



Date:	11 February 2016
Title:	Community Forum Update
Purpose of the Report:	To provide an update following the Youth Forum event held on 21st October 2015 and future proposals for the Steering Group.
Contact Officer:	Jo Martindale, Committee Officer Sarah Hughes Community Engagement Manager CBC

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To note the feedback and projects that are currently in action and proposed following the Youth Forum event held October 2015.**
 - 1.2 To note the new Chairman of the Community Forum Steering group and Spokesperson to the Partnership Committee.**
 - 1.3 To note the preferred option for the future Community Forum**
 - 1.4 £500 has already been allocated in Big Plan 502/4524 proposed projects for 2016/17 to hold another Community Forum event. In addition to approve £1,800 from EMR Economic development budget 970/9018 towards the costs of a Youth Music event in 2016 to be organised by TACTIC.**
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2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Community Forum has operated since November 2012. The Forum steering group agreed that it would engage with the local community through events to gather local views in order to influence future priorities and decisions regarding the local area and the information generated would be fed back to the Partnership Committee. The first event 'You and Your Town Centre' took place in February 2013, followed by 'Healthy Wealthy and Wise' in 22 March 2014. The third and most recent event focussed on engaging with young people and took place on October 21 2015.**
- 2.2 This report demonstrates the progress since the event to address the feedback received from young people**

3. Youth Forum 21. October 2015

- 3.1 The Youth Forum event took place at Cedars Upper School, Vandyke Upper School and TACTIC at Mentmore. Pre-event data was collected through an online survey of 135 local young people and this guided discussion with a further 185 young people, face to face at the three venues.
- 3.2 Partnership Committee received headline feedback at its meeting on 17th December 2015. Since that meeting the Community Forum Steering Group has collated more detailed feedback and recommendations from a number of experts and agencies. This is set out below under the key headings of: Health, Personal Safety / Crime; Public transport; Information provision, Volunteering, Town and Leisure.

Key Issue	Response
<p>Mental health issues and access to help/support</p>	<p>Health & Wellbeing event for young people on 17th February 2016 at Centre Parcs, Bedfordshire for 13-18yr olds, organised by HealthWatch. The purpose of the event is to engage with as many young people living in Central Bedfordshire. To gather feedback and insight on their experiences of <i>health, social care and wellbeing services</i> and to listen to their aspirations for improving services for younger people. HWCB will also be looking to identify methods for continued engagement with young people, It is also an opportunity to look at <i>developing a 'Young Healthwatch'</i> designed by young people for young people.</p> <p>HWCB are inviting a diverse range of younger people from Upper and specialist schools in the area, young carers and young people from various youth groups, to ensure this event will be a positive, fun and interactive day and an opportunity to work with Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire to improve services and influence change.</p> <p>TACTIC organised a Mental Health Awareness week - 25th January.</p> <p>All schools have access to a School Nurse, this will be reinforced.</p> <p>Youth Support Service (YSS) confirm that the Children's Trust is exploring issues around low self-esteem where the statistics for Central Bedfordshire show the incidences of low self-esteem amongst young people in Central Bedfordshire are extremely high including admissions to A&E for self-harm.</p>

<p>Personal Safety / Crime/Drug misuse</p>	<p>All findings have been reported to the Police Schools Liaison Officer – Richard Denton.</p> <p>The Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) is addressing this through a pilot scheme in Biggleswade; surveys are out at the moment and Community Safety are gathering information. This survey is specifically aimed at young people using alcohol in the town. The next campaign could be done in Leighton-Linslade.</p> <p>TACTIC are organising a Hate Crime Awareness week – 29th Feb</p>
<p>Access to Information</p>	<p>The Youth Support Service (YSS) is currently developing approaches to centralise information that may benefit young people in Central Bedfordshire. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new social media presence including a Facebook fan page that will contain the latest information on opportunities and services for young people. This page will also link/network to their organisations who are providing services - Regular email bulletins with the latest opportunities (e.g. Apprenticeships) for young people, parents and professionals who support them - An updated CBC website with information on the Youth Support Service <p>It is anticipated this will be in place by April 2016</p> <p>LLTC is considering supplying upper schools with more information on what's happening in the town – either through About Town, social media , a dedicated web page or information boards at schools.</p> <p>Signage money is available should we wish to proceed with the community noticeboards at the schools.</p> <p>LLTC will encourage local councillors/MP to work with the schools through assemblies/workshops and get them involved in Council led projects and have a better understanding of who's who and what the Council does.</p>
<p>Active citizens and Volunteering</p>	<p>In partnership with schools, the YSS is arranging elections to the new Central Beds Youth Parliament.</p>

	<p>These elections will take place in Jan/Feb 16 and young people from both Cedars and Van Dyke are fully engaged in the process. In addition, a 'special interest' seat is being made available to a young person who attends the TACTIC centre.</p> <p>Youth Support Service contract with the CVS to provide Youth Action – a programme targeted at recruiting and placing young people as volunteers. The contract is worth £55,000.</p> <p>Adam Payne has attended most upper schools in Central Bedfordshire and given assemblies in relation to Volunteering. Young people have been given registration forms and so far receiving a good response.</p> <p>Youth Action has offered to lead on more focused projects around Social Action. In particular the outcome of 'cleaning up eye sores' which could lead to them gaining their V-Inspired awards. Contact will need to be made back with the schools to engage with students who are interested.</p> <p>Citizens Advice will engage with schools and offer 'Work experience' volunteering opportunities for young people.</p>
Town/Leisure	<p>LB Theatre distribute 10 copies of the brochure each to all schools. They also send out posters and flyers for relevant live screenings and shows and email schools with info for their newsletters. The theatre also has a theatre e-bulletin and Facebook page.</p> <p>Broaden the entertainment offer at events for all ages, making it relevant to youth, not just young children and adults.</p> <p>TACTIC are proposing a Youth Music Event – 18th August.</p> <p>Lighting issues are being addressed under the resident survey action plan.</p>
Public transport	<p>The feedback from young people re public transport was very useful as CBC enter into the consultation stage of a new Public Transport strategy.</p> <p>A review of the information and awareness issues will take place to ensure that information is readily</p>

	available particularly on the cheapest fares. Out of date timetables have been replaced.
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4. Future of the Community Forum and budget.

- 4.1 The Steering group met on 20th January 2016 and considered future options. It decided to continue as is with a small Community Forum Steering group to organise a maximum of one event per year in response to a local issue or need or opportunity.
- 4.2 Tricia Humber was elected as the new Chairman of the Community Forum Steering group and will be the Forum spokesperson at future Partnership Committee meetings.
- 4.3 The Forum has £254 remaining this financial year with an additional £500 projected in 2016/17 for future forum events. The steering group seeks a further £1,800 to support the Youth Music event proposed by TACTIC who will meet the associated staffing costs from within their current resources. (see recommendation 1.4).

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Through the youth event the Community Forum has maintained a high standard of event organisation and engaging with residents across the town. The Youth event was an opportunity for key current issues affecting young people to be debated. The follow up indicates that whilst many issues raised are already on the agenda of a number of key agencies, it has also highlighted some gaps in provision which will be explored further to see if they can be addressed.