

# Barking and Dagenham Partnership

## Shadow Children's Trust Board Report

28.05.2009



## **1.0 Introduction**

The first shadow Children's Trust Board meeting was held by the Barking and Dagenham Partnership on May 28 2009 at Barking Town Hall. These meetings will be held five times a year prior to the adult Children's Trust meetings so that young people's opinions can be fed directly into the trust decision making processes.

Staff supporting the adult Children's Trust will attend each of the Shadow Trust Board meetings and present to the young people informing them of their role and what responsibilities they have towards children and young people in the borough. This will allow more professionals to hear directly from children and young people themselves and for young people to be able to link directly with decision makers and provide them with a young person's perspective on agenda items.

## **2.0 Attendees**

The first meeting was well attended by 10 young people representing various organisations including the following;

- Kymberly- Youth Champion
- Sharlan- Youth Forum
- Charlotte- Jo Richardson Community School
- Paul, Jordan and Toni- All Saints School Council
- Rachel and Dennis- Progress Project- Disabled Children's Parliament
- Connor and Sarah – Trinity School

The young people introduced themselves and said one interesting thing about themselves. They then participated in an Ice-Breaker game to further get to know each other.

## **2.1 Youth Champion**

The borough's youth champion was present at the meeting and she introduced herself and explained what her role is and what projects she was currently working on. She informed the group that she enjoyed her role and encouraged the young people to apply for the role once her 1-year term was up.

Chris O'Connor Engagement Group Manager represented the trust. Chris informed the group about the role the trust has with regards to decision making and what impact these decisions have on young people's lives. Chris informed the group that the trust members have a combined budget of over £100 million and this money is spent on young people's services. The shadow group's role would be to give ideas on the sorts of things the trust should spend its budget on.

Chris explained what the trust is and that it meets every 6 weeks and that the young people will have their views fed to the trust. He explained the benefits of having a group specific for young people as opposed to a young person attending the actual children's trust meeting.

### 3.0 Be Safe

Feeling safe for children and young people is a key issue in Barking and Dagenham which has been brought up at a number of different consultations and engagement forums over the last three years. The adult Trust is keen to hear from young people about projects or ideas about how we can increase feelings of safety for children and young people in Barking and Dagenham. The young people were given a fictional budget of £10,000 and asked to come up with solutions to crime problems in Barking and Dagenham effecting young people.

#### **Agenda Item 1: Where in the borough don't you feel safe?**

The group split into two and were given the opportunity to discuss amongst themselves, where they do and don't feel safe and to come up with some suggestions on how those places could be made safe.

**1) Problem** - Do not feel safe on buses, and are wary and intimidated of young people who congregate at the back of the bus.

**Solution** - Rules should be enforced that would stop people wearing hoodies, scarves and hats or items that are used to conceal faces.

**2) Problem** - Vandalism on buses make young people feel unsafe.

**Solution** – Board members suggested having inspectors/undercover police officers on buses.

**Solution** - it would be useful for someone to come into schools to give a lecture regarding what was being done to make travelling on buses safer, and to inform pupils what happened to people who misbehaved or committed crimes.

**3) Problem** – Board members did not feel safe near shopping parades especially the parade of shops near Becontree Station.

**Solution** – Board members stated that having teachers patrol that area after school did help.

**4) Problem** – Board members did not feel at all safe in parks and did not use their local parks as they didn't feel safe.

**Solution** - More Community Officers to patrol parks. Park Wardens and park activities were also discussed as young people felt increased activities would encourage young people to use the parks and a greater police presence would help to make young people feel safe.

**5) Problem** - The young people also focussed heavily on having more lighting in alleyways and parks as they are too scared to use either parks or alleyways as soon as it is dark.

**Solution** - Young people felt that if there was more lighting it would be less likely that people would commit crimes and they themselves would feel safer in well lit surroundings.

**6) Problem** - Young people felt that there are often lots of good things happening in their community, some initiatives that are designed to make young people feel safer but that they are not always publicised very well.

**Solution** - Young people felt that good publicity and promotion of groups, events, support networks and activities for children and young people is the key to making young people feel safer in B & D.

**7) Problem** - Young people discussed the need for a greater understanding between young people and police and for better relationships to be built. Young people drew on their own and their friends experiences with police and discussed how this could be improved. Young

people identified there is a communication barrier and young people often feel misunderstood or stereotyped by police.

**Solution** - In order to improve this relationship young people discussed the idea of events that bring young people from across the borough and police together in a fun and informal way. These events should be regular throughout the year.

Other places where young people didn't feel safe were alleyways and felt that they needed more lighting. On a positive note, one board member felt good about the community during the Float parade and she enjoyed the sense of community spirit and said that there should be more things like parades and other events to bring people together. All Board Members agreed that if they had money to spend on making the borough safer they would have a greater police presence at night to reassure people of all ages that they are safe.

#### **4.0 Integrated Youth Support Service Street base Presentation**

Jo Feeney IYSS Group Manager and Micah Gold presented the borough's plans to introduce more youth activities across the borough. They explained that their aim was to target young people not in education, employment or training, children in care and also raise young people's attainment.

They informed the group that they had designed, via consultation and engaging with over 1200 pupils, a brand called 'Street Base'. The reasoning behind this was so that young people knew that when they saw this logo they would know that activities were for young people of their age and free or there may be a small fee. There are going to be sub brands such as Street Base Leisure and Street Base Active. Young people raised the possibility of a Street Base 'Active' theme including more outside the borough trips such as bungee jumping or go-cart racing.

The young people were asked which areas of the borough they lived in and were told what activities and youth centres were planned for each particular area. The young people were genuinely impressed and happy with the plans. They particularly liked the idea of having a youth only gym.

To launch the Street Base brand the young people were excited about celebrating it big and thought the idea of having a big party on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July was great. They felt the timing was right as it's the first day of the holidays and the event should be between 2 – 5 p.m. The group also discussed the type of event the launch should be and the type of acts that should play on the main stage to attract young people to attend.

#### **5.0 Group Naming**

Young people were asked to suggest a name for the group. The suggestions were:

- Our Voice
- Trust in us
- A fun day out
- A leisure day out
- Trust together

Young people had two votes each and 'Trust in us' received the most votes. The group from now on will be called Trust in us.

## 6.0 Youth Opportunity Fund

The deputy youth champion has made a bid to the Youth Opportunity Fund for funding for the group. If he is successful he will need help to present to the Money Matters panel. The young people were asked if he any would like to support him when he makes his presentation. Five of the group volunteered to help.

### 6.1 Evaluation

The group were asked what they thought of their first meeting, the venue, the length of the meeting, timing and whether they would like to have the next meeting at the Vibe so that they could decide what location would be best. The following responses were recorded:

- Would come again
- Nice atmosphere
- Not too formal
- Fun
- Food was great
- Made new friends
- It's nice to be heard
- Timing was fine
- Timing just right
- Liked warm-ups
- Happy to have next meeting at the vibe and in the evening if necessary.
- Happy to be contacted by text.

The group said that they were happy with what they had done during the meeting and that they would definitely come back to future meetings.

For more information regarding the Shadow Children's Trust meetings, or if you are a professional, parent/guardian or young person and know young people who would like to join the group please contact:

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