

# Safer North Devon Youth Consultation Report



**Report to:** IYSS, 18th June 2009

**Topic:** Consultation with young people regarding positive activities.

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## **1.) Introduction to report:**

This report is concerned with the recent consultation organised by Safer North Devon. This consultation was designed to engage with young people, aged between seven and eighteen, and their parents. The consultation targeted residents of West Bideford, particularly, the areas around Pynes Lane and Bowden Green.

There are two distinct sections to this report. Firstly, to present and analyse the results of the consultation with young people, and secondly, to evaluate the method of consultation.

## **2.) Background to the project:**

The *Safer North Devon Youth Crime Prevention Report* contained a recommendation to consult with young people living in West Bideford. This recommendation was made as a result of the comparatively high-level of youth crime in relation to the level of targeted and appropriate provision. It was necessary to consult in order to gather information about the type of provision that is relevant and that young people will engage with. The information from the consultation will be passed onto organisations that are responsible for providing positive activities for young people.

## **3.) Aims and Objectives:**

The purpose of the consultation was threefold. Firstly, to ascertain the type of activities that young people want the opportunity to participate in, and the obstacles or deterrents that young people experience in trying to access provision. Secondly, to provide information regarding preferred activities to commissioning agencies and local stakeholders. Thirdly, to provide opportunities for young people to influence and participate in the development of services which affect them.

Furthermore, the purpose of this report is to establish whether the method of consultation used was successful in engaging with the target group. Where the consultation has not been successful, this report seeks to identify methods to remedy this for future consultation.

## 4.) Method of consultation:

Brief meetings were held with members of organisations that consult or work with young people, including PCSOs, youth workers, seize-the-moment and officers from Torridge District Council (TDC).

Following this, a meeting was held with staff from Devon Youth Service, Connexions, Extended Services and TDC to discuss the best strategy for engaging young people, and the resources available to implement the findings of the consultation.

It was decided that a consultation event and an online questionnaire would be the best method to engage young people. Consequently, a consultation event was organised for the 16<sup>th</sup> of May at Westcroft Junior School and an online questionnaire was created. The following individuals and organisations were invited: the 5x30 Torridge Community Activator (Jessica Christie), Asda Bideford (represented by Peter Wilcox), Connexions, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Devon Youth Service, the Bideford Extended Services Co-ordinator (Mary Harris), Seize-the-moment, Tarka Housing, TDC's community development and sports and leisure departments, WINGS and Young Devon. They were all invited to attend the event, and asked whether they would like to deliver a service or activity.

Representatives came from all organisations except Devon Youth Service and TDC's sports and leisure team. Jessica Christie gave cheerleading lessons and brought hula hoops. Peter Wilcox ran a stall giving away fruit, Felicity Bright, Bobby Dyer and Sarah Watkins from Connexions organised and ran consultation exercises, **PCSOs Paul Uden and Sarah** ran the evaluation area and prize draw, the fire service had a stall with freebies and ran a football competition with Jonny Goode from WINGS. Mary Harris helped with setting-up stalls and registering the young people, Seize-the-moment ran workshops and Paul Raeburn and Lesley Robins from Tarka Housing ran a stall with freebies and consulted with parents. Anna Malone, Nicola Quill and Becky Dennis from TDC community development ran a stall with information about TDC's services and Sally Ellis from WINGS ran an information stall.

At a later date I contacted Bideford Bay children's centre and the Integrated Youth Support Services, IYSS (this includes representatives from the Primary Care Trust, the Youth Offending Team and Y-smart), inviting them to attend. Jane Kivlin from Bideford Bay Children's centre and representatives from some of the organisations which sit on the IYSS attended.

A variety of consultation methods were used on the day, including workshops and games. In addition, there were information stalls, games and food at the event for the young people to enjoy.

## **5.) Results from consultation:**

The consultation games and workshops are analysed separately in the following section of the report. The consultation exercises at the event were 'The Fishing Game', 'The Washing Line', 'The Boredometer', 'Sports Questionnaire' and 'The Wish Tree'. In addition, a short clay-mation film was made about ways young people would like to spend their time, and a Big Brother Style Diary Room was used to catch on film young people's views.

Ninety-five young people were registered throughout the day, though it is possible that more were present. They were aged between six and sixteen, though the majority was aged between eight and twelve. The number of parents that attended was not recorded. The majority of participants were from West Bideford and attended Westcroft Junior School, though there were a few attendees from other parts of Bideford.

## 5.1) Analysis of Fishing Game Results

**Method of consultation:** The participant picked out a coloured fish from a fishing well in exchange for a sweet. The colour of the fish corresponded to a question that they then answered. A member of staff recorded the participants' responses.

The questions were open ended, and therefore the responses are not uniform. In analysing the results, I've tried to collate similar responses, or group answers so that patterns in responses can be seen. The raw, qualitative data is contained in the appendix (pp. 1-12).

Sixty-five young people participated in this game, and The majority answered all seven questions.

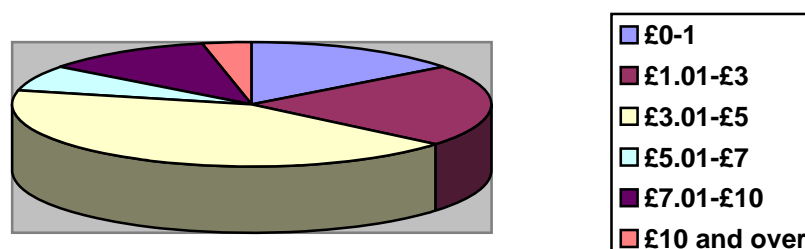
Purple fish: What is the most you would spend on an activity?

A large number of young people said they would be willing to pay between £3 and £5 for an activity session.

However, it is difficult to know without consulting parents whether the young person's statement about how much they are willing to pay for an activity is a realistic estimate how much they could pay.

