a world-class facility**

In terms of planning for a world-class facility, members of the project team call on a range of experience in running youth activities and events as well as being able to draw on successful business experience and knowledge. This combined expertise is reflected in the business plan.

In the planning process, there has been significant attention given to incorporating the widest possible range of interests. A great deal of care and attention has been paid to ensuring that interested parties are both consulted and informed of developments. As a consequence, this project seems to be a highly popular development in Minehead.

### **4. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

A number of public consultations have taken place at community events building on a large survey in 2003 as part of the Minehead Coastal Town Initiative, working towards the regeneration of Minehead. A number of groups and organisations have come together to form the Minehead EYE focus group, to ensure community interest is maintained throughout the development of the project

The Minehead EYE has consulted with young people and their representatives using its range of participating organisations to keep young people involved and to establish a Youth Board who have been active in planning, development, design as well as promoting the Minehead EYE at community events and forums and among their peers.

Although there is evidence of consistent engagement from young people, much of this has been generated in the context of the work of participating organisations. The local school was particularly highlighted in this regard. Representation from the school on the Management Board and the active interest of the school in the development of the project has been a key to involving a wide range of young people.

The structure of governance and decision making offers a particular model of engagement with the decision to constitute the project as a CIC being a key to broad community and youth participation. Local people are represented to some extent through the involvement of their democratically elected local politicians, but the membership structure of the CIC offers a more immediate and direct means of representation in the decision making and development of the project.

Although the provision of resources and services for young people remains central to the project's vision, it is apparent that as it has developed, there has been a widening of the remit to make specific reference to the potential of the new facility to be used by 'the community' and it is indicated that 'accessibility to the wider community is central to the project and everyone will be welcome' (<http://westsomerseionlinfor exampleov.news> 6 Oct. 2009).

How this will function in practice is yet to be tested.

There is a determination to keep local people informed of developments and in addition to regular press releases related to significant developments and decisions, the website of the County Council includes news of the progress of the scheme. In addition, it was planned to produce a newsletter 'to keep everyone posted with updates on the project and news on how to get involved' (*Somerset County Gazette*, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

### **5. How to secure funding and generate income**

Apart from the **myplace** grant of £3,205,856, the Minehead EYE secured a promise of £250,000 from West Somerset Council, with about £6,000 of this released at an early stage to fund contingencies associated with planning. Both these sums are for capital spend only.

Several income streams have been identified, as itemised above.

Resources for staffing are included in the running costs of partnership and participating bodies. For example, youth workers, as employees of Somerset County Council will be deployed to the building. There is also an expectation that volunteers would make a significant contribution to the resources of the building.

## **6. *How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people***

Plans for the activities to be developed by the Minehead EYE refer directly to the historical absence of such facilities in Minehead and to evidence that suggests that making provision for young people is a priority among members of the public.

There is a determination to work to change negative adult perceptions of children and young people. It was claimed during the case study visit that the presence of children and young people in and around public spaces is often seen as suspect, threatening, or even criminal, and associated with anti-social behaviour. Minehead EYE seeks to challenge this perception, both by changing the image of young people in the area, and by providing somewhere safe and welcoming for young people to go and hang out in order to combat social exclusion.

The planning of the project has been directly responsive to the stated leisure interests of young people and there is an understanding that the facility is as much about association and relationship building as about activities per se, or about integrating and consolidating youth orientated services. In that sense, the vision is comprehensive and works to marry young people's subjectively articulated interests with the interests of the wider public and the priorities of policy.

It does this with reference to the particular conditions of the local area. In particular, specific attention has been paid to the relationship between Minehead and its peripheral districts and the question of transport is high on the agenda with reference to the accessibility of the facilities to those young people living in rural locations. The Minutes of West Somerset District Council (8<sup>th</sup> April 2009) state that:

In answer to a question about transport provision for young people in outlying areas, Members were advised that talks were underway with the community college and Atwest regarding the use of their minibuses and with voluntary drivers it was intended to keep the costs of transport as low as possible.

It is unclear how far these talks have developed. At present, discussion around this question seems to be focusing on the possibility of running a minibus outreach service to bring in young people from peripheral and rural areas (access without reliance on the private car).

## **7. *The importance of leadership.***

Those involved in the project team talked about an interdependence in what is a relatively small community across a large geographical area where people need to work together collaboratively across sectors in order to address local needs. There is a perception that people have to work together to get things done.

Local councillors involved in the project have been able to work closely within a local independent coalition. As such there is great deal of support across the range of main and independent political parties.

Leadership is characterised by a range of overlapping and tightly knit formal and informal relationships which are peculiar to the conditions of a small town in a largely rural environment. For example members of the project team are also local councillors and they have worked to ensure that the project has retained a high profile in local political circles.

The principle contact for the project Naomi Griffith, occupies a crucial role in relation to co-ordination, administration, organisation and publicity. The applied energies and expertise of this individual have made a significant contribution to the success of the project to date.

## **Outcomes:**

### **1. *More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure activities that support their personal and social development***

- This is intrinsic to the Minehead EYE which is being constructed in a place which has previously been marked by an absence of any specific facilities for young people.
- It is built into consultation processes and young people have been consistently consulted with reference to the provision which includes a range of positive leisure activities as well as more specific services. Already this is an increase in participation and activism.
- Young people welcome the development and there is evidence that they are considering seriously how the facilities might be used. There is a skateboarders blog in which young people are currently discussing the anticipated skate park.
- Structures are in place for youth participation in management and decision-making. These are clear in relation to the processes of CIS but the Youth Board is still in the process of development.
- Involvement of CLOWNS in the partnership and of the local school in the management ensures that youth participation reaches young people who might be defined as disadvantaged and who might not normally be involved in such developments.

### **2. *More young people, parents and communities feel the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a range of exciting activities.***

- The combination of sport and cultural activities planned, alongside the opportunities for associating with young people from a range of backgrounds and geographical areas appears to be eagerly anticipated by young people.
- There is evidence of broad enthusiasm across age groups and within different organisations and situations for the development.

### **3. *More young people have access to information, advice and guidance from within places they feel comfortable.***

- Information, advice and guidance services will be located within the building and there are also plans for signposting to other services.
- There are plans that the facility be used by partnership organisations currently dealing with youth issues, as a base for further integration of services.
- Young people expressed some concern about targeting and about the balance between 'services' and leisure facilities. Their priority for the building is for the leisure aspects and while they are happy to endorse some AIG services being present in the building, they would prefer others to remain sited elsewhere.

### **4. *Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.***

- Somerset County Council and West Somerset District Council are members of the partnership alongside CLOWNS.

- There is evidence of collaboration across political parties as well as across sectors.
- The councils have already committed significant resources to the development of the scheme in terms of finance, land and expertise.
- There is no commitment to revenue in the future. But there is to facility, labour and management training. The extent of the future commitment in terms of land is very clear. Other aspects are subject to ongoing decision-making processes.

Relationships between different partners and participants are constructive. The fact that in this particular context roles are interwoven and that there are informal as well as formal networks of association and communication is a positive contribution to the successful development of the scheme so far.

## Case study 5: Oldham Youth Zone: MAHDLO

Total Award: £5,044,577

Lead Organisation: OnSide North West Ltd.

Contact: Jeremy Glover

### Overview

Oldham Metropolitan Borough has a population of 219,500 (2009). A long term population decline which runs counter to the country-wide trend is related to the collapse of its manufacturing base which had been centred on the cotton mills. Oldham now has a small manufacturing and high tech sector, but it is characterised by a low-skill workforce and high unemployment. The town has a relatively young age profile with 28% of residents under the age of 20.

Overall population decline is countered by the trend in the BME population which has from increased from 8.8% in 1991, to 13.9% in 2001 to 16.6% in 2007 and is projected to stand at 19.4% in 2012 and 24.6% in 2022. This trend suggests that the needs of these communities are unlikely to be met through responsive and incremental change in service design and delivery. The composition of the minority population is predominantly Pakistani (6.4% in 2001) and Bangladeshi (4.5%). In demographic terms the growth in minority population is particularly concentrated among young people with 31% of young people under the age of 18 being from BME groups. This is also higher than national average. BME and white communities tend to be concentrated in separate localities.

The Audit Commission corporate assessment of Oldham reported:

There is a range of good work with young people to promote cohesion, for example through sport and in the Youth Service's Fusion project. However, the Council's formal plans are not explicit about local communities' sense of place and identity or about the differences in quality of life between groups and localities (2009: 51).

The *myplace* application notes the need to respond to both the magnitude of the population change and the neighbourhood rivalries and tensions that have arisen. It quotes the riots of 2001 as evidence of strong differences of identity and notes that despite significant work on community cohesion this need still emerged as the primary need for younger people in the borough (2006 Needs Analysis for Every Child Matters). In the case study work, Bradford is a close comparator where the claim is that young people have strong motivation to overcome such sources of difference.

*Oldham Youth Zone* will also focus on the needs of young people in low-income groups and here there is evidence from official statistics of significant need. The 2001 census showed Oldham ranking 37<sup>th</sup> of 376 authorities with dependent children in lone parent families. The degree of concentrated poverty is evidenced in the fact that two town centre wards contain areas among the most deprived 1% in England while in one town centre ward 9% of children are living in poverty (Baseline Report p. 45-47).

The picture is consistent with lower levels of qualification (37.6% people with no qualifications aged 16-74 compared with 28.9% nationally):

Education and skill levels are generally below regional and national averages. In 2006/07 (latest available data), there were improvement at Key Stage 2, ....the numbers of young people aged 16 to 18 who were in education, employment or training improved to above

the average for similar authorities (Baseline Report p. 39, DCSF *Quality Choice and Aspiration* p. 27, 2009).

As the 42<sup>nd</sup> most deprived local authority (2007, IMD), Oldham also experiences higher than national level morbidity rates. There is as much as a 12-year difference in life expectancy between people living in different parts of the same borough.

The interaction of these indicators of deprivation within localities and different ethnic groups suggests the necessity of specific and targeted approaches to provision.

## The Project

The Oldham **myplace** project is one of five being developed in the North West under the umbrella of the recently established charity *OnSide*. Four are in receipt of **myplace** funding: Carlisle (fast track), and Manchester (Harperhey), Blackburn and Oldham. OnSide North West was originally funded by the North West Development Agency and the regional private sector and was set up in order to bring together the public and private sectors across the North West to develop strong local partnerships to build new, world-class, town and city centres for young people (<http://www.onsidenorthwest.org/whatwedo.html>)

The charity has developed a model of 'world-class, state-of-the-art' facilities for young people to which it has given the working name *Youth Zones* and which OnSide recommends for development in every town and city. The model for *Youth Zones* is the Bolton Lads and Girls Club (BLGC) as developed under the 31 year stewardship of its Chief Executive, Jeremy Glover, and cited as a model of good practice in *Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities* (2007). Jeremy Glover was on the *Aiming High* advisory group from which the **myplace** programme developed, and has recently moved from BLGC in order to become the Chief Executive of OnSide. The new deputy Chief executive of OnSide, Rob Carter, has also moved directly from BLGC. As one of the OnSide projects, *MAHDLO* is therefore designed with direct reference to the expectations of a 'world-class' facility as promoted by the **myplace** scheme.

Speaking about the foundation of OnSide North West, Glover explained how when the BLGC moved from an old mill into new premises, things changed very rapidly. It became a success; people came to visit; people tried to replicate our success and it never came to anything. So we thought, 'Well it needs to be something more than a series of visits for people to go away and do something'. So we started working just with Blackburn for a start and said, 'Let's try and build something stronger, have a partnership so we can support you'.

As collaborative work increased with other agencies who wanted to build on the BLGC success, it was decided to separate the work and OnSide North West was created to become the lead body for the four successful **myplace** development bids.

Each of the bids is relevant to its local circumstances but uses the core model devised by OnSide. In the Oldham case, the plan is to demolish the defunct Marjory Lees Health Centre, Egerton Street, Oldham, in 'the highly deprived town centre' ([www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pr](http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pr), March 2009) and replace it with a new building of '21<sup>st</sup> century quality'. The new building is conceived as a 'community facility' for young people, a sports centre and 'hub' which will include:

A climbing wall, an external floodlit multi-use games area, fitness suit and a coffee bar. There will also be several flexible recreational and social areas for the arts, music and dance, an atrium, training rooms, offices, a coffee bar and catering facilities. Targeted services will be co-ordinated by project partner Positive Steps for Oldham (ibid).

Building on the philosophy developed by BLGC, the *MAHDLO Youth Zone* aims to provide a universal service for young people aged 8-21 years (up to 25 for young people with disabilities). The issue of cohesion is core to the provision of activities and young people will initially access services 'in their

comfort zone before undergoing natural integration' The approach is summed up in the application as 'participate to integrate' ( s.2.7). The aims of Oldham *Youth Zone* are listed as follows:

- to provide support for emotional health and well-being;
- to prevent bullying;
- to improve outcomes for specific groups; looked after; BME; young carers; low income;
- to promote cohesion through participation;
- to reduce risky behaviours;
- to develop education and training for employment.

The **myplace** bid in Oldham was 'kick-started' by a grant of £250,000 from a local charity, the Stoller Foundation. The first plans for the building were in place by September 2009 with a view to demolition and rebuilding work beginning in September 2010.

## The Developing Situation

### Organisational Arrangements

The initiative remains under the leadership of OnSide North West whose aim is to secure 'the commitment of local councils, private sector supporters and key strategic partners' ([www.onsidenorthwest.org/whatwedo.html](http://www.onsidenorthwest.org/whatwedo.html)) within an organisational model which is centred on the charity's regional remit. OnSide has an explicit model of organisational responsibility. Apart from its Chairman, Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive, it has posts which are specific to:

- Local engagement
- Property construction advice
- Sponsorship, fundraising and communication
- Private Sector development and funding
- Administrative management
- Communications Management.

Each of these roles has clear and direct relevance to the work relating to the **myplace** development.

Partners in the Oldham bid are Oldham Borough Council which is identified as the 'strategic lead' and Positive Steps For Oldham who work with young workers in order to manage the involvement of young people. The project is intended to be a 'key element of Oldham's community cohesion strategy' and OnSide stressed at the outset that, 'A very strong cross-sector partnership in Oldham has been working with the charity for several months to prepare a successful application to the **myplace** fund.

At this particular stage of pre-building, the organisational framework at local level remains embryonic. A partnership flowchart is in use to map out which partners are needed in which areas and it is anticipated that different partner organisations will want different levels of involvement from simply receiving information to a formal commitment. The organisation at this level is 'very much at the development stage' (Interview, March 2010). It is planned that local private sector Boards, including sponsors of the project will be influential in the schemes at local level and for these 'clear targets and outputs are being established for each area so that we know what people want and what they expect for their money' (Interview, March 2010). There will an Advisory Group of young people. There are also Young People's Development groups each of which has a Facebook page.

