

Youthinc Two

Sunderland Youth Service Annual Conference for Young People 2007



Youthinc Two

Wednesday 11th April 2007 was no ordinary day in the school Easter holidays.

108 young people, aged between 13 and 19 years of age, packed the Stadium of Light, to discuss and debate their views about their city.

This event, the second of its kind, organised by Sunderland Youth Development Group, Sunderland Voluntary Sector Youth Forum and Sunderland Youth Parliament, was for young people to tell everyone what they think.

Every area of the city was represented

Young people and youth workers from 22 different youth projects, both from the statutory and the voluntary sector, came to have their views listened to and to talk about the things that matter to them.

Young people were consulted in a variety of ways. They were asked their opinions about a wide range of topics using an E-voting system. Using a giant jigsaw, young people identified what would make their community ideal and were asked to explain why they thought their ideas would help improve things. Workshops were organised by youth projects to generate ideas for 'youth led projects', which would inspire young people to apply to the Youth Opportunity Fund and the Youth Capital Fund, new 'youth-led' grant making initiatives, and the Sunderland Keyfund.

It was also an opportunity for youth organisations to 'show off' the work that they do and for young people to express what it meant for them to be involved.

We asked you what you think!

73 young people took part in E-voting and they provided responses to questions about how young people are portrayed in the media, personal safety, activities, information services, and racial tension. The responses from the e-voting are highlighted throughout this report.

E-voting response:

96% of young people said that it was either important or extremely important that there are worthwhile activities available in their community.

E-voting response:

65% of young people wanted activities to be youth led and planned by young people.



Your area

In an exercise involving a giant jigsaw, young people were asked to consider what would make their area ideal, what it would look like and why it would benefit the local community.



Coalfields

"We would like young people to become positive role models."

Young People in the Coalfields area voted that better transport, more youth events, improved access to health services, better sports facilities and a local music venue would be the top five things that would make their community ideal.

"We would like more youth clubs and more youth events in our area. This would give parents and their children more freedom and independence which will give us more skills and confidence."

"If an affordable and regular timetable for public transport that covered a broader area was available to young people, a lot of other issues in their area would be resolved" they said.

Young people were keen to access information that would help all young people stop smoking, drinking and taking drugs, and they felt that a 'Walk in' Health Centre in both Hetton and Houghton would be appropriate. A local music venue or band night would give an opportunity for young people to perform and would also resolve the issue about young people going into pubs underage.

The Councillors from the area, Juliana Heron and Dennis Richardson pledged to:

- ✓ Explore establishing a one stop shop for health
- ✓ Continue supporting the development of a sports facility in Hetton

West Sunderland

More youth facilities, with a teenage dry bar, an Internet café and an advice shop would make a difference to the lives of young people in the West. Research for this project should be done by young people and the young people themselves should form a committee for this project, that will offer advice and guidance when other places are closed and when it is needed.

"We will have pride in it as we will have developed it and we will therefore maintain it. It will curb drinking on the streets and keep us out of trouble."

Young people also felt that improving the parks and placing wardens in them, having lighted seating areas, more rubbish and recycling points and a greater police presence would make their community ideal.

"We would like the police to work with us and get to know us so that we would feel safer, but

not get moved on if we were sitting in a crowd. We would like a greater police presence but have less harassment from them."

As no Councillors from the West were able to attend, Sunderland Youth Development Group will send the information to the Ward Councillors for their information.



Washington

Public Transport was the most important issue for the young people in Washington, as they highlighted how a better night service, cheaper fares, greater access to other areas of the city and friendlier drivers would impact on their lives.

"More young people will use the buses, we will feel safer and arrive on time and we will be able to access more youth clubs, activities, school and colleges."

They also voted that more parks and bigger open spaces, a greater police presence and an improved relationship with the police, increased youth provision and a cleaner environment would all help to make their community ideal.

"We would like the opportunity to put something back into the community and somewhere to go to keep us out of trouble."

Councillors Linda Williams and Harry Trueman pledged to:

- ✓ Encourage the handing out fines for litter and dog fouling
- ✓ Improve parks and play areas and better transport systems. Washington is closed after 6pm!



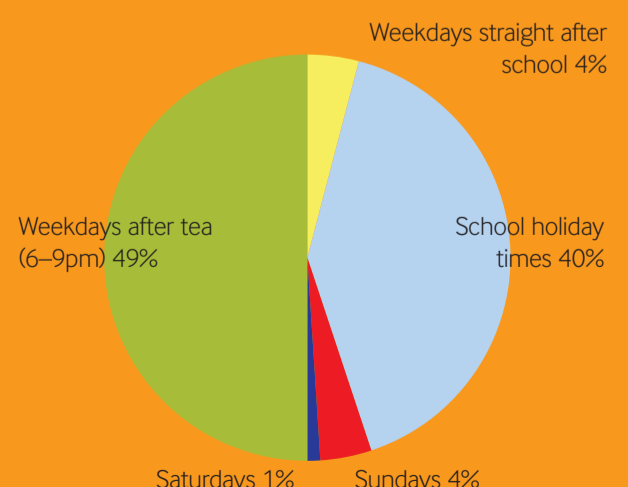
E-voting response:

63% of young people said that activities outside of school should just be for fun.