The most a young person would pay for an activity session	Number of votes
£0-£1	9
£1.01-£3	13
£3.01-£5	26
£5.01-£7	4
£7.01-£10	7
£10 and over	2

A Pie Chart showing how much young people would be willing to pay for activities



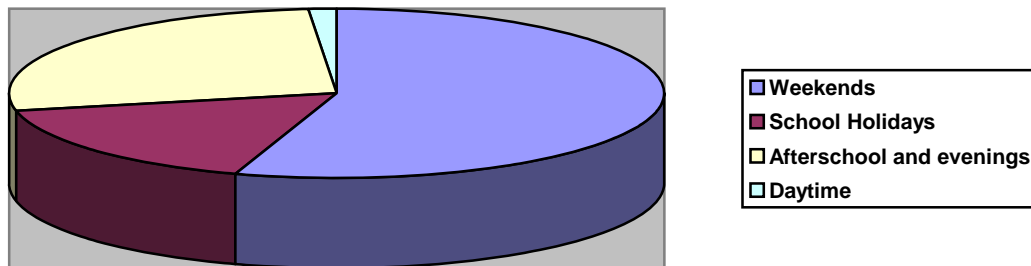
## Blue Fish: When would you like activities to take place?

The majority of young people wanted activities to take place at weekends, and a large number wanted after-school and evening activities.

One parent commented that activities in the middle of the day were impractical for families because they interrupt lunch.

The time a young person wants activities	Number of votes
Weekends	43
After School or evenings	21
School holidays	13
Daytime	1

A Pie Chart showing when young people would like activities to take place



## Pink fish: What do you think about where you live?

### Recurring themes:

The **park** is very important to the young people, and ten comments mention parks or spaces to play. Of these, nine are positive or neutral comments.

The young people felt that living **close to friends** was important. Eight comments state that living near friends and/or people to play with was what they liked about where they live.

Four young people mentioned '**litter**', '**clean**' or '**bins**'. Two felt the area was clean, one mentioned that there was too much litter and one wanted more bins.

### Safety and disturbances:

Thirteen young people said the area was **'quiet'**, **'peaceful'**, or **'quite safe'**.

Seven young people mentioned **'noisy'**, **'disturbing'**, **'not nice people'**, **'rough'** or **vandalism**. One person felt it was 'exciting' that where they lived was 'rougher than most areas', but the six other comments regarding negative behaviour and noise were not positive.

**Like or dislike:**

Thirty-six young people said they thought where they lived was **'nice'**, **'good'**, **'happy'**, **'fun'**, **'exciting'** or **'I like it'**.

Eleven young people said it was **'ok'**, **'alright'** or **'quite cool'**.

Three comments said it was **'horrible'**, **'boring'** or **'not exciting'**

Yellow fish: What activities would you like to do?

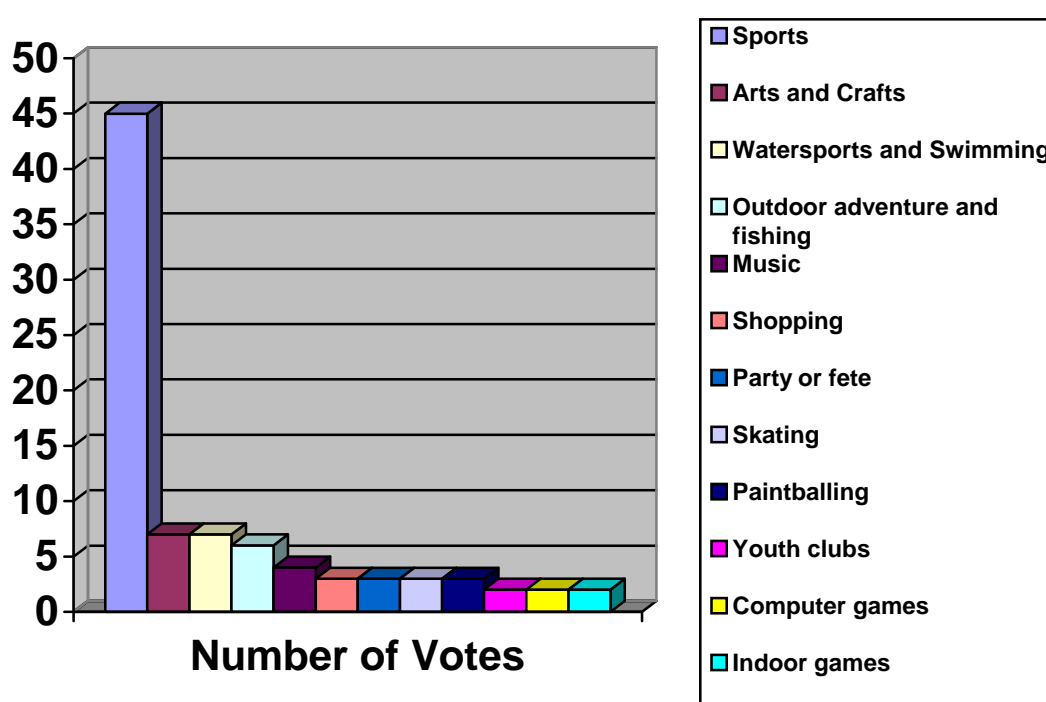
'Sports' emerged as the most popular form of activity; 'arts and crafts' and 'water sports and swimming' were joint second in popularity. Amongst the sports, 'football' and 'tennis' were equally popular. Twelve young people mentioned wanting to participate in each of these sports.

Some young people responded to the question by naming a facility they would like to be able use. These were a new park (two comments), a Football pitch, an improved pool and a gymnasium.

Type of Activity	Number of times mentioned
Sports:	45
Football	12
Tennis	12
Basketball	7
Athletics, gym, running	6
Cricket	6
Trampolining	6
Dancing	5
Rugby	4
Other	11
Arts and crafts	7
Water Sports and swimming	7
Outdoor adventure sports and fishing	6
Music	4

Shopping	3
Party or fete	3
Skating	3
Paint-balling/ laser shoot/ quad biking	3
Youth Clubs	2
Indoor games	2
Computer games/play station/wii	2

A Bar Chart showing the activities that young people would like to participate in



Green fish: What would you change about activities in your area?

A large number of comments pertained to wanting more activities to be available to them. Some statements were very specific, e.g. 'woodland activities' or 'colouring', whilst others were more general e.g. 'more activities available'. The cost of activities and the proximity of activities also emerged as important factors in improving provision.

