

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED: AN
EXAMINATION OF SOME OF THE
REASONS BEHIND AND MEASURES
IN PLACE TO TACKLE YOUTH
DISAFFECTION IN NEWHAM**

April 2012

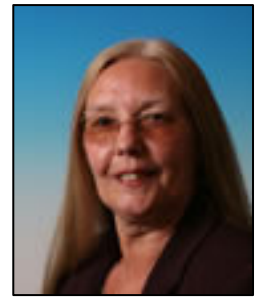
CHAIR: Cllr Freda Bourne

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission's report on Engaging the Disengaged: An examination of some of the reasons behind and measures in place to tackle youth disaffection in Newham.



The purpose of the Commission's in-depth review into youth disengagement in Newham was to examine some of the reasons behind youth disaffection, to identify what measures were currently in place to tackle youth disaffection in Newham, and to provide suggestions as to how the Council might work to better engage disaffected youth in Newham.

On multiple occasions, I have met with young people and when asking them why they are hanging about on the streets, the most common response I received was: "There is nothing to do around here." Knowing that the offer for young people in Newham is extensive and offers a variety of ways for young people to become involved, the Commission saw this as an important issue to delve further into.

Youth disengagement is very broad, multi-faceted and refers to a cluster of behaviours, attitudes and experiences. Since the reasons for disaffection in young people vary greatly, this prompted the Commission to examine reasons based around three main areas: the dissemination of the Newham Youth Offer, communication and improvement of working relationships between various Council departments, and knowledge sharing among key stakeholders to minimise the number of disaffected young people.

Over the course of several months, the Commission received detailed evidence about the Council's Children and Young People Services, Environment Services, Leisure Services, and Public Health Partnerships Service. The Commission also gathered evidence from partners and conducted several site visits where the Commission Members spoke directly with young people. With that, I would like to sincerely thank everyone involved in this process.

This in-depth review has given Members of the Commission an excellent understanding of the reasons behind youth disaffection in Newham, the possibility of observing cases of good practice in the borough which aim to minimise the number of disengaged youth and lastly to make an informed decision about its recommendations for future improvement. Members of the Commission have also used this opportunity to actively question, challenge and suggest improvements to the work of the Council and partners in the context of disengaged youth, and to thereby embrace their leading role in ensuring that the Council acts as an effective conduit in the creation of opportunities for young people in Newham.

On this note, and finally, I would like to say a big thank you to all the Commission Members for their contributions to this in-depth review, and to the Overview and Scrutiny Unit for their support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Freda Bourne', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cllr Freda Bourne
Chair, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission has carried out an in-depth review into youth disengagement in Newham in order to examine some of the reasons behind youth disaffection, to identify what measures were currently in place to tackle youth disaffection in Newham, and to provide suggestions as to how the Council might work to better engage disaffected youth in Newham.

Since the factors for and reasons behind youth disaffection are multiple and varied, the Commission found it hard to provide a precise number of disaffected young people in Newham. It is also for this reason that the number or ethnic breakdown of disengaged young people is not readily available.

Overall, it is difficult to pin-point factors or occurrences that trigger disengagement in young people as these vary on case by case scenario. It has been argued, however, that disadvantage in different spheres of life (including material, educational, employment, family, peer group, and psychological and physiological health) can combine to form vicious circles that result in disaffection.¹ Therefore and during its review, the Commission narrowed its focus to three main factors which provided an understanding for disaffected youth in Newham. The Commission considered 1) advertising of current and all available activities for young people to become involved in and their awareness of such programmes, 2) communication and working relationships between various Council departments and 3) sharing of information, knowledge and good practice among key stakeholders to reduce the chance of young people becoming disengaged.

Based on site visits, evidence gathering meetings, interviews, and discussions with the young people, partners, and senior officers that the Commission undertook, it was found that disengagement in young people in Newham could be partially alleviated by the Council's improvement in effective communications and advertising of involvement opportunities to young people by employing the use of new media and social networks. Furthermore, it was also found that adopting and duplicating techniques of good practice in the borough as well as effective knowledge and information-sharing would maximise the Council's effectiveness in engaging with the young people². More specifically, it is recommended that more partnership committees and joint working relations among the appropriate Council departments be set up as a medium for information exchange and that secondary schools in Newham continue to develop innovative ways of sharing good practice with one another on regular basis.

The Commission has made ten recommendations which are based on the evidence received and take into account areas that could be further improved in order to better assist and provide engagement opportunities for the young people of Newham. While youth disengagement is hard to define and difficult to convert into statistical data, mitigation of the causes behind youth disaffection can be achieved by the Council. In conclusion, the recommendations put forth by the Commission both reflect and build on those areas already identified as in need of improvement by the Council itself.

¹ 'Destination Unknown: Engaging with the Problems of Marginalised Youth,' London, by T Bentley and R Gurusurthy, 1999, in 'A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people,' by Richard Steer, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2000.

² The referenced report points out the necessity of political commitment (at council and strategic levels) to good data sharing between agencies and a well-coordinated multiagency response for NEET reduction and thus supports the Commission's findings. Nelson, J. and O'Donnell, L., (2011). Approaches to Supporting Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training: a Review. Slough: NFER, p.3.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1) Communications to set a firm launch date for the completed Youth Offer website (www.newham.gov.uk/youthzones) and report progress to the Commission in two months time.
- R2) Communications to ensure the team regularly liaises with the CYPS Early Intervention Inclusion and Progression Service to monitor as well as update the Youth Offer website as necessary.
- R3) An online youth forum to be created on the Youth Offer website (www.newham.gov.uk/youthzones) enabling young people in Newham to anonymously input and exchange their opinions about the quality and availability of activities in Newham. As part of this, Communications and ICT to commission a web application developer to create a Newham Youth Offer web application to be downloaded onto smartphones (Android and Apple) which will enable easy and instantaneous access to the Youth Offer for all of Newham young people.
- R4) The Communications team to advertise a comprehensive Newham Youth Offer (including non-Commissioned and non-Council funded organisations and programmes) in the Newham Mag in addition to the sports activities available on fortnightly basis.
- R5) The Communications team to utilise the communication tools in Council-owned properties, such as plasma televisions, and employ use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Blackberry Messenger, to advertise activities to young people. The use of new technologies should be driven by the young people of Newham.
- R6) The Early Intervention Team to establish a partnership committee with the Youth Offending Team as well as with Safer Schools Partnership Officers (SSPOs) from secondary schools in Newham in order to share information about young victims, all of whom have a greater risk of becoming perpetrators of crimes.
- R7) The Metropolitan Police Service and the Head of Service Improvement in the Newham Children and Young People Directorate to report to the Mayor of Newham as well as the Commission meeting in October 2012 on successes and challenges of the delivery of the Healthy Relationships Training (HEART) programme for the remainder of the 2 year pilot phase.

This reporting will be essential in:

- Determining the necessity of future funding for the programme.
 - Identifying and assessing the severity of the problem of vulnerable young people who have unhealthy relationships with their peers and girl/boy friends.
 - Drafting recommendations to other London Boroughs about the improvements brought forth by the HEART programme.
- R8) The Careers Information Advice and Guidance Service to be maintained by the Council until August 2012 when responsibility will be transferred to individual schools. As part of this, secondary schools are encouraged to share expertise and good practice with each other to help ease the transition process while maintaining appropriate support for its students.

R9) As a high priority issue, the Council to improve its partnership work with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to better tackle youth disengagement in Newham by establishing ways of regularly sharing local intelligence and information with each other- for example:

- The Head of Progression to share information with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) by distributing an updated Newham Youth Offer on quarterly basis. In order to monitor this recommendation, the Commission should simultaneously receive this data.
- The MPS to provide updates on incidents and conflicts between young people in Newham to the key youth centres' staff to minimise the risk of potential violence.

R10) The Council advises that secondary schools in Newham continue to develop innovative ways to share good practice on regular basis. The Council advises that secondary schools in Newham continue to reduce the number of disaffected children through teachers knowledge sharing - for example:

- Secondary schools could hold observation days every 6 months, on rotational basis, where two secondary schools could host and invite the secondary school teachers to observe programmes which work well in engaging disengaged pupils.
- Secondary schools could host staff exchanges every 6 months, on rotational basis, where a teacher from one secondary school is invited to come and spend a day at another secondary school to observe programmes and activities that engage young people positively.

SECTION A - INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Purpose of the Review

1.1 The purpose of the review was to examine some of the reasons behind youth disaffection, to identify what measures were currently in place to tackle youth disaffection in Newham, and to provide suggestions as to how the Council might work better to engage disaffected youth in Newham.

1.2 When the Commission was discussing what to look at for an in-depth review, they found that they had a number of concerns. These concerns were around:

- youth offending, reoffending and gang activity in Newham;
- support provided to young victims of crime in Newham, many of whom become disaffected and disengaged themselves if not adequately supported;
- whether suitable education, training and employment opportunities exist for young people in Newham;
- children and young people engaged in and affected by substance misuse in Newham;
- absence rates amongst schools pupils in Newham; bullying taking place in schools;
- what activities and community events exist to promote positive youth engagement in Newham;
- what local government best practice there is with regard to engaging disaffected youth.

As all these concerns seemed to relate to disengaged youth, the Commission felt that the best way to explore them was by carrying out an in-depth review into disengaged youth.

Understanding Youth Disaffection

1.3 Young people who are disengaged are disaffected youth. The term 'disaffection' is multi-faceted, referring to a cluster of behaviours, attitudes and experiences. A report by the then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions identified the following as elements of disaffection:

- "Lacking a sense of identity; having a sense of failure;
- 'Disturbed,' 'depressed,' 'difficult' young people with social and emotional problems;
- Behaviour including crime, misbehaviour, drugs, lack of social skills, harming (or potentially harming) self and/or others;
- Not exercising civil/democratic rights (uninterested, uninvolved and unregistered) or social/economic rights (poor knowledge of and access to services);
- Experience of discrimination through age alone or combined with other factors (race, disability, single parenthood, homelessness, young carers);
- Being failed by the system (especially education and employment/training), and
- 'Status Zero' – not in education, employment or training ('NEET')."³

³ DETR (2000), 'Disaffected Young People,' Ch 5 of *Cross-cutting Issues in Public Policy and Public Service*, London in 'A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people,' by Richard Steer, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2000.

- 1.4 The causes of disaffection are multiple and interconnected. To give an example, children from families where both parents were unemployed were found to be three times more likely than other children to have specific learning difficulties, three times more likely to have special educational needs, and ten times as likely to get in trouble with the police. These factors are in turn linked to the kinds of behaviour that lead to exclusion from school and subsequent non-participation.⁴ It is also argued that disadvantage in different spheres of life, including material, educational, employment, family, peer group, and psychological and physiological health, can combine to form vicious circles that result in disaffection.⁵ Statistical analyses confirm that the greater the number of risk factors present, the more likely it is that a young person will end up not participating.⁶
- 1.5 Whilst community attitudes to education and employment can prompt non-participation, research tends to suggest that disaffected young people have normal aspirations to work, and in a study it was found that these young people still subscribe to dominant goals, but either don't know how to get there, think it impossible to get there, or are exploring different ways of getting there.⁷ This is important as it runs counter to the assumption of the existence of a 'dependency culture.'⁸
- 1.6 Since the factors for youth disaffection are multiple and varied, the Commission decided to consider the following factors in trying to understand the reasons behind disaffected youth in Newham:
- How current and available activities for Newham young people are advertised and the young people's awareness of such programmes and activities taking place;
 - Communication and working relationships between various departments to minimise the number of disaffected young people in the borough;
 - Sharing of information, knowledge and good practice among key stakeholders to reduce the number of young children becoming disengaged.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The terms of reference for this review were:
- An examination of some of the causes of youth disaffection;
 - The identification of what measures are currently in place to tackle these causes in Newham;
 - An exploration of opportunities for improving the work being done by the Council and its partners to engage disaffected youth in Newham;

⁴ 'Children for whom school has no point,' *The Guardian*, 10 July 2000 by N Davies, in 'A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people,' by Richard Steer, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2000.

⁵ 'Destination Unknown: Engaging with the Problems of Marginalised Youth,' London, by T Bentley and R Gurusurthy, 1999, in 'A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people,' by Richard Steer, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2000.

⁶ DfEE, 2000b, 'Youth Cohort Study: Education, Training and Employment of 16-18 Year Olds in England and the Factors Associated with Non-Participation,' Statistical Bulletin 02/2000, London, in 'A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people,' by Richard Steer, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2000.

⁷ 'Status Zero youth and the 'underclass: some considerations,' by H Williamson, 1998, cited in 'A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people,' by Richard Steer, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2000.

⁸ As above

- 2.2 The final report makes recommendations to the Mayor, in consultation with the Cabinet, for any actions that the Council and its partners can take to improve the offer to disaffected young people in Newham.

Exclusions to the Terms of Reference

- 2.3 **Appendix A** contains a summary of desk-top research which explores the causes put forward to explain youth disaffection and non-participation in education, employment and training. Given that youth disaffection is a vast topic with numerous components of varying complexity, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission, at its meeting on 14 June 2011, decided to narrow its focus to an examination of 'Institutional Shortcomings' and 'The family and relationships.' 'Socio-economic structure and inequalities' and 'Behavioural and emotional factors' contributing to youth disaffection will be excluded from the remit of this in depth review.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Commission held eight evidence-gathering meetings between May 2011 and February 2012. At these meetings, the Commission took written and verbal evidence from the following:

- Lorna Hadley, Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending, Youth Offending Team in Newham.
- Nicky Rayner, Divisional Director - Families, Youth Offending Team in Newham YOT.
- Gary Brown, Chief Inspector – Youth Strategy Lead for Newham Borough Police.
- Jason Hendy, Detective Inspector – Head of Newham Borough Police's Serious Youth Violence Team.
- Andrew Billany, Divisional Director Housing and Public Protection
- Fred Baxtor, Housing Options Manager.
- Grant Aitken, Divisional Director for Leisure Service.
- Jim Kenworth, Local Playwright and Arts Educator, The Britannia Voices Script-Writing Project.
- Steve Cameron, Head of Employability and Skills.
- Bushra Nasir, Chair of Newham Association of Secondary Headteachers (NASH).
- Kevin Brailey, Head of Progression Service.
- Dave Stevens, Group Manager- Integrated Youth Services.
- Gary Bird, Deputy Head of Communications
- Linzi Roberts-Egan, Divisional Director- Early Intervention and Progression.
- Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health.