## Youth Participation

OnSide North West has a strong commitment to youth participation and it is evident that young people have been involved from the early stages of the bid. Nick Cooper, the OnSide local engagement worker attended the Oldham Youth Council meeting in July 2008 to discuss the proposal with young people. During that meeting it was explained that:

... the plan is to get a group of young people from all across Oldham to decide on what they want in the centre and how they want it to look. The plan is to also put out questionnaires and surveys to get young people's thoughts across about the development of the centre.

The youth council can help greatly with design as they have helped in the development of Cannon Street so they have the experience and knowledge to get young people's thoughts across (YC Minutes, Wed. 26<sup>th</sup> July 2008).

Young people are evident in the publicity materials. During the evaluation visit, the researcher was able to meet with an 18 year-old woman and a 17 year old man through Positive Steps Oldham. One of these young people was previously a member of the Youth Council. These two young people were keen on the **myplace** scheme because:

**myplace** will give so many more young people somewhere to go rather than just hanging around the streets in the town centre. (Interview, March 2010)

They explained that large numbers of young people had been involved in work relating to **myplace**, and that about 60 of them who hadn't worked together before, (including members of the Youth Council), had been on a residential in October 2008. Their participation has been related to key stages of development and it has been sustained.

Throughout it after every stage we'll have a break; we've got a trip coming up in a couple of weeks, a celebratory event because we've done so much so far.

Young people have been involved in consultations relating to the design of the building, and they had some clear views about what was appropriate for them:

We've been to the Bolton Lads and Girls Club, as a group our first response was that it was too sporty. We've got a perfectly good sports centre quite nearby so our first response was that we didn't want it to be sports, we wanted somewhere we could go and hang out, have fun, we looked at the creative side of it, the arts and that sort of thing. We liked it, it worked for them but it just wasn't what we wanted.

We thought they were like big sport things, we still want to include a bit of sport but we wanted dance studios, enterprise work, a multi pitch outside.

All the young people questioned the architects and the sports focus. There's two kick pitches but they can be multi-purpose.

We originally wanted a trampoline on the roof; we went to Westminster Academy to have a look around.

A lot of the spaces in the building are all multi purpose; we didn't want anything to be stuck. Staging area in the dance studio, it also has a projector screen (Interview, March 2010)

In consultation with the architects, of the Sorrell Foundation, designs have been amended as a result of their views.

We didn't at first with the sports at the start but then the architect brought in a model and a saw and he cut half of it off because we didn't like it and asked what we wanted and we did a lot of re-designing on the computer. I think we really have been listened to (ibid).

The *myplace* support website reports that one young woman who was involved in helping to design the centre is now 'on track for a career in architecture'. She is quoted as saying: 'Being on the group has given me so much confidence and I would never have taken to my studies the way I have without the invaluable experience I got from working with top architects' ([www.myplacesupport.co.uk](http://www.myplacesupport.co.uk)).

The name of the Oldham project, *MAHDLO* (Oldham in reverse) was decided by the Oldham Young People's Development Group working with a graphic designer and ending with a vote on Facebook.

There is also evidence of engagement with political processes by the young people involved. A group of them gave a presentation to the East Oldham district Partnership of Oldham council in January 2010 where they explained their participation from the start of the project and outlined their aspirations for the centre. In this presentation, they described how they had participated in 'workshops, inspirational visits, discussions on branding and the choosing of a logo' (Oldham council: Minute, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010).

## Activities

At the first meeting of the Youth council, it was suggested that the centre would be aimed primarily at the 13-21 age group, (though it could go as low as eight years old), that it would be open when schools were closed that there would be about twenty different activities in the centre, and that reasonably priced food would be available.

It is clear from the discussions with the young people during the evaluation visit that there was a strong emphasis on sport at the outset and indeed, the facility was described in some of the publicity as a 'sports centre'.

Although some young people have expressed some misgivings about the heavy emphasis on sport, this remains central to the plans, and in the presentation given by them to the East Oldham Partnership in January 2010 specified:

A sports hall with a climbing wall, an external floodlit multi-use area, fitness suite and coffee bar. There would also be several flexible recreational and social areas for arts, music and dance, an atrium, training rooms, offices and catering facilities. Targeted services would be co-ordinated by project partner Positive Steps for Oldham. (Minute, 26 January 2010 [www.oldham.gov.uk/decision\\_recording.htm](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/decision_recording.htm))

The same description was used in a council Report of 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010. This is directly taken from the original conception of the activities to be included in the building and so although the architectural designs might have been modified, the programme planning for the facility has remained constant throughout the development period.

## Building Design

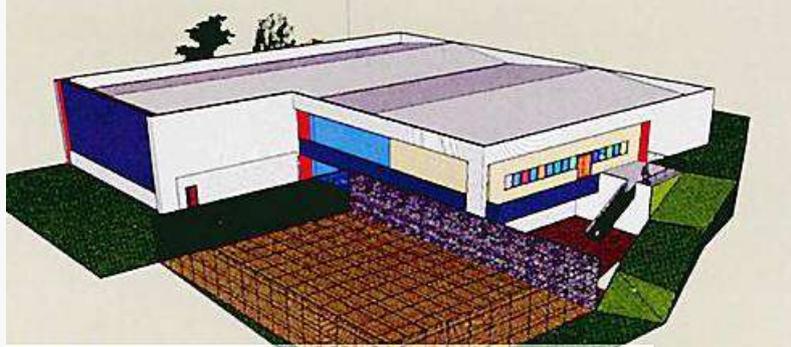
The building will be erected on a site in the town centre which is very near to the bus interchange and next to a school. Aspirations for the building as described by OnSide are that it:

Will make a strong visual statement with an attractive, low-maintenance, simple built form allowing it to be finished to a high internal specification with the best equipment and a

clear focus on the quality of the environment and facilities.

([www.onsidenorthwest.org/current\\_projects\\_oldham.html](http://www.onsidenorthwest.org/current_projects_oldham.html))

In September 2009, the Oldham Evening Chronicle published a drawing of the planned building of the disused health centre which it will replace.



*A DRAWING of how the new club will look*



*COMING down . . . the Marjory Lees Health Centre will be demolished to make way for the new club  
© Chronicle Online 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009*

The newly unveiled plans for the new centre were described by the Mayor of Oldham as ‘the best for Oldham’s young people’. Jeremy Glover was quoted as saying that gone are the days when young people would put up with tired and run-down buildings for a youth centre:

They want bright, modern and fit-for-purpose buildings, and this new lads’ and girls’ club will bring young people together and keep them active. It’s simple but it works.

Not everyone in Oldham agreed on the quality of the plans and two people responded to the newspaper article to complain about the building design.

A short film by the Sorrel Foundation demonstrates the involvement of young people in discussing the designs for the building. The model which they prefer has ‘more curves’ but the film is undated and it

is unclear whether this consultation took place before, or after the designs were published in September 2009. Young people have been involved throughout the design process, within the Young Peoples Development Group activities, with the local architect and then extensively through the additional *myplace/Sorrel* process.

The young people who were interviewed during the case study visit have high hopes of the building:

We wanted the place to be seen, the shape of the building we want it to stand out so it's not like a lot of the other buildings in Oldham so people drive past and wonder what it is. We're having lights in it that shine out over Oldham, a lot of it is glass so you can see in to what is going on when you're walking past. It's just gonna be different.

The initial hope that demolition work would start in September 2010, has now been deferred until July 2010. The target opening date is November 2011.

## Governance

All OnSide centres will be locally managed. There are, however, ongoing advantages of being part of a new network of Centres:

Five clubs gives us loads of opportunities to be looking at things like common database systems, common data collection the business side of the operation once they're up and running, the relationships with the community so the potential of doing something across five centres is enormous and once they're up and running we'll be running six centres because Bolton Lads and Girls Club will come into the fold because they were the original one (Interview, March 2010).

In each locality there will be a private sector-led Board which will be supported and developed by the charity and in addition there will be a young people's advisory group. The OnSide web page describes governance as follows:

Oldham Youth Zone will be operated by a new charitable body, governed by young people, representatives of the local business community and voluntary sector, with local authority officers providing a strategic lead  
[www.osidenorthwest.org/current\\_projects\\_oldham.html](http://www.osidenorthwest.org/current_projects_oldham.html).

## Income Generation

OnSide outlines its model for sustainable funding on its web site as follows:

OnSide proposes a strong, multi-sector, sustainable revenue funding model incorporating the following contributions:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Council-led public sector contribution | 40% |
| Private Sector contribution            | 25% |
| External funding applications          | 25% |
| Contributions from young people        | 10% |

With regard to the 40% contribution from the public sector, the intention is to work with lead Councils to identify key components of public sector funding for young people, involving key strategic partners.

In January the *Oldham Chronicle* ran an item suggesting that the recession and threat of public sector cuts implied a threat to the council's long term commitment to the building suggesting that:

Any agreement would be drafted to include a clause to allow for any future cuts in Government funds to local councils...Talks with OnSide will continue and the running costs and contributions will be reviewed every year....

Councillor Kay Knox, cabinet member for children, young people and families said: 'We desperately want to support this in principle, but we don't want to tie ourselves into a contract that is unrealistic. We want to know by 2011 what the funding is from Government before Oldham commits (*Oldham Chronicle*, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010).

It is of course possible that in a climate of recession, it will also be more difficult to gain long term commitment from the private and charitable sectors. Two of the principle roles within the OnSide team relate to the functions of fundraising in these two sectors. The management team of OnSide are acutely aware that for the private sector in particular, there needs to be a 'return on investment' insofar as sponsors are clear about the uses and benefits of their sponsorship: 'We're looking at social return investment models...quantifying the return on a £1 investment' (Interview March 2010). They are currently considering a number of models, including one from Youth Net, to assess their suitability.

The 10% contribution from young people is based on the existing BLGC practice which they will apply to the new premises. At the Youth Council Meeting in July 2008, it was suggested that projecting that the centre would have 300 young people going into it every day, a membership scheme could be put in place. Young people might pay £5.00 per year membership and 40p every time they visit. Those who are not members would be required to pay £1.00 at each visit. In interview in March 2010, it was suggested that young people might be paying 50p per visit.

The management team in OnSide are aware of the potential impact of the recession and are also clear that to meet the aspirations of the *myplace* vision, much more funding as well as voluntary effort is required than is immediately available.

## Evaluation

### Leading Practice themes

#### **1. Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy.**

OnSide is in the unique position of having a Chief Executive who worked closely with the DCSF in the initial thinking about the *myplace* Programme and also in being able to draw from experience of the Bolton Lads' and Girls' Club as a working model of successful practice within these terms of reference. The OnSide charity is a direct derivative of this and has the advantage of working as the lead for four *myplace* centres. As such it will be able to make economies of scale and co-ordinate activities on a highly structured model of organisation. The team believe that this is a positive advantage. At the same time, it has devised systems to enable each locality to develop its own particular scheme with reference to local circumstances and interests.

The model offers clarity of management, role and accountability and within a commonly structured model and in a commonly articulated vision of the key components and processes of the scheme. Systems of information and performance measurement are to be planned on the basis of what is important to families, what's important to young people, not just what's important to councillors, or government or academics. It's what's locally important and what communities want to see and that for me would be about participation, activity, behavioural change, families and aspiration and on ambition so those things that we know that we can measure...

However, during the evaluation visit it was also suggested that we really need to be having a much broader system of measuring our performance and measuring our impact on young people really. (Interview, March 2010).

There is a strong awareness of the need to conform to other features of measurement, including the cost-benefit expectations of the private sector and that 'it needs to complement the local authority statistics, it needs to feed into that'.

Data collection was recognised as beneficial not only to funders and the organisation but to young people themselves:

it's about using that info to reward young people so if we're into making kids more healthy and active so if you're working with young people on the climbing wall then very time they get 100 hours they get a free trip or something like that. That would be a big thing for kids if they got something which was of value to them. (Interview, March 2010)

In order to develop systems most effectively, the team are aware that an IT system will be necessary and they expect to need assistance in that.

The OnSide team believes that their *myplace* model offers an opportunity 'to do something much better than has been done before' and that 'there is the potential that we may be able to develop something that is useful to other *myplace* projects.'

In terms of Oldham itself, there was some indication that it might be possible to measure the impact of *myplace* by doing:

... some real baseline study about what life is like in Oldham and then 5 months, 12 months, two years down the line how things have changed for families (interview, March 2010).

## **2. Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action**

While the formal partnerships arrangements are limited to two partner organisations: OMBC and Positive Steps Oldham (a third sector organisation), a prominent feature of its claim to both sustainability and to taking an innovative approach is its partnership with the private sector (generating 25% of revenue funding). The private sector partners are identified as being 'prime advocates of the youth zone model' (s2.6) and will be both members of the Steering Group and the subsequent Board along with formal partners and young people.

OnSide have created a partnership flowchart which describes the process of mapping out what partners we need in each of the areas, so who we need to talk to in the council, youth workers etc. presenting to panels of people, working with young people and schools, the local academies.

It was considered vital for partnership success that clear targets and outputs for each area were known.

On specific partnership working, OnSide have taken the direct and proactive step of inviting local press editors onto the Board in recognition of the role of the media in marketing and promoting their work. It is an aim to repeat this across all four *myplace* locations:

The editor of the *Chronicle* in Oldham is on the Board and he is very supportive so there has been space in the paper given over to the young people to act as young reporters and I think they might be producing a copy of their own paper...That's a principle we're adopting across all the *Youth Zones*, if you get the editor of the local paper on the board then you really cement that relationship and it's critical (Interview, March 2010).

It is believed that this has helped create 'Huge enthusiasm wherever we go, people understand the value of what we're doing.'

It is clear that the press give sympathetic space to the development of the **myplace** scheme. However the opportunities for comment from the public available on their web site have resulted in a small amount of negative feedback, mainly relating to negative stereotypes of young people, and the amount of money being spent by the council on the scheme.

### **3. What a world-class facility looks like and how it works**

OnSide take their initiative for the meaning of 'world-class' from the highly publicised success of the Bolton Lads and Girls club which they apply to their concept of a Youth Zone. In their outline of the important features of a *Youth Zone*, they suggest that the following are 'non-negotiable':

- A wide range of high quality activities, from sport to arts
- Nominal entry fees
- Long opening hours – seven nights, weekends and all holidays
- Young people only – never dual use
- A strong young people's lead
- A safe, non-threatening environment
- A welcoming, accessible and fully inclusive setting
- Clear safeguarding arrangements
- A great atmosphere
- A 'tonight better than last night' philosophy
- A range of targeted projects (such as Mentoring) for the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people ([www.onsidenortwest.org/21st\\_century\\_youth\\_zones.html](http://www.onsidenortwest.org/21st_century_youth_zones.html)).

The Chief Executive of OnSide believes that

The **myplace** stipulation was based on an offer for young people which is as good as what adults have: cinemas, gyms, facilities seven days a week. Centres are there when schools are shut. They've got to be a mirror image of the school. So that means you open in the holidays... weekends...and it's making an offer that's as good as adults would expect in their activities. That was the underlying principle of the **myplace** programme. It's about giving the kids the best and what adults have had for the last twenty years (Interview, March 2010).