Comments relating to:	Number of comments
Number, variety or type of activities	16
The cost of activities	12

The proximity of activities	9
Quality of facilities	7
Quality or enjoyment of activities	4
Increase capacity and numbers	2
Opening hours	1

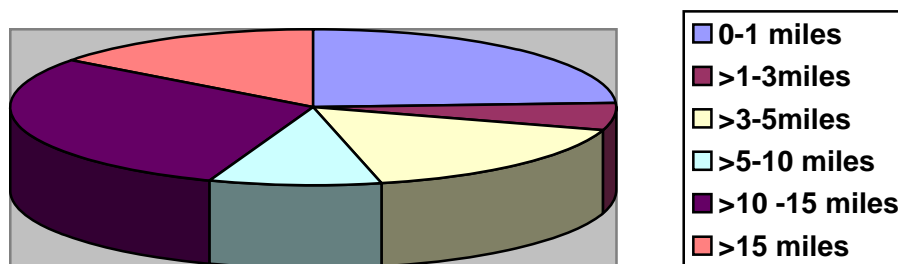
Orange fish: How far would you be prepared to travel to attend activities?

The distance bracket 10-15 miles appears to have the highest number of votes. This is because many young people said they would be willing to travel to Barnstaple, which falls within this distance bracket. There were also many young people willing to travel one mile or less.

It is difficult to know without consulting parents whether the young person's statement about how far they are willing to travel is in fact a realistic estimate of how far they would be able to travel. This is because, if transport were not provided as part of the activity, it would most likely fall to the parent to transport their child.

Number of miles	Places mentioned in this distance	Number of votes
0-1 miles	Bideford	13
1-3 miles	Northam	3
3.1-5 miles	Westward Ho!	9
5.1-10 miles	Torrington	5
10.1-15 miles	Barnstaple	16
15.1 miles and over	South Molton, Exeter, Plymouth, London	8

A Pie Chart showing how far young people are willing to travel to attend activities



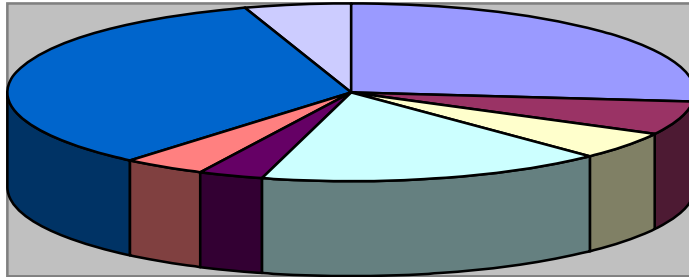
Time spent travelling	Number of votes
0- 5 minutes	2
5.1-10 minutes	1
10.1-20 minutes	2
20.1 minutes-30	3
30.1 minutes -1 hour	1

### Red fish: What do you do in your spare time?

Sport is most frequently cited as what young people do in their spare time, followed by playing T.V or computer games and playing with family, friends or pets.

Activities	Number of votes
T.V/ computer games	26
Music	6
Socialise and play with friends/ family/ pets	16
Go out/ go to park	5
Homework	3
Youth club/ uniformed group	4
Other	5
Sport	33
Football	10
Dance/ gymnastics/ majorettes	9
Trampolining	4
Bike/ BMX	4
Running	3
Cricket	2
Swimming	6
Other	8

A Pie Chart showing participation in activities



## 5.2) The Boredometer Analysis

**Method of consultation:** The Boredometer asked the question, 'Do you get bored during the summer holidays?' The young person was asked to place a sticker on the Boredometer to represent how bored they get during the summer holidays.

The bottom of the Boredometer represented, 'no, I'm never bored'. The middle represented, 'I sometimes get bored'. And the top represented, 'I get very bored a lot'.

Forty-three young people took part in this consultation exercise.

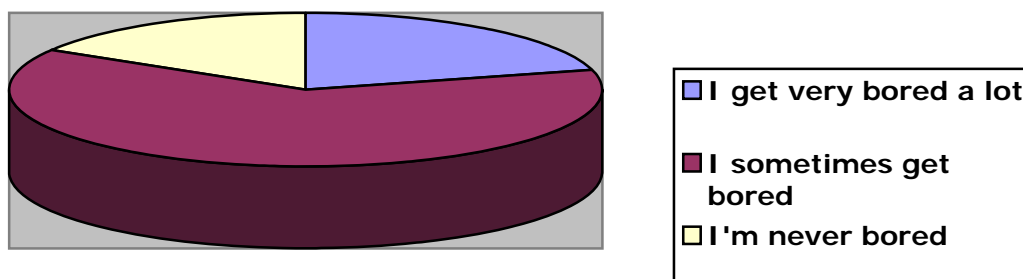
Seven votes were in the bottom third of the Boredometer (six right at the bottom).

Twenty-seven votes were in the middle third of the Boredometer.

Nine votes were in the top third of the Boredometer (six at the very top).

This suggests that the majority of young people do feel boredom during the summer holidays, but for most it is not acute, and small number of young people don't get bored at all.

A Pie Chart showing boredom levels in the Summer Holidays





### 5.3) Analysis of the Wish Tree

**Method of consultation:** At the Wish Tree young people and their parents were asked the question, 'What would you most like to be able to see or do in West Bideford?' They then had to take a coloured leaf and draw or write their answer to this question. The colour of the leaf corresponded to the age of the participant. In the appendix pp.13-15, there is a list of wishes broken down by age.

Ninety-three young people and five parents took part in this consultation exercise.

The majority of wishes related to new or improved facilities. Parks, green spaces and sports facilities were frequently mentioned, including skate parks, play parks and dance studios.

Seven wishes were related to skating and eight related to football. Clearly, these are both very popular activities.

Wishes relating to animals were also very popular, and lots of young people wanted to be able to play with dogs.

Wishes Relating to:	Number of wishes
New or improved facilities	33
Green spaces and parks	15
Sports facilities	13
Sports clubs	14
Indoor activities	13
Youth Clubs	5
Spending time with animals	11
Food	5
Educational or training opportunities	2

## 5.4) Young Devon Big Brother Diary Room

**Method of consultation:** Thirty-two young people were asked questions by a volunteer from Young Devon, who was filming them throughout. The questions sought to find out what people liked and disliked about West Bideford, and what they'd like to change about the area. Full details of the results can be found in the appendix pp. 20-22.

### **Negative factors about living in West Bideford:**

In total, eighteen comments were made regarding this.

There were seven comments concerning '**litter**' or '**messy streets**'.

There were six comments concerning '**nasty people**' and '**gangs**'.

There were five comments saying it was '**boring**' or that '**everything's far away**'.

### **Positive factors about living in West Bideford:**

In total, twenty-one comments were made regarding this.