A complete record of the evidence obtained can be found in **Appendix B** and is also available on the Council's scrutiny website: www.Newham.gov.uk/scrutiny

- 3.2 The Commission also went on site visits to obtain the views of young people and to observe organisations with good practice in the borough in engaging the disengaged youth. The Commission conducted the site visits at the following organisations/institutions and met with the following persons:

- Little Ilford School
 - Ravinder Bansal (Deputy Headteacher)
 - Annette Henry (Projects, Marketing and Communications Manager)

- Maddi Austin (Aim Higher and Destinations Coordinator)
- Peacock Gym
 - Fred Cuts (Projects Coordinator)
 - Rob Barnett (Director of Education)
 - Martin Bowers (Peacock Gym Chairman)
 - Brenda Thornton (Peacock Steering Group Secretary)
 - Laura Bowers (Performance Co-ordinator)
 - Danny Steadman (Student Mentor)
 - Bradley Stone (Student Mentor)
 - Alf Raper (In charge of bicycle project)
 - Sharon Grainger (Newham Additional Provision Operational Manager, Employability and Skills, 14-19 Partnership Team)
- Fight for Peace Academy
 - Emma McGuigan (Institutional Relations Manager)
 - Marigold Ride (Project Manager)
 - The other representatives from Fight for Peace who attended were a selection of members of the Youth Council.
- Education Links (Community Links)
 - Sandy Davies (Principal of Education Links)
 - Gary Partridge (Student Services Manager)
 - Paul Smith (School Finance and Administration Manager)
 - Sophie Groenvynck (Student and Staff Development Manager)
- Future Links Project (Community Links)
 - Mark Steer (Future Links Project Manager)

The record of the evidence obtained from the site visits can be found in **Appendix C**.

3.3. The Commission also received additional evidence from:

- Cez James, Service Manager - Professional Development and Quality Improvement
- Abraham Male, Young Mayor of Newham 2011-2012
- Rachael Davey, Brunel University student

The record of the evidence obtained from Cez James and Abraham Male can be found in **Appendix D**.

In order to amplify and obtain more in-depth evidence, a Brunel University student, Rachael Davey, spent eight weeks in a range of organisations in Newham working with disengaged youth, and her report, further underlining the recommendations made, is included in **Appendix E**.

SECTION B - EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS PERTAINING TO THE ISSUE OF DISENGAGED YOUTH IN NEWHAM

Since May 2011, the Commission has gathered a wide range of evidence that reviewed various facets of youth disengagement in Newham. When considering its findings, the Commission decided that its recommendations could be divided into three distinct categories. They are 1) wider dissemination of the council's youth offer and leisure activities, 2) communication and improvement of working relationships, and 3) knowledge sharing. The findings which are set out below follow this pattern.

1. Wider Dissemination of the Council's Youth Offer and Leisure Activities

The following section focuses on the analyses of advertising of current and all available activities for young people in Newham. The analysis specifically looks at the young people's awareness of the Newham Youth and Leisure Offer and their knowledge of programmes and activities that they could become involved in. Additionally, the following section explores the use of new and social media, the implementation of a new youth-centred Newham website and increase in advertising of other youth activities (in addition to sport) in the Newham Mag.

1.1 Leisure and Youth Offer for Young People in the Borough

- The Newham Youth Offer, as well as Newham Leisure Services, provides a wide range of activities for the young people of Newham to become involved in, whether it be after school hours or during the weekend. Yet, many young people are seen hanging about on the streets claiming that there is nothing to do and that there are no activities to engage in.⁹
- The Commission learned that the Newham youth centres provide activities ranging from dance and drama to gardening and cooking, as well as providing a place for young people "to hang out" and "someone to talk to" (which have been identified by the young people themselves as central to their leisure time). The Commission was pleased to learn about the wide range of activities and was further interested if the leisure centres offer would match the variety of activities that the youth offer had displayed.
- When the Commission also found out about what the leisure centres offered, it commended the wide range of activities that were included in this offer. The leisure centres, just like the Newham Youth Offer, provide a wide but different range of options for young people to participate in, from swimming and group exercise classes to ballet and climbing. While these several listed programmes and activities are just a sample of what is available, the Commission is mainly concerned about the inadequate advertising of these offers for young people. Since a wide range of activities is available to serve the young peoples' appetite and interest, there should be a decrease of young people hanging out on the street with nothing to do, which is unfortunately not observed.

⁹ Appendix D: Brunel University Student Report; Appendix B: Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 14 June 2011

- Therefore, the Commission as well as the Divisional Director for Leisure Services, Grant Aitken, have acknowledged that whilst there were many activities on offer in Newham, there is a lack of knowledge about what is available to people in the borough in general and more specifically amongst young people.¹⁰
- In this respect, the Commission recognises the importance of marketing techniques. Since young people today network differently than young people in the past, in that they spend less time reading hard copy materials and instead spend more time on the internet, the Commission recognises the need to promote the youth services and leisure offers through a channel which the young people are able to easily and instantaneously access in this Web 2.0 world.¹¹
- The Commission learned that since October the Children and Young People Services (CYPS) Directorate has been developing, with the Communications Team and in consultation with young people, a new website that would feature the Newham Youth Offer and incorporate the popular themes from social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube¹². Since many young people do not visit or read the Newham website because they do not feel that it is there for them, the Commission supports the launch of the new youth-centred webspace. The strategy behind the website supports the view of the Commission, which recognises that advertising is key and that social media is a good channel to advertise activities and encourage networking, but the Commission also stresses the need for a speedy implementation.
- Since the marketing needs of the CYPS Directorate have changed over the past year, the Commission recommends that a launch date for the new youth website is set and that a measure be put in place to establish regular communication between the Communications Team and the CYPS Directorate for monitoring, updating and tracking the website usage as well as delivery of the youth offer marketing pieces (flyers, wraparound stands, etc). This can be accomplished by ensuring that the Communications team regularly liaises with the CYPS Early Intervention Inclusion and Progression Service.
- As a part of the new website, the Commission acknowledged the need to incorporate three main elements into its main functions in order to function as a hub for all youth activity and offer in Newham:
 - Detailed information and advertisement of the Newham Youth Offer¹³
 - Detailed information and advertisement of the Newham Leisure Offer¹⁴
 - Inclusion of and advertising of any other Newham based and youth centred organisation¹⁵

¹⁰ Presentation by the Divisional Director for Leisure Services, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 12 July 2011

¹¹ *How are young people using social media?* Analysis commissioned by DIUS from Forrester's European Technographics study, Steph Gray (DIUS Social Media) and Rebecca Jennings (Forrester Research), September 2008 (<http://www.slideshare.net/diusgovuk/how-are-young-people-using-social-media-presentation>)

¹² Meeting with Service Manager-Professional Development and Quality Improvement, 8 February, 2012

¹³ As above

¹⁴ Presentation by the Divisional Director for Leisure Services, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 12 July 2011

¹⁵ Meeting with Service Manager-Professional Development and Quality Improvement, 8 February, 2012

R1 Communications to set a firm launch date for the completed Youth Offer website (www.newham.gov.uk/youthzones) and report progress to the Commission in two months time.

R2 Communications to ensure the team regularly liaises with the CYPS Early Intervention Inclusion and Progression Service to monitor as well as update the Youth Offer website as necessary.

1.2 Newham Youth Offer and Targeted Marketing Practices for Engaging the Disengaged

- Within the last year, the Children and Young People Services (CYPS) Directorate has been through many changes. The Directorate has been able to adjust to such change very quickly and the ease of transition along with the Directorate's creativity in the delivery of its services should be commended.
- As a result of the recent changes, the new Newham Youth Offer was started on 1st September, 2011 and a lot of hard work has gone into ensuring that the activities and programmes included within the new offer were meeting the needs of the young people. A detailed consultation with young people, community organisation partners, as well as the community has been conducted to ensure best service delivery. At present and due to the structural changes, a key youth centre and an additional provision are provided in each of the 9 Community Service Areas in order to maximise service coverage for all of Newham.¹⁶
- While the Commission recognises the extensive work done by the CYPS Directorate, it has identified a weakness in the marketing strategy currently in place. The Commission learned that none of the current marketing strategies of the Newham Youth Offer focus on communication with the young people through social media, web applications, or the Newham Council website but that they instead focus on handing out hard copy marketing materials, such as flyers and focus the advertising of the Newham Youth Offer in the Newham Mag and the in-focus information supplement.¹⁷
- The Commission recognises the need to have such hard-copy materials, which were developed and designed through the use of youth focus groups, as well as having the distribution of flyers and banners advertising the youth centres at each library. At the same time, the Commission feels it necessary to employ marketing techniques which reach out to the young people in a more effective way.¹⁸
- At the moment, young people in Newham mostly find out about the various activities and programmes available at the youth centres through the word of mouth or through their school.¹⁹ While attaining information in such a way is acceptable, it is important to note that young people today are considered digital natives, meaning that the internet is a natural space and a natural path for communication. As research shows, nine in ten children in 2011 in the UK (91%) lived in a household with access to the internet through a PC or laptop, allowing young people to gather information from the internet.²⁰ More importantly, young people's use of 'new media' allows them to create a continuous stream

¹⁶ Presentation by the Head of Progression Service, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 10 January 2012

¹⁷ As above

¹⁸ As above

¹⁹ As above

²⁰ Ofcom, *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*. Rep. 25 October, 2011

of multiple conversations, interweaving differing media formats. Young people associate the internet with a strong sense of community and they use a number of digital devices and different modes of communication, at the same time. In a recent study, 75% of young people claimed that they could not live without the internet and 86% of young people loved how new technology helps them communicate with others.²¹ This data indicates the importance for an online presence of the Newham Youth Offer for young people in Newham.

- The Commission is aware that a website to feature the Newham Youth Offer in combination with various social networking components is in its development stages, however, the Commission deems it important to recommend that an online forum for communication be implemented on the website. Through research conducted, it has been shown that “being able to give back to others from their own experience” is important to young people, who seek the opportunity to directly engage and share their personal experiences with others in a similar situation.²² The Commission, therefore, deems it important that such forum be established, especially since it has been shown that 82% of young people said they had used the internet to look for advice and information for themselves.²³ While recognizing the popularity and importance of social networking sites, the Commission recognises the need of the Council for a controlled internet environment where the young people would be able to anonymously communicate and share their experiences securely.
- Since one of the most popular activities among 12-15 year olds with a smartphone is social networking, with half (50%) going on social networking sites at least once a week²⁴, the Commission recommends that a web application for the use of the Newham Youth Offer website be developed for an instantaneous and easy access to the activities available. At the moment, this advertising tool is not utilized and the Commission believes that a significant number of young people are not being reached.

R3 An online youth forum to be created on the Youth Offer website (www.newham.gov.uk/youthzones) enabling young people in Newham to anonymously input and exchange their opinions about the quality and availability of activities in Newham. As part of this, Communications and ICT to commission a web application developer to create a Newham Youth Offer web application to be downloaded onto smartphones (Android and Apple) which will enable easy and instantaneous access to the Youth Offer for all of Newham young people.

1.3 Utilizing the Newham Mag

- The Newham Mag is published fortnightly and is delivered to every home in the borough (amounting to 98,000 homes), making it a valuable resource in the promotion of local services. In terms of the services available to young people in the borough, it appears through researching the previous magazine archives (from 2007-2011), that the activities which are being promoted in the magazine are mainly sports-based. **Appendix E**

²¹ YouthNet, *Life Support: Young people's needs in a digital age*. Undertaken by Professor Michael Hulme of the Institute for Advanced Studies, Lancaster University, and commissioned by charity YouthNet, the report draws together literature and new research conducted with 994 young people aged 16 to 24 (funded by Nominet Trust)

²² As above

²³ As above

²⁴ Ofcom, *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*. Rep. 25 October, 2011

provides a sample of Newham Mag “What’s on?” page over the period of four years illustrating the dominance of sport-based advertising in blue font colour.

- Through the Commission’s site visits which have been conducted as part of this review it can be concluded that the young people in Newham are interested in a wide range of other and also non-sport based activities. It is for this reason that the Commission felt, that as the Newham Mag is distributed across the entire borough it should, therefore, be helping to promote a wider spectrum of services which are available to young people rather than solely focusing on sport-based activities in its “What’s on?” section. While it has been previously identified that most young people receive information through the internet, word of mouth, or school, it is still important to note that even though many Newham residents believe they can find the information contained in the Magazine elsewhere, many also find it as the single most useful resource and also a helpful tool in understanding local issues.²⁵
- The Commission, therefore, sees a value in advertising the Newham Youth Offer in the Newham Mag as it remains important to communicate with parents the possible ways for their children to become involved through a youth centre or participate in other available activities.²⁶ Throughout research and site visits, the Commission discovered numerous and other highly popular activities which run either within an organisation that also offers sports or that run independently. The main cases for this include Peacock Gym and Caramel Rock which are both based in Canning Town.
- Peacock Gym is a well known boxing gym in Canning Town and has been running since 1973. Since the establishment of the Academy, however, Peacock Gym has been able to offer a greater range of activities for young people which the Commission found many of which had proven to be very popular. Peacock Gym also now offers qualifications for young people in Sports and Fitness Award, Sports Leadership Award and ABA Boxing Certificate as well as:
 - Chess Federation Award
 - First Aid Certificate
 - Health and Safety Award Wider Key Skills Qualifications
 - Hair and Beauty
 - Performing Arts and Dance
 - Comedy Workshop
 - Bicycle Repairs and Maintenance
 - Music Classes
- Through research, the Commission learned that Caramel Rock is an outreach project which aims to help young people get industry experience in fashion by offering education classes which include design work, drawing and sewing and which lead to showcasing of the pupils’ work at various events, for example a fashion show at Westfield Stratford City. Caramel Rock works in collaboration with the Peacock Academy, as students from the Academy can attend classes at Caramel Rock and the accreditation for their work is based at the Peacock Academy. Between them, these two organisations are providing nine activities other than sports, all of which are heavily attended by young people on a weekly basis. The research which has been conducted amongst the young people in Newham has proven that sporting activities are very popular; especially boxing and

²⁵ Newham Residents Communication, Tracking Research, October 2011

²⁶ Presentation by the Head of Progression Service, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 10 January 2012

martial arts, however, there is a large number of young people who would rather participate in more artistic or creative activities.

- The Commission has also been informed by the Young Mayor that many children are interested in other activities besides sport. Some of the activities that the Young Mayor spoke about and in which his peers are interested in are: poetry, drama, arts, debating, creative writing, playing music, and photography.²⁷
- The Commission has shown through this anecdotal evidence that young people of Newham are interested in more than sports activity, indeed young people are interested in things like music, dance classes, hairdressing and fashion design, to name a few. Since there is a wide youth offer in Newham, it is important that these opportunities are advertised in the Newham Mag in addition to the sports activity in order for parents to encourage their children to partake in these activities instead of hanging about on the streets.
- The Commission recommends that the activities and programmes which will be displayed on the Newham Youth Offer website be advertised in the Newham Mag to try and raise the awareness amongst parents/guardians about the variety of programmes and activities that Newham has on offer. The success of this implementation can be measured in one year's time through the annual survey.

R4 The Communications team to advertise a comprehensive Newham Youth Offer (including non-Commissioned and non-Council funded organisations and programmes) in the Newham Mag in addition to the sports activities available on fortnightly basis.