For the young people who spoke to the researcher, apart from the relevance of the activities on offer, it was stressed that:

We want it to be young person based, so many jobs for young people, and also a chance for young people to get qualifications and job opportunities. **myplace** is about young people and giving them somewhere to go (interview ,Young people, March 2010).

### **4. How to plan and deliver a world-class facility**

The OnSide model of *Youth Zones* is one which is highly structured and clear in its stated aims and principles.

It is planned with a view to recognising and meeting all needs and interests from policy makers, partners, sponsors and local community interest, but at the same time, it works to keep young people

within the centre of its vision, creating a structure whereby young people can be consulted and can participate throughout.

There is a strong emphasis on financial planning, clear, relevant organisational roles and lines of accountability. Strong role descriptions are in place for employees, and each has a clear understanding of their contribution to the whole scheme. This results in consistency of understanding, commitment and of 'message'.

Public relations were considered critical: 'you've really got to get the message out there if you're going to create that community ownership' and this is applied to each area at a local level' (Interview, March 2010).

##### **5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

The history of participation to date is identified in the project application and there is evidence that young people have been consulted throughout. The nature of consultation continues to have been limited predominantly to consideration of activity, design and naming. However, the process has enabled a wide range of young people to collaborate and to participate in associated activities which in themselves have increased levels of participation.

The Oldham Youth Council was provided with information at a very early stage of the planning and asked to participate in the process to which they agreed. Subsequently, a wider consultation through questionnaires administered in schools, youth clubs and to user groups was developed. This process was supported by the multi-agency group Active Involvement Matters (AIM). 1604 questionnaires returned and 450 young people indicated their willingness to be involved in further consultation events. From a subsequent consultation event 46 young people joined the Young Persons' Development Group which it is anticipated will become a 'key component in the governance of *Oldham Youth Zone*' (Baseline Report p. 45-47). Two members of the YPDG were interviewed together with reference to the evaluation.

In the initial stages of the Youth Development Group the young people took part in a weekend residential (Oct 2008) where 60 young people attended. They have also visited other projects such as Bolton Lads and Girls Club and Westminster Academy to consider design and build options and inform their own planning. It is felt that the *myplace* development 'will galvanise and maintain their [Young People's] interest for longer than would otherwise have happened' (Interview, March 2010).

There is evidence from published documents and from the interviews that young people do feel they had been listened to, and they cited the example of working with the architects to interpret their needs.

A carefully considered and planned goal for OnSide is 'absolute local ownership' with 'The young people's development group and Board work[ing] in parallel all the way up to the opening and we occasionally pull them together but we're quite deliberately not just putting one person on the Board and saying that ticks the box of youth engagement, it might be an unconventional model. (Interview, March 2010).

Sustaining the involvement of young people in the longer term especially between the process of planning and design through to build completion estimated at July 2011 is one of the difficulties encountered but this has been managed by involving young people particularly at key moments. Young people themselves acknowledged the process was aided by teamwork activities and 'treats'. "Throughout it after every stage we'll have a break, we've got a trip coming up in a couple of weeks, a celebratory event because we've done so much so far (Young person, YPDG March 2010). In discussing the opening of the new building, one of the workers suggested that making sure every young person in Oldham was aware of the facility was important and that one of the challenges is to 'go into schools and ensure that everybody in Oldham 3 months before, know exactly what is planned and we'll stop them and ask them. I will go to Oldham and I will stop 20 people' (interview, March 2010).

Young People are excited about the demolition process scheduled for July 2010, identifying it as an opportunity to 'blow something up' legitimately (!) They believed that this event would stimulate interest in the development within the wider community of young people through the visibility of this particular aspect of the development.

Summer is when the demolition starts and that's going to be a big thing for us, we want to push the button, we have said we want to be there and want an event so people know why it's being demolished and then young people will get excited, its right next to a school as well. We like press opportunities (Group Interview, Young People, March 2010).

One young person felt it important that the Youth Zone 'have a general feel of comfort so they want to keep coming back and back...Having loads of people talking about this Beacon will give a more positive image of young people' (ibid).

The site for the building is near the town centre and the 'community' constituency in terms of locality is less evident. The whole of Oldham is addressed by the development which is for all young people. The downside of this is possibly a loss of active participation on the part of local adults who are not directly engaged through the Board, the local council or professional responsibility for young people. This could be problematic in light of the perceived need to attract at least 75 volunteers to enable the scheme to work to the rigours of 'world-class' activity as envisioned by the sponsors.

#### **6. How to secure funding and generate income**

The fundraising plan follows the formula developed by OnSide described above, and is anticipated to see the project through its first three years.

Young people will be charged 50p per 4 hour session not only to contribute towards the funds but also to 'make it possible to keep to the value of what *myplace* is all about' (Interview, March 2010).

Workers advocated the wisdom of building working relationships with the Chief Executives of Local councils especially in the current economic climate 'so you've got the buy-in from the top in places where potentially you've got issues - in Oldham and Blackburn and towns where there are nothing for young people to do, so they realise how critical having a *myplace* is. But they are going to come under great pressure in the next two years' (Interview, March 2010).

In addition to the four current *myplace* developments currently underway under the wing of OnSide, a fifth development in Wigan is currently being considered with private finance. It was suggested that it would "be interesting if out of this government funding it stimulates the private sector once that initial funding is over, so a reverse of what would usually be the case' (Interview, March 2010).

#### **7. How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people**

The consistent message of commitment to the *myplace* development coming from sponsors is reinforced by the communication and consultation with young people. The emphasis is on a combination of leisure activity, recreation and association and training, all of which are inscribed within the developmental practices associated with the processes of consultation. Members of the Young People's Development Group (YPDG) have received training, worked with architects and designers on building features and branding, and undertaken a variety of tasks such as consultation with other young people, presentations to the Board and to the Council, marketing, reporting, publicising. To aid communication with other young people each YPDG has a Facebook page.

There is a sense that the achievement of world-class relates to a responsibility to do well in every aspect of the work and to seek the best quality with reference to every part of the process in order that there can be some ownership and pride taken by local people:

We're just trying to be the best we can be, and have a standard of what you're aspiring to do, you just want something that the town is proud of, that every family is aware of and values. That's what you're aiming for and if through the process it becomes world-class then so be it. It's about your responsibility to local people, local kids and everybody is aware and proud of what it is.

Everything has got to be the best and that is the message because what they're used to is the worst (Interview, Mach 2010).

Clarity of role, accountability and to targets and measurement are integrated into this approach by OnSide.

Because of the stage of the development of the project, the everyday processes of management are currently aspirational although some structural feature, for example Young People's participation in the Board are in evidence. Less clear are the systems to be implemented relating to the organisation of volunteer, the co-ordination of workers from different services using the building and the management and maintenance of plant.

### **8. The importance of leadership.**

OnSide has been developed with a clear image of central leadership and commitment legitimated by participation, deliberation and the search for consensus among all those with investment and interest in the scheme. In the context of *myplace*, effective leadership was defined with reference to 'an understanding of what young people want and an ability to communicate that so that other people want to do it as well, having a vision and sticking to it (Interview, March 2010).

Individuals are important in this process but the probity of the organisation was a crucial factor in establishing effective leadership. It was considered vital that the lead agency consistently demonstrated self-confidence, maintained links with relevant partners and other interested parties and demonstrated capacity in the process:

You have to be persistent on this. It's not an easy thing to do because they're basically giving you 10% of the revenue costs and nothing towards the capital so in a business sense it's a non starter but the benefits can be huge so its convincing people that (Interview, March 2010).

The staff of OnSide are, as planned, taking a central leadership role for the development of the building and the work, and have legal responsibilities for the contract and capacity building. The intention is that once these responsibilities are fulfilled, leadership can become more local with the centre boards and the young people's development groups taking greater responsibility. The plan is to 'step back at that stage but not step away as that is when there is potential for the six centres to network together and any others that want to come and join in' (Interview, March 2010).

## **Outcomes**

### **1. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure activities that support their personal and social development.**

The process of engagement with young people has been underway since the project was conceived. The Youth council was a key body for making initial contact, and members of the council both agreed to support the *myplace* bid in early 2008. Participation has widened through the use of Facebook and a training event designed to develop a young people's consultative group involved 45, many of whom had not previously known each other.

Given the long planning and development lead-in, attention has been given to involvement of young people in designing and planning the facility and in training and development that would enable them to consider the relevant issues associated with the process of establishing such a building. There are issues of sustaining energy and interest over the time period, and from the young people's perspective, the moment of demolition of the old building will be a key moment in maintaining their interest. Meanwhile, participation has been kept in train through involvement at key events followed by 'treats' as a reward for the energy and time committed. Those who have participated have clearly benefited from the training and development opportunities presented by their involvement.

Publicity material shows that there is some diversity of ethnicity among the young people involved although at the present time it is unclear how far the work is reaching those who might be defined as seriously disadvantaged or disabled. Ethnicity and disability are important factors in thinking about design.

Plans to ensure that the building is open seven days a week, outside of school hours as well as during school hours 'for those who are excluded', and at weekends are important considerations in considering the extent of possible engagement.

**2. *More young people, parents and communities feel the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a range of exciting activities.***

One member of the YPDG described the current situation as she saw it:

... there's not a lot for young people, we've got youth centres which are quite run down, but there isn't really much, we have 3 youth buses in Oldham that work like youth centres but we haven't really got a lot (March 2010)

It was felt that '**myplace** will give so many more young people somewhere to go rather than just hanging around the streets in the town centre'.

Alongside the excitement around the Youth Zone development it was acknowledged within OnSide that:

there is a nervousness among the small existing voluntary organisations and the first thing that we've done...is to stress that this is additional provision. It's not about closing other centres to make way for one brand new one (Interview, March, 2010).

This concern was reflected by two members of the Youth Development Group

They don't want **myplace** to remove all the youth centres, the Youth Zone will be good for everyone, everybody will find something in there that they like, but it can't take away what you get from your own local youth centre. We're getting that point across a bit more now. Young people are comfortable where they are and although they'll be encouraged to come here they'll still want that comfortable zone. (Interview Young Person, March 2010)

Participation is seen as one of the positive activities by the young people themselves who recognise the transferable skills gained through their involvement with the process. 'It definitely, gives us a broader future, something we can build on for the future for a future career (Young person). Accessibility and safety have also been stressed throughout, and these have been key aspects of the planning processes relating to the building.

There has been a great deal of discussion about the planned facilities and programme, but the plan as originally conceived, to develop a sports-focused facility with creative multi-use spaces and offices has been maintained throughout modifications to the building design.

At present there is little evidence of the views of parents and other members of the community beyond targeted groups and individual associated with the development of the project and a very small minority who have commented in response to newspaper reports. This is related partly to the determination to centre young people in the developmental stage and to maintain the focus on their needs. It is also related to the situation of the project in the town centre. OnSide is committed to family and community support and efforts at publicity and information dissemination are directed towards this end.

More young people have access to information, advice and guidance from within places they feel comfortable.

Oldham intends to identify service delivery for young people with *myplace* and services will be delivered jointly with youth workers within the building. The scheme is committed to the integrated approach promoted by the Every Child Matters agenda and youth centres are understood as a hub, involving an evening club, sports programmes and out-of school care via which young people can be directed towards a range of targeted services as appropriate. Youth workers are central to this process.

There are plans to include offices within the building but the intention is to prioritise and reinforce young people's ownership of the space. (Baseline Report p. 39) The Youth Zone vision insists that the new buildings to be developed are 'youth' and not 'community' centred and that services will be directed solely for the use of young people. This was reinforced by a worker at OnSide:

Our model is to be Young People only and we work with the age range 8-21 years and up to 25 for those with disabilities, within that age group our main focus is to work with young people aged 13-19 years Interview, March 2010).

The significance of the youth club model was affirmed by the young people involved:

We really didn't want it to be that [community]. It was about the young people having something. We've got the gallery and the library that was built just a few years ago which anyone can use, we wanted something that was about us." (Interview, Young Person, March 2010)

### **3. *Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.***

OnSide is particularly committed to a model of public-private-third sector partnership. In Oldham strong relationships have developed between OnSide, a local charity (the Stoller Foundation), and with the local newspaper.

The role descriptions of OnSide workers include a requirement that these relationships are developed and supported. Their success is crucial to financial sustainability and also to satisfactory governance which integrates an ideal of citizenship participation in youth development.

While relationships are positive and developing, there are some concerns about their ability to deliver planned outcomes because of instabilities in the economy affecting all sectors.

## Case study 6: Parkfield, Torbay

Lead partner: Torbay Council

Key contact: Maggie Naylor, seconded from South Devon YMCA

Total award: £4.9 million

### Overview

The unitary authority of Torbay consists of three small towns in the South West of England – Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. The bay is a popular tourist spot and the population of approximately 133,000, (10% of which are aged 11-19) almost trebles in the peak summer season.

Much of the available work in the area is associated with tourism. As such it tends to be seasonal and be characterised by long hours, low wages and low skill. There are few entry level graduate jobs available and there is a tendency for young people who gain higher educational qualifications to leave the area. Torbay is thus one of the most deprived areas in England. There is a large transient population, a large proportion of whom are dependent on benefits, and who often live in poor quality rented housing. There are high rates of teenage pregnancy. School attendance is below the national average and rates of school exclusion are high. Rates of first time entry into the criminal justice system are also high among young people. As a consequence, Torbay is one of the ten Local authorities classified as a ‘targeted youth support area’.

The local authority has been working with the support of the ‘youth Task force and Government Office South West to address the issues associated with the circumstances of young people in the area, and its corporate assessment of Torbay in 2007 the National Audit Commission was largely favourable in its findings on work with children and young people. In 2007, the proportion of young people in education, employment and training was above the national average, including those young people who have been looked after. Achievement of general and vocational A/AS levels or equivalent was above the national average and success rates at college were also generally above average. Young people were thought to receive good advice and guidance through the Connexions Strategy. The council and its partners have collaborated effectively to extend and appropriately target the range of 14-19 provision. Support for care leavers is good. Effective action has been taken to ensure that young people have access to decent housing. Yet despite such a positive picture the underlying problematic issues relating to the range of social and economic disadvantages which arise out of local circumstances continue to need addressing.

The application for **myplace** funding for the Torbay scheme should be understood in the context of the continuing need to offer specific services to young people disadvantaged by local conditions.

### The project

In June 2008, in response to the announcement by government of the **myplace** scheme, Torbay Council’s Children’s Services put out a call for local groups and organisations to construct a multi-agency bid to work with the council to ‘create a new and impressive facility for young people in the Bay’. In its press release about the scheme, and in the application pack which it put together for interested organisations, reference was made to research which demonstrated that young people in the area were asking for ‘safe places to go that offer exciting activities and opportunities’ (Press Release, 30 June 2008).

**myplace** was promoted by the council as significant to its developing work to improve outcomes for children and young people in the area, and as complementary to other initiatives in the locality:

Torbay is working hard to improve the outcomes for children and young people particularly focusing on the areas of early intervention, extended services and more places to go and things to do for young people. As an example the council has recently formed a multi-agency partnership to host 'R nite' Saturdays at Torbay Leisure Centre. This fantastic initiative enables young people aged 13-19 from across the Bay to take part in positive activities such as sporting activities and workshops and also gives them the opportunity to access advice, support and information every Saturday night.