E-voting response:

Youth Projects was favoured by 43% of young people as the venue for worthwhile activities to take place.

We asked you when activities should take place.



E-voting response

We asked you what you thought about how young people are portrayed in the media.

- ✓ 63% of you felt that most of images of young people are negative or very negative
- ✓ 63% of you felt that the negative images are mostly portrayed in the local newspaper

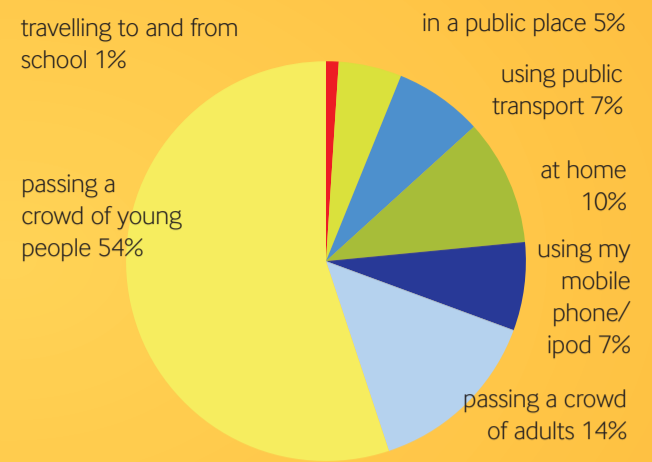
- ✓ 58% of you felt that you would like the TV to portray you in a more positive light

E-voting response

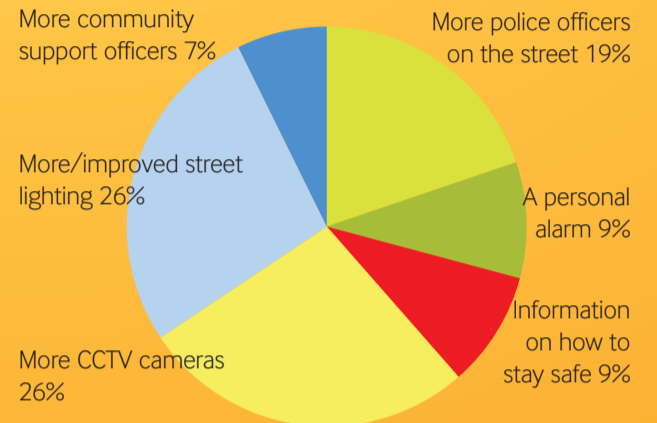
We asked you what concerned you about your personal safety.

- ✓ 36% of you are concerned about weapons and knives
- ✓ 27% of you are concerned about gangs

You said you felt most unsafe when.....



We asked you what you thought would improve your personal safety



E-voting responses

We asked you where you thought was the best place to locate information services

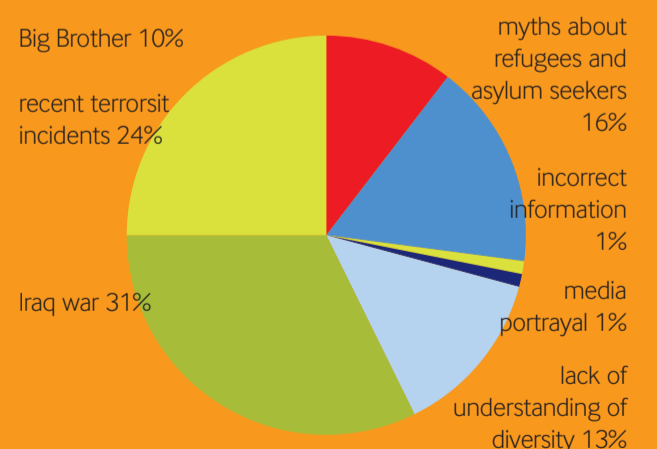
- ✓ 43% of said in youth clubs / community centres
- ✓ 21% said on the internet
- ✓ 46% of you said that you would like to receive information by text or on the internet

E-voting response

We asked you what you thought about racial tensions in Sunderland

- ✓ 43% of you felt that they had increased
- ✓ 43% felt that they had decreased
- ✓ 22% felt that they had stayed the same

You felt that the biggest cause of local tension was...