Seven young people said they liked living close to a **park**.

Five young people felt the area was **friendly** and/or liked the people living near them.

Four young people liked living quite close to the **beach**.

### **Things young people would like to do or change about West Bideford:**

In total, twenty-six comments were made regarding this.

Fifteen young people said they would like to play (more) **football**.

Five would like to do **computing activities** e.g. wii sports/dance mats.

Four young people would like better opportunities for **skateboarding**, four would like to do **horse riding**, four would like to play **rugby** and four would like to do more **sports**.

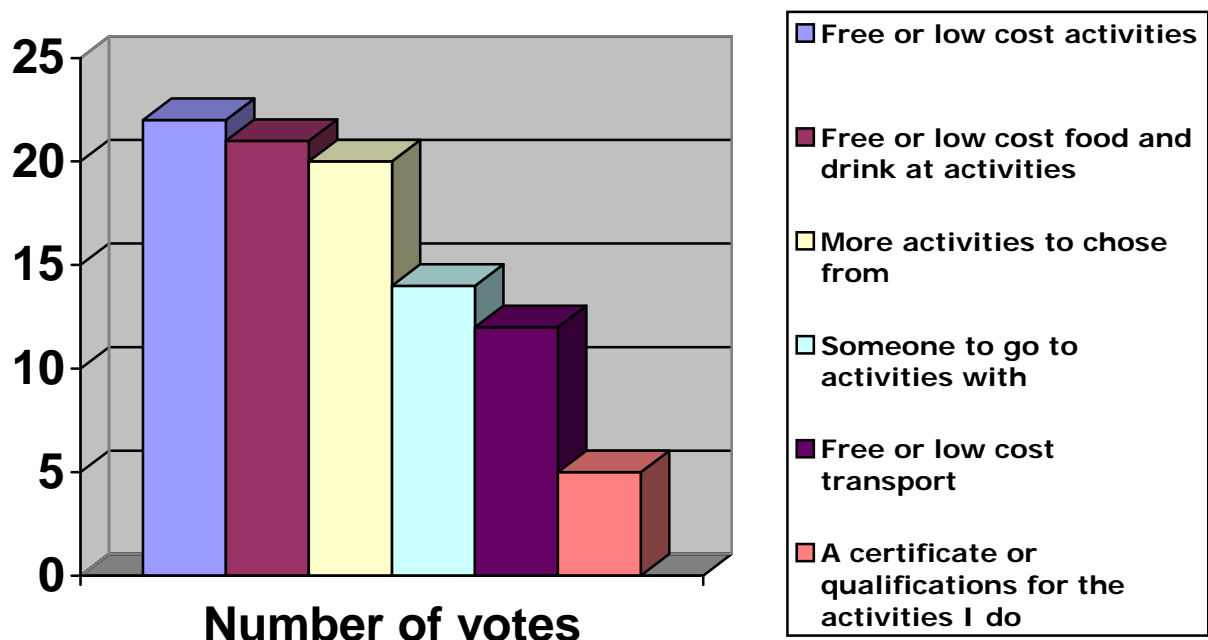
## 5.5) The Washing Line

**Method of consultation:** At the Washing Line, the young person was asked, 'what would encourage you to take part in more activities?' They responded to the question by hanging up one piece of clothing. There were six different pieces of clothing, and each piece represented a different statement. The choice of statements was from the following: free or low cost entry to activities, free or low cost food and drink at activities, more activities to chose from, someone to go to activities with, free or low cost transport and a certificate or qualification for the activities I do. Ninety-four young people took part in this consultation exercise.

At the end of the day the number of pieces of clothing on the washing lines were counted, to establish which one factor would encourage the highest number of young people to take part in activities.

'Free or low cost activities' was the most frequently cited factor, with twenty-two votes.

A Bar Chart showing the number of votes for factors affecting attendance of activities



## 5.6) Analysis of the Prize Draw results

**Method of consultation:** The ticket to enter the prize draw had a question on the back, which said, 'what is your favourite thing to do in your spare time?'

Seventy-three young people entered the prize draw and sixty-one answered the question. Some young people gave more than one answer to the question. Sports was popular, both informal sports like 'riding my bike' and more formal sports like football, as was playing and socialising.

Comments relating to:	Number of comments:
Sports	25
Football	5
Biking	5
Dancing	3
Other	12
Playing/going out with friends, family, pets.	14
Watching TV or computer games	9
Arts (music, reading, crafts)	7
Other	10

## 5.7) Sports Questionnaire

Twenty-three boys and twelve girls filled out the sports questionnaire, which was designed to find out young people's favourite sports, most hated sports and how sporting activities could be improved.

Some young people only partly completed the questionnaire, so there are not necessarily thirty-five answers for every question.

Amongst boys, football is clearly the most popular sport, followed by cricket, running and basketball, whilst netball and hockey were the least popular. Some boys remarked they were unmanly sports.

Amongst girls, cricket and running were most popular, cricket, along with gymnastics, was also the most disliked.

Ideas that young people came up with to improve sports included more prizes, nearer facilities, more clubs, lower prices and longer hours.

### Boys:

	Sport I'd most like to do	Favourite Sports	Clubs I attend	Sports I dislike
Football	6 votes	14 votes	7 votes	3 votes
Cricket	1 vote	4 votes	1 vote	2 votes
Running/athletics	4 votes	4 votes	1 votes	1 vote
Basketball	1 vote	4 votes	0 votes	1 vote
Netball	0 votes	0 votes	0 votes	4 votes
Hockey	3 votes	0 votes	0 votes	4 votes
Tennis	0 votes	3 votes	1 vote	2 votes
Racing/driving	2 votes	2 vote	0 votes	0 votes
Rugby	0 votes	3 votes	0 votes	2 votes
Skating	1 vote	3 votes	0 votes	0 votes
Other	6 votes	6 votes	2 votes	1 vote

### Girls

	Sport I'd most like to do	Favourite Sports	Clubs I attend	Sports I dislike
Cricket	1 vote	7 votes	0 votes	2 votes
Running	4 votes	1 vote	1 vote	
Gymnastics	0 votes	0 votes	0 votes	2 votes

Trampolining	0 votes	0 votes	2 votes	0 votes
Other	1 vote	6 votes	2 votes	2 votes

## 5.8) Clay-mation Video

The young people were asked to make a short animation about where they live, the things they do and what they'd like to do.