1.4 Plasma Televisions and Social Media as Effective Advertising Tools

- The Commission has been informed that the use of plasma televisions as advertising channels has been used and proven to be successful over the years in other boroughs, such as Tower Hamlets. The Commission feels since it has invested in the purchase of these televisions, their use needs to be maximised by effective advertising that is driven by young people.
- The Commission sees it as important to show videos of young people taking part in various activities (i.e. theatre plays from Stratford Circus) across the Borough as this will grasp the young peoples' attention better than still images and encourage them to become involved in those activities.
- The Commission learned from the Young Mayor that young people today like to receive information through creative mediums, such as school assemblies, but that increasingly more young people digest information through the internet and mainly through Facebook. Since Facebook as well as others, such as Blackberry Messenger (BBM) are trusted brands, they tend to be popular among youth.
- From the anecdotal evidence in the report produced by Rachael Davey, the Commission learned that social media sites are used on a regular basis by the majority of young people (often on mobile phones). It is assumed that this trend reflects the desire by the young people to have all information instantly available. Therefore and due to this occurrence, websites as well as social media sites need to be designed in a way to

²⁷ Appendix D: Meeting with the Young Mayor

deliver instantaneous results and information and also be available on multiple devices. It appears that Blackberry smartphones are the most used phone amongst the young people in Newham; the free Blackberry Messenger service is very popular especially as it is seen to be something which is designed for young people and is private.²⁸

- Additionally, the Commission has found from its research that has been conducted amongst numerous youth projects mainly in Newham but also UK wide, it appears that the main forms of social media that are used are YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. In order for the Commission to gauge a sense of how successful the use of social media is within the youth projects that have been researched, considerations have been made to both the content and maintenance of the sites and also to the possible outside influences which may have led to either a specific project's site being used very frequently and by high numbers of people or to be used rarely and only by a small following. Such factors include; comparison of membership within a project and followers on a specific social media site, the young people's level of access to the internet and who the page or group appears to have been aimed at, if it is purely informative or if it is interactive. This evidence has been drawn from seven youth projects both in Newham and in London which use social media sites. Please note when the specific terms from each site have been used for example, "wall", "group", "blog", they are all referring to the individual page on a site which has been created by that individual person, organisation or project. Furthermore, in the same way discussion of the amount of "likes", "friends", and "followers" are all referring to the amount of people who are connected to the specific page. Below is a summary of the Commission's findings in regard to how social media is used by different youth projects:
 - Peacock Gym in Canning town.
 - Uses Facebook²⁹
 - 42 people who "like" the page"
 - Contains a basic information section, details of opening times and a map.
 - One wall post which was from 2010.
 - Within Peacock Gym they run vocational courses; one of these courses is a hair and beauty course and there is a separate Facebook group for this.
 - 71 members.
 - Contains an information page
 - A few posts from members of the public who have used the salon.
 - Fight for Peace Academy in North Woolwich
 - Uses Facebook³⁰
 - Has 208 "likes".
 - Contains an information page, the details of their location, a description about themselves, timetable, mission, email, phone, website, and links to Luta Clothing.
 - Includes 2 photo albums, a videos page with a video about their youth council and an events page.
 - From levels of activity on their Facebook "wall", it appears to have almost daily updates of information regarding dates and times, as well as web links posted and numerous job adverts for external companies.

²⁸ Appendix E: Brunel University Student's Report

²⁹ <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=306073498568>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=45615548064>

³⁰ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fight-for-Peace-UK/217265378336981>

- Caramel Rock in Canning Town
 - Uses a wide selection of social media sites, Facebook³¹, Twitter³², YouTube³³, Tumblr³⁴, and BlogSpot.³⁵
 - Facebook page has 1180 “friends”
 - It is updated very frequently, new web links to YouTube videos and to their Twitter page are posted every few days.
 - Also messages to the students, enthusiastic statements raising the excitement for fashion in 2012.
 - Also questions are posted to make the page interactive to both students and staff.
 - There are 3 albums of photos from the various fashion shows they have conducted.
 - They do not have an open wall but people can comment on posts which have been done, this makes it interactive.
 - They use Twitter to “Tweet” on current news, styles, general comments, YouTube videos.
 - Each of the forms of social media used by Caramel Rock have a similar theme but they are modified slightly to match the purpose of the site.
 - Their blog pages on Tumblr and Blogger contain for example images from photo shoots and from catwalk inspirations however on each site there is always a full set of links to all the other sites.

- Scribble Ink which is London wide.
 - Scribble Ink use social media as a large part of their advertising and interactions. Facebook³⁶, Twitter³⁷, LinkedIn³⁸, The Future Playground³⁹ and Ideastap⁴⁰.
 - Facebook page has “120” likes
 - It is frequently updated and the main uses of their Facebook page appear to be in order to post links to their blogs, videos, and website.
 - Also as a method of contacting the young people they work with to provide details of events, dates and deadlines for applications to roles.
 - They also use Twitter and blog sites to post details of news updates and to advertise events.
 - Has open comments box which makes it interactive
 - Scribble Ink appears to have taken its use of social media a little further than some of the other projects as it has launched a free Scribble Ink web app which can be used on I pads, Androids or mobiles. They are using this app to give general information, details of services, prices and a map to the head office.

- Ascension Eagles in Gallions Reach.
 - Facebook⁴¹ page with 338 “likes”.
 - It has one album of photos, and only 4 updates since July 2009.
 - They do not appear to use any other forms of social media and there are no links to any sites on their main website.

³¹ <http://www.facebook.com/CaramelRockFashion?sk=wall>

³² <https://twitter.com/#!/caramelrock>

³³ <http://www.youtube.com/user/caramelrocktv>

³⁴ <http://caramelrock.tumblr.com/>

³⁵ <http://caramelrock5.blogspot.com/>

³⁶ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Scribble-Ink/415636640724>

³⁷ <https://twitter.com/#!/ncgasper>

³⁸ http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Scribble-Ink-Writers-Revelation-Revolution-3981488?home=&qid=3981488&trk=anet Ug_hm

³⁹ <http://thefutureplayground.com/profile/NadiaGasper>

⁴⁰ <http://www.ideastap.com/Groups/Group/1f6a4418-8db4-4553-b640-9e0e0167ad66#Overview>

⁴¹ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ascension-Eagles-Cheerleaders/107814609249203>

- Feltham Young Offenders
 - Has a Facebook⁴² page with 29 “likes”
 - The page simply has the details of their opening hours and a map.

- The Art Room in Oxfordshire
 - Uses Facebook⁴³ and has 193 “likes”, 28 “talking about”
 - Has a detailed information page with address, phone, website, map, description of organisation and email address.
 - The site is linked with their Twitter⁴⁴ site so updates appear on both.
 - Used to publicise their fundraisers, events, work produced by students
 - Contains posts of quotes from the young people
 - Regular news updates
 - Interactive

- After collating all the information which has been displayed above, it is possible to draw some conclusions as to the methods of use of such sites and the success they have in terms of the number of followers and how frequently users are updating the pages. For all of the forms of social media which have been referred to; it is necessary to consider that they all require access to the internet.

- From conducting a number of site visits to the projects, it is possible to see that in Peacock Gym, for example, a large number of the young people appear to have access to the internet via their mobile phones. Information provided on the Local Government, Improvement and Development Website in their guide called “*Connecting Councillors, a guide to using social media to support local leadership*”⁴⁵ displays the importance of social media uses by stating that there are 24 million Facebook users in the UK, two-thirds of UK residents are participating in ‘social computing’ and amongst 18-24 year olds this figure raises to 87%. They also explain that it appears that more local residents are using online networks than reading local newspapers and that 70% of UK households have internet access, the majority of which are on a broadband connection (page 1). The statistics then show the scale of social media use in the UK, especially amongst young people.

- Out of the seven youth projects, the three which seem to be the most successful at using social media for advertising are Caramel Rock, Scribble Ink and The Art Room. All of these organisations are using numerous different sites with similar theme of information but with the links on each site to the others which appears to potentially be a key part of their success. This is amplified by the fact that these projects are also the only ones which provide links to their social media sites from their main website, making their social media pages much more accessible and able to be found quicker. Additionally to this, they have made their Facebook sites interactive rather than just informative. This may then encourage the young people they work with to use the sites as another method of communication with staff and peers, as well as being able to post their own work and interests.

- Overall, it appears that engaging the disengaged will not be helped by just creating a page within a social media site; as these examples demonstrate the key to using social

⁴² <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Feltham-Young-Offenders/155188901180853?ref=ts>

⁴³ <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Art-Room/159548410756084>

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/#!/TheArtRoomUK>

⁴⁵ <http://socialmedia.21st.cc/2010/03/welcome-to-the-councillors-guide-to-social-media/>

media successfully comes from the way such pages are managed and designed to meet the required audience. It is the pages which are firstly well advertised but also which are constantly updated and maintained by both staff and youth users, enabling them to be an extension of communication out of the projects base, which appear from the Commission's research to be attracting the higher numbers of followers. Tweeting or posting about specific people and events, uploading photos on a regular basis and allowing the young people to have a method of interacting with message will build a hub of communication rather than an informative static site for an alternative audience.

- Possible uses of social media sites within youth services include; arranging and posting events, news updates, contacting young people through a media they use regularly, communicating with a number of people at one time – through group messages, post photos, videos and statuses, post surveys and contacting young people on short notice as many have Facebook updates on their mobiles.
- The research summarised above shows good practice in local Newham organisations working with disengaged youth as well as organisations London-wide. The research shows that social media use helps to attract more young people and also makes young people aware of the activities happening at the respective organisations in which they can partake. It is therefore recommended, that Council duplicates this practice by employing the use of social media to advertise activities in Newham to young people.

<p>R5 The Communications team to utilise the communication tools in Council-owned properties, such as plasma televisions, and employ use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Blackberry Messenger, to advertise activities to young people. The use of new technologies should be driven by the young people of Newham.</p>
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2. Communication and Improved Working Relationships

The following section focuses on the analyses of communication and working relationships between various Council departments. The analysis specifically looks at strengthening and establishing partnerships as well as the evaluation of pilot programmes, which work towards youth engagement, to assess the necessity for future funding. Additionally, the review explores the changing governmental climate which will have an impact on education/training and employment opportunities which could, if not done appropriately, increase the chances of young people becoming disengaged.

2.1 Newham Youth Offending Team Perspective

- The Commission learned that the Youth Offending Team (YOT) works with young offenders (charged with offences and on statutory orders), perpetrators of antisocial behaviour (working with the Community Safety Team), young people at risk of committing crime, and supports identified young people in the context of preventing violent extremism. In May 2010, there were 276 young people on a court order in Newham.⁴⁶
- In the context of serious youth violence, the YOT works with the Inspector of the Newham Gangs Unit, and with the Council's Community Safety team. In terms of diverting young people from the Criminal Justice System, where young people who had committed lower

⁴⁶ Presentation by Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 10 May 2011

level crimes were given 'prevention interventions,' the YOT has made an impact, but this also means that those remaining in the system are often more disaffected.⁴⁷

- The Commission acknowledged that one of the best and most cost-effective ways to reduce youth crime was to prevent young people from getting into trouble in the first place, by dealing with the problems that made it more likely they would commit crime or anti-social behaviour. Causes that are identified as leading to a young person's troublesome behaviour included a lack of education, poor family relationships, having family members or peers who had offended, and misuse of substances to name but a few. There are also numerous risk factors which can increase the likelihood of a young person offending or reoffending, such as personal or community factors, and sometimes a risk exists when young people themselves have been victims of crime.⁴⁸
- A research from the Centre for Law and Society at the University of Edinburgh has shown a causal relationship between offending and victimization. The causal link exists due to the fact that young victims of crime are likely to retaliate, therefore actually turning into perpetrators of crime.⁴⁹ Also, it can be the case that due to victimization during childhood, the young person can then turn into an offender during adolescence. As the research shows, the factors explaining the link between victimization and offending are risky activities and situations (such as frequency of hanging about and evenings out at clubs) and having a delinquent circle of friends.⁵⁰ More often than not, victimization and offending have been linked through interactions between young persons in the same social circles.
- Members learned that when the YOT worked with children and young people who had been identified as being at risk of offending, it used an assessment called Onset, which was used by all prevention programmes. Onset was used to identify whether a young person would benefit from participating in a prevention programme, as well as identifying their needs and how best to address them to reduce the likelihood of them becoming an offender.⁵¹
- The Commission was informed and agrees with the fact that a close working with partners and schools is needed in terms of targeted behaviours. In Newham, there is a high number of robberies and possession of cannabis and class A drugs, which can lead to gang activities such as drug dealing, which further escalates the problem of disengaged youth.⁵²
- The Commission has learned that the interaction between Safer Schools Partnership Officers (SSPOs) and young people in schools has proven successful in engaging disaffected young people.⁵³ Therefore, the Commission feels it is important that increased knowledge sharing between departments takes place.

⁴⁷ As above

⁴⁸ As above

⁴⁹ Smith, David. *The Links Between*. Rep. no. 5. Edinburgh: Centre for Law and Society, The University of Edinburgh, 2004.

⁵⁰ As above

⁵¹ Presentation by Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 10 May 2011

⁵² As above

⁵³ Presentation by Youth Strategy Lead for Newham Borough Police, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 10 May 2011

- The Commission learned that contrary to popular belief, some of the most serious offenders were also the highest achievers. It is, therefore, seen as essential that early intervention work be done with schools to prevent amongst other things, young people dropping out of school and possibly becoming disengaged.⁵⁴
- The financial cuts have had a significant impact on the YOT and as part of the service redesign risk areas were acknowledged. Due to this change, the Commission feels that communication and joined up working relationships are more important than ever before. In the YOT redesign, officers will be based in integrated teams, and will be able to draw on the full range of resources. Resources will be freed up to be directed into universal and targeted services, including effective early interventions.
- The Commission strongly believes that a new and a cost-effective strategy and implementation to reduce youth crime is needed with the aim of decreasing the number of young offenders, as well as robberies and possession of cannabis and class A drugs which further deepen youth disengagement. It is essential to establish a partnership committee with representatives from the Early Intervention Team, the Youth Offending Team and secondary schools in Newham to combat youth disengaged by focusing on young victims who are at the risk of potentially becoming perpetrators of crimes.

R6 The Early Intervention Team to establish a partnership committee with the Youth Offending Team as well as with Safer Schools Partnership Officers (SSPOs) from secondary schools in Newham in order to share information about young victims, all of whom have a greater risk of becoming perpetrators of crimes.