We want to build on this success and the chance to access '**myplace**' funding will give us the opportunity to create a brand new state-of-the-art building designed by young people that is dedicated to their needs (Ali Matthews, Assistant Director for Early Intervention, Press Release 30 June 2008).

The initiative from the Children's Services was managed by the project manager of South Devon YMCA and the eventual bid which was submitted was led by Torbay council in partnership with a range of organisations which included the YMCA. The local newspaper, the Herald and Express reported that:

The success of securing the funding is down to the expertise of Torbay Council officers and the YMCA in submitting the bid and to the young people in the Bay 6 for their hard work and creative input (4<sup>th</sup> March 2009).

The successful bid was for £4.875million towards a project with a total cost of £7.2 million, to create a 'world-class' youth centre at the Parkfield House site on Paignton sea front, linked with two satellite mobile centres in Brixham and Eltham.

## The developing situation

### Organisational arrangements

The **myplace** project is managed by Torbay Council's Parkfield Management Team, in partnership with a range of local organisations, including:

- Connexions
- Groundwork SW, S
- Shekinah Mission
- Torbay Voluntary Service
- The Children's Society
- South Devon College
- YMCA South Devon.

Partner agencies have been involved in a Partnership Board since July 2009 and will continue to be involved in the delivery of services once the centre is up and running.

There is a possibility that some partners will give up their current premises in order to move onto the new site. This is considered to be important because having a vested interest is related to levels of commitment to the overall project. Organisations were expected to demonstrate their commitment to the vision and direction of **myplace** before they could be included in the partnership (Interview, Feb. 2010). The role of the project manager has been central to extending the range of organisations that

might be included in the arrangements, working beyond those 'delivering on service level agreements'.

The **myplace** project will use the hub and spoke model of organisation which is already mobilised by Torbay Council through its strategic vision.

While the current situation is that the Local Authority maintains its position as the lead body, it is anticipated that this might not necessarily remain the case in the long term. It is considered possible that **myplace** could succeed as an independent partnership body working within the local authority strategy but with its own objectives.

## Youth Participation

Young people have been involved since the outset of the process. Twelve young people from Brixham, Paignton and Torquay, had formed a steering group by July 2008 in order to participate in decision making regarding the bid. It was reported in a press release by the council, (18<sup>th</sup> July 2008) that:

The young people have called the steering group 'Bay 6' as they represent six local schools while also using the name as a play on words as the young people believe involving young people with any project for young people should be the 'basic' starting point. Four members of 'Bay 6' will sit on the **myplace** short listing panel, alongside four adults - Cllr Anna Tolchard (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Jan White (Connexions), Caroline Jones (Children's Society) and Nicky Corbett (Student Services, South Devon College).

The Bay 6 group participated in a consultation exercise in which 3000 young people in the locality were asked for their views in relation to the development. The group also undertook responsibility for promoting the scheme through school assemblies and presentations to tutor groups. In addition, they organised open days in various locations across the bay area to ensure that as many young people as possible had the opportunity to participate in the discussions

After winning the finance, the young people became involved in consultations about the design of the new centre and worked alongside the architects with the help of the Sorrell Foundation to create the plan for the development. In July 2009, they presented the concept designs at Parkfield House explaining how young people came up with ideas for the centre, what it means to them and how it will benefit other young people in the Bay area (Press Release, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008).

## Activities

The centre will offer a wide range of leisure, training and support activities. In its press release regarding the bid, (4<sup>th</sup> March 2009) The Big Lottery highlighted:

- indoor and outdoor skate and BMX park;
- a multi-use games area;
- arts performance space;
- a recording studio;
- a large horizontal climbing wall linking the two buildings; and
- a BMX dirt track, which will run through the site's adjoining woodlands.

Ali Matthews, Executive Head of Early Intervention at Torbay Council, indicated that the intention was to make use of Torbay's natural assets and that this included beach and water sports. Other activities planned in this context included kite surfing, sailing and windsurfing.

In addition, the centre would be the base for other youth related services and activities including training and apprenticeships in areas such as catering, outdoor education and sports, to be delivered by existing local providers including local colleges, and a range of advice and support services including careers advice and sexual health clinics would also be based at the centre.

The centre will be open at times requested by young people including evenings and weekends. It is planned that the programme will incorporate the following:

- **Information Advice and Guidance** - 2 hour drop-in session per day plus pre-booked sessions and counselling Monday to Friday.
- **Education programmes** - Term-time courses for 5 hours per day provided 5 days a week.
- **Sporting activities inside** - Taster sessions of sporting activities for one hour per day. Coaching sessions 4 hours per week on each activity. Social night 2 hours every Saturday night Competitions, leagues and matches weekly.
- **Wheeled Sports (BMX track - Skate Park)** - Taster sessions of sporting activities for one hour per day. Coaching sessions 14 hours per week on each activity. Weekend social sessions. Monthly national and regional competitions. Demonstration weekend events.
- **Outdoor and water sport programmes** - Taster days. Coaching days. Residential Trips. Holiday programmes and accreditation awards.
- **Music and Dance workshops (DJ booths, Recording Studio, Performance Space, Concerts, Drama)** - Taster session in all areas. DJ booth one sessions. Dance and Drama Workshops. Concerts 1 per 8 weeks.

The two satellite venues in **Brixham** and **Ellacombe** will provide activities and services geared specifically to their locality. A detached and street based programme is being developed in the spoke areas especially in areas of deprivation or where transport is an issue. These sessions run throughout the week and at weekend. Mobile youth provision is delivered in the form of converted Luton vans called the Box and Boxer which provide lunchtime provision on community school sites and in the evening providing community provision in the three towns in areas with social housing.

It is anticipated that during the holiday season there will be competition for the use of the Parkfield facilities with tourists. It therefore envisaged that special events geared to local young people, and prioritising them will be organised during the summer season.

## Building Design

The new facility involves the renovation of Parkfield House, a Grade II listed building latterly used as council officers. The building is situated in a central location on the sea front in Paignton and occupying an extensive area of land including nine acres of part and woodland.

Parkfield House in Paignton is an ideal location for **myplace** as it enjoys a central location which will enable young people from all over the Bay to enjoy the world-class youth centre (Cabinet member for children's services, Cllr Anna Tolchard quoted in *Herald Express*, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009).

The proposed site is in the middle of postcodes TQ1-TQ5. In finding a site a number of criterion were considered important. Firstly territorial issues and the need for relative neutrality, second, ease of access from the surrounding postcodes, thirdly, centrality and the right size and potential to offer a world-class/quality facility. The Paignton site fulfils all of these requirements.

It was expected that the offices would be vacated and that work would start on the renovation and building during 2010 with an anticipated completion date in 2011.

The RIBA award winning architects Feilden Clegg Bradley were appointed to work with the ideas presented to them by the young people and planning permission for the development was approved by the Council's Development and Management Committee 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The planning permission included the development of youth hostel type accommodation and office space for a multi-disciplinary team focused on young people. It was emphasised that the design would be particularly sensitive to the qualities of the Grade II listed building.

The plans for the new development have been modelled and were published in the newsletter of Brixham town council:



([www.brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk))

Images of the current site and suggesting the way in which it will be developed are available on 'My Bay' a web site geared towards providing information for local young people ([www.my-bay.info/april\\_2009.pdf](http://www.my-bay.info/april_2009.pdf))

## Governance

On a day to day basis there will be a management team with responsibility for running the facility. The management team will include the Centre Manager, Business/Events Manager, Senior Youth Worker, Duty Manager and P/T Project Manager. They will meet on a weekly basis. The Centre Manager will report to the Board of Management and the Principal Youth Officer will act as line manager for the Centre Manager.

The Board of Managers is made up of up of partners, council officers' (accounts and legal), the Principal Youth Officer and representatives of the Young Peoples' User Board. The board will meet once every two months. It will make all strategic decisions for Parkfield. The Board of Management will meet with Torbay Council's Legal and Human Resources dept if any disputes are unresolved by the management team. The Young People's User Board will also have representation on the Board of Management. The Participation Youth Worker will facilitate this group. The Centre Manager will also attend these monthly meetings; young people will develop ideas and share their concerns with Centre Manager, who in turn will discuss with the management team. The young people's user group will be invited to regular management team meetings.

In the process of developing the partnership work there has been a continuing expectation that Board members will play a vibrant and active role as opposed to the token participation which can characterise similar bodies in which 'the same people end up going to the same meeting all the time. As the board comes together so specific people could be co-opted on when necessary with a small core of dynamic people rather than hosting people who aren't directly involved.

It is considered appropriate that the local authority is represented both from both a legal and financial perspective at the current time, but looking to the future it is believed that there is potential to develop the **myplace** project as an independent trust with a board of directors, board of trustees and a management group, including young people. It is possible that a more independent model of governance would also contextualise the project within the community. With this in mind, Torbay **myplace** has looked at other models of governance such as the Salmon Youth Centre and Bolton Lads and Girls Club as independent trusts.

## Income generation

The total cost of the scheme is estimated at £7.2 million of which £4.875million has been granted through **myplace**.

The business plan shows that the local authority will contribute 10% of the total costs and identifies a range of revenue sources that will sustain the project:

- Hostel and backpacker accommodation which will be provided for residential group/outdoor education programmes
- Extreme water and land based activities
- Catering
- Tourism use of the facilities.

It is recognised that there are different and sometimes competing interests focused around income generation. In particular, whilst it is believed that tourism is a useful source of income, this could compete with the focus on the needs of local young people. It is intended that there will be a subsidy for young people living in the local postcode areas targeted by the **myplace** project. Payment will be through the use of membership swipe cards with differential costs. Those living in districts adjoining the priority areas will pay double the lowest cost, those from the wider Devon area will pay treble. There will be a premium membership rate for those taking out holiday membership.

Further areas of exploration for funding generation include:

- Charity Auctions
- Friends of Parkfield. Business Sponsorship
- Business advertising boards
- Parkfield website advertising
- Public Art Commissioned and the public to buy a piece advice being sought from The Arts Council

It is planned to develop the funding strategy through the employment of a business/events manager at Torbay council.

## Evaluation

### Leading Practice themes

#### **1. Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy.**

**myplace** is situated squarely within Torbay Council's Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Integrated Youth Strategy for the area. Each of the contributing organisations within the partnership

will bring a range of expertise and services to the facility which contributes towards the achievement of the strategy. Thus:

- **Connexions** will run a series of drop in sessions and pre-booked appointments for young people wanting advice, information and guidance on education, employment and training;
- **Groundwork SW** will offer a horticultural programme;
- **Shekinah Mission** will run the cafe which includes a training kitchen;
- **Torbay Voluntary Service** will appoint a specialist worker to assess and induct all volunteer placements to the Parkfield site;
- **The Children's Society** will run a series of drop-in sessions using existing staff for young people in crisis. The drop-in service will be supported by a number of specialist casework initiatives that have been developed to meet the particular needs of young people - for example counselling, drugs and alcohol, housing and running away;
- **South Devon College** will provide students with opportunities to gain work-based experience from level entry 1 to foundation degree courses;
- **YMCA South Devon** will extend their provision of alternative education programmes for primary and secondary young people to offer more practical based learning for those who are excluded or on the verge of exclusion from mainstream education.

In addition, music, art, drama and sporting activities will be provided directly by the management team within the Parkfield facility ensuring in the process that young people are able to directly influence the design and delivery of the programme. Across all activities and services, the management team will also ensure that Torbay Council's anti-bullying strategy is used and monitored. The opening hours will be 9am – 10pm seven days a week. It is planned that the effectiveness of the scheme will be measured according to the following targets:

- 2000 young people will report they feel safer and are more confident, and feel there are less barriers to them, to access positive activities, across a range of sites in Torbay by the end of the third year of opening;
- 3000 young people who use the centre will have healthier lifestyles with improved understanding of personal health issues including sex and relationships, substance misuse, healthy eating, exercise and mental wellbeing by the end of the third year of opening;
- 3000 young people will report having fun as well as having received an accredited award as part of their involvement with the project by the third year of opening;
- 1000 young people will have been involved in making a positive contribution within their community either by direct involvement in decision making within the project and within wider networks and forums or through placement, work experience and volunteering opportunities offered through the project by the third year of opening;
- 50 local voluntary youth and community groups that use the centre report enhanced partnership working with the public sector by the end of the second year of opening.

## **2. Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action**

Agencies involved in the partnership believe that through **myplace** it will be possible for different partners to offer more than if they were to work independently. For example North Devon College will be able to use **myplace** as a training venue working with outside trainers to run a music training project. Working independently a project like this would not be possible.

As the lead body, the local authority has been keen to select partners who demonstrate a willingness to collaborate. A partner is 'seen as someone who puts something into the jigsaw, a partner is a

cornerstone with *myplace* empowering organisations to do more than they might achieve on their own' (Interview, Feb. 2010).

It was emphasised during the case study visit that being closely bound to the local authority in the planning stages has had significant advantages, particularly in the area of planning and finance. The local authority's ability to manage a capital project of this size has proved particularly helpful.

### **3. *What a world-class facility looks like and how it works***

The ideal of 'world-class' has been used throughout the planning stages of the Torbay project, although it is recognised that this is a subjective concept. For many of the young people involved in the planning, the main concern has been about getting the best accessible facilities at the cheapest cost. It is thought that the idea of 'having the best' rather than 'world-class' would better describe the focus of the young people. Young people have talked about the 'wow' factor being important, but as something that lasts, not just the first time they go in.

Certain areas of the project are more commensurate with the idea of world-class than others insofar as there are objective measures, for example, BMX tracks are described as international or world-class in competition terms. With this in mind young people have something to tangibly measure against when determining the standard of the resources they are getting.

Having staff who share the same commitment to quality is something that has been identified as a defining feature of a world-class facility; providing a warm and attractive presence for young people. It is envisaged that staff in a world-class facility will be able to foster opportunities for an evolving programme and relationships that provide scope for development.

World class has also been taken as meaning a facility that brings people together; having a unifying effect, accessible for all. Planning for the new facilities with its hub and spoke arrangement, with the concentrated attention to prioritising the needs of different groups of young people in the particular local context, and in the sense of the willingness of services to engage in collaborative partnership work to achieve the aspirations of the local plans for children and young people's services, are understood as contributions to the world-class vision. Within this, the participation of young people is also understood as crucial.

### **4. *How to plan and deliver a world-class facility***

During the case study visit, a number of criteria were outlined as necessary for planning and delivering something which might attain world-class status. They were:

- planning consistency
- identity maintenance
- recognising the significance of local history and its influence on current circumstances;
- a willingness to think differently and to look to new ideas for inspiration
- an ability to compromise where necessary.