The video can be watched on: [www.watchronda.tv](http://www.watchronda.tv)

The following featured in the clay-mation video: football (three times), swimming and diving, surfing, wrestling, sumo-wrestling, horse riding, driving cars, golf, weight lifting, watching TV with the family, skateboarding, playing at the park and loads of animals.

## 5.9) Conclusion from results:

### Types of activities:

**Football** is most frequently cited as being a popular sporting activity, both formal, club-based football and kicking around in the park. Furthermore, the young people on the day were very enthusiastic about the 'cross bar challenge', and were willing to brave the wet weather to play some football.

Amongst the girls, **dance** appeared to be popular, both in the consultation results and also on the day. The dance mats were full all day and the cheerleading class was immensely popular.

**Skateboarding, running, cricket and tennis** were fairly popular with both sexes. They were mentioned in the sports questionnaire, the Big Brother Diary Room, the Wish Tree and the Fishing Game.

**Playing and socialising**, particularly in **parks** or out on the streets, were repeatedly cited as enjoyable activities, showing that **informal activity** is popular amongst young people.

Quite a lot of young people mentioned **children's groups** and **youth clubs**, whilst others wanted somewhere to do **indoor, stationary activities**, such as board games, colouring and playing computer games. The clay-mation workshop was very busy all day long, rarely with less than fifteen children sat round the table at one time.

Many children showed an interest in spending time with **animals**. This was evident from the number of young people wanting pets, enjoyed walking their dogs or expressed how much they like animals.

### Problems with accessing activities

In three separate consultation exercises, **lowering the cost** of activities or making them free was named as an important factor in increasing participation in activities.

The **proximity of activities** was repeatedly mentioned as affecting participation, despite the fact that 'free or low cost transport' was not particularly popular in the Washing Line game. In particular, young people expressed a desire for facilities that are available in or nearby Bideford to be nearer to where they live. For example, young people mentioned wanting skate-parks, football pitches and swimming pools to be located nearby their residence.

Many young people mentioned **food** as a strong incentive for participating in an activity, and the Wish Tree contained many wishes pertaining to various types of food. In addition, the free chips, sweets and fruit available at the consultation event were very popular amongst the young people.

## 6.) Evaluation of Consultation

There are three strands to the evaluation of the consultation. Firstly, the young people evaluated the consultation event; secondly, the organisations that participated in the event completed an evaluative questionnaire. Thirdly, the consultation process, including the preparation and online questionnaire, has been evaluated.

### 6.1) Dartboard Evaluation Game

At the Dartboard Evaluation, the young people were asked to answer three questions about the day. These were:

Do you feel you had an opportunity to say what you wanted to say?

Would you take part in a similar event again?

Did you have fun today?

The young people answered the question by putting a sticker onto a picture of a dartboard.

Bullseye represented 'yes' or 'definitely'

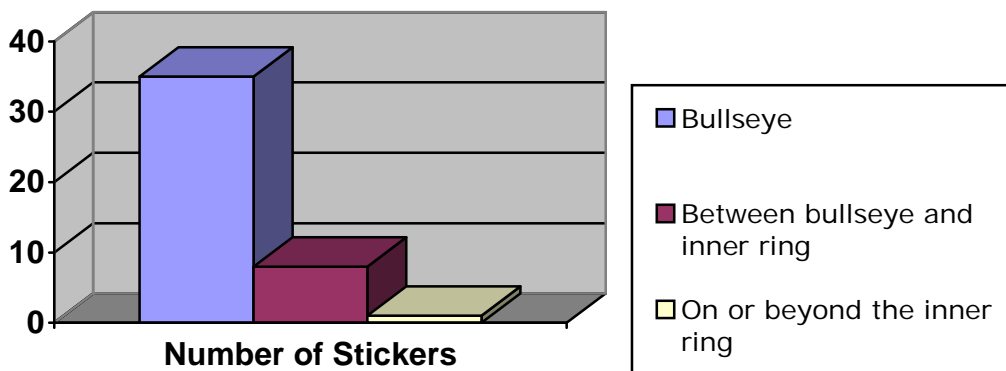
Edge of the Board represented 'no!' or 'definitely not'.

Between bullseye and the edge of the board represented 'maybe' or 'a bit'.

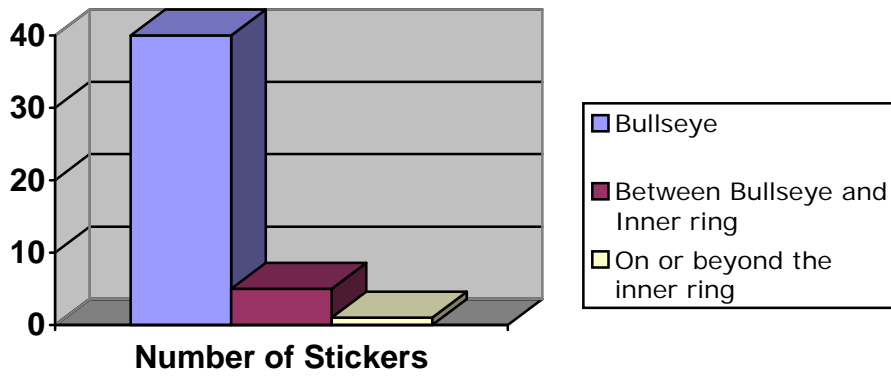
Nearly half of the young people that attended evaluated the day, and the responses to these three questions were, for the most, very positive.

### Bar Charts to show where the young people put the stickers on the dartboard?

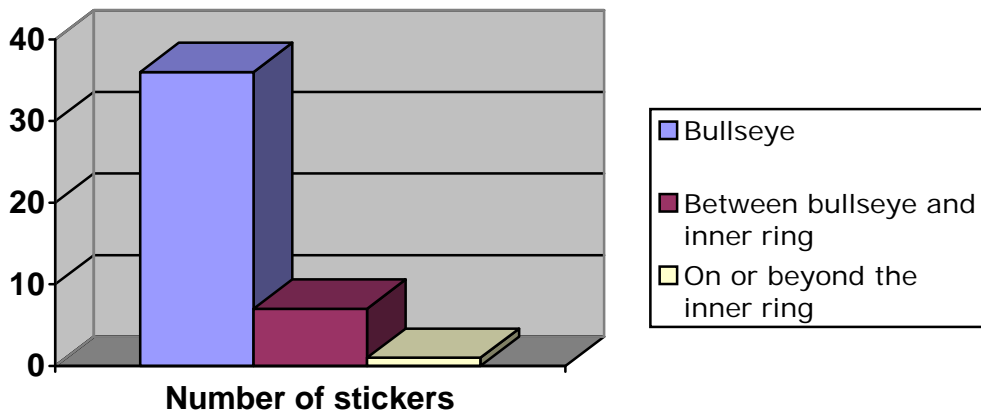
Did you feel you had a chance to say what you wanted to say?