2.2 A Partnership Approach to Tackling Serious Youth Violence

- The Commission was informed that whilst crime levels for most offences were down in the borough, Serious Youth Violence was on an upward trend. Serious Youth Violence is defined as “any offence of Most Serious Violence or Weapon Enabled Crime, where the victim is aged 1-19”.⁵⁵
- The Commission learned that in response to the increase in serious violence, the police had set up the Serious Youth Violence Team in November 2010. This team worked closely with other units in the police such as Trident and the Flying Squad, and was also building strong partnership links with the Council’s Community Safety Team and Youth Offending Team. The approach adopted by the Serious Youth Violence Team was one of targeting so-called Tier 1, 2 and 3 nominals within gangs, (tier 1 referring to the most dangerous, involved individuals, with tier 3 referring to those individuals just getting into gangs), and sending out a clear message of ‘No Tolerance.’ Within the Council’s Youth Offending Team, the approach was one of supporting those individuals that wanted to exit gangs.⁵⁶
- The Commission heard that whilst enforcement was the first approach used to tackle the problem, prevention programmes were also being used. A school-based Healthy Relationships Training (HEART) programme is being piloted in 3 boroughs (Newham, Lewisham and Waltham Forest), with the aim of increasing resilience amongst those at

⁵⁴ Presentation by Head of Newham Borough Police’s Serious Youth Violence Team and Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 14 June 2011

⁵⁵ Presentation by Head of Newham Borough Police’s Serious Youth Violence Team and Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 14 June 2011

⁵⁶ As above

risk of being drawn into gangs.⁵⁷ The Commission learned that the pilot began on 3rd January 2011 and was to run until January 2013. While it is clear that some young people are at risk, there is no clear evidence that vulnerability of young people, who have unhealthy relationships with their peers and girl/boy friends, is a large scale issue or that the problem is increasing.⁵⁸

- The Commission recognises the focus of the HEART programme which is aimed at reducing the risk of young people either committing or being subject to serious violence, particularly sexual violence. The Commission agrees it is necessary that benchmarking be reported and comparisons be made in terms of achieving the goal of reducing victimisation and crime levels.
- A new MPS initiative, Safe and Secure was also being used to assist victims of gang violence, many of whom were in fear of confiding information to the police. The Commission heard that the Safe and Secure Programme needed buy-in from partners - the Mayor had indicated his approval for Newham to get involved, and Community Safety had the responsibility to ensure Newham Council signed up to this scheme. Mediation was also utilised by the police, this approach sought to create a dialogue between the perpetrator of violence and the victim, stopping the violence escalating. The process also allows the police to gain an insight into what prompted the violence. Mediation was proving very successful, and was being encouraged more⁵⁹
- The Commission heard that the Youth Offending Team was also engaged in specific, multi-agency operations to disrupt gang activity. After the police had made an arrest, the YOT would move in, talk to parents and the young people involved, and offer to support them in exiting from gang involvement. Many parents were not even aware that their children were involved in gang activity. Safeguarding Teams in the Council could also be alerted if the YOT had any safeguarding concerns about young children when entering homes.⁶⁰
- The YOT had also started to work closely with the Housing Service and in cases where the young person's behaviour breached the residency, warnings would be sent to the parents, with the ultimate consequence of eviction if the behaviour persisted. This was found to be an effective tool for changing the young person's behaviour, as there were consequences for the entire family⁶¹
- The Commission recognises the partnership work done, but it feels it necessary to focus on the evaluation of success of the pilot HEART programme. Since majority of funding for the HEART programme is being supplied by the Daphne III project, which was established in 2007 by the European Parliament and Council, the Commission deems it important to continue the project in the future should it prove successful. It is important to also include and review experiences of the London Borough of Lewisham and also London Borough of Waltham Forest in determining the success rate in achieving the project's goals.

⁵⁷ Healthy Relationships Training (HEART) Programme Briefing Paper, December 2011

⁵⁸ As above

⁵⁹ Presentation by Head of Newham Borough Police's Serious Youth Violence Team and Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 14 June 2011

⁶⁰ As above

⁶¹ As above

R7 The Metropolitan Police Service and the Head of Service Improvement in the Newham Children and Young People Directorate to report to the Mayor of Newham as well as the Commission meeting in October 2012 on successes and challenges of the delivery of the Healthy Relationships Training (HEART) programme for the remainder of the 2 year pilot phase.

This reporting will be essential in:

- Determining the necessity of future funding for the programme.
- Identifying and assessing the severity of the problem of vulnerable young people who have unhealthy relationships with their peers and girl/boy friends.
- Drafting recommendations to other London Boroughs about the improvements brought forth by the HEART programme.

2.3 Job Opportunities and Initiatives to Prevent Youth Disengagement

- A number of government policies now being introduced will have a considerable impact on education/training and employment opportunities for young people aged 14-19+ over the following years. A number of these are contained in the 2011 Education Bill. Others are based on new policy announcements and on government reports that will impact on future policy.⁶²

The main areas are:

- Raising of the Participation Age
 - Careers Education Information, Advice & Guidance
 - Post 16 provision and the expansion of Free Schools, Academies and University Technical Colleges
 - 14-19 Vocational Curriculum/Expansion of Apprenticeships
 - Increased university fees.
- The Commission learned that in terms of Careers Education Information, Advice (CEIAG) & Guidance and Progression, the Education Bill 2011 changes the duties on schools and local authorities with reference to careers advice & guidance.
 - Local authorities will continue to have a duty to enable and assist young people to remain in education and training post 16. Local authorities will continue to be responsible for vulnerable young people who are at risk of not engaging in education and training. In particular, they retain their duty to provide Learning Difficulty or Disability Assessments (section 139a) for learners who have a statement of special educational needs.
 - Schools will be required to secure access to impartial and independent careers guidance for every pupil in years 9-11. There will be further consultation on whether the duty should be extended down to year 8 and up to year 13. The governing body of the school will have the freedom to decide how best to fulfil this duty.⁶³ Schools will no longer have a duty to provide careers education although this should not be seen as implying these activities are unimportant.
 - The Government expects that schools will work in partnership with local authorities and external careers guidance providers to ensure that young people are appropriately

⁶² Presentation by Head of Employability and Skills and Head of Progression, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 8 November 2011

⁶³ As above

supported but there will no longer be a duty to provide appropriate pupil data and access to external persons in order to do this. Schools will make any provision for careers guidance from with the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is not ring-fenced.

- The Government intends to develop new destination measures at Key Stage 4 which should hold schools to account for the work they do to prepare young people to progress to positive destinations post 16. The provisions apply to all maintained secondary schools and pupil referral units and academies.⁶⁴
- Whilst these changes won't come into effect until September 2012, it is expected that schools and the local authority will put transitional arrangements in place for 2011/12. The Early Intervention Grant to the authority (not ring-fenced) supports any transitional arrangements in advance of the changes in 2012.
- Newham has continued to maintain a significant investment in CEIAG in 2011/12. The council has agreed to maintain the current careers Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) contract until April 2012 with the possibility of a further extension to the end of the academic year. The contract ensures all KS4 students are given individual access to an independent careers interview and all tutor groups to do group work on progression. The precise arrangements are negotiated directly with each secondary school and post 16 institution. The majority of the funding for the contract comes from the Early Intervention Grant with additional support this year from the DSG via schools forum.⁶⁵
- Planning involving key stakeholders has begun to develop proposals for the structured delivery of CEIAG in Newham from 2012. Key priorities for the future will involve maintaining support for vulnerable groups and ensuring 'progression' advice and guidance in order to support the introduction of Raising of the Participation Age (RPA).
- Early Intervention Grant funding is also used to provide two open access Connexions centres that provide general information, advice & guidance to young people including many 16-19 year olds. These centres have well developed integrated referral and tracking arrangements with the range of Integrated Youth Support (IYS) youth centres and are developing suitable arrangements with the CYPS Early Intervention Teams.
- Post 16 young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) are supported by a small dedicated team of IYS advisers who are based at the council's Workplace in Stratford. This team use the CCIS system to identify those who are NEET and where there is no evidence of EET activity in order to carry out telephone contact and home visits and encourage young people into EET activity.⁶⁶
- The Commission recognises that these are challenging times for young people. Indeed they may possibly be greater for those residents in Newham than in other areas of London and other parts of the country. Government cuts, new education structures, increased fees and high youth unemployment create a background that requires a clear response if the Council is to ensure that the young residents achieve, progress and prosper, taking advantage of the new opportunities that will still continue to develop in Newham in the foreseeable future.

⁶⁴ As above

⁶⁵ As above

⁶⁶ As above

- The Commission has been informed by the Young Mayor that in order for students to be well prepared for job interviews and have a good CV, the young people need to learn interview techniques and about career development tools in a more enjoyable way. The Young Mayor stressed the importance of engaging the students in interactive activities as it will help to ensure the student's future success.⁶⁷
- A site visit to Fight for Peace Academy has informed the Commission about the importance of innovative career guidance even further. The visit had shown that young people digest career guidance (including interview techniques and CV writing) much more effectively if done creatively. For example, the young people at Fight for Peace Academy receive separate 1:1 time with a staff person who specifically coaches them and provides tailored advice based on the young person's need.⁶⁸
- Another site visit undertaken by the members of the Commission to Little Ilford School has shown that innovative and creative practice of preparing students for job interviews is very successful. Since Little Ilford School has been conducting its mock interview program, 78% of the students believe that they have done good or excellent on their mock review and therefore feel confident in their interviewing skills and prepared to tackle interviews for their work placements. Sharing of such good practice could, for example, benefit other secondary schools in the borough in preparing their students for job or work placement interviews and providing constructive criticism to their CV writing.⁶⁹
- In order to retain the elements which have proven successful in providing careers information advice and guidance service, schools will need to share expertise and knowledge to deliver the best guidance to their students. It is important that schools share good practice with each other as well as with organisations who have a high success rate in equipping their students with the knowledge and skills they need to be marketable in the workplace.

R8 The Careers Information Advice and Guidance Service to be maintained by the Council until August 2012 when responsibility will be transferred to individual schools. As part of this, secondary schools are encouraged to share expertise and good practice with each other to help ease the transition process while maintaining appropriate support for its students.

3. Knowledge Sharing

The following section focuses on the analyses of information and knowledge sharing as well as examples of good practice among key stakeholders as a strategy to reduce the chance of young people becoming disengaged. The analysis specifically looks at maximising the sharing of local intelligence between the Metropolitan Police Service and the Council as a high priority issue and the continuing development of innovative ways of sharing good practice among secondary schools in Newham.

3.1 Police Work on Youth Engagement

- The Commission has learned about the challenges faced by the police when dealing with disaffected youth, which included:

⁶⁷ Appendix D: Meeting with the Young Mayor

⁶⁸ Appendix C: Site Visit to Fight for Peace Academy

⁶⁹ Appendix C: Site Visit to Little Ilford School

- the attitude of not wanting to engage, so not engaging;
 - parental influence (a culture of not liking the police) leading to attitudinal problems;
 - perceptions that the police did not want to know about issues affecting young people, and that the police were too busy to care about young people's issues. Here it was acknowledged that perceptions needed to be dealt with, and that the media could play an important role in bridging the gap;
 - communication issues for the police, particularly relating to getting their key messages across to young people;
 - the generation gap;
 - young people's stereotypical views of police as all being rude/incompetent etc;
 - making meetings attractive to young people so they would attend and share their views;
 - insufficient time being allocated to speak to young people in schools (National Curriculum limitations);
 - capacity issues of the police, including not always having enough time to spend engaging with young people;
 - young officers not knowing how to engage or lacking experience in this regard. It was acknowledged that more training could be done in this area, and
 - some young people purposefully not wanting to listen, and aiming to spoil things for the majority. This could stem from them feeling they had no influence over the community.
- The Commission acknowledges that it is difficult to assess whether programmes which are aimed at helping to engage disengaged youth have been successful or not, as it is difficult to measure their impact on young people's lives. It was also acknowledged that getting messages out could be a slow process, and that the focus was not merely on the present, but also future. Nonetheless, it was felt that the following programmes had proven successful in terms of engaging disaffected young people:
 - engaging the dance group "*Flava*" – feedback given was that messages had been received and understood (an extensive questionnaire was completed post-event);
 - Interactions between SSPOs (also known as Schools' Officers) and young people in schools;
 - "*Mad Blud*" was effective (this is an interactive theatre production);
 - "*Breaking the Cycle*" had proven a success, with the draw being that the speaker who had been knifed in Newham was a friend of David Beckham.
 - The Commission was informed that "*Met Tracks*" and "*Kickz*" had not proven as successful as envisaged. In both of these programmes, police capacity was an issue. These programmes were, however, due to be re-invigorated.
 - At the June 2011 meeting, the Commission learnt one of the main reasons for youth disengagement in Newham included a lack of knowledge about what activities were available to young people. In this regard, the Commission felt that the Council needs to clearly publicise activities, and as such counter opinion that there was 'nothing to do' in Newham.⁷⁰
 - The Commission also acknowledged that one of the other main reasons for disengaged youth was a consequence of authorities including the Council and Metropolitan Police Service not being joined up enough in their approach to young people.

⁷⁰ Presentation by Youth Strategy Lead for Newham Borough Police, Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission meeting, 14 June 2011

- The Commission heard about some of the positive partnership work being undertaken between the Council and the police, as well as ideas for future partnership work between the Council and the police to better tackle youth disengagement in Newham. Whilst it was acknowledged that the existing relationship was good, the Commission felt that the relationship could be strengthened further. Partnership work had included/ could include some of the following:
 - the Council providing the police with a directory of youth activities (which had long since been requested from the Council), which they could help circulate to young people;
 - more engagement with the Young Mayor and Youth Council, as the police acknowledged they had great ideas;
 - the Youth Street Action Team (YSAT) worked very well with police on Operation Staysafe last year. This involved engaging with young people at risk on the streets of Newham. Expanding on this, the police felt that joint patrols with the police and YOT or outreach workers was the way forward, as police only interaction was not as effective;
 - the YOT was working very well with police, especially the Soft Support Team. This was particularly effective on the last day of term when YOT officers were deployed by the Council or the police to go out and engage with young people, deflecting them away from potential conflict/violence;
 - there were joint police and Council truancy patrols that had been very successful in the past. These tactics had not however been used of late;
 - in respect of SSPO's, the police felt that this should be a partnership, but that sometimes it seemed one-sided and schools could do more to work in partnership with the police.
- The Commission recognises the extensive work done by the police around youth engagement and it feels stronger working relationships are necessary in order to appropriately knowledge-share the needed information. The Commission therefore encourages that the Newham Youth Offer be made available and distributed to the police along with the various marketing pieces available (including the information about the developing website) to enable the police to be able to direct young people to these recommended programmes and activities. The regular updates to the police will need to include updates of new programmes and activities and elimination of no longer existing programmes in order to ensure a current and comprehensive Newham Youth Offer is being distributed.
- The Commission has been informed of the Shipman Centre incident from two years ago in which a youth centre worker did not receive the necessary information from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and due to this lack of information a conflict between several youth centre attendees escalated. Due to such incident and in order to prevent future incidents from occurring, it is important that sharing of information between the MPS and youth centre staff take place.