In relation to the last point, some limitations on aspiration have already been experienced within the planning processes. For example, it was noted that there is more flexibility of thought within the Voluntary Sector than within the Local Authority because of the nature of the organisation. It was pointed out that it is not always possible for young people to succeed in achieving their aspirations because of funding limitations. Overall, funding can be a major limiting factor. Related to this, a specific frustration for the Parkfield development, and particularly for young people's hopes, was that at one stage the size of the skate board ramps and the standard of the BMX track were at risk of being scaled back due to financial constraints. Eventually, the money was found from within the existing budget and the matter was fully resolved. It was believed that acknowledging constraints

could be turned to advantage with regard to the participation of young people insofar as it provided them with an opportunity to learn how to negotiate and to make realistic decisions.

Youth participation is understood within Torbay as central to world-class planning for young people. The involvement of young people in Torbay **myplace** right from the start, both in consultation and in the decision-making processes and structures has been achieved through a 'bottom up' approach facilitated and mediated with the support of youth workers.

Having clear structural arrangements for management and decision making is also identified as important. Structurally **myplace** in Torbay has involved a group of different boards networking together, deliberating with one another in what might be better described as a web of leadership all contributing to the strategic management board in which the objectives of and for young people are central. The importance of strong management and understanding of people is also seen as a defining feature of a world-class facility. The right sort of leadership is required. The hour glass model has been used to represent the leadership strategy with staff at one end, board at the other and the manager/ **myplace** CEO, feeding upwards and downwards.

##### **5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

Being involved in project development has provided young people with opportunities to play a key role in important decisions. This has been facilitated by the involvement of the **myplace** project manager who has been seconded from South Devon YMCA to work for Torbay Council. Over a period of 15 months the project manager has built up relationships with a core group of young people who make up the steering group, Bay 6. There have been changes to the steering group over the fifteen month period as new tasks have attracted young people with different interests. – making engagement with this group a dynamic and process-based exercise.

With reference to the intention to target work with particular groups of young people, the worker has encouraged participation within the group itself of a range of young people, some of whom might ordinarily be targeted by the Youth Service. These include teenage parents, young people excluded from mainstream school who are now participating in alternative education programmes, young people with learning disabilities and young people known to the local youth offending teams. On a wider level, a series of events and processes have been established to ensure the possibility of all young people in the area understanding the nature of the developments and contributing their views. This has included members of Bay 6 talking to other young people through schools, and the use of electronic media, specifically disseminating information via the e-newsletter 'My Bay'.

A significant task in working with the Bay 6 group has been to manage the tension between their ideals and the realities of what might be achieved. In particular, there were issues relating to the original architectural designs which were not what the young people had envisaged. The young people were encouraged to engage with a process of negotiation which involved challenging the designs. Rather than equating decision making with power and control, young people have been encouraged to listen and engage with ideas of others, taking a more collaborative approach to working with others rather than simply giving their opinions and expecting their ideas to be upheld by decision makers higher up the chain.

By being involved, young people are starting to think for themselves, they are learning negotiation skills. Being involved in the process of project development has created belief and improved self esteem of hard to reach young people. Examples of such development include one young person involved in the project design is now working as a volunteer youth worker and peer mentor and looking to develop professionally within this field. Another young person who has been excluded from mainstream education and has to be transported outside of the local authority to be educated now has a placement working with the new architects.

With reference to community interest, There is a Deed of Covenant on the Parkfield site where the **myplace** which means that site must be used for the community. The site currently has a high profile

in the community because it is currently in an unkempt state and the existing gardening nursery is also in considerable disrepair.

Young people have been working with local residents around the impact of improved provision for local young people through a series of public consultations but this is a recent development in the context of the overall gestation of the project. This has led to young people and youth workers having to address concerns from local people that the development will turn out to be something of a white elephant. Rather than reacting negatively to hostile views, the Bay 6, working with Maggie Naylor, project manager, have been in a position to reason and engage with local people during these public consultations.

The project plans to encourage local community interest. One idea is to develop a patron /friends society/community partnerships model where individuals and businesses would be able to offer support with skills, fundraising and sponsorship thereby attracting people with an interest in the site, creating a sense of ownership.

It is envisaged that adults will be present and visible on site, making use of facilities at certain times, but also in supporting their own children in activities. There will be places for parents and carers to watch and support built in to the outdoor facilities. It is also envisaged that adult community groups may make use of the facilities at various times. With this in mind there is a clear sense that while providing a place/space for young people, it is seen visibly within a community context through support and engagement in the activities on offer.

## **6. How to secure funding and generate income**

The business plan was put together by two key figures - Ali Matthews, Executive Head (Assistant Director) for Children's Services and Maggie Naylor seconded from the voluntary sector (YMCA), both of whom have been involved in the **myplace** project from the outset.

A strategy is in place for meeting the revenue costs which involves the employment of a Business/Events Manager who will be employed by Torbay Council.

It is agreed that the funding strategy will have all the following elements. It will:

- outline the organisation's current financial and funding situation;
- clarify the amount of money that needs to be raised;
- agree who is responsible for raising the money;
- describe the methods to be used ; and
- have a timescale within which the money is to be raised.

Like other plans, the fundraising strategy will be monitored and reviewed regularly to see if Parkfield is meeting its fundraising goals. It is believed that one of the benefits of having such a strategy is that it allows Parkfield to plan fundraising in the long term and it enables staff and stakeholders to engage with the fundraising process.

## **7. How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people**

Those involved in the Torbay development are particularly keen to ensure that the new facility is suitable for the needs of young people. In approaching the task, they have centred the interests of young people while continuing to pay attention to the circumstances of the locality. The hub and spoke model is particularly relevant in this context. In addition, they have directed their attention to the local authority's planning and the **myplace** development is an intrinsic part of the strategy for children and young people in the area.

The range of activities planned and programmed for the project are designed both to stimulate interest and enable young people to develop skills while at the same time addressing needs arising from deprivation and from the particular circumstances of youth.

Many young people in this area claim that they want to leave. Apart from the local tourist industry, youth participation workers describe Torbay as an area that has little to offer its young people. This view is compounded in the often negative perception of young people hanging around with nothing to do as portrayed in the local media. Through consultation exercises, young people have made it clear that their priorities are for:

- freely available activities in their local area;
- affordable transport;
- an increase in the range of information available and ways in which it can be accessed;
- an opportunity to shape services;
- an improved feeling of safety;
- confidential access to services where and when they want them;
- places to meet friends, activities at the weekend and in the evenings;
- a positive image of young people in Torbay.

The **myplace** plans incorporate an intention to address all of these priorities. To achieve this, it is stressed that workers involved in the project will need to fulfil a number of roles and that the centre should not be seen simply as a leisure facility or a youth centre. The workers will need to possess the characteristics of skilled youth workers including the capacity to be reflective, think critically, and engage people in dialogue. They will also need to be able run a project or administrate, deal with logistical issues and at the same time encourage and empower young people.

#### **8. The importance of leadership.**

The **myplace** development has been led by one key person since the outset of the council's decision to become involved. Maggie Naylor who has been seconded from the YMCA, is described by others as, 'a person centred professional who empowers people to facilitate their own lives and their surrounding communities'. She has extensive knowledge and is widely respected among those agencies involved at a partnership level and this has helped in bringing people together. Her skills and disposition as a relational youth worker have been crucial in building up relationships and developing the work of the Bay6 group of young people over the past 15 months.

There are no signs of leadership tensions in the **myplace** processes in Torbay and this relates to the clear allocation of responsibility for co-ordination and direction to one person. However, the level of responsibility in these terms is enormous. Maggie Naylor has covered a range of duties from chasing young people to attend workshops to delivering presentations and writing business plans. More support in terms of supporting young people would have been helpful. There have been opportunities to engage young people but not always the resources to support the type of engagement that is desired, for example there is the potential for every activity to have its own young persons' group. Currently there is an emerging BMX/skate park club of young people who are interested in managing that particular part of the **myplace** facility. In the long term investment at this level could have economic benefits as young people with support are prepared to take more responsibility for services. Creating a sense of ownership and involvement could add a further dimension to the way in which the project is led.

## Outcomes

### **1. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development.**

This has been evident in the processes of consultation and youth participation associated to date with the *myplace* development. There are specific examples of young people from disadvantaged circumstances improving their situation because of such involvement. There are structures in place to maintain this, but it could be further enhanced with additional youth worker support.

There are practical problems about accessing the project when it is completed relating to transport. Negotiations are currently underway for reduced fares for young people accessing the facility during evenings. Every effort will be made to ensure the project is accessible to young people from each of the three towns. Satellite sites and mobile provision in non-central districts will add to this process.

The development site will conform to the council standards for disability access and health and safety.

### **2. More young people, parents and communities feel that the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities.**

The scheme adds to the amount of provision available for young people in the Torbay area. Young people have demonstrated their commitment to it and structures are in place to ensure that it attracts them across a wide range of needs and interests.

Specific targets are in place for measuring the success of the venture in these terms.

### **3. More young people have access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable.**

Through the partnership arrangements, a range of services will be made available including, information, advice and guidance for young people in crisis, work placements, modern apprenticeships, information, advice and guidance around education, careers and training, alternative education programmes and play schemes.

One area of concern in developing partnership work has been that some young people have had difficulty engaging with statutory services. This needed to be addressed as part of the service level agreement, specifically around issues such as information sharing protocols and confidentiality. Further case study work may show whether the young people, particularly the hard to reach are less likely to access the *myplace* project given the partners involved.

### **4. Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.**

The scheme is led by the local authority and predominantly includes statutory services and voluntary sector partners working alongside young people.

Strong arrangements are in place to maintain and enhance the partnership with future potential for the scheme to develop as an independent body.

Financial planning includes reference to the local community and the private sector.

## Case study 7: Shoeburyness Youth Centre

Lead Organisation: Southend on Sea Borough Council

Contact: Mrs Janice Lyons

Amount: £2.9 million

### Overview

#### The Place

Shoeburyness is an area facing a number of challenges. It is defined as a 'super output area', that is a small geographical area, consisting of an average of 1500 people of which there are 32,482 in England. Of all the children and young people on roll in Southend schools who live in the Shoeburyness area, 51% live within one of the 30% most deprived super output areas compared to 34% for Southend as a whole. Of these children and young people, 20% live in one of the 10% most deprived super output areas in the country compared to 9% for Southend as a whole.

Southend has a significantly higher proportion of dependent children in lone parent families compared with neighbouring areas, England and East of England. Of children and young people on the Southend-on-Sea child protection register, 17% live in Shoeburyness.

A higher proportion of children in Southend live in a household where no adult is working compared with England and East of England. In 2007 this amounted to a total of 1823. The number of local residents with a qualification to NVQ level 4 (18.4%) continues to fall far short of the East of England average (25%) and the national average (27.4%).

The Shoeburyness postcode is SS3. Between July 2006 and June 2008, 16% of all recording crime committed in Southend took place in the SS3 area (Source: Southend-on-Sea Youth Offending Service). Between April 2007 and June 2008 576 incidents of anti-social behaviour were recorded with rowdy and/or nuisance behaviour accounting for the majority of reports.

Shoeburyness High School serves the community and is located on the same campus as the proposed new **myplace** facility. In 2007 30% of young people in Year 11 achieved 5 or more A\* to C GCSE's including English and Maths. Not including English and Maths, this figure rises to 45%. Since 2007 this figure has continued to increase. Results for 2009 show that 46% of young people in Year 11 achieved 5 or more A\* to C GCSE's including English and Maths. Not including English and Maths, this figure rises to 70%. This was above the 2008 national average of 65.8% in 2008.

Participation in work based training and employment with structured training, such as Modern Apprenticeships have fluctuated but not risen significantly in recent years. 95 Year 11 leavers (4.24%) went on to full time employment without structured training. One hundred and eleven (4.95%) young people became defined as Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) in 2007 at the end of their Year 11. The number of local residents with a qualification to NVQ level 4 (18.4%) continues to fall far short of the East of England average (25%) and the national average (27.4%).

#### The project

The plan as submitted for funding to **myplace** was to demolish an existing 1950s purpose-built youth centre situated at Delaware Road, Shoebury (Shoeburyness Youth Centre – SYC). SYC is one of three centres in Southend; the others are in Leigh-on-Sea and Southend itself. SYC will be replaced with a modern 'landmark' building to serve local young people aged 10-19 years. At the centre of the

building there is to be an informal and contemporary high specification restaurant which will offer reasonably priced, locally sourced seasonal food. The restaurant will be run as a Social Enterprise by the YMCA and will be used as a training kitchen and work place for vulnerable young people ([www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 2008). A range of additional facilities will include a garden and terrace area, resources for a range of leisure and skills-development activities, a volunteering centre and office accommodation.

The previous youth centre was well established and has always been well used. A local councillor involved in the **myplace** development who had once worked as a youth leader in the original centre described it as historically having a community feel to it, with a range of local groups using it. However, the recent emphasis has been on work with young people. It is envisaged by the project team and partners that the new centre with its training restaurant/café and close links with the adjacent Children's Centre will help reinvigorate community involvement.

During the case study visit, young people on the **myplace** steering group suggested that the old centre had become a place which was dominated by a core group of regular users, and those who worked with these users described them as having 'challenging behaviour and coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.' Both youth workers and a local councillor noted what they perceive as high levels of deprivation, notably worse than elsewhere in Southend, and it was claimed in one conversation that 75% of Shoeburyness is deprived. Stories about young people coming into the centre, hungry, dirty and wearing the same clothes day after day were offered in support of this claim.

One staff member who had worked in other areas of Southend perceived that the levels of deprivation in Shoeburyness were noticeably worse. It is hoped that the new building would both address issues associated with such deprivation but not be subject to domination by any one group. The plan is to create a universally attractive facility in which there will be 'something for everybody' and not just for 'targeted' young people.

## The Developing Situation

### Organisational Arrangements

The lead organisation in the **myplace** development is Southend Borough Council through its Connexions service. The Southend Connexions service manages the SYC within an integrated youth support strategy which provides a range of education and support programmes as well as positive activities for young people targeted at those who are deemed hard to reach and NEET. Initially it was the Head of the Youth and Connexions Service who suggested that the Local Services Manager for Shoeburyness attend a presentation on **myplace**.

The main partners who were involved in the bid and in the subsequent development are Southend YMCA and Southend-on-Sea Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS). Both organisations are represented on the Southend-on-Sea Children's Trust Board and Executive and are signed up to the vision for children and young people set out in the Southend-on-Sea Children and Young People's Plan.

It is intended that Southend YMCA will operate the restaurant and professional kitchen. The space will be leased to them for a nominal sum and they will have responsibility for all aspects of this part of the facility. They will use it as a training centre for young people who are undertaking their 'Food for Thought' Entry to Employment and Foundation Learning Tier training courses. SAVS will operate the 'v' branded youth volunteering centre.

Historically there has been a close working relationship between the Connexions service and Southend YMCA. The YMCA has a proven track record of providing integrated services and Sylvie Cox, Chief Executive of Southend YMCA is quoted in the Southend council newsletter as saying that:

We are delighted to be working in partnership with Connexions to develop this new resource. The success of this funding bid is testament to the different organisations' commitment to working collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for young people. With this new project, I look forward to building on our success of engaging with young people with food related and customer service related schemes. ([www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 2008)

## Youth Participation

Historically the SYC has always had a steering group of some kind, including young people. The project leader is working to support this group to undertake a more active management role in the new centre.

