

East End Youth Initiative

Background

Early in 2005 the former East End Social Inclusion Partnership undertook a review of services to young people across the East End with a view to improving the quality, range and coverage of services and encouraging organisations to work more effectively in Partnership. The initial review undertaken by IBP Strategy and Research was presented to the SIP Board in April 2005. Following on from this a stakeholder group set up by the SIP met and considered the findings of the research and offered advice to an implementation team set up by the SIP to take forward the research proposals and implement programmes of activity to address the issues raised. The implementation team met shortly afterwards and drafted an action plan which was approved by the SIP Board and implemented afterwards.

In parallel with this, the East End Housing Associations Regeneration Forum (EEHARF) was established earlier in 2005 and identified youth issues as a priority. The EEHARF is an initiative by five registered social landlords (RSL's) – Milnbank HA, Shettleston HA, Thenew HA, Parkhead HA and Tollcross HA all of whom are based in the East End. In addition the EEHARF works closely with seven local housing organisations (LHO's) who are attached to Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) – Crossview LHO, Milnbank LHO, Keystone LHO, Shettleston LHO, Tollcross LHO, East End Community Homes LHO and Tenant Controlled Housing.

The co – ordinator of the EEHARF has been a key member of the implementation team since the start. The aim is to work with GCPP, the Youth Network and other partners to improve the effectiveness of current services and develop new services in other areas to address concerns expressed by local housing organisations. Through access to Wider Role budgets and funding support from GCPP, the East End Youth Initiative has accessed some £260,000 to develop and deliver services at the weekend to young people.

Role of the Housing Organisations

The role of the housing associations and local housing organisations in this partnership is crucial. Housing associations have contributed positively to the regeneration of communities through the physical transformation of rundown areas in the East End and also in their contribution to the social inclusion agenda. As well as having a good track record of delivering good quality affordable housing they also aim to build sustainable communities. The housing associations work in close collaboration with voluntary organisations, the local authority, police and social work and other agencies. The Scottish Government's objective of creating strong attractive communities where people want to live is

shared by the members of the EEHARF. In order to deliver that objective it is crucial that a strong partnership approach is developed. In relation to the youth implementation team and the weekend activities a strong working relationship has already been developed with the partners involved.

Activity to date

Streetwork

Since November 06 streetwork has been developed and delivered in various areas across the East End. These areas include Parkhead, Tollcross, Haghill, Dennistoun, Milnbank and Calton. To date some 500 shifts have been delivered across the area resulting in 10,000 plus contacts (see appendix one).

Weekend Activities

Since November 2006 activities have been developed and delivered in a number of areas across the East End. Over 8,000 young people have accessed the weekend activities (see appendix two). The aim of these sessions is to provide a more structured way of spending time, learning skills and taking part in new activities. The activities are used as a tool to provide a range of opportunities for young people in the area. The key to this is that young people have chosen to become involved.

Development of the Youth Initiative Database

One of the crucial areas of development has been the creation of a database that could capture the numbers of young people that access and use the weekend activities. All the youth providers involved in the programme have been given individual access rights to the system to input and monitor their own data. Hard copies are still collected by the Implementation Team to ensure accuracy and backup. Administrative rights are held by key members of the Youth Implementation Team for reporting and monitoring purposes. The reports generated can produce a variety of data ranging from ages, areas, venues, streets, gender etc. The system itself is web based and can be developed and expanded to reflect additional information and generate reports. Longer term it is hoped that all youth providers in the area will be able to use this database for all their activities and therefore give a more accurate picture of service development and need across the whole area.

Increased Capacity

It is recognised that the advent of the weekend activity programme has placed a considerable strain on those organisations delivering services in terms of staff availability. Since the inception of the programme there has been three streetwork training programmes delivered in conjunction with Youth Services, John Wheatley College and various youth providers. The aim is to develop capacity and skills of existing staff, sessional workers and young people to become volunteers / paid staff.

Catch the Light Evaluation

Catch the Light (Consultants) were commissioned on behalf of the Youth Implementation Team to provide an evaluation that would assist in informing the future direction of the programme. Their remit included:

- i. A review of activities carried out to date with stakeholders and users.
- ii. Identification of strengths and weaknesses within the current portfolio
- iii. A review of the achievements of the project against targets, outputs and impacts
- iv. A measure of qualitative achievements (soft indicators)
- v. A measure of the demand for continued services within the Housing Association sector
- vi. Recommendations on organisational and staffing structures, key development opportunities, target markets and future funding strategies

The programme evaluation (attached as Appendix 3 to this report) involved gathering information from a range of sources and providing an objective third party review and analysis that would assist the Implementation Team to plan a future strategy for the initiative. The findings of the report have identified the importance of the programme but recognised some of the issues related to the uptake from youth projects, increased capacity and sustainability. The development of the database has provided the Implementation Team with valuable data from across the area which in turn has provided a baseline for the numbers of young people who are using the additional services provided at the weekend. It is also recognised that the programme and the recording of information could eventually track the paths and referral routes (if appropriate) young people have taken whilst using the services provided. Another important aspect of the programme has been the commitment of partners to the initiative and the time given to the programme by individuals. Without the purchase of time of a senior member of the college staff from John Wheatley College to co-ordinate the activities and act as the contact for the youth projects a lot of the work that has been undertaken so far could not have been achieved.

An options paper was circulated previously to all the partners, Youth Network and the members of the Youth Implementation Team for consideration (see appendix four) to look at the future resourcing of the programme including the co – ordination role. The evaluation has alluded to this within the recommendations. It is recognised that a full costing option will have to be developed. This option will assist the long term continuance of the programme.

Programme Strengths / Weaknesses

Strengths

The coverage of the programme ranges from Milnbank to Baillieston (see map of area appendix five). The programme is looking to continually move into other areas. This is dependent on capacity, accessible premises and appropriateness.

The partnership approach, commitment and flexibility of the Implementation Team, Housing Organisations and Youth Projects have ensured continual support and development.

Database: this piece of work has provided a shared recording system that is open to all projects to use as a monitoring and evaluation tool. It is also recognised that the system can be developed to reflect the destinations, routes and services young people use, Its main strength is that for the first time (to our knowledge) that data from youth projects within the area can be collated and collaborated for analysis that can be used to support the development of future services.

<http://www.eeharf-sw.org.uk>

Increased Capacity: the training of existing and new staff in areas like streetwork has provided a larger pool of workers to assist in the provision of weekend activities and streetwork. The issue of available employment still remains an issue.

Weaknesses

Buy in from all youth projects in the area still remains low.

Engagement of young people in service design is still limited.

Implementing Recommendations

The evaluation report has provided recommendations for our consideration and that the Implementation Team should continue to build upon the success of the programme so far. As a group we should consider all the options and decide on the most appropriate and feasible option bearing in mind the status of the group and the funding that we could potentially attract to fulfill and meet these recommendations.