R9	<p>As a high priority issue, the Council to improve its partnership work with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to better tackle youth disengagement in Newham by establishing ways of regularly sharing local intelligence and information with each other-for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Head of Progression to share information with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) by distributing an updated Newham Youth Offer on quarterly basis. In order to monitor this recommendation, the Commission should simultaneously receive this data. • The MPS to provide updates on incidents and conflicts between young people in Newham to the key youth centres' staff to minimise the risk of potential violence.
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3.2 Bushra Nasir's Perspective on Disaffection in Schools

- The Commission learned that curriculum design, Learning Support Unit (LSU), use of internal as opposed to external exclusions, use of adults in school support, engagement initiatives and working with parents and other agencies are all strategies that secondary Headteachers have used to engage students which previously were or are presently disengaged.
- Many secondary schools also engage in extracurricular provisions because there is much more to education than just that which happens in the classroom. Previously schools did not offer many extra-curricular options for students, but that has now changed in that schools are now seen as hubs of activities. The Plashet School has, for example, opened up the school to students during lunchtime, which was not previously done. There are now 1,300 students on-site during lunchtime and also after school and this small improvement has proven to have a direct impact on engagement.
- The Commission has acknowledged the work of the Learning Support Unit (LSU) at Plashet School and encourages the sharing of this good practice further. In most schools, the LSU sets up a disciplinary base so the education of the disengaged children can be guided and not disrupt the education of other students. At the Plashet School, the LSU is about individualised support for students who are disengaged for a number of reasons, such as not having a good fit with the educational system (these might be students who need to dedicate more time to some subjects over others) or even students who have health issues. Also mentors take on a leading role in keeping students engaged in that they will design individual work plans for students in order to help them to progress. The mentoring system is then also further used for students who are internally excluded, these are students who have done a misdemeanour and they need real guidance in how they need to improve and reflect on their behaviour. After a day or sometimes even after a half day and talk with the parents, the students who are internally excluded are then reintegrated into the school. These measures are in place because most importantly they offer individualised support for pre-exclusions and they serve as pre-emptive measures.
- Over the last few years, it has also proven helpful to involve other adults, other than teachers, in helping to engage the disengaged students. Many jobs, such as attendance were not as thoroughly done and overseen by teachers. Now with the attendance officers in place, there is an improvement in keeping track of students and keeping them engaged. The role of the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) is especially important, because the officer gets to know families, parents, social services and other multi-agency work on a more personal and deeper level and is therefore better able to engage the students in school. The Plashet School has appointed their own EWO because they have often served as a lifeline in engaging some of the more disengaged students. The Commission feels that the knowledge sharing of this practice could serve as a benefit to other secondary schools in Newham.
- The Commission has also learned about the various initiatives which are taken to directly assist with student engagement; more specifically, targeted interventions. During the summer, for example, when there is a higher vulnerability for some of the students and when the students are prone to become involved in activities which would be destructive for them, summer programs (drama, etc.) are available. In 2011, the Plashet School received £140,000 through the Pupil Premium and that money was targeted for students who have free school meals (FSM) and looked after children (LAC). The budget dedicates roughly £430 per student for the purposes of narrowing the attainment gap between the

students (research has shown that the FSM students have lower attainment than other students). This money helps to offer free laptops to the students and other extra activities (subsidised trips, textbooks, etc.) to keep students engaged.

- Working with parents is key in keeping students engaged in school and the persistency in that is very important. The Commission learnt that attendance at parent's evenings needs to improve, however, many parents are willing to help their child and want their child to succeed in school but they either do not know how or they do not have the tools to help their child. Therefore, targeted curriculum evenings (year 7, 8, 9, 10) were set-up where parents learn how they can better assist their children with education. At the Plashet School, for example, the Somali students have shown to be an underachieving group and therefore a special Somali Parents Group was set-up. It is key for the school to target any group that is underachieving in any way and also to have the necessary language and cultural knowledge to assist with the needs of that underachieving group.
- The Commission has acknowledged other good practice such as student contracts being written in student speak, practices for working with the parents or carers who are not supportive of college education for year 11 girls, and St Luke's CEVA Primary School's Out Of School Hours Learning (OSHL) programme.⁷¹ The Commission believes that the secondary schools in Newham could greatly benefit from knowledge-sharing and exchange of information about such programmes and policies which have proven to be effective in mitigating the risk of students being disengaged and in engaging the already disengaged students.
- The Commission has been informed that the Plashet School has worked on achievements together with other schools and that the school is very open to visits and sharing of information with other schools. The Commission recognizes that many secondary schools in the borough practice innovative techniques in engaging their students. Therefore, the Commission sees it as important for the secondary schools to knowledge-share, benchmark and exchange good practices to help them further assist disengaged students.

R10 The Council advises that secondary schools in Newham continue to develop innovative ways to share good practice on regular basis. The Council advises that secondary schools in Newham continue to reduce the number of disaffected children through teachers knowledge sharing - for example:

- Secondary schools could hold observation days every 6 months, on rotational basis, where two secondary schools could host and invite the secondary school teachers to observe programmes which work well in engaging disengaged pupils.
- Secondary schools could host staff exchanges every 6 months, on rotational basis, where a teacher from one secondary school is invited to come and spend a day at another secondary school to observe programmes and activities that engage young people positively.

⁷¹ Theresa Aanonson, St.Luke's Ceva Primary School, Module C, Post-graduate Diploma in School Development, May 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission Members

Councillor Freda Bourne	Chair
Councillor David Christie	Deputy Chair
Councillor Shama Ahmad MBE	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Ayesha Chowdhury	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Charity Fiberesima	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Sharaf Mahmood	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Charlene McLean	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Patrick Murphy	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Ellie Robinson	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Kay Scoresby	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Firoza Nekiwala	Scrutiny Member
Ellen Kemp	Representative for the Church of England Diocese of Chelmsford
Steve Wilson	SACRE
Paula Daly	Primary Parent Governor Representative

Officer Support for the Commission

Johana Fiserova	Scrutiny Manager
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Additional Support Provided by

Clive Mentzel	Head of Overview and Scrutiny
Rachael Davey	Brunel University Intern

Newham Council Officers who Provided Oral and/or Written Evidence

Lorna Hadley	Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending (Families Directorate), Youth Offending Team in Newham.
Nicky Rayner	Divisional Director - Families, Youth Offending Team in Newham
Andrew Billany	Divisional Director Housing and Public Protection
Fred Baxtor	Housing Options Manager
Steve Cameron	Head of Employability and Skills
Linzi Roberts-Egan	Divisional Director- Early, Children and Young People Services
Kevin Brailey	Head of Progression Service
Dave Stevens	Group Manager - Integrated Youth Services
Gary Bird	Deputy Head of Communications
Rachel Flowers	Director of Public Health
Cez James	Service Manager-Professional Development and Quality Improvement

Other Witnesses who Gave Evidence

Gary Brown	Chief Inspector – Youth Strategy Lead for Newham Borough Police.
Jason Hendy	Detective Inspector – Head of Newham Borough Police’s Serious Youth Violence Team

Grant Aitken	Divisional Director for Leisure Service.
Jim Kenworth	Local Playwright and Arts Educator, The Britannia Voices Script-Writing Project
Bushra Nasir	Chair of Newham Association of Secondary Headteachers (NASH)
Abraham Male	Young Mayor of Newham

Sites Visited for the Purpose of the Review

- Little Ilford School
 - Ravinder Bansal (Deputy Headteacher)
 - Annette Henry (Projects, Marketing and Communications Manager)
 - Maddi Austin (Aim Higher and Destinations Coordinator)

- Peacock Gym
 - Fred Cuts (Projects Coordinator)
 - Rob Barnett (Director of Education)
 - Martin Bowers (Peacock Gym Chairman)
 - Brenda Thornton (Peacock Steering Group Secretary)
 - Laura Bowers (Performance Co-ordinator)
 - Danny Steadman (Student Mentor)
 - Bradley Stone (Student Mentor)
 - Alf Raper (In charge of bicycle project)
 - Sharon Grainger (Newham Additional Provision Operational Manager, Employability and Skills, 14-19 Partnership Team)

- Fight for Peace Academy
 - Emma McGuigan (Institutional Relations Manager)
 - Marigold Ride (Project Manager)
 - The other representatives from Fight for Peace who attended were a selection of members of the Youth Council

- Education Links (Community Links)
 - Sandy Davies (Principal of Education Links)
 - Gary Partridge (Student Services Manager)
 - Paul Smith (School Finance and Administration Manager)
 - Sophie Groenvynck (Student and Staff Development Manager)

- Future Links Project (Community Links)
 - Mark Steer (Future Links Project Manager)

APPENDIX A: CAUSES OF YOUTH DISAFFECTION

The following is a summary of causes that have been put forward to explain disaffection and non-participation in education, employment and training⁷²:

Socio-economic structure and inequalities

Poverty and family disadvantage

It is well established that those from poorer backgrounds are less likely to do well at school and hence less likely to stay in education beyond the age of 16. In some low-income families, young people may be pressured into going out to work to supplement the family income rather than attend school.

Geographical concentration of unemployment

In areas of high unemployment there is likely to be a perception that education and training are a waste of time, which may lead to the existence of 'local cultures of unemployment.' In these areas, the immediate cash rewards of low-waged low-skilled jobs, engagement in the informal economy and criminal activities are often perceived to outweigh the uncertain benefits of continued participation in education and training.

Changes in the economy and labour market

A number of trends have been identified that have worsened employment prospects of young people with few or no qualifications. These include: the decline of manufacturing industries and the growth of knowledge and service sectors, with the consequent emphasis on skills, work experience and 'human capital;' increasing participation by women in the labour force; and the casualisation of employment.

Social exclusion of ethnic minorities

Poverty and family disadvantage are disproportionately concentrated among ethnic minority groups, and often reinforced by the experience of overt and institutional racism. As a result, these groups have been found to perform relatively less well at school. Research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁷³ found that young people most in need of support as they begin their adult lives risk being missed, misunderstood or simply ignored by official agencies whose job is to help them- disaffected teenagers from minority ethnic communities and those 'looked after' by local authorities are especially likely to fall through the net. The study of vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds found that significant numbers of young people in difficulties are unknown to, and unregistered with the Careers Service and other agencies, and it also suggested that too little account is taken of racism and other special difficulties encountered by young people from minority ethnic groups.

Social exclusion of people with disabilities

The marginalisation of people with disabilities in society is in part a result of educational disadvantage, with disabled people of working age much less likely to have educational qualifications than their non-disabled counterparts.

⁷² Information for this summary obtained in the main from 'A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people,' by Richard Steer, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2000. Additional sources of information will be referenced in the footnotes

⁷³ 'Disaffected youth in multi-cultural areas 'are missed or ignored by support services,'" 6 February 2002, <http://jrf.org.uk/media-centre/disaffected-youth-multi-cultural-areas>.

No confidence in the underlying promise of a decent life

The phrase 'disaffected' presents the problem as one of disconnection from prevailing social values and alienation from a set of moral ideas about how to behave. The disaffected no longer believe in the old chestnuts about working hard, listening to one's parents, showing respect to others, obeying the law and conforming to society's expectations. Anti-social behaviour of young people in this category derives from their 'demoralisation,' namely their failure or society's failure to absorb a set of normative standards about personal and social conduct. To put a spin on this, it has been suggested that perhaps disadvantaged youth disbelieve because they have lost all confidence in the underlying promise, namely conform to societal norms and you will have a decent life. In this respect, the psychological cause of demoralisation resulting in anti-social behaviour can be viewed as economic and not necessarily moral.⁷⁴

Institutional Shortcomings

Educational underachievement

Performance at GCSE is a good predictor of future non-participation in education, employment or training. Educational underachievement results from a combination of factors including: a failure to detect poor literacy and numeracy at the point of transition to Secondary school, which may lead to truancy and absenteeism. The disjunction experienced between the environment and culture of the primary and secondary schools systems may be an important trigger of disaffection. It has also been suggested that the introduction of school league tables had worsened the problem of educational underachievement as schools may be tempted to pay more attention to those pupils likely to gain A-C grades at GCSE level.

Inappropriateness of the National Curriculum

For some students, especially those struggling, the syllabus is experienced as boring and/or irrelevant. Research has also shown that attitudes and perceptions of school are in some way carried over from the world of school to the world of employment, youth training and the careers service.

Institutional racism in the education system

This term means that the practices and procedures or methods of working within an institution will have a worse impact on one ethnic group than another, whether or not that impact is intended. In the past, the British education system has been viewed as institutionally racist, and underachievement of black children, the lack of ethnic minority teachers and the lack of ethnic minority input into Ofsted have been cited in support of this claim.

Bullying and poor teacher-pupil relationships

The above have been recognised as important factors in absenteeism and truancy, as well as in the high number of exclusions from school. Racism can also be a factor in school bullying, and it has also been reported that there are higher levels of tension between black pupils and teachers.

Truancy and school exclusion

Persistent truants (those absent from school without permission) and those who are excluded from school have a greater likelihood than others of future non-participation in

⁷⁴ Understanding Society- Innovative Thinking About Social Agency and Structure in a Global World,' Daniel Little, 27 February 2009, <http://understanding.society.blogspot.com/2009/02/disaffected-youth.html>.

education, employment or training. As noted above, institutional factors play an important part in the level of school exclusions.

Inadequate career guidance and post-16 support

The provision for post-16 education and training has been viewed as fragmented and incoherent. The break in support from that available up until 16 is also experienced as too sudden. Confusion about the qualifications system has been found to compound the problem. The uncertainty and lack of support may leave young people feeling that they cannot successfully re-enter the education and training system once they have dropped out of it for a time.

Negative experiences of training

Experiencing problems with training affect the willingness of young people to take up subsequent work training placements. These include inappropriate placements, employers views of trainees as 'merely a source of cheap labour,' and misunderstandings of the needs of young people.

The family and relationships

Unstable family life

Being part of a stable family unit lessens the likelihood of a young person becoming disaffected. Where the home environment is characterised by conflict and abuse, this often leads to difficulties in education, employment and training. Research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁷⁵ found that young people rarely made a connection between difficulties at home and problems at school. Yet their home lives were often turbulent and unstable, characterised by violence and disrupted family relationships. The study found that since education professionals did not appear to have made the link with events at home either, it seems the causes of educational disaffection are often poorly understood and under-explored.

Breakdown of traditional family, schools, religion, community organisations and public values

Research on youth gangs has recognised the idea of the positive forms of solidarity and community that are provided by the gang as a welcoming social group. Young people who have lost the social support of their families and other traditional organisations may find that a gang is the closest thing to 'home' that they are able to locate. Gangs are social groups with their own behaviour, even though their largest effects are anti-social. If young people lack an emotionally meaningful connection to adults through some of the above institutions, it begs the question as to where their positive social values come from.⁷⁶

Parental and peer attitudes to education

The attitudes of parents and peers to education, and whether or not one or both parents are in work, have been found to have an important bearing on a young person's likelihood of participation. A lack of positive role models, in particular for young men, has been put forward as a reason for this. The lack of male primary school teachers may also be a factor in the development of negative attitudes towards education among boys.

Residential insecurity and homelessness

⁷⁵ See 8 above

⁷⁶ See 9 above

In 2000, there were estimated to be between 13,000 and 20,000 homeless 16 and 17 year olds who were not in learning or work. It has been found that those living with neither parent at 16 are much more likely than those living with one or both parents to be not participating.

Young carers

Caring responsibilities, particularly those of teenage mothers is an important barrier to participation. Reasons teenage parents find it hard to continue in education include: possible exclusion during pregnancy; interruption of studies caused by birth; lack of childcare for those who want to continue in education and the stress of coping with young children.

Being in Local Authority care

Looked after children have often encountered multiple disadvantages, which leave them on the margins of the education and training system. A high percentage of care leavers have been found to have no academic qualifications.

Behavioural and emotional factors

Low self-esteem and confidence

Whilst the above have been cited as characteristics of young people not participating in education, employment and training, this view has been challenged by those who argue that non-participation is the product of (local) cultural norms rather than a lack of confidence.