Communication between the local authority, other stakeholders and the young people of Shoeburyness has been facilitated through a *Debate Shoebury* process. This involves students from primary schools and from the local high school meeting with councillors, police, council department representative the Connexions service and other stakeholders in the **myplace** development. *Debate Shoebury* has a high profile in schools through the work of the extended schools coordinator and in the press which reports on events. *Debate Shoebury* is seen as an important event in terms of keeping young people informed as well as allowing them to have a voice in decisions that are likely to affect them.

This process has been aided by activity to encourage young people from the area to express ownership of the place. For example in November 2009, 14 young people supported by a street artist and two connexions youth workers created a piece of street art on the hoardings outside the building site of the new centre. The purpose of the activity was described as:

to engage the young people from Shoebury in a positive activity to celebrate the building of the new **myplace** centre, and at the same time passing the positive message that street art can be a good thing in the community if done in the right place.

Young people were involved in all aspects of the design and painting of the final piece of Art work with them all receiving training on the correct use of spray cans, the legal aspects of the activity as well as accreditation for the high class work they completed, in the very adverse weather conditions ([www.myplacesupport.co.uk](http://www.myplacesupport.co.uk) ).

Young people's engagement in the project is ongoing. They have been involved alongside architects and property managers as full members of the project team overseeing the building of the new facility. It is planned that ten places will be set aside on the management group for young people providing direct influence over the day to day decision-making and longer term development of the centre. Five of these ten places will be reserved for young people from vulnerable groups, such as young carers or young people with learning difficulties or disabilities. Each month an event will take place to engage young people who do not wish to be so involved to contribute to the development of the centre. An annual survey will complete the process, enabling numerical data to be produced and benchmarked on young people's experience of using the centre and the services on offer.

Under these conditions, it is anticipated that the new centre will offer more of a universal attraction for young people than has hitherto been the case in the old centre. During the case study visit, some young people described how their peers who would not have used the centre in the past are now talking about the new facilities with interest.

SYC intends to undertake two consultation exercises annually with young people who are 'non users' to understand and respond to the barriers preventing all young people from using the new facility.

## Activities

The new centre will offer universal access for all young people aged between 10 and 19 years old (with a priority on young people aged 13-19 years old) and at the same time it will build on the work undertaken in the old SYC. This includes a young carers' programme, a youth group for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities and a youth group for LGBT young people. The process of supporting the development of a forum for looked after children is well under way and this group will have access to the facilities on offer at to the new centre. Young people who are NEET will be targeted through the provision of information, advice and guidance.

The restaurant and professional kitchen will be at the heart of the new building which will also include:

- a garden and terrace
- a dance studio and gymnasium
- a large multi function hall with a climbing wall
- modern changing and shower facilities
- an IT suite
- a soundproofed music area offering both rehearsal and recording facilities
- a snooker room
- a bike and motor vehicle workshop
- a youth volunteering centre
- office accommodation for up to 12 targeted youth support staff
- four interview rooms.

The new centre will offer the opportunity for young people to access daytime information, advice and guidance services alongside evening and weekend positive activities. Opportunities will also be provided for community groups and local organisations to access to centre and take advantage of the facilities.

## Building Design



Janice Lyons, Local Services Manager, has said of the new building that it:

will create a landmark building for Shoeburyness and provide seven days a week access to services and facilities. It will challenge perceptions of what youth facilities have to be like and who they are for. Most of all it will raise aspiration by sending out a positive message about Shoeburyness and provide a building that local people can be proud of (<http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk> , 28<sup>th</sup> November 2008)

Plans for the new building have been developed by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Property and Regeneration team and architects Camal, in consultation with young people at Shoeburyness Youth Centre. Plans for the building were approved and work began in 2009. ([www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) 28th Nov 2008) The projected opening date is May 2010. The building itself will be one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in Southend. Materials will come from sustainable sources and the kitchen garden included in the plans which will provide some of the food which will be served in the restaurant.

The site is located next to the local High School, the Children's Centre and the local Leisure Centre. It is a prime location prime in terms of access for all young people in the area with strong links with the school through the extended schools coordinator and the Children's Centre who have shown a keen interest in the development and building of the new facility.

The co-location of youth support workers will provide young people (and where appropriate their parents) with swift and easy access to a range of professionals, including Connexions Personal Advisers, workers from the Southend Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service, Relate (youth counselling) and healthcare professionals, such as sexual health outreach workers.

As partners both SAVS and Southend YMCA will have a clear presence in the new building with their own space. They will have their logos on the side of the building, thus bringing their own brand to SYC.

## **Governance**

The centre will be managed by the Local Services Manager, who will oversee the operation management of the centre.

The YMCA will manage the staff working in the professional kitchen and SAVS will manage the input of 'v' workers. These different management strands will be brought together through the management group. In addition the management group will have five seats for members of the local community such as local residents and 10 seats for local young people, five of whom will be identified as belonging to targeted groups.

Both SAVS and Southend YMCA will have representation on the SYC management group and it is possible that there will be representatives from the Local Authority on the management team (Case study visit discussion).

The centre will be managed by a Local Services Manager (Janice Lyons). Working with an Assistant Local Services Manager they will continue to manage 5.3 FTE Personal Advisers, 1 FTE Youth Workers and 6.8 FTE Youth Support Workers. The centre has 1 FTE support worker.

The centre currently has 10 volunteers aged 16 and over, committing 30 hours per week. They undertake a range of tasks, including sitting on the youth centre's existing members committee and working with young people. The aim is to double the number of volunteers working at the new centre to 20 working 90 hours per week. In addition SAVS would expect that the new 'v' centre would be staffed by a team of five young volunteers working up to 15 hours per week.

## **Income Generation**

There are income generation targets associated with this project. The core revenue funding for the new facility will be provided by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. This funding is reoccurring local authority youth services funding along with the Connexions Grant and other elements from the Area Based Grant. As this is not a new facility but a replacement, it is not necessary to find additional revenue funding and those involved are confident about the affordability of this project.

Shoeburyness Youth centre is an established centre that already houses a number of staff who 'deliver' services to young people. The new project will see these staff move into the new building along with staff already located in another venue close by. There will therefore be no additional staff recruitment necessary within the project.

The existing building is already serviced and maintained within the Connexions budget – a statutory service with secure funding from within the Children and Learning schools budget. It is therefore possible to project revenue costs based on existing operational costs. Close by, the service rents a smaller facility whose staff and associated budgets will be transferred to the new building. This combined budget will ensure that the larger building will be fully funded.

There are no plans to charge young people for attendance. However, it is assumed that the management committee may in the future consider hiring out facilities at times when the centre is underused, to provide additional income. It is also assumed that after the initial set-up period the YMCA will be able to operate the café at a profit and provide further income to the project.

Southend YMCA will have a five year period where the rent on the professional kitchen and restaurant will be limited to £1 per week. In the case of Southend YMCA this will provide time for the proposed social enterprise to be established and develop. At the end of the initial five year period of subsidised rent it is anticipated that the restaurant will be a successful and fully sustainable social enterprise. All income generated from the sale of food and drink from the restaurant will be retained by the YMCA to offset costs and invest in continued developments to the facility.

SAVS will also enjoy a five year period where the rent on the youth volunteering centre will be limited to £1 per week. It is SAVS intention to secure further external grant funding after that date to continue to support young people into community volunteering opportunities.

## Evaluation

### Leading Practice Themes

#### **1. *Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy.***

The business plan identifies a range of outcomes which are linked to specific targets:

- In total 1,500 young people will make 20,000 visits per year to the new facility. 750 young people per year will achieve a nationally accredited award recording gains in personal and social skills. 95% of young people using the centre will report satisfaction with the facility and services on offer.
- Of the total number of users per year a third (500) of young people will be from specific vulnerable groups. Of this group, 250 young people will achieve a nationally accredited award recording the gains they have made in personal and social skills.
- In total 2,500 people will benefit from access to healthy, low priced food each year. 12 large scale community impact events per year will engage an additional 1,000 people. Each year 72 young people will participate in formal work based learning working in the professional kitchen.
- In total 300 young people per year will be enabled to take part in local volunteering activities, challenging the negative stereotype of young people, developing social capital and increasing the skills and boosting employability of the young people involved.
- In total 10 new community-led groups will be developed through advice and support together with free access to facilities during the first three years, increasing the capacity of local people to gain new skills through volunteering and empowering local people to create sustainable activities and support services.

*Youthbase* (an electronic management information tool) will be used to record the numbers of different young people accessing the facility as well as visits made. Southend Association of Voluntary (SAVS) will keep detailed records in relation to the youth volunteering centre and the YMCA track will track the progress of learners working in the kitchen and restaurant as well as information on workshops and events they deliver. All this information will be brought together and will be presented to the management group on a quarterly basis for analysis.

It is expected that having a seven day a week opening, an extended range of sessions and a focus on youth volunteering should directly contribute to the effort to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (Business Plan).

It was suggested during the case study visit that with **myplace** funding the SYC should be able to raise its standards in a manner similar to the achievements made in Shoebury High School.

## **2. *Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action***

There is already partnership working taking place between the three principal organisations involved in the **myplace** development and this predates the **myplace** scheme. There is a sense from partners that their main focus will be their particular core activity, i.e. running the café/training kitchen/restaurant and organising volunteers. However, there is potential to collaborate in the future, for example through social functions or getting more young volunteers involved in running activities in the centre.

Having said that, central to this project has been what is described by the project team as ‘a shared vision.’ All partners share the intention to make a difference in the lives of young people, creating aspiration and bringing the young people on board. The project itself has been described as having a unifying effect. This was repeated a number of times during the case study visit by young people, the project team, the Children’s centre and by one of the local councillors. This councillor was quite keen to point out that there was complete cross party support for the **myplace** project. Both the project team and partners talked about an ethos in the centre which was more than the services people provide. Having a shared ethos/vision for the project based on the quality of relationships with young people and wanting to help young people where two strong themes emerging during discussions with the project team and partners.

There is some evidence that it is unlikely that private partners to the venture will be forthcoming. Previously, in the centre of town, Southend Council has tried to rely on private funding to renew the Focus Youth Centre but this has not been forthcoming.

## **3. *What a world-class facility looks like and how it works***

During interviews which took place during the case study visit, the idea of ‘world-class’ was discussed, with some prompting. There was a general perception among all those interviewed that youth workers were often working on low budgets. With the new centre and all its resources, training is being put in place for staff to improve their skills. Being able to offer more activities than previously and creating aspiration were ideas that came across more strongly during discussions. One of the project team members when asked about the idea of ‘world-class’ talked about a place where ‘things can happen, a place to create and a place where young people can take risks’.

Young people on the steering group talked about the importance of universal appeal, something for everyone and a place that ‘opens more doors’.

In discussions with partners, the concept of **myplace** as an aspirational term was reiterated.

The provision of the café at a standard comparable with similar venues in the high street was seen as adding something of quality and value to the area as opposed to being something that is world-class.

The aspirations of those involved were clearly related to the previous experiences of what had been problematic in the old centre and under previous conditions. Simple things like computers that don't keep crashing and not having to put the equipment away at the end of each session are seen as important factors by workers and young people. The previous sports hall was too small and precluded most indoor sports. The open plan lounges did not provide spaces for separate activities. Specialised and standard equipment could not be utilised as there was nowhere to position or store it. Despite the difficulties, SYC has been popular and able to offer a range of facilities and support services on site, but the breadth and scope of these facilities has increased significantly with *myplace* investment.

Ultimately the significance of 'world-class' was considered an aspirational idea, an aim to bring and be the best possible in all areas of practice and provision.

#### **4. How to plan and deliver a world-class facility**

As part of the process of developing this project, the team visited a number of other projects where they were inspired in terms of what could be achieved, particularly where projects were drawing people together from all areas of the community, not just young people. The business plan discusses the potential of SYC becoming an exemplar to other projects in the same terms, and with particular reference to the engagement and involvement of young people through social enterprise and volunteering opportunities.

From a youth work perspective, there is a perception that the phrase world-class is not something that the young people understand, neither is the idea of landmark, or leading practice. At the same time the young people interviewed from the steering group did talk about having the best in terms of resources. In contrast partners and adults do use the term world-class as an indicator in terms of the quality of resources and the services that will be on offer to young people. For example they referred to the quality of the training kitchen that is to be installed, and to the dance studio as 'top of the range'.

In aspiring to provide and sustain world-class facility there is a sense that this should include reference to the engagement of those young people being targeted through integrated support. It is hoped to increase their level of involvement by approximately 30%. It is intended that there will be opportunities to evaluate SYC and its work with young people, through ongoing satisfaction surveys and self assessments. Through these mechanisms there is sense in the youth work team that the idea of world-class could be integral.

A comment was by one member of the project team that 'you can always build, you can always do better. There is a need to continue to look forward' (Case-study visit).

#### **5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

*Debate Shoebury* has played an important part in encouraging young people and other interested parties to talk to each other. At a *Debate Shoebury* event organised by Shoeburyness High School, over 300 young people were joined by representatives from local organisations to discuss a range of community issues. A key message from this event was the need for more affordable, high quality positive activities for young people.

As a result of this event, more detailed work has been undertaken involving some 92 young people. Young people have contributed to the project through special sessions, including those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Through *Debate Shoebury* all young people are given an opportunity to put forward any concerns they may have or ask any questions. In Shoebury High School this is facilitated by the extended schools coordinator through form groups. Every young

person is invited to contribute with ideas, issues and questions. Elections are held to decide on those young people to act as representatives, a model of indirect representational democracy.

Young people involved in the steering group have been supported through in-house workshops on issues such as public speaking and debating, which in turn have led to OCN accreditation.

Through outreach/detached work with young people, work on local estates and work with local community groups there is a sense that all groups in the Shoeburyness area have been represented during consultation and planning. More specifically in targeting particular groups of young people the Connexions service has been able to work closely with NEET young people, young people with disabilities and young carers through existing projects. Similarly Southend YMCA, one of the main partners, has undertaken an internal consultation with young people accessing their training courses. The Southend East Locality Youth Forum and Club have also regularly debated and consulted on this project (Copies of minutes are available).

The **myplace** project team have undertaken proactive community outreach work to ensure that they have been able to talk with local people and hear what they think about the proposed new facility and what should be in it. The outreach team claim to have engaged over 200 local people in a conversation about the proposed new facility. Six community outreach sessions with youth and community workers have taken place, visiting a range of locations, including parks, the local ASDA superstore and housing estates. Through these meetings valuable feedback has been provided which has informed the design of the new facility. In addition, another 83 people expressed their support for the proposal during a visit to the youth centre to find out more about what was planned.

To date the project team have yet to come across tensions between young people and community members. One of the councillors describes himself as being quite proactive in meeting with the elderly population of Shoeburyness to talk about the new SYC. Having facilities for the whole community in the form of the café/restaurant and volunteering opportunities has been taken as a positive sign by local residents.