Would you take part in a similar event again?



Did you have fun today?



## 6.2) Comments from young people recorded on the day

### Positive statements:

'Everyone is mad it's so busy.'

A boy heard making a phone call to a friend 'you want to come down now as there are lots of great things to do and loads of free things – chips.'

'Chips, chips, chips.'

'The plastercine models are so easy to do and I liked making the film clips with my dog.'

'My friends and I just want to play football and the playground has goals.'

'The Samba was really loud.'

'We loved the pom-pom dancing.'

'When I first came in a thought it would be rubbish but I've had great fun and had a go on the dance mats.'

'I had a go at the hula hoops and won!'

'I liked the beat box stuff the best.'

'No the drumming and music was the best.'

'Are you going to be here next week?'

'When are you going to do this again?'

'You should do this every week.'

### Suggestions for improvements:

'There should have been more free drinks.'

'Go carts would have been fun.'

'No samba.'

'I would have like to have had a go at the Samba stuff.'

'More out door stuff and no rain.'

'More computers and wiis.'

## 6.3) Evaluation by organisations

The members from organisations that attended the consultation event were sent a questionnaire by e-mail. Sixteen questionnaires were sent out to eleven organisations and seven were returned from six organisations.

Five questions were asked:

1. Did you find the consultation event a useful opportunity to engage with other organisations?
2. Did you find the consultation event a useful opportunity to engage with the target group that your organisation works with?
3. Was there any aspect of the consultation event that you feel was particularly successful?
4. Was there any aspect of the consultation event that was disappointing or problematic?
5. If you could change, improve or add to any aspect of this consultation, what would this be?

### **Responses to question 1:**

All organisations responded 'yes' to the first question, and for some organisations the communication resulted plans for future joint working.

**Responses to question 2:** The answer to this question was mixed. Two of the organisations work primarily with adults. They were able to speak to some parents, however, the turn-out of parents was not as high as one would expect given the high turn-out of young people. Connexions and Seize-the-moment felt the event was a good opportunity to promote their services to younger children, however, primarily they work with adolescents, and the attendance of adolescents was low. Young Devon found the event was a positive experience for their young volunteers.

**Responses to question 3:** Five responses emphasised the success of having a good range of fun activities to do and ensuring the consultation workshops were interesting and creatively designed. Two responses commented that the free food and goodies were successful.

**Responses to question 4:** Five responses to this question were concerned with the noise levels and space issues, two comments

were regarding the low turn-out of adolescents, and attributed this problem to the location. There was one comment relating to inadequate domestic arrangements for staff.

**Responses to question 5:** Two comments related to using a different venue, and two comments related to having input from other services that work with young people, Devon Youth Service for example. Two comments related to providing better information to young people about positive activities, this ties in with the comments about input from other services. One comment suggested young people should have had to partake in all the consultation activities before being able to have free chips.

**Other comments made:** One suggestion was changing the venue, and another was to let the young people join in with the samba.

## **6.4) Summary of evaluation of consultation event**

### **Positive factors:**

The turnout of seven to twelve year olds was good. Many stayed all day, and really enjoyed themselves. All the activities were busy, especially clay-mation, dance mats and wii games.

The young people, as well as having fun, took part in the consultation exercises and good, detailed information was collected. The type of consultation carried out meant that young people had the opportunity to say exactly what they wanted to say, and voice individual concerns or ideas about positive activities.

Young people were given multiple ways of expressing their views. They could draw, talk, write and even make videos to tell us the things they liked doing. The variety of methods used meant that the consultation was accommodating towards children's differences, and their various strengths and weaknesses in communicating with adults.

Free chips were a big draw for the young people and their parents; freebies and sweets were also very popular.

### **Negative Factors:**

The attendance of thirteen to eighteen year olds was quite low. This may have been as a result of the venue, or marketing of the event and distribution of the promotional material.

There were fewer parents attending than one would have expected given the number of young children at the event. This was disappointing for those organisations that primarily work with adults.

The event was noisy, which was sometimes unpleasant and made it difficult to consult.

The majority of the consultation data is qualitative. This has made it difficult to collate and categorise, which makes spotting trends in the information quite hard.

No young people have filled in the online questionnaire, despite that it was promoted on the flyer.

## 7.) Recommendations

### 7.1) Community Building in West Bideford

a) The responsible bodies should give their full support to projects aimed at developing a community building in West Bideford.

Councillor Humphrey Temperley and Alison Boyd (Assistant County Community Strategy Officer for Torridge & North Devon) are investigating various options regarding obtaining a building for community use. Athos Pittordou (Director of CanPlay) is also investigating into the possibility of a community building. Athos Pittordou and Councillor Humphrey Temperley have been put in contact with each other, and made aware of their similar objectives.

The responsible body should be involved in the project, providing advice, officer time and, where possible, resources. Including, if it proves necessary, supporting the setting-up of a community group to manage the building.

The responsible body should use the results of this consultation to support and evidence the need for a community building.

**Reason:** There is no building for community use in West Bideford. A local primary school was used for this consultation event, but it is not always available and it is locked during the school holidays. There is no building for the organisations that need regular contact with the community to use as a base.

Young people repeatedly cited the proximity of facilities and activities to be a problem, saying they wanted 'more activities locally' and complaining 'some [activities] are too far away'. Activities cannot take place locally unless there is a site for them to be based at. Socialising and playing with friends was one of the ways in which a lot of young people told us they enjoyed spending their time. In cold or wet weather and in winter when the days are short, this can be difficult as many young people said they play in the park or streets.

In the evaluative questionnaire, many organisations cited the venue as being the aspect of the event that they felt was problematic. This was predominantly because of the low turn-out of thirteen to eighteen year olds, which may have occurred as a result of using a primary school as a venue. However, there is no alternative indoor space available in West Bideford, and therefore similar problems may be encountered with future projects aiming to engage secondary-school-aged people. The nearest alternative building is Bideford College. However some disengaged young people may be

discouraged to access events or services held in the college, because of associations they may have with the venue.