Depression, stress and mental illness

Mental illness has been found to be a cause of non-participation. Those young people who have experienced a traumatic event, either in early childhood or more recently are more likely to drop out of school. Mental illness is most likely to lead to non-participation when experienced together with other aspects of disadvantage.

Learning difficulties and behavioural problems

Pupils with Special Educational Needs are much more likely than other children to be excluded from school, and also much more likely to leave school with no qualifications.

Drug/alcohol misuse

Drugs have been found to be related to truancy, school exclusion, emotional and behavioural difficulties and homelessness.

Offending

Non-participation has been viewed by some as a key stage in the descent into criminal activity. A large percentage of 16-17 year old males appearing before Youth Courts are not in education, employment or training. It is important not to stereotype young offenders, as it has been found that demonising this group in the professional culture of the police, reinforced by the treatment of the issue in the popular media, creates a pattern of professional practice which often makes the problem worse not better.

APPENDIX B: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMISSION MINUTES - ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED YOUTH

May 10th 2011

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK OF THE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM

Lorna Hadley, Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending (Families Directorate) was in attendance to introduce the work of the Youth Offending Team ('YOT') in Newham.

Members had requested information on:

- Common reasons why young people offend in Newham;
- Programmes in place to prevent young people offending and reduce the likelihood of reoffending;
- How the team works with partners (police, probation, health, children's services, youth court and crown court) to address mutual priorities, and
- The work done with parents of young offenders.

Members learned that YOT's were introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to 'co-ordinate the provision of youth justice services in their local authority areas.' They were comprised of representatives from the police, Probation Service, Social Services, health and education services and other specialist workers. In Newham, the YOT comprised: one Sergeant and three Police Constables; a Probation secondee; two seconded Social Workers; two Education Workers and a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) specialist.

Members heard that the primary aim of the YOT was to prevent offending in Newham. Within this, the team aimed to:

- Reduce and prevent youth crime and antisocial behaviour;
- Assist with the swift administration of justice;
- Rehabilitate young offenders;
- Address the needs of victims and offenders, and
- Protect public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Members learned that the YOT worked with young offenders (charged with offences and on statutory orders), perpetrators of antisocial behaviour (here work was done with the Community Safety Team), young people at risk of committing crime, and supported identified young people in the context of preventing violent extremism. Members heard that there were currently 276 young people on a court order in Newham. In the context of serious youth violence, the YOT worked with the Inspector of the Newham Gangs Unit, and with the Council's Community Safety team. In terms of diverting young people from the Criminal Justice System, where young people who had committed lower level crimes were given 'prevention interventions,' the YOT had made an impact, but this also meant that those remaining in the system were often more disaffected.

Members were informed that in terms of youth support, the YOT and Social Care/Statutory Services provided specialist support, Connexions/Third Sector and PAYP/Prevention Services provided targeted support (such as diverting young people away from crime) and Extended schools/Youth Centres/Clubs and the Third Sector/Community Projects provided universal services. The YOT worked on some projects with Youth Centres, and after young people had completed their interventions with the YOT, many were supported in community projects.

Members were informed that when young people first got into trouble, behaved anti-socially or committed minor offences, they could usually be dealt with by the police and local authority

outside of the court system, and using a variety of orders and agreements. These included sentences in the community such as Youth Rehabilitation Orders and Referral Orders.

A Youth Rehabilitation Order was a relatively new generic community sentence for children and young people who offended. Replacing nine existing sentences, it combined 18 requirements into one generic sentence. A Referral Order was usually given to a young person who pleaded guilty to an offence when it was his/her first time in court and the offence was not so serious as to warrant a custodial sentence. Members heard that when a young person was given a Referral Order, he/she was required to attend a youth offender panel, which was made up of two volunteers from the local community and a panel adviser from a youth offending team (YOT). The panel, with the young person, their parents/carers and the victim (where appropriate), agreed a contract lasting between three and 12 months. The aim of the contract was to repair the harm caused by the offence and address the causes of the offending behaviour.

Members learned that a custodial sentence was used as a last resort. The main custodial sentence was the Detention and Training Order, but for more serious offences a young person would be given a sentence under Section 90/91. This sentence could only be given in the Crown Court. The Detention and Training Order could be given to 12 to 17-year-olds. The length of the sentence could be between four months and two years. The first half of the sentence was spent in custody while the second half was spent in the community under the supervision of the youth offending team (YOT).

Members learned that when the YOT worked with children and young people who had been identified as being at risk of offending, it used an assessment called Onset, which was used by all prevention programmes. Onset was used to identify whether a young person would benefit from participating in a prevention programme, as well as to identify their needs and how best to address them to reduce the likelihood of them becoming an offender.

Members were informed that the YOT worked through community options, custodial sentences, to the end of licenses, and then through the transition to Probation. This transition point could be problematic, and it was acknowledged that it was important to manage the cross-over into Probation more effectively, particularly in the case of serious offences.

Members heard that one of the best and most cost-effective ways to reduce youth crime was to prevent young people from getting into trouble in the first place, by dealing with the problems that made it more likely they would commit crime or anti-social behaviour. Problems that might lead to a young person's troublesome behaviour included a lack of education, poor family relationships, having family members or peers who had offended, and misuse of substances to name but a few. There were numerous risk factors which could increase the likelihood of a young person offending or reoffending, such as personal or community factors, and sometimes a risk existed when young people had themselves been victims of crime. Members heard that young people could be both victims and perpetrators of crimes. In terms of effective direct reparation (Reparation Orders were designed to help young offenders understand the consequences of their offending and take responsibility for their behaviour. They could require the young person to repair the harm caused by their offence directly to the victim, which could involve victim/offender mediation if both parties agreed), this could prove difficult as parents didn't always want their children to attend 'prevent conferences' where they could feel re-victimised.

Members heard that the following Prevention Programmes aimed to deal with risk factors, engage young people's interests and increase their knowledge:

- Youth Inclusion Programmes;
- Youth Inclusion and Support Panels;

- Parenting interventions;
- Safer School Partnerships;
- Mentoring, and
- One to one support.

Members heard that close working with partners and schools was needed in terms of targeted behaviours. In Newham, there was a high number of robberies and possession of cannabis and class A drugs, which could lead to gang activities such as drug dealing.

Members were then given an opportunity to ask questions. Members asked what the Knife Crime Programme consisted of, and were informed that there were two types of programmes, each demonstrating the consequences of knife crime. The first was a low level prevention programme, which offered a scenario, and with video clips took the viewer through a story/journey. The viewer would be given choices, and for each wrong choice he/she would end up in a prison cell. In terms of those young people receiving statutory orders, the programme was more hard-hitting, with hard-edged photos and videos of the consequences of knife crime. Members enquired whether the programmes were effective, and what could be done instead of the programmes in terms of prevention. They were informed that the programmes were effective for some young people, but not for all. The YOT always looked at other activities young people could be doing and signposted young people into these other activities, such as sporting activities. Peacocks Gym worked with disaffected young people, and aimed to get them interested in Sports Science. Members expressed concerns that most schemes were sports oriented, yet not all young people were interested in sports. In speaking with young people, Members conveyed that many of them had nowhere to go where they could play their music out loud, and 'just be.' Anti-social behaviour and noise harassment was common of these groups. Members heard that the YOT had tried to promote Dance United, but the take-up was poor.

Members questioned whether young people had role models, such as ex offenders who had turned their lives around, and were informed that it had been debated whether or not to bring in ex offenders to talk about their experiences. At present, video clips of ex offenders speaking about their offences were shown. The YOT were looking into bringing in ex offenders, and were working with police mediation teams in this regard. Members questioned how the YOT measured outcomes, if for example they intervened at age 16 of a young person's life, and that young person didn't reoffend at age 18, but after age 18. Members heard that a reoffending performance indicator existed, which followed a cohort for 12 months, even if the young person crossed into the Probation Service after age 18. Officers were waiting to see what the Ministry of Justice put forward- it was envisaged that a 'payment by result' measure would be put in place, whereby if a team/service didn't meet an outcome, they would lose their grant pertaining to that outcome.

Members thought it problematic when young people left school at age 16, and then failed to secure employment. This was thought to have a huge knock on effect.

Members questioned how the 'prevent' agenda was measured, and heard that this debate was ongoing, but one measure that could be used was a reduction in the number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System.

Nicky Rayner informed Members that the YOT was at the intensive, 'sharp end' of the service, and what was important was the general youth offer to young people in the borough, which was about ensuring that Newham, as a borough, had the facilities in place to talk to young people and listen to their views. A positive of Newham was that all young people could afford to travel with travel cards, and as they could get to activities, it was important that they were motivated to do so and that the right kinds of activities were offered in this regard. In terms of building on the

youth offer, ongoing consultation with young people was viewed as vital. It was also important to use other young people as positive role models, not merely adults.

Members enquired how the YOT was performing relative to other boroughs, and were informed that the rate of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System was ok, but custody figures were not as good. Some targets were however contradictory. If for example it was decided to target serious youth crime, more young people would go into custody, which would result in an escalation of custody targets. Members were informed that work had been done to disrupt gangs in Newham.

Members questioned what could be done to resolve problems for residents associated with low level anti-social behaviour, and were informed that the YOT worked closely with the Community Safety Service. Flare data pertaining to anti-social behaviour was monitored, and regular meetings took place with the aim of identifying names and areas where anti-social behaviour occurred. YOT officers, youth workers and the police would be tasked to go to the hotspot areas, and would patrol, talk to young people and signpost them. If problems persisted, officers would go on home visits to talk to the parents. Many parents didn't even know what their children were getting up to. This would be followed by the enforcement route, ASB contracts then orders.

Members noted that young people were not a homogenous group, and what was worrisome was that not much real support was provided to victims of crime, many of whom would become perpetrators if not supported properly.

Members questioned what impact the cuts would have on the YOT, for example if youth centres were closed, and were informed that as part of the service redesign, risk areas were acknowledged, and that communication and joined up working were more important than ever. In terms of the redesign, officers would be based in integrated teams, and would be able to draw on the full range of resources. Resources would be freed up to be directed into universal and targeted services, including effective early interventions.

Members thought it important to not only engage with young people, but also to care enough to challenge them and put parameters forward, such as in the case of a Magistrate challenging a young offender by asking what consequences should flow from the offence.

Members were informed that the YOT delivered parenting programmes, aimed at supporting parents to become better parents.

Lorna Hadley informed the Commission that she would be happy to come back to the Commission to talk in more detail about any particular activities of the YOT that Members were eager to learn about.

June 14th 2011

NEWHAM POLICE'S YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORK WITH DISAFFECTED YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEWHAM

Chief Inspector Gary Brown, Youth Strategy Lead for Newham Borough Police was in attendance to discuss some of the positive youth engagement work the police were doing with disaffected young people in Newham. The Commission requested that Gary share his experiences and information on:

- what the main reasons were for youth disengagement in Newham;
- what challenges the police face/have faced when dealing with disaffected youth;
- what tools/methods the police used to engage with disaffected young people;
- which programmes had worked well (success stories) and which hadn't, and
- how the Council might work in partnership with the police to better tackle youth disengagement in Newham.

The Commission was informed that in Chief Inspector Brown's personal and professional views, the main reasons for youth disengagement in Newham included:

- A lack of knowledge about what activities were available to young people. In this regard, the Council needed to clearly publicise activities, and as such counter opinion that there was 'nothing to do' in Newham;
- A distrust of the police;
- Linked to the above, issues around stop and search procedures;
- A lack of knowledge about how to engage with the police and the community in general. This could be merely because young people didn't possess these skills, had never learnt these skills, or they had not been passed on from their parents.
- Lack of positive role models at home (most often absent fathers);
- Distractions, for example the internet and social networking sites, and social drinking;
- No sense of 'community' amongst some young people;
- Authorities including the Council and Metropolitan Police Service not being joined up enough in their approach to young people;
- Young people questioning what was in it for them. This could include young people not feeling that anyone actually listened to them or cared about their views;
- Too many things going on in young people's lives, with the result that they found it difficult to remain focussed.

The Commission heard about the challenges faced by the police when dealing with disaffected youth, which included:

- the attitude of not wanting to engage, so not engaging;
- parental influence (a culture of not liking the police) leading to attitudinal problems;
- perceptions that the police did not want to know about issues affecting young people, and that the police were too busy to care about young people's issues. Here it was acknowledged that perceptions needed to be dealt with, and that the media could play an important role in bridging the gap;
- communication issues for the police, particularly relating to getting their key messages across to young people;
- the generation gap;
- young people's stereotypical views of police as all being rude/incompetent etc;
- making meetings attractive to young people so they would attend and share their views;
- insufficient time being allocated to speak to young people in schools (National Curriculum limitations);

- capacity issues of the police, including not always having enough time to spend engaging with young people;
- young officers not knowing how to engage or lacking experience in this regard. It was acknowledged that more training could be done in this area, and
- some young people purposefully not wanting to listen, and aiming to spoil things for the majority. This could stem from them feeling they had no influence over the community.

The Commission then heard of some of the tools/methods used by the police to engage with disaffected young people, which included:

- the Newham Borough Police Youth Engagement Strategy, which focused on Enforcement, Education and Prevention. Prevention involved engaging with young people and discussing their life choices, and the consequences of going down different paths;
- work within schools, with an extensive Safer Schools Partnership Officer (SSPO) programme in Secondary Schools;
- Safer Neighbourhood Teams engaging with primary schools;
- Chief Inspector Gary Brown personally doing some work with primary schools;
- giving talks on knife crime;
- targeting the move from Year 6 to Year 7 (the key school transition in a young person's life);
- work with Peacock's Gym Academy, where the challenge was talking to disaffected young people who didn't like the police. A DVD was being prepared to foster engagement;
- engaging with young people through sport. Police officers would often join in sports initiatives, which would be followed by a discussion on what issues were facing young people etc. Some young people were on the cusp of crime, and could 'go either way,' and it was thus important to engage with them;
- work with the Newham All Star Sports Academy;
- the 'Carry a basketball, not a blade' event on 20 May 2011;
- Met Tracks (an athletics programme);
- KickZ (a football programme);
- Street Chance (a cricket programme);
- Word 4 Weapons;
- Commissioning theatre groups to perform plays about bullying, knife crime etc. This had proven a great way to engage with young people, though was costly and funding was an issue in this regard;
- 'Meet the Met' initiatives (for example at Stratford Theatre) where police officers would sit on a panel and answer questions posed by young people. This could be extremely challenging, especially when contentious issues such as stop and search were being discussed. Chief Inspector Guy Wade had recently given a presentation to NewVic, but this had had a poor turn out;
- a new process whereby the Senior Management Team would go out into the community and let them know what the police were doing. Gary Brown would be doing this at his Peacock's Gym Academy meeting.
- the MPS's use of You Tube, Facebook and Twitter, a welcome move into the 21st century and a great medium to obtain the views of young people, particularly in relation to what they thought about the police;
- use of specialised web sites;
- engaging the dance group Flava (anti-bullying and anti-knife workshops);
- presentations to/conversations with the Youth Council, though this could be expanded on;
- selecting role models (for example a girl from the Speak Out competition recently) to get them on side and help deliver key police messages;
- use of local radio (for example NuSound);
- holding youth conferences. These had proven successful for engaging with young people, especially when an England footballer and minor celebrities were invited, but were expensive. A

mother of a victim of crime had also been invited to talk about the effect the crime had had on her life, and her emotive talk had proven very moving to those present;

- cross post code border work, such as sports days where different schools from across the borough were invited to participate. This was felt to be important in bringing post codes together (particularly in the context of post code rivalry and youth violence), and moving forward;
- a decision to re-focus on restorative justice, whereby young offenders would be brought together with victims of crime, to help them understand that what they'd done was wrong.