The importance of listening to people, encouraging debate and questions has led to people feeling included. When the outreach team talks to local residents and young people the feedback given is positive. Having a presence as a local worker and being known to community groups has allowed the project manager to push/pull people in getting local residents and young people on board. The project itself has been described by the project team as having a high profile among residents in the area but also, politically among councillors and through the media which again can be linked to the transparent inclusive approach of the project manager.

SYC currently provide a transport service to young people from vulnerable groups who have difficulties accessing the existing centre independently. This service will continue to be offered as well as a pilot a minibus 'shuttle service' to enable young people who live further away from the centre to participate.

## **6. *How to secure funding and generate income***

This has not been a major issue within Shoeburyness for the reasons outlined above, which refer to continuity with previous funding regimes.

However, it is hoped that hire of rooms and facilities, and an eventual profit from the restaurant will contribute additional funds to the centre.

## **7. *How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people***

The focus in the SYC is on helping young people using the new facility to achieve accredited outcomes and become familiar with *Aiming High*. It is anticipated that having their efforts rewarded and celebrated will directly support the drive to improve formal educational achievement.

It is believed that a seven day a week opening, an extended range of sessions and a focus on youth volunteering will directly contribute to the effort to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

The restaurant is expected to provide a focal point for families, encouraging them to spend more quality time together, meet new people and extend their support networks.

The provision of healthy food in the restaurant, linked with enhanced sports facilities, is understood as a direct response to rising obesity levels.

Information, advice and guidance services are intended to provide support to young people making career choices in an impartial, accessible environment.

#### **8. *The importance of leadership.***

The main person leading this project is the local area manager for Shoeburyness.

With a project of this nature she emphasised the importance of being able to keep people on board, to work with consensus, and have an ability to build relationships. Having established relationships, over a number of years, with the CEO of Southend YMCA and the Head of Service who first encouraged the *myplace* bid has helped insofar as the quality of relationship was already in place.

The project leader has the support of a capital manager, and access to support around building and planning. In this sense being placed within the local authority has had advantages.

The leadership structure is horizontal in terms of the management committee. From the project the next layer up is the local authority. With this in mind opportunities to develop in terms of community members and young people are limited to the steering group. There are plans within the Connexions team to encourage young people to take on key roles within this group, such as chair, vice chair and secretary. The level to which local authority representation is required on the steering group is an area that has yet to be considered, although currently there is both financial and legal representation from the local authority. The project leader is keen to ensure that all decision go through the steering group

Through involvement in the steering group, individual young people are starting to emerge in terms of their ability to articulate, debate and represent the views of others. This is an area for development in considering elections to key roles on the steering group.

### **Outcomes**

#### **1. *More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development.***

This project is designed to overcome problems of usage by a small and self-defined group identifying with the original SYC. It is intended to broaden the scope both in terms of the numbers and range of young people participating, and in terms of community access to the facility. At the same time, pre-existing work with targeted groups is set to continue.

The project is working systematically towards broadening the appeal of the facility by devising schemes such as the 'Street Art' event and the *Debate Shoebury* event to engage, inform and encourage a sense of ownership among a wider range of young people.

The leisure activities are designed to be universally appealing to youth participants and the specific focus on training and volunteering within the project are directly designed to improve skill levels and employment opportunities among disadvantaged local young people.

**2. *More young people, parents and communities feel that the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities.***

The new building replaces a previous structure which was considered not fit for purpose.

The planned remit includes scope for a wide range of activities and for a range of services to be sited in the facility.

It is hoped that the restaurant will offer a means whereby a wider community constituency will relate to the building.

Modern facilities offered within a centre used by a variety of young people accessing a range of activities and services, and the regular daytime use of the restaurant should lead to enjoyment and learning in a safe environment.

**3. *More young people have access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable.***

If the facility is widely and regularly used as planned, young people will feel comfortable using the advice and support services which will be based or delivered in the new building.

**4. *Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people***

The current partnership arrangements between the local authority and the third sector are continuous with what has been achieved in the past. However, the **myplace** scheme has already enabled those partnerships to become more explicitly articulated and strengthened in practice.

There is little evidence of private sector involvement and previous history suggests that this is an unlikely source of support in the immediate future.

## Case study 8: Young Person's Village, Stoke-on-Trent

Total Award: £4,850,000

Lead Organisation: Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire YMCA Foyer

Contact: Miss Sharon Richards.

### Overview

The North Staffs YMCA serves the Potteries Urban Area and the rural Staffordshire Moorlands area. Stoke on Trent, a linear conurbation of 12 miles, is considered to be the home to the pottery industry in England. Its industrial development also included coal mining and steel works but it is now a centre for service industries and distribution centres.

Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority area has a population of 240,636 (<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>, 2004). It has a relatively young age profile with 39.4% of residents under the age of 29. The 0-18 population accounts for almost a quarter of the total population of 239,000, (Stoke-on-Trent Children and Young People's Plan 2009/10). A further 7% are aged 20 to 25. Anyone in this age group has a disability, is also eligible for children's services.

The overwhelming majority (92.5%) of the population describe themselves as white, with 4.4% Asian or Asian British, 1.3% mixed race, 0.9% Black or Black British and 0.9% Chinese or other. The area has an unemployment rate of 6.7 %, higher than the national average (5.4%) (<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>).

The Local Authority area rates high in measurements of social deprivation around income, employment, health, education, crime and living environment and is in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the UK (Department for Communities and Local Government Indices of Deprivation, 2007). The town of Stoke-on-Trent was ranked 16th out of 354 English districts across national indices of multiple deprivation in 2007. This is a deterioration from its previous position of 18th most deprived district in the 2004 indices. Stoke-on-Trent has the highest claimant rate for JSA in the country and has risen faster than general in the West Midlands and the UK as whole (Staffordshire County Council, 2009). Of this 29% of young people between the ages of 18-24 were represented in JSA figures across the Stafford area.

Numbers of young people identified as NEET in the Stoke area are 11.9% and represent 947 young people, significantly higher than the number of NEETS in Staffordshire Local Authority area which is 5.1% and 1448 young people respectively. Offending by young people in the City is predominantly boys and young men i.e., 52%, peaking at ages 16 and 17 years. 16% were female, the majority also being aged 16 –17 years (Youth Offending Service, 2005).

### The Project

The Young Persons' Village (YPV) is situated in Harding Road, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. It was among the first, fast track projects to win funding in November 2008 and is in receipt of £4,850,000 in order to enhance a youth village scheme which has been under development since 2005. In the press releases following the news of the award, it was described as 'a dramatic redevelopment of an existing YMCA centre, [which] will benefit some of the county's most vulnerable young people' (<http://www2.biglotteryfund.org.uk/pr>)

The history of the YPV is as a hostel for homeless young people. It continues to offer accommodation to across 92 beds for men and women aged 16-35 (*The Sentinel*, 23/3/10), but in recent years its

workers have been engaged in broader, developmental work, emerging from a worker review of 'What a YMCA should be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'.

The establishment of the 'Youth Village', described by CEO Daniel Flynn as 'A campus for young people' ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWnlbQxN684&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWnlbQxN684&feature=player_embedded)) emerged from a four month youth consultation exercise involving a partnership between the YMCA, the Local authority and a group of young people who were trained as peer researchers. The consultation with brought evidence that to be meaningful in relation to the realities of young peoples' lives, the question of homelessness needed to be contextualised with reference to other needs and issues affecting young people and that a better model for the work was as a 'youth development community' (interview, Feb. 2010).

The background process was outlined in the Stoke-on Trent Active Involvement and Participation Strategy and Toolkit document (2006):

Supporting People worked in partnership with young people at the YMCA during 2005 with the aim of asking current and past residents what they wanted from residential and support services in the future. Young residents were trained and paid to conduct the survey and the findings were presented to the YMCA Board. As a result the city council is working together with the YMCA to help them attract more than £4 million capital monies to develop a visionary Young People's village which residents and ex-residents will help to build. This will be a fantastic opportunity not only to provide an excellent quality service which meets the needs of young people, designed with the help of young people, but it will also help individuals develop new skills, build self confidence and achieve independence ([www.moderngov.stokfor exampleov.uk](http://www.moderngov.stokfor exampleov.uk)).

By 2007, approximately £4.5 million had been raised to renovate Edinburgh House, the local YMCA building. Contributions were forthcoming from the Department of Communities and Local Government (via the Hostel Capital Improvement Programme -£970,000), the Housing Corporation, North Staffs Regeneration Zone, and private developers. This resource enabled the beginning of the transformation of the site into the Youth Village offering a diverse range of services (Enabling Sustainable Housing Solutions: A strategy to prevent homelessness in Stoke-on-Trent, Sept. 2007-Dec. 2010, p7). The money was used to establish a new training centre, renovate canteen facilities into a community café which offers employment for YMCA residents and improve the housing facility 'to make sure it meets decent homes standards' (Homeless Strategy, 2007-2010, p11, [www.moderngov.stokfor exampleov.uk](http://www.moderngov.stokfor exampleov.uk)).

The overall plan for the village is a substantial, devised as a 'hub' of youth services in the area (Hall Aitken Report, 2008) and costing £7 million (YMCA: *Sentinel*, 20 July 2009). It will eventually comprise housing built with eco-friendly methods, a library, a 'learning zone', leisure facilities and 'international-standard' sports facilities. At the time of the bid to **myplace**, a rooftop conference and training centre, the café and internal training facilities had already been established. The **myplace** funding is intended to continue the growth of the initiative. It will enable the creation of an additional floor to the main buildings and more specifically to extend the development in particular priority areas including:

- a new Tower entrance, reception areas, meeting rooms and ancillary support space;
- the creation of an enclosed link bridge between the Sports Hall and the YMCA Tower complex;
- the provision of basement spaces beneath the 'Move On' Units to Blocks A and B;
- junction and internal road layout improvements to the existing accesses, including provision of new parking (Capital Delivery Plan, July 2008).

The YMCA is working in close partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council in order to develop the overall scheme. The YPV project is integral to the council's Local Area Agreement and the Children and Young People's Plan and also meets priorities identified in the Local authority Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (Business Plan). It is evident that the participation of young people has been integral within the development of this partnership and young people are also part of the management system of the YMCA. The development seems to be well supported within the area and a variety of youth groups and interest groups have been consulted in the process of development. Apart from some muted concern from a number of local residents, the scheme seems to be non-contentious and to have won general support in the area.

## The Developing Situation

### Organisational Arrangements

The primary partnership advancing the YPV scheme is that between the YMCA and Stoke City Council. The partnership is regularly described as including young people. However, in her response to news of the **myplace** award, the deputy CEO and Project Developer of the YPV referred to 'partnership with the local authority and young people's services' ([www.myplacesupport.co.uk](http://www.myplacesupport.co.uk)). There is no evidence of any formal protocols to secure the partnerships and they appear to have proceeded largely through co-operative and mutually beneficial initiatives and endeavours rather through any clear structural arrangements. The management system of the scheme is therefore maintained within the internal structures of the YMCA. Representatives from the YMCA sit on a wide range of Local Authority strategic groups which have young people within their terms of reference (Group Interview, Feb. 2010). The Integrated Youth Support Service (run by Stoke council) has asked the YMCA to lead on volunteering.

As an established organisation working with vulnerable and 'at risk' young people within Stoke, the YMCA has a wide network of contacts and it has in place service level agreements for partnership working with Connexions, the Primary Care Trust and the Learning and Skills Council.

In the application form for **myplace** funding, it was stated that private sector partnerships were being developed to secure ongoing investment in young people throughout Stoke on Trent. There is particular evidence of this in the development of the building work.

### Youth Participation

The *Supporting People Inspection of Stoke-on-Trent City Council* (June, 2007) cited the YMCA as an example of 'good practice' in engaging service users in the development of services. The work with the peer group of researchers in the initial consultation exercise set the terms of reference for future consultative work of this nature, and the work of the YMCA peer researchers is cited across a range of Local authority documents (for example. *Identifying Community Needs in Shelton* (July 2007); *Stoke-on-Trent Active involvement and Participation Strategy and Toolkit*, 2006).

It was suggested by the West Midlands Big Lottery Fund Head that, 'Young People have been involved in the new Young People's village every step of the way' ([www.myplacesupport.co.uk](http://www.myplacesupport.co.uk)) and the CEO of the YMCA indicated in a group interview that 'everything we do, and everything we're trying to do, is to make sure that young people are at the centre and not be over-tokenistic about it' ( Feb. 2010).

Asked directly how the YMCA involved their young people, the 'Customer Journey Manager' described the problem of engaging young people between the ages of 14 and 25 from different socio-economic backgrounds. After discussions about this within the staff team, it was decided in 2008 to build a 'youth leadership group' from the users or 'customers':

Their responsibility was to actually come together as a group, do exciting things, go on residential, look at youth governance, look at what they could actually take charge of running themselves, look at which bits of money, they could have a budget, they could design things like sports days, community days, all sorts of things. We could look at political involvement; they could look at local political involvement, national political involvement and international political involvement. So our youth group got involved in national Aids Awareness...Internationally we looked at the Palestine situation and we took a group over to Palestine to visit the West Bank...

Around **myplace**, that group was key in being brought together with other groups, student representatives from the college say, who came in and did **myplace** consultation, so that youth leadership was seen by the rest of the community as driving things that were going on (Group Interview, Feb. 2010).

The principle model of youth participation used thus works on an everyday level within the operations of the YMCA in general and with reference to the development of consultations and project activities. There is some scepticism among YMCA staff about the value of attempting to involve the majority of young people in the formal processes of management and decision-making:

If you're going to expect them to sit around for two hours at a board meeting, with everybody talking AT them and not talking WITH them and all high convoluting conversational speak, they don't want to be there...you've got to use something that's engaging; that's relative. If you don't use those methods of engagement, you'll lose them (Interview, Feb. 2010).

The youth leadership model is thus the principal method of soliciting the views of young people and involving them in the YPV development. The Customer Journey Manager indicated that since Christmas 2009, there have been two consultation events using the youth leaders around the **myplace** initiatives, to consider the internal design of the next stage of development.

We looked at hundreds and hundreds of other sort of similar youth hub type developments. And they sat in groups and these were groups of young people from the college, our youth leadership group, young people from the training department. And they sat there looking at all of these designs and then they came up with what they thought were the most positive environments for them. So it was like a planning for real event (Interview, February 2010).

The seven young people, aged 18 – 25, all currently YMCA residents, participated in a focus group discussion during the case study visit. They indicated that they had attended meetings with the architects and the staff to discuss the facilities which they would like to see in the building. They believed that their opinions were significant and that they were influential although there was some conflict between them and the ideas of the architects and to date they had not received feedback to tell them if their ideas had been included. They had not been involved in the overall design of the building as this had been agreed with previous members of the youth leadership group.

This group of young people were currently considering methods of communicating through a 'customer panel', through posters, mentoring and informally through 'word of mouth', information about the **myplace** scheme. They believed that 'word of mouth' would be the most effective means. They described a 'fun day' which had already taken place during 2009, organised by two other residents to showcase the project to the wider resident base, and they were currently engaged in a photography project which was associated with the development of the **myplace** facilities. They looked forward to the scheme offering opportunities through volunteering and participation in management to 'help YMCA residents to develop skills and opportunities which would help them when looking for work' (Interview, Feb. 2010).