East Sunderland

'More youth projects and more youth clubs' were the top issues for those from the east of the city, who were able to come up with many ideas as to what the youth facility would look like. Accessibility was very important and posters should be "in different languages, there should be Braille signs and the place should be wheelchair friendly" said the young people.

Benefiting the whole community was a key theme emerging from the workshop, with young people identifying that increased safety for everyone, cleaning up the area, better job prospects for all, and more open areas would help make their area ideal.

"Better job prospects would raise the overall opinion of people living in the area, less people would be unemployed, there would be a rise in the



standard of living and it would give good publicity to the area."

Councillor Eric Timmins agreed with the young people and pledged:

- ✓ "As the City Council's strategy is that 'Sunderland will be a prosperous city, a desirable safe and healthy place, to live, work learn and visit....' I will continue to encourage the growth of job opportunities in the area."

North Sunderland

"We would like to have the best park in Sunderland!"

Ideas came flooding in as what this park would look like. "A skate park, an ice rink, a band stand, tennis and basketball courts, a football field and a pond would create a place that all ages would visit, where everyone would feel safe and people from the community will relax and grow," said the young people.

More youth clubs, cheaper travel, more entertainment venues and a safer and cleaner environment were voted the top five things that would make the north of the city ideal.

Councillor Paul Stewart made two pledges to:



- ✓ To get in touch with youth and community groups and to meet young people
- ✓ To take up the negative portrayal of young people with the local newspaper and make sure that they take a different approach in future

South Sunderland

A cheaper and improved transport system, with free school travel, and more buses, particularly in the evening, would make a difference to the lives of young people from the South. The area would be safer, there would be less cars on the roads and places would be easier to get to were all reasons why this was a good idea.

Better wheelchair access, a new park, and improved lighting in street and parks would also improve the quality of their life.

The young people were concerned about their relationship with the police.

"We are constantly stopped for no reason, as we are only allowed to be in groups of four," said one young person. "We would like the police to listen to us more and be more understanding."



Councillors George Blyth and Michael Tye pledged to:

- ✓ Visit the Box Youth project and have a look at the problems in the area with the young people
- ✓ Explore issues concerning the relationship between the police and the young people at the Council's meetings with the police

Your ideas!

The Sunderland Keyfund facilitated ideas sessions using a variety of items from the Ideas Box, young people were asked to generate ideas, one that would benefit them and one that would benefit other people in their community.

235 great Sunderland Keyfund ideas were generated and all ideas were fed back to the projects who took part on an individual basis.

"It was very good as it gave us lots of ideas about how we can improve our youth club!" commented one young person about this workshop.

Here are a few of the ideas:

- City Equals would like to organise a treasure hunt using a local map to find places of interest
- The Hall Lane Boys think it would be a good idea to develop a resource with the police so young people can get educated and more aware of the dangers of drugs and alcohol



- Hendon Young People's Project would like to hold a community event for older people with a disco and BBQ
- Sans Street Youth centre would like to hold an issue based dance and drama project and put on a community performance.

What you felt about the day!

Sunderland Youth Development asked the young people how they felt the day had gone.

"The day was very good because it was the chance to express my opinion and what I think!"

- 70% of young people felt that designing their own community had been good or excellent
- 75% of young people felt that the venue, the Stadium of Light had been good or excellent
- 73% thought that the showcase workshops had been good or excellent
- 69% thought that the Sunderland Keyfund workshop had been good or excellent.

Next steps

The next steps in Sunderland will be to:

- Use the information from the conference to inform Sunderland Youth Development Group planning
- Make this report available to all city councillors and put it on the corporate consultation website
- Inform the discussions of Sunderland Youth Parliament with the City Council and Children's Services directorate
- Follow up the pledges with the Councillors



Youthinc.com 2006

At the conference last year, young people highlighted a number of issues that were important to them.

What you said

Young people were unanimous in agreeing that there should be more youth clubs and leisure facilities. Youth projects should be open more at weekends.

Young people wanted their councillors to meet and talk with them more often and visit them in their youth clubs.

Accessibility was poor for those in wheelchairs. Cracked pavements made it difficult to get around.

Young people from the South wanted their youth project to be up and running.

Young men were keen to discuss their experiences of racism in the city and how it made them feel.

What has happened since

The Youth Matters Team distributed money to young people led initiatives through the Youth Opportunity Fund and the Youth Capital Fund.

Improved communications and better links were established between young people and the elected members.

Young people and councillors identified poor lighting and conditions of pavements on a walk around their area.

The Box Youth project officially opened its doors to young people, five nights a week and at weekends.

Sunderland Youth Development Group delivered a series of Rewind Racism Awareness Courses to young people across the city.

Operation Forge, a police led initiative responded to race related issues.

Children's Services continued to support Young Asian Voices in searching for their own premises.

Further information

For further information please contact your neighbourhood youth project and youth worker.

Alternatively, contact:

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