In East-the-Water, despite occasional problems, the Polyfield Centre has provided a much needed and well-used indoor community space. The building of the Polyfield Centre has enabled positive activities such as a BMX club, a youth club and majorettes to be based in the heart of the community.

**b)** If possible, the community building should be nearby a green space, such as a play park or a field. The responsible body should take this into consideration in planning the location of the building.

**Reason:** Many of the young people said they enjoyed playing in the park, 'climbing trees' or doing running-around games, like tag. A building located near a public, outdoor space would enable the organisations that use the facilities to be flexible and respond to uncontrollable factors, such as weather, to provide the activities that young people would most like to do.

**Responsible bodies:** Devon County Council (DCC) and TDC.

## **7.2) Children's Group**

**a)** The responsible body should advise, support and/or commission a youth club for people under thirteen years old. They should influence the spread of resources and work with existing providers to ensure that an area of need, such as West Bideford, receives a suitable level of appropriate provision.

**Reason:** The consultation event was well attended by people under thirteen years of age, and there were lots of comments asking or requesting that the event becomes a regular fixture. Many of the young people arrived early and stayed until closure, implying that they have free time at the weekends, and really enjoyed the activities on offer. In the consultation results, there were multiple requests for more activities, and many were for youth clubs and children's clubs.

To prevent youth crime, it is important to engage with young people early on, before offending behaviour is manifested. A Children's Club enables positive relationships to be formed between young people and adults, whilst positive activities help to build self-esteem and raise aspirations. These three factors, self-esteem, high-aspirations and positive relationships with adults, are key factors in reducing the likelihood of offending.

At Pynes Infants School, fortnightly on Saturday afternoons, a children's club is open for young people with special needs, and their friends and/or siblings. The club is usually attended by between twelve and sixteen young people. It is staffed by volunteers and managed by Athos Pittordou. Building on the success of this, a weekly children's club could be established.

**b)** The club should provide a safe place for young people to play and socialise, as well as allowing young people to forge positive relationships with trusted adults and developing young people's social and emotional skills.

**Reason:** There is significant evidence to show how positive activities can help reduce the risk of young people becoming socially excluded by developing their social and emotional skills. 'Young people experiencing risk factors are not inevitably on a pathway to exclusion in later life. This is because young people can develop resilience to risk through exposure to protective factors...Young people's participation in positive leisure time activities...supports the development of resilience through building social and emotional skills. Good quality youth activities help build on important characteristics that are increasingly necessary for capitalising on the opportunities available to young people and for overcoming disadvantage.'<sup>1</sup>

Youth workers from WINGS and Seize-the-moment have expressed the opinion that beginning youth work early can have a positive effect on a young person's development, particularly in respects to their relationship with adults.

**c)** The club should open on a Saturday or Sunday.

**Reason:** According to the consultation, the weekend was when the majority of young people wanted activities to happen. There are after-school clubs running every week night, based at Westcroft School.

**d)** The club should be centred around arts and informal play, taking opportunities to play outside where possible. In addition, the club should be flexible enough to accommodate the young people's ideas and opinions.

**Reason:** In addition to direct requests for youth clubs or children's clubs, many of the young people requested arts based activities such as colouring, music, modelling clay and craft activities. In

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<sup>1</sup> HM Treasury, *Aiming High for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*, July 2007, pp.17-18.

addition, young people requested non-sports based activities that could be easily incorporated into a children's club such as playing board games, playing on the computer or wii and run around games.

Playing –in the park, at home, with family or friends –was frequently cited as young people's favourite activity. There is considerable research-based evidence to support the importance of play in a child's healthy development. 'If normal play experiences are absent throughout a child's life, that child is more likely to become highly violent and anti-social regardless of demography.'<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the benefits of play are directly related to the prevention of youth crime and youth anti-social behaviour in individuals. Children's play can be 'a benefit in the lives of children who are economically disadvantaged by providing a protective and compensatory factor in their life.'<sup>3</sup>

**e)** The children's club should balance a fun, relaxed and flexible environment with structure and goals.

**Reason:** Evidence suggests that it is the characteristic and nature of activities rather than the particularities of the activity, which have the greatest positive impact on the young person. 'It is the level of structure in the delivery of activities which is the most important. This means the activity has a goal and a purpose, and some level of organisation and facilitation by a trusted adult or older peer.'<sup>4</sup>

Some young people requested activities such as trips to old sailing boats or to the ice-rink, which need an adult or older peer to help organise and over-see. For young people, planning and organising a trip would constitute working towards a goal. A youth group can enable young people to do activities that otherwise they would be dependent on their parents or their school to organise.

**f) The club should be low-cost or free to the child.**

The club should seek outside sources of funding to reduce the cost to the young person.

**Reason:** 15 % of young people said they could only pay £1 or less, whilst 36% could pay £3 and under and 79% of young people would be unwilling to pay anymore than £5 for an activity. The Washing Line consultation exercise revealed that making activities

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<sup>2</sup> Beth Manwaring and Chris Taylor, *The Benefits of Play and Playwork: Recent evidence-based research (2001-2006) demonstrating the impact and benefits of play and playwork*, 2007, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> *The Benefits of Play and Playwork*, P.12

<sup>4</sup> *Aiming High for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*, p. 21.

'free or low-cost' was the factor which would encourage the highest number of young people to attend more positive activities.

The majority of young offenders are from areas ranked 1-3 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scale,<sup>5</sup> which factors in income deprivation. Any positive activity designed to reduce youth crime must be low-cost, otherwise it is excluding some of the young people it should be seeking to engage.

**Potential providers:** Canplay, CASP, Extended Services, Michelle White Fitness (Kids Club), Seize-the-moment, TDC, WINGS, outreach workers from Burton Art Gallery or The Plough Arts Theatre. Young Devon or WINGS might be able to help recruit young volunteers to help-out at the youth club.

**Responsible body:** Early Years and Childcare Services (EYCS).

### **7.3) Monitoring and possible extension of 'Soccer Safe':**

**a)** The responsible body should monitor the success of 'Soccer Safe' to establish whether it is an appropriate scheme for reducing youth crime and youth anti-social behaviour (YASB). 'Soccer Safe' offers three free football training sessions to eight to twelve year olds in three different areas around Bideford. The training sessions culminate in a final tournament between the teams from the three areas. It is being organised and delivered by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

The following needs to be monitored:

The level of uptake, i.e. are all the places on the Westcroft course filled?