The Commission heard that it was difficult to assess whether programmes had been successful or not, as it was difficult to measure their impact on young people's lives. It was acknowledged that getting messages out could be a slow process, and that the focus was not merely on the present, but also future. Nonetheless, it was felt that the following programmes had proven successful in terms of engaging disaffected young people:

- engaging the dance group Flava – feedback given was that messages had been received and understood (an extensive questionnaire was completed post-event);
- Interactions between SSPOs (also known as Schools' Officers) and young people in schools;
- Mad Blut was effective (this is an interactive theatre production);
- Breaking the Cycle had proven a success, with the draw card being that the speaker who had been knifed in Newham was a friend of David Beckham.

The Commission was informed that Met Tracks and Kickz had not proven as successful as envisaged. In both of these programmes, police capacity was an issue. These programmes were however due to be re-invigorated in the coming weeks.

The Commission heard about some of the positive partnership work being undertaken between the Council and the police, and also ideas about how the Council might in future work in partnership with the police to better tackle youth disengagement in Newham. Whilst it was acknowledged that the existing relationship was good, it was felt that this could be strengthened further. Partnership work had included/ could include some of the following:

- the Council providing the police with a directory of youth activities (which had long since been requested from the Council), which they could help circulate to young people;
- more engagement with the Young Mayor and Youth Council, as the police acknowledged they had great ideas;
- the Youth Street Action Team (YSAT) worked very well with police on Operation Staysafe last year. This involved engaging with young people at risk on the streets of Newham. Expanding on this, the police felt that joint patrols with the police and YOT or outreach workers was the way forward, as police only interaction was not as effective;
- there was a meeting coming up to look at the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership plans to deal with youth crime issues in 2011-14;
- the YOT was working very well with police, especially the Soft Support Team. This was particularly effective on the last day of term when YOT officers were deployed by the Council or the police to go out and engage with young people, deflecting them away from potential conflict/violence;
- there were joint MPS and Council truancy patrols that had been very successful in the past.

These tactics had not however been used of late;

- in respect of SSPO's, the police felt that this should be a partnership, but that sometimes it seemed one-sided and schools could do more to work in partnership with the police.

June 14th 2011

NEWHAM POLICE'S RESPONSE TO GANG ACTIVITY IN NEWHAM

Detective Inspector Jason Hendy, Head of Newham Borough Police's Serious Youth Violence Team, and Lorna Hadley, Head of Vulnerable Young People and Youth Offending in the Council, were in attendance to discuss the partnership approach to tackling serious youth violence in Newham.

The Commission was informed that whilst crime levels for most offences were down in the borough, Serious Youth Violence was on an upward trend. Serious Youth Violence is defined as "any offence of Most Serious Violence or Weapon Enabled Crime, where the victim is aged 1-19."

The Commission learned that in response to the increase in serious violence, the police had set up the Serious Youth Violence Team in November 2010. This team worked closely with other units in the police such as Trident and the Flying Squad, and was also building strong partnership links with the Council's Community Safety Team and Youth Offending Team. The approach adopted by the Serious Youth Violence Team was one of targeting so-called Tier 1, 2 and 3 nominals within gangs, (tier 1 referring to the most dangerous, involved individuals, with tier 3 referring to those individuals just getting into gangs), and sending out a clear message of 'No Tolerance.' Within the Council's Youth Offending Team, the approach was one of supporting those individuals that wanted to exit gangs.

The Commission heard that whilst enforcement was the first approach used to tackle the problem, prevention programmes were also being used. A school based HEART programme was being piloted in 3 schools, with the aim of increasing resilience amongst those at risk of being drawn into gangs. A new MPS initiative, Safe and Secure was also being used to assist victims of gang violence, many of whom were in fear of confiding information to the police.

The Commission heard that the Safe and Secure Programme needed buy-in from partners - the Mayor had indicated his approval for Newham to get involved, and Community Safety had the responsibility to ensure Newham Council signed up to this scheme. Mediation was also utilised by the police, and this approach sought to bring together the perpetrator of violence and the victim, to try and understand what prompted the violence. Mediation was proving very successful, and was being encouraged more and more.

The Commission heard that the Youth Offending Team was also engaged in specific, multi-agency operations to disrupt gang activity. After the police had made an arrest, the YOT would move in, talk to parents and the young people involved, and offer to support them in exiting from gang involvement etc. Many parents were not even aware that their children were involved in gang activity. Safeguarding Teams in the Council could also be alerted if the YOT had any safeguarding concerns about young children when entering homes. The YOT had also started to work closely with the Housing Service and in cases where the young person's behaviour breached the residency, warnings would be sent to the parents, with the ultimate consequence of eviction if the behaviour persisted. This was found to be an effective tool for changing the young person's behaviour, as there were consequences for the entire family.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions. Members commended some of the prevention work being done, particularly relating to the involvement of parents of disaffected young people.

Members questioned whether evicting tenants in private housing (where their children were involved in gang activity) was an option, and were informed that they would be asked to sign up to the same agreement.

One Member mentioned the launch of the new play area at the Snowhill Estate, and that nobody had thought to involve the YOT or police. There existed on the Estate a perception by older people that they couldn't trust young people on the Estate. It was suggested by this Members that a model be used where disaffected young people on the Estate were tasked with being responsible for the play area themselves, giving them a sense of 'ownership' and potentially improving perceptions of them.

Another Member who worked with young people and helped get them into employment expressed the view that many young people who has been labelled with a criminal record gave up on themselves. It was also felt that the front office of many police stations was not welcoming, and suggested that a second booth be set up in police stations, where young people could be directed to someone who could discuss employment options with them. The police acknowledged the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere in the front office, where the community felt safe to report crime, and that they would be helped. In terms of deploying police officers to a second booth, it was important to balance this with the need for police officers to be on the street.

Lorna informed Members, that contrary to popular belief, some of the most serious offenders were the highest achievers. It was essential that early intervention work be done with schools to prevent amongst other things, young people dropping out of school. Lorna would soon be meeting with Head Teachers and the Placement Team to discuss approaches to managing risk and keeping young people in school.

Members questioned what work the police would do in schools if there was more time in the curriculum, and were informed that drama had been shown to be a positive medium to get their message across. The emphasis however was on making their presence known in schools such that young people started recognising their faces, thereby building up relationships with young people so they would feel comfortable to talk about issues and share information.

Members expressed concerns that Newham invested heavily in sports activities to keep young people engaged and active, but that not all young people liked sports, and what was needed was more variety.

July 12th 2011

THE LEISURE SERVICE'S WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEWHAM

Grant Aitken, Divisional Director for Leisure Services was in attendance to discuss the Leisure offer to young people in the borough, and also how the Leisure Service was engaging disaffected young people in leisure activities. The Commission heard that leisure covered sports, activities, arts and culture. The Commission was informed that what the Council delivered itself in terms of leisure activities was quite small- the voluntary sector and schools offered much more. The service was also however about the Council's role as a regulator (this included licensing), and the Council had the ability to both deliver but also commission leisure services.

Members heard that the Leisure Division had three main objectives: mass participation, with more people involved in activities, which often had positive outcomes for young people in respect of educational attainment, self-esteem and employment; increasing the sustainability of activities, which linked in with the resilience agenda and aimed to get more clubs, groups and

societies doing things, thereby discouraging them from reliance on the public sector; and developing the environment (such as the Royal Docks project and Olympic Park), such that residents could access activities and that they were fit for purpose for Newham's residents. The Commission heard that the objectives aimed to deliver long-term outcomes, which included Newham residents feeling fit and well, safe, young people achieving in learning, getting involved in decision making, learning assertiveness (by getting involved in theatre groups for instance), easing the transition of young people into adulthood, promoting better attendance and behaviour and tackling obesity etc.

The Commission was informed that the Leisure Service had a strategic role in commissioning, and across the Council the sector was used to deliver outcomes. The role of the service was therefore to understand the market place, and to ensure the facilities were fit for purpose. There had been recent investment in parks and open spaces, and satisfaction was going up. What was needed was good parks and open spaces, play facilities and buildings with the right dimensions. It was also important to ensure there were enough clubs, organisations and groups, and that grants could be given where possible. On the demand side, the service was working with the PCT, and employing nudge techniques to get people better involved. There was a strong drive around active participation.

The Commission was informed about the context in which the service operated- there were a number of changes to policy and shifts taking place. In terms of the resilience agenda, it was important for groups to be empowered to help themselves in respect of arranging sport and cultural activities, and it would be important for people to realise that they didn't always need support from the public sector.

The Commission heard that in relation to engaging disaffected young people, the range of programmes the service commissioned was underpinned by research. Neighbourhood sports programmes were community based and the service worked with the police. The service was also looking to target new activities, such as 'Dare to dance.' Newham had a very large summer programme of activities.

It was acknowledged that whilst there were many activities on offer in Newham, there was a lack of knowledge about what was available to people on their doorsteps. Urban sports had been encouraged, and there was a summer programme brochure. Some specific targeting was also done, where for instance people left school and their involvement in activities decreased. The service worked with New Vic to encourage young people to continue in positive activities. The service's universal offer was the four leisure centres in the borough, which were in the top 10% in the country in terms of quality assurance. For under 16's, there were free swims, and the PCT were funding swimming lessons with parents and carers. There was increasing emphasis on a family-centred approach, which was felt to be important for positive role modelling. The youth rates for the leisure centres were extended from age 16 and under to age 19. The offer was hence affordable for young people. The service also arranged a big volunteer programme, and a significant portion of volunteers were in the 16-19 age group. The volunteer programmes had clear task descriptions, and were meaningful for many young people. The arts programme included commissioning of Stratford Circus and the Theatre Royal. In the Stratford area there were 20 cultural organisations. It was important that these and other organisations recognised the Council's policies, such as how they looked at inward investment and charging, to ensure sustainability.

Members were interested to know how many youth clubs existed in Newham, and were informed that in terms of the CYPS Strategy going forward, and the Community Spaces Review, there would be 4 Youth Hubs, with 12 satellite venues.

The Commission was informed that there were opportunities for young people to get involved whether it be through leisure, communities schools, the library etc but young people of today networked differently, and the challenge was determining how best to make connections with young people. In this respect, marketing techniques were felt to be important.

Members felt that it was not only about what facilities existed, but also about working with partners such as Housing Associations and faith groups. A large number of young people attended Friday prayers in the Beckton area, and it was felt that this would be a good opportunity to engage with these young people. If young people didn't 'come to us,' Members felt it was important to 'go to them.' Members were informed that in terms of the Reorganisation, this would be coming through more in that the focus would be on the local area.

Members heard that many organisations apart from the Council delivered activities, and what the Council offered was small in this regard. What was important however was that in communities, organisations supported the Council in achieving its objectives. The Council also called for organisations to communicate to them what was on offer, and the Council would market these activities. The Council was happy to support inclusive organisations. Members heard that facilities at some schools could only be used if the young people attended the school, and it would be good if they could be opened and more flexible access permitted, particularly since most schools had playgrounds. Members heard that one of the drivers around the Community Spaces Review was that if people had to get out of buildings, and head out, it was not a bad thing. Resilience needed to be articulated, and the fact that not all activities existed in people's houses or schools, but that there were other things 'out here' to access.

Members conveyed that a lot of young people were going to the Power League, as they felt safe since it was manned and regulated. It was felt that more of this was needed, and that volunteers should be used to make people feel safe. Members also felt that advertising was key, and that social networking was a good medium to advertise activities and encourage networking. Members were informed that safety was a key priority for promoting more activities, and that this could be accomplished through design and also 'adult supervision.' Whilst leisure provision could be regulated, in terms of the resilience agenda, the service wanted people to regulate and organise themselves more.

Members heard that Newham was well connected, and it was important that sport and art be used to break down boundaries, many of which were perceptual not physical. A co-opted Member informed Grant that leisure never went on the SACRE agenda, and suggested that this be done.

Members felt that most young people were social, and that Newham lacked a café culture. The focus seemed to be on sport, yet it was felt that the social element was what was missing in Newham. Members were informed that it was acknowledged that 'hang out' spaces were important for young people, especially where they didn't get stigmatised. In terms of what the Council could influence, this included planning (safer neighbourhoods where public spaces between private land were reclaimed), designing in 'hang out spaces' in new projects, and reference was made to Grassroots café as a good example of this, though it wasn't open enough of the time.

Members felt that more activities were needed for younger people of primary school age. Members also felt that sport and physical activity were promoted, but not culture and the arts. It was important to expose young people to a wide range of activities not merely sport, and the earlier the better since young people were the most impressionable. It was also felt that some of the arts like drama could help boost the confidence of young people, and that not all young people felt comfortable with playing sport. Members also felt that the interests of young people

changed as time went on, and that it was important to engage with young people to learn from them what activities they wished to participate in etc.

Members raised the issue of there being insufficient female trainers at the women's only sessions at Eastham Leisure Centre, and that this should be looked into if the service wanted to raise participation levels.

Members were informed that it was important to understand what young people wanted, and since the Council itself wasn't involved in much actual delivery of activities, but rather worked through its partners, it was important to stay close to the market. The service was working with the Young Mayor's Office to ensure that what was commissioned was relevant. It was felt that young people did often want quick fix activities such as street dancing, and that the arts and cultural offer was more vibrant in Newham- there were many strong partners including independent artists, multi-media companies, design companies and private recording studios. What was needed was to 'talk up' the creative industries more. It was also important to improve marketing, and make it more relevant to young people, such as applications on phones, not merely limiting information to booklets etc. It was also felt that the Newham magazine could be used more, not just to promote activities in the borough but also what could be done outside Newham. The emphasis could also shift from promoting merely what the Council offered, to rather what was 'available' in Newham. It was felt that more use could also be made of the Newham website.

September 13th 2011

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED: EXPLORING THE USE OF DRAMA AND CREATIVE WRITING AS A STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING DISENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEWHAM

Local playwright and arts educator Jim Kenworth was in attendance to discuss some of the playwriting workshops/performances he has organised with young people in Newham, and how scriptwriting and drama can be used to engage disaffected young people.