This relatively loose and process-based model of participation is supplemented by opportunities for those young people who are interested to become involved in the formal, wider YMCA management structures.

There is some concern to encourage access for young people who live outside the immediate vicinity of the development, specifically with reference to the linearity of the geography of Stoke-on-Trent. A member of YMCA staff has been allocated the job of considering transport issues. These include looking at cycle routes and the canal as part of the sensitivity to environmental issues. Nevertheless, the fact that a railway station and a bus stop are each less than ten minutes walk away is seen as an obvious benefit. The YMCA website details all the transport and access options.

## **Activities**

The concept of the Young People's Village has enabled the YMCA to expand beyond its core activities of offering a service to homeless young people, and those at risk of homelessness, although this remains central to its remit. The YPV is currently being conceived as a central hub of youth activity for the area, and includes all young people in that area but specific reference is made to those who are members of deprived households, those who are excluded from school and young offenders. The general principle is to offer a 'safe place' where young people can meet, get support, find accommodation and access advice, guidance and leisure facilities.

The range of activities which will be offered is not yet formally established, but is emergent with reference to other considerations including commercial considerations, funding sources, different and changing interests among different groups of young people and youth cultures, and the possibility of other youth organisations using the facilities (Group Interview, Feb. 2010).

The initial bid identified a library and learning zone, basement areas under existing residential blocks to hold exhibitions, a new sports hall and changing rooms. This remains the framework for the scheme. Work is currently underway with the architects and the designs have yet to be approved so the final plan is not yet in place. However, the web site of the building company contracted to undertake the work indicates that they expect the building to house 'international standard professional sports facilities - including a refurbished boxing club and climbing wall – as well as offices and new accommodation facilities' ([www.seddonbuilding.co.uk](http://www.seddonbuilding.co.uk)).

In discussion with the researchers, the staff team of YMCA mentioned specifically the need to target services in different ways and not to fall into the trap of trying to please everyone, thereby simply creating a 'mundane average'.

An 800-person petition has indicated that there is a large demand for an indoor skate park and the CEO is currently considering this, along with boxing, roller disco, and football facilities among the activities options, partly because there is a demand and partly because such activities could generate funding, given that those who are interested are prepared and willing to pay for the use of specialist, high class facilities. Meetings are also taking place with a view to hosting the British Youth Olympics Archery team.

The intention is to engage in core youth development activities during weekdays, working with YMCA residents and delivering services on behalf of other organisations such as connexions, YOS, care services and schools. However, between 5.00 and 10.00pm, and at weekends, it is envisaged that social enterprise and commercial considerations will be central to the activities programme devised.

## **Building Design**

The building work is emerging on a site which is already occupied by the YMCA in Hanley. The design is driven by the campus concept and informed by the interests of young people who have been YMCA residents. The principle of environmental sustainability is central to the thinking about the

building and the CEO has indicated that 'An important issue is to be as Green as possible... *We're going for outstanding as a standard in the greenest sense*' ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWnlbQxN684&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWnlbQxN684&feature=player_embedded); 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009). In July 2009, YMCA residents went to Germany to undertake a one year apprenticeship with Streif in order to learn how to work on the construction of 'flat-pack' houses using eco-friendly methods (The Sentinel, 9 July 2009).

The renovation and redevelopment of the **myplace** aspects of the YPV is being undertaken by Seddon, who are aiming for a BREEAM Outstanding rating for the project. BREEAM, from BRE Global, (the Building Research Establishment) is the leading environmental rating tool for buildings around the world. Outstanding is the highest that can be achieved under the standard and demands that the most up to date sustainable construction techniques are used. If successful, the building will be among a handful in the UK achieving the standard. The plans include:

- the introduction of a biomass heating system, which involves a large-scale wood burning stove to power the entire development;
- a green sedum roof, which will provide a habitat for wildlife and help drain water more effectively;
- a solar wall, designed to blend in with little effect to the external appearance of the building, while trapping the sun's rays to help power the building;
- low energy lighting;
- the re-use of all excavated materials at the development, in line with the aim for zero waste being sent to landfill. The demolition waste has been crushed on-site and re-used to build driveways within the development, as well as making up recycled aggregate in the concrete used on site;
- use of timber from sustainable sources; and
- a sourcing policy for sustainability-produced products within a 30 kilometre radius of the construction area.

A video of the project has been developed and is available to view at Seddon's You Tube channel [www.youtube.com/user/Seddontv](http://www.youtube.com/user/Seddontv).

## Governance

The arrangements for governance fall entirely within the remit of YMCA structures.

## Income Generation

To date, income has been generated mainly in co-operation with the Local authority and through use of the various funding streams available to finance the range of work undertaken by the YMCA.

YPV has received assistance from the **myplace** Support team in for its financial management systems. Income is to be generated from a range of sources including:

- Activity Classes
- Youth Service Funding
- Connexions Funding
- Schools & Community Groups
- Local Authority Grant Income

- Private Sector Income

The model that is increasingly emerging for income generation from the *myplace* facilities is that market considerations will predominate in the evenings and at weekends. Sports, conference and training facilities will be hired out to user groups and clubs – not exclusively organised for young people. Those young-people orientated organisations which use the facilities during the day, such as Connexions, Youth Services, PCT, the college will pay rent for their use.

## Evaluation

### Leading Practice Themes

#### **1. *Developing, implementing and measuring an effective youth facility strategy.***

The development of the YMCA YPV emerged from a review of pre-existing services and an effort to think about how services should be constructed and provided in contemporary circumstances and in consultation with young people.

The scheme is characterised by a combination of informal, process-based and developmental methods with young people and a team approach to working practice. The work of the YMCA is relevant to a number of priority areas within government policy and as such it has been able, with the support of the Local Authority to access important funding streams. Support from the local authority has helped strategically but this has been sustained by important work to keep young people participating in the processes of development.

The strategy is characterised by flexibility and responsiveness to young people within a framework of a broader set of principles about young peoples' development and sensitivity to their needs on the one hand, alongside recognition of the importance of representation of those from the YMCA within decision-making structures beyond their own organisation, and as part of an integrated approach to young people.

There are no clear plans for specific methods of measuring outputs and targets relevant to the *myplace* aspect of the development beyond what is already in place as part of the everyday practice of the YMCA.

#### **2. *Linking with Local Agencies to Deliver Joint Action***

The key partner in this development is the Stoke-on-Trent city council. There is a symbiotic relationship between the council and the YMCA. In this relationship, the YMCA facilitates the possibility of the council meeting its targets and priorities for work with young people at a high standard. In return, the YMCA has gained from the support of the council in developing bids and accessing funding.

The YMCA has a wide network of relationships and representation on other bodies in the area which are concerned with youth issues. Some of these will be beneficiaries of the YPV development although mostly they will be 'clients' rather than partners in the use of the facilities.

There are ongoing relationships and what is described as partnership work with young people and young people's services. However, the YMCA operates as an autonomous organisation and there are no specific formal partnership arrangements in place.

### **3. What a world-class facility looks like and how it works**

A number of strands were identified during the case study visit as contributing towards a world-class facility. These included the building, the quality and relevance of the facilities provided, the quality and range of services, the attitude of workers and the atmosphere generated.

The building work is based on an eco-village model and the aspiration is that these should be of the highest standard possible – an aspiration that is shared by Seddon the contractors who are aiming for an ‘Outstanding’ award for their work.

The sports facilities have been identified as being designed to an international standard in order that they might be used to promote county events. The possibility of hosting national sports events is currently under consideration with potential private partners such as the British Youth Olympic Archery Team. At this stage an ambition is for the extreme sports facility to host championships in skateboarding and associated sports from the **myplace** Young People’s Village in Stoke.

In terms of staffing and atmosphere, integrity and respect were identified as being key in maintaining relationships with service users. It is hoped that ‘people will be enthused by the energy, the buzz, the excitement of the place.’ At present, there is a great deal of creativity and excitement being generated by the planning of the work to date. This depends to some extent on unity of approach among staff, a relaxed and participative management style within the project and the value accorded to their work both by young people and by politicians, funders and local people. These aspects of the approach are not accidental but are pursued within a developmental model of practice with young people’s interests at the heart.

### **4. How to plan and deliver a world-class facility**

The planning stages of this scheme have been characterised by co-operation between YMCA staff and young people, including the training of young people, which is part of the Foyer model, and by co-operation between the managers and staff of the YMCA and representatives of the local authority. The local authority appears to have been responsive rather than pro-active in the process but it clearly provided the space whereby ambitious plans might be pursued.

### **5. How to engage young people and communities in planning and delivery**

The YMCA staff highlighted the importance of matching real expectations with an appropriate skill set when involving young people and communities in the planning and delivering of services. Further opportunities for the active involvement of young people are enabled through the Youth Leadership Group established in 2008. Members of this group are trained in peer education in order to work with wider groups of young people in consultation about the **myplace** development. This ‘organic’ approach is considered a preferable route to involvement in formal decision making for instance through the management structures of YMCA and allows for the relatively short term nature of the involvement of some young people.

The young people associated with the YMCA leadership group appreciated the opportunities which membership offered them, and were articulate both about their understanding of the **myplace** scheme and also about the nature of their learning and development in this context.

Local residents have been consulted on the scheme through organised meetings and those who were anxious about the impact of the development have had their fears allayed with the result that there is some anticipation among local community groups that the facilities will also be of value to them.

### **6. How to secure funding and generate income**

The majority of funding is likely to be sourced, as at present, from specific funding streams relevant to the specialist work of YMCA. However, there is an intention to use the new facilities to generate income through rent and hire. The **myplace** Support Team have offered advice in this regard.

It is anticipated that relationships developed with the private sector will provide revenue to support the provision of services for those with less disposable income enabling wider involvement.

### **7. How to run a world-class facility to achieve real advantages for young people**

YPV recognise the importance and value of delivering services in partnership. The city council's Children and Young People's services department are currently carrying out a full review of youth services in the city, which will include referral mechanisms. The YPV will follow the guidance produced following this review.

The core work of the YMCA in working with homeless young people, and their consequent network relationships with other relevant organisations, ensures that the scheme reaches young people who might be described as 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' and marginalised. The development plan specifically prioritises 'estranged young people without lots of relationships from the community'. While this work remains central, there is clearly a need to generate income from the facilities and this has involved specifying that the priority time for traditional work will be daytime, weekdays. The remaining time will be allocated to income generating activity. It is possible that a tension might be introduced when the facility is opened between working with priority groups and managing plant.

### **8. The importance of leadership.**

Leadership skills were felt to be important by the YMCA staff. A collective model of leadership incorporating systems and roles to provide clarity, accountability and transparency was that preferred and in use. It was felt necessary to continually analyse involvement in strategic meetings and attend those most beneficial to the development. A level of forward thinking was also felt to be important, anticipating problems and opportunities in order to best position the YPV in relation to such factors.

Formally, the CEO is at the centre of strategic thinking and promotion in relation to the *myplace* scheme. Creative energy is required from the individual inhabiting this role as well as an open style and an ability to trust others to pursue their own roles effectively, especially in relation to the day to day work with young people and the representation on other youth bodies.

## **Outcomes**

### **1. More young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participating in positive leisure activities that support their personal and social development.**

Because the Young Persons Village is being developed from the current YMCA homeless hostel in Hanley, it already provides extensive support in the personal and social development of the young people accommodated in the project. Providing 'an improved environment for vulnerable young people, which enhances their quality of life and enables greater positive involvement in activities, development of social and interaction skills and personal development is integral to the development' (Business Plan). Already there is evidence of young people benefiting through the Young Leaders Group and the work which it has undertaken and through the support offered to young people as volunteers and in accessing work and training opportunities. In addition, the YMCA encourages local volunteers through training opportunities, support, and guidance in order to meet the identified needs of its community.

The creation of a much improved centre and extended sports facilities will broaden the range of young people and community members the project is able to attract and will extend the range of people using its facilities. New and improved facilities, designed with reference to the interests of young people, will be of value to those who are already associated with the YMCA, to specific sub-cultural groups of youth, and to other youth organisations.

Developing work with a wide range of young people from varying backgrounds is important in order to for the development to remain sustainable. The team openly acknowledge the nature of market segmentation within the communities of young people and the need to provide a range of activities in service to enable the widest range of participants to be included.

**2. *More young people, parents and communities feel the young people have attractive and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a range of exciting activities.***

The project aims to provide a 'hub' of youth services/young people's facilities for the entire city. It is a large and highly visible development of an established facility. Consultation events and the involvement of the current community of young people, other young people's groups and local community members suggest a positive attitude toward the development.

Some initial concerns from local residents have become questions about whether they too can use the facilities and there are currently plans afoot to enable a range of community groups to use the new building. This is likely to be moderated by financial considerations.

There are currently tensions between some residents of the YMCA and the local BME population and older residents. It is hoped that the comprehensive approach of the new facility will encourage different groups from the community to come together, creating a mix which will help to break down cultural and generational barriers. However, it is not clear that there are any specific mechanisms in place or being established in order to facilitate this hope.

**3. *More young people have access to information, advice and guidance from within places they feel comfortable.***

The YMCA café within the current building provides ample evidence that young people are comfortable with the staff and services currently available, experiences and skills which will be built on in the YPV development. The long term involvement of The Young People's Forum around design and their needs are central to the end product and therefore more likely to appeal to other young people. The sports activities and other programmes available are likely to increase the numbers of young people accessing advice, information and guidance.

The plan to site other services within the 'hub', being established through local authority strategy will ensure that a range of services are immediately accessible to young people who access the buildings.

There are some minor concerns about geography, and a dedicated member of staff is working on transport issues. However, overall, it is thought that the site is convenient for local transport and sufficiently near to the town centre of Stoke to be accessible to most young people in the region.

**4. *Stronger partnership working between local authorities and their third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.***

The partnership approach to working with the local authority, young people, and other services is one of co-operation and mutuality.

The **myplace** scheme has benefitted from the collaboration with and support of Stoke-on Trent City Council, and it is evident that the work of the YMCA, specifically with vulnerable young people and the process of participation, is highly valued in the area. Work towards the funding bid and with reference to the further development of the scheme has consolidated these relationships. Partnership working with young people has also been enhanced by the development which has provided increased opportunities for consultation, public relations work and training with young people. It is less apparent how the development has impacted on work with other services.

The project will contribute to the targets in Stoke on Trent's Local Area Agreement and Children and Young People's Plan. The project also meets priorities that have been set out in the Local Authority Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. The project will be integrated into all youth strategies for the city.

The YMCA has service level agreements for partnership working with the following organisations; Stoke on Trent City Council, Connexions, Primary Care Trust and the Learning and Skills Council. The application form includes a statement from the [then] Chief Executive Officer from Stoke on Trent City Council expressing support for the project. They also have partnership agreements in place with Stoke on Trent College and Connexions for the delivery and support of activities for young people.

Relationships are also being developed with the private sector around their potential use of the facilities.

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