The type of participants, i.e. are places taken-up by young people who may not usually engage with positive activities? Are these young people at-risk of offending?

The behavioural development of the participants, i.e. does the scheme have a positive effect on the behaviour, relationships or outlook of the young person?

**Reason:** Aspects of this monitoring will inevitably be subjective, speculative and difficult to identify given that the scheme is only running four sessions. However, it is important that an effort is made to recognise whether the scheme has the potential to reduce levels of youth crime locally. The consultation showed that football was the most popular sport amongst young people, particularly amongst males.

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<sup>5</sup> This information is taken from Clive Cotton's report, *FIRST TIME ENTRANTS, 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2006 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2007, Version 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008.*

**b)** The 'Soccer Safe' scheme should be extended if it is deemed fit for purpose. Here, fit for purpose means 'soccer safe' engages with young people that may be at risk of offending or that demonstrate negative behaviour, it has a positive effect on the behaviour or outlook of the young person and it facilitates social inclusion.

'Soccer Safe' could be extended in two ways. Firstly, the time-scale could be extended, so that the scheme continues to run throughout the year. Secondly, the age range could be extended to include a separate set of training sessions for secondary school aged young people. The new college will have two all weather pitches, one of which has planning permission to be floodlit until 9 pm, therefore, weather permitting, facilities shouldn't be too problematic.

**Reason:** Long term engagement in positive activities is more likely to have a positive effect on behaviour than short-term bursts of participation, and therefore it is important that the time-scale of the scheme is extended if it is deemed to be appropriate and popular. Though offending behaviour can begin at ten or eleven years old, the majority of FTEs are aged fifteen or sixteen. Therefore, it is important that youth crime prevention projects should seek to engage young people early on and keep them engaged throughout adolescence.

**c)** If 'Soccer Safe' is fit for purpose, then further investigation should be done into the availability of resources required to develop the Soccer Safe scheme into a Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP), taking the Get Off Your Arse (GOYA) YIP as a model of good practice. This would provide universal provision for the community whilst providing additional support and mentoring for identified young people.

**Reason:** The GOYA YIP has been very successful in reducing First Time Entrants (FTEs) into the criminal justice system. Given that the consultation results show that football is very popular amongst the young people living in West Bideford, the GOYA model could prove an effective method of engaging young people in positive activities and reducing FTEs.

**Responsible bodies:** Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS) should ensure that 'Soccer Safe' is monitored by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. This information should then be fed back to the IYSS, who would be responsible for deciding on the potential of the project to reduce youth crime and YASB.

#### **7.4) Information sharing days**

Schools should advertise local clubs and activities to its pupils, working in conjunction with the voluntary and third sectors to ensure that information is distributed effectively. This could include asking providers or leaders at sports clubs to run a Physical Education lesson or lead a dance and drama class, so that links are set-up between schools and the community.

**Reason:** Some of the activities young people said they would like to try-out are available in Bideford or Barnstaple. For example dance classes run at Michelle White Fitness, which is within walking distance of Westcroft Junior School. This suggests that they may not know about the activities going on in their area. Following the roll-out of the Extended Services disadvantage subsidy scheme in 2010, financial support will be provided to young people eligible for free-school-meals, so that they can access positive activities. Therefore, one of the priorities of the learning community needs to be ensuring that the young people have sufficient information and sufficient confidence to be able to take advantage of the disadvantage subsidy. By having coaches or staff from the community club forging relationships with pupils in schools, young people may find the transition from school activities to activities in the community a small step to take.

**Responsible bodies:** Northern Devon Children's Trust (NDCT) and Bideford Learning Community.

### **7.5) Community Access to Bideford College's Facilities**

**a)** The responsible body should ensure that the community has some regular access to the facilities, particularly the sports facilities, at Bideford College, when the new build is completed.

**Reason:** A major part of the agenda for the new development is to allow community use of the facilities. The responsible body should ensure this is upheld.

Two of the most popular sports were cricket and tennis. Currently, there are tennis and cricket clubs at Westward Ho!, which may be too far for some young people to travel. Bideford College will have two Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) with markings for seven outdoor tennis courts, four of which have planning permission to be floodlit until 9 p.m. The sports hall has the capacity for two indoor cricket nets. It is important, therefore, that the West Bideford community can access the new sports facilities at Bideford College.

**b)** The feasibility of holding sports sessions for primary-school aged children, held at Bideford College, run by members of staff of either

Westcroft Primary School or Bideford College, should be investigated.

**Reason:** The young people wanted to be able to play tennis and/or cricket, and Bideford College will have the facilities to enable this to happen. Were the sports clubs run as after-school clubs through extended services, it may be possible to organise a walking bus from the primary school to the secondary school. This may help motivate young people to attend the activities, as they could stay with their friends. In addition, using teachers to provide training may help to reduce the cost to the young person.

**Responsible Bodies:** TDC and Extended Services.

## **8.) Recommendations regarding consultation methods**

### **8.1) Consultation with parents**

In future consultation events, more of the workshops should be orientated towards consulting with parents.

**Reason:** Factors affecting a young person's ability to access a positive activity, such as the travelling distance to the activity and the cost of the activity, are often determined by the parent of the young person. Consulting with parents, as well as young people, would help to establish an accurate and realistic idea about what is required to make positive activities accessible.

In addition, organisations that work primarily with adults, such as Tarka Housing and TDC, would have more time to engage with their target group.

### **8.2) Quieter workshops**

In future consultation events, fewer noisy workshops should be run simultaneously or they should be run in separate rooms.

**Reason:** At certain points, the event was unpleasantly noisy, particularly for young children and the staff that were required to stay at the event all day. In addition to comfort, the noise made consultation difficult as it was hard to hear the young people's responses to questions.

### **8.3) Alternative Venues**

In future consultation targeting young people over twelve years of age, it would be preferable not to host the event in a primary school. A community building, such as a youth club, would be more appropriate.

**Reason:** Many organisations attributed the low turnout of secondary-school aged children to the venue. Westcroft Junior School was an appropriate venue for the primary school aged young

people, however, secondary school aged young people may have been unwilling to return to their junior school.