Jim informed the Commission that he had done work primarily in Newham primary schools (they had more flexible timetabling), and also in some secondary schools. He had run workshops such as 'write a play in a week,' which took up 5 mornings. The basis of this workshop was that the teacher would choose a picture book connected with citizenship, and Jim would adapt the story and the pupils would write a play. Issues that came up included harassment and bullying. The workshop was more of a literacy workshop than one based on drama, and was targeted mainly at year 5's. Jim emphasised that sport was not the only way to effectively engage young people, and exploring the arts and activities such as creative writing had nothing to do with 'intelligence' in the school context. The main limiting factor for young people was that of a limited vocabulary to express themselves, which could impact on imagination. In terms of 'engaging the disengaged,' Jim discussed the playwriting workshops he had organised at Britannia Village- the Britannia Voices Script- Writing Project. Britannia Village was an isolated area, and there was mutual antipathy between private housing residents and social housing residents. In collaboration with the charity Conflict and Change, and the Community Leaders and Engagement Team, the scriptwriting project took place over a period of 3 months, and culminated in a community conversation about issues facing residents in the Royal Docks area, and how to improve life in the area. Britannia Voices showcased the plays they had been working on, which tackled themes including private and social housing, social mobility, poor transport links, and inclusion. Jim's impression of older young people (aged 15 upwards) is that they don't necessarily want to act in plays, but they enjoy creative writing. The younger people often prefer acting.

The Commission was informed that the benefit of this type of engagement was that it promoted the use of imagination and self-expression. It was also a tool to help young people articulate their ideas. Jim expressed the view that for many young people, creative exercises were the only time where young people felt they had some control over what they were doing.

The Commission were shown a film clip from the project, which depicted issues such as the use of dispersal orders on groups of young people in the area, which contributed to feelings of exclusion, and being 'trapped' in the area. Other issues contributing to this feeling were that the Connaught Bridge closed at 10p.m. and there was only 1 bus route in and out of the area. Young people in the workshop were given the opportunity to talk to Councillors, and in so doing felt that there was hope for the area and the community in the area. The workshop also allowed for a growth in confidence of the participants, and helped build relationships and friendships. Young people found it useful in that in talking to Councillors they could describe and discuss what issues they faced, and they acknowledged that even if things couldn't change overnight, this was a stepping stone to getting their voices heard. A spokesman for the young people conveyed that these types of workshops could help other young people with issues they faced, in that it gave them an opportunity to speak up for themselves, and in this way promoted positive engagement. The work done by the young people also helped tackle negative perceptions that some residents had of young people in the community, as these young people were seen to be doing something positive and engaging. Jim expressed the view that these types of workshops were useful as issues written down in play form were easier to digest than issues being debated- it created a kind of stop-gap or buffer, and allowed constructive conversations to take place.

Jim informed the Commission that volunteers from the Theatre Royal Youth Company (that he used from time to time) acted as mentors to some of the young people.

Councillor Chowdhury welcomed the work that Jim was doing, and said that she'd like to see more of this kind of work done in schools and community centres in Newham. Jim mentioned that he'd recently given 6 taster workshops for children at risk from ASB activities/involvement in Flanders Fields Community Centre. Two of the young people at risk actively took part, which was encouraging, and the police were also involved. However, Jim felt that it would be of more use if these kinds of workshops could be sustained, and were not just one off. Ellen Kemp agreed with Jim, and said that if the offer was for too short a time, young people might think 'why bother' and not get involved.

Councillor Mahmood referred to the Green Street Musical that had been performed some time ago in community centres in the area, and said that it had created a good feeling amongst people in the area. The focus in this instance had not merely been on young people, but also old people, and people with disabilities. Councillor Mahmood felt that the project had proven highly successful, and that it was a pity that it was not sustained. Anything that could add to it was welcomed.

Councillor Scoresby expressed the view that working in partnership with schools was important, as schools had more of the resources to fund these types of workshops etc. She expressed concerns however over whether Councillors talking to the young people about their issues (such as in the Britannia Voices workshops) would go back to these young people to report on progress in tackling the issues, or to help residents lobby for things they needed or change. It was important to not only listen, but also to follow through within realistic parameters, or else it would promote a defeatist attitude amongst young people.

Councillor Bourne questioned how these workshops could be promoted and sustained, and whether it was feasible for them to take places throughout the borough. She recognised that it was a great way to engage young people, especially since many young people had no interest

in sporting activities. It was also a useful tool for getting people talking about issues, and building confidence amongst young people.

Jim informed the Commission that he would be interested in handing on some of the skills he had- such as in the case of the film clip where he insisted that Theo, a young person involved in the workshops 'front' the film, as opposed to Councillors or himself doing so. Jim suggested that he could even train up people to conduct the workshops on a larger scale. Jim emphasised that whatever a young person learnt in the creative environment of scriptwriting was transferable, whether it be team-working skills, awareness, communication skills or improved confidence. Many of these skills were vital in the work environment.

Councillor Scoresby mentioned that there had been creative writing type workshops on the summer scheme, but it was always only offered to a small number of people. In contrast, 200 young people could participate in a football game in a park. The issue then was how to persuade schools to use money from the extended schools budget to offer courses in youth clubs for instance. Councillor Scoresby was also of the view that some of the more hard to reach young people would be more interested in attending youth clubs or community centres to partake in activities than they would if the same activities took place in the school environment. It would be crucial to put the benefits across (to teachers) in terms of skills and learning concepts.

Jim referred to the earlier presentation by the Acting Executive Director for CYPS, and stated that in terms of the attainment agenda, it didn't matter where skills were learnt, so long as they were learnt. In this respect, schools needed to trust more in alternative or creative forms of learning. Jim thought it would be a good option for schools to join up, thereby pooling their resources, and using classes (whether in the curriculum or after school) to hold such workshops. Councillor Chowdhury expressed concern over too many children being in one place at a time, and Jim said that it was possible for 5 or so different schools to work on different parts of a script, and for them to come together to perform.

The Commission was informed that should they have any further questions for Jim, they could be emailed to the Scrutiny Manager. The Commission agreed that should they find it necessary or useful, they would invite Jim to a future meeting.

November 8th 2011

STEVE CAMERON, HEAD OF EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS AND KEVIN BRAILEY, HEAD OF EARLY INTERVENTION, INCLUSION AND PROGRESSION, DISCUSSED INITIATIVES TO PREVENT DISENGAGEMENT AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN NEWHAM

The Commission invited two Officers to present evidence to the report on *Raising the Participation Age for 14-19 years*: Steve Cameron, Head of Employability and Skills, and Kevin Brailey, Head of Early Intervention, Inclusion and Progression were invited to discuss initiatives to prevent disengagement and job opportunities for youth in Newham.

Some of the areas he covered include:

- The national issues facing the 14-19 age group as well as the Newham context.
- The new Education Bill
- Raising the participation age from 16 -19 years
- Changes to Careers Education Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG)
- Post and pre -16 provision and delivery

He also outlined key challenges facing Newham including:

- One of the key changes from the previous government's policy means schools can choose whether to raise the participation age
- Schools' performance will be measured against pupil's future educational choices
- Movement amongst young people in Newham is 47% and is predominantly evident from East to West with more students travelling to Waltham Forest, Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge and Havering.
- Staying on rate in Newham is 94.6% which is ranked fourth best in London

Steve mentioned how Newham currently offer good Apprenticeship schemes and are committed to increase this offer. Although there may be some concerns over the quality of Apprenticeship schemes offered by trading organisations for instance. Increase in University tuition fees has also added pressure on young people to further their education. Further, supporting organisations such as Connexions that provided careers guidance have also been forced to decline. In response, Councillor Scoresby commented on the changes to Sixth Form education facilities. She also raised the need for schools to better manage teaching staff and dynamics of Sixth Form structures. Steve mentioned there was a need to work in current structures as Newham has good Sixth Form facilities.

Councillor Scoresby commented on changes to School's becoming Academies as not all schools were in favour. If government proposals are enforced many schools will feel pressured into becoming Academies. Steve added how demand in applications has declined as more schools opt out of becoming Academies, although if enforced this may be the outcome. Ellen Kemp added documents on Federations suggest schools may not have much choice as the Diocese is a trusted Cabinet and some schools have been pressured into becoming an Academy.

Councillor Scoresby enquired whether the number of young people studying out of Newham was being tracked, and how they progressed. In response Steve suggested young people were achieving their best and that figures are available. Councillor Scoresby commented on how the Council should not be concerned if these young people are doing well as they have educational choices to study where they need to. But she was concerned over the level of parental choice given when sending children into primary and secondary schools. In response Steve mentioned the Council attempted to retain wealth and knowledge in the borough by encouraging residents to 'live, work and stay' as Newham is just as good as the other boroughs.

Councillor Mahmood enquired about the new development with Siemens and technical colleges in the borough. In response Steve mentioned Newham is in discussion with a Construction Trading organisation interested in developing a Construction UTC and encouraging partnerships with other local authorities, such as Dagenham.

Councillor Bourne commented on issues of young people's choices to studying out of the borough. Also the issue of individual's moving out of Newham may not mean whole families re-locating. In response Steve suggested there was not enough evidence to indicate these demographic changes at present.

Councillor Scoresby was concerned about Newham's image and how it's being projected, especially with new developments and regeneration in the borough. And is the offer to young people encouraging them to stay and study in the borough, especially as housing and transport appear to be main concerns. In response Kevin agreed with Councillor Scoresby's comments and added these pressures often turn residents away. He added Newham have a responsibility to ensure correct provisions are offered to residents. Their learning should be catered for to avoid young people being pushed out of the borough. Councillor Robinson added young people

should have provisions available to them within the borough Councillor Bourne agreed that we're not giving them the full package.

December 13th 2011

BUSHRA NASIR, CHAIR OF NASH, AND GARY WILKIE, CHAIR OF PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP, A PERSPECTIVE ON THE EXTENT OF DISAFFECTION IN SCHOOLS AND MEASURES TAKEN TO DEAL WITH IT

Gary Wilkie, Chair of Primary Partnership, sent his apologies to the Commission. Bushra Nasir, Chair of NASH, informed the Commission about the secondary school perspective on disengaged youth in Newham and also outlined the existing measures in place to deal with it. Bushra Nasir began her presentation by reading a poem called "The Teacher" by Dr. Haim Ginott, which is regularly read to staff at the beginning of each term to remind teachers about their role within education. The poem draws attention to the relationships that teachers and students have and it also highlights the importance of teachers' role in preventing youth disaffection.

Bushra Nasir informed the Commission about her personal background and achievements of the Plashet School. She then further informed the Commission about the current situation at Newham Secondary Schools and discussed strategies which are used to engage the disengaged students.

The Commission learned that curriculum design, Learning Support Unit (LSU), use of internal as opposed to external exclusions, use of adults in school support, engagement initiatives and working with parents and other agencies are all strategies that Headteachers have used to engage students which previously were or are presently disengaged.

Bushra Nasir informed the Commission that curriculum needs to be at the core of engagement and needs to spark student interest. GCSEs are not for all students, so other provisions should be provided such as entry-level qualifications and vocational courses. Plashet School does not offer a variety of vocational courses, as other schools do, but Plashet does offer an ICT course. Many schools are also engaging in extracurricular provisions because there is much more to education than just that which happens in the classroom. Previously schools did not offer many extra-curricular options for students, but that has now changed in that schools are now seen as hubs of activities. The Plashet School has, for example, opened up the school to students during lunchtime, which was not previously done. There are now 1,300 students on-site during lunchtime and also after school and this small improvement has proven to have a direct impact on engagement. Alternative provisions, such as diplomas, are not offered at Plashet, but are offered at many other secondary schools.

At Plashet School the logistics have shown to be problematic and there were also security issues that were connected to this alternative provision. Religious assemblies are also one of the provisions at the Plashet School and through SACRE there are separate acts of worship twice a week. It is necessary to acknowledge that such opportunities are very important to the students and their religious identity and be able to have those offers in place. Also more schools have started talking about and started offering various pathways that are designed for students so that they do not feel that the curriculum is beyond them.

In addition, Bushra Nasir informed the Commission about the work of the Learning Support Unit (LSU). In most school, the LSU sets up a disciplinary base so the education of the disengaged children can be guided and not disrupt the education of other students. At the Plashet School, the LSU is about individualised support for students who are disengaged for a number of reasons, such as not having a good fit with the educational system (these might be students who

need to dedicate more time to some subjects over others) or even students who have health issues. Also mentors take on a leading role in keeping students engaged. On many occasions, the mentors will design individual work plans for students in order to help them to progress. The mentoring system is then also further used for students who are internally excluded, these are students who have done a misdemeanour and they need real guidance in how they need to improve and reflect on their behaviour. After a day or sometimes even after a half day and talk with the parents, the students who are internally excluded are then reintegrated into the school. These measures are in place because most importantly they offer individualised support for pre-exclusions and they serve as pre-emptive measures.

Bushra Nasir further informed the Commission that schools are moving towards using internal exclusions more frequently than external exclusions. While external exclusions are still used, there are a lot of changes happening. Before, many students would be excluded for up to 10 to 12 days at one time, now there are very strict provisions that limit external exclusions to up to 5 days and after the 6 day there is a ruling. At the Plashet School, after the 6th day the students are transferred to St. Angela's School (mutual agreement between the schools) and a clear message is being communicated to the students in that this is a form of punishment in that they have to attend a different school and wear the other school's uniform and take part in their curriculum. These measures are done to take students out of the vicious cycle of exclusions.

Permanent exclusions serve as a last resort and they are perceived as the school's failure in helping the student and therefore there is a strong interest for school not to have many or any permanent exclusions and be able to assist the students in as many ways as possible. In the last couple of years, the number of permanent exclusions in Newham has decreased significantly by the managed moves system. Over the last few years, it has also proven as helpful in involving other adults, other than teachers in helping to engage the disengaged students. Many jobs, such as attendance were not as thoroughly done when overseen by teachers. Now with the attendance officers in place, there is an improvement in keeping track of students and keeping them engaged. The role of the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) is especially important, because the officer gets to know families, parents, social services and other multi-agency work on a more personal and deeper level and is therefore better able to engage the students in school. The Plashet School has appointed their own EWO because it many times serves as a lifeline in engaging some of the much disengaged students.

Bushra Nasir also discussed the various initiatives which are taken to directly assist with student engagement. More recently targeted interventions are being used. During the summer, for example, when there is a higher vulnerability for some of the students and when the students are prone to become involved in activities which would be destructive for them, summer programs (drama, etc.) are available. This year, the Plashet School received £140,000 through the Pupil Premium and that money was targeted for students who have free school meals (FSM) and looked after children (LAC). The budget dedicates roughly £430 per student for the purposes of narrowing the attainment gap between the students (research has shown that the FSM students have lower attainment than other students). This money helps to offer free laptops to the students and other extra activities (subsidised trips, textbooks, etc.) to keep students engaged.

Working with parents is key in keeping students engaged in school and the persistency in that is very important. The attendance at parent's evenings needs to improve, however, because many parents are willing to help their child and want their child to succeed in school but they either do not know how or they do not have the tools to help their child.

Therefore, targeted curriculum evenings (year 7, 8, 9, 10) were set-up where parents learn how they can better assist their children with education. At the Plashet School, for example, the

Somali students have shown to be an underachieving group and therefore a special Somali Parents Group was set-up. It is key for the school to target any group that is underachieving in any way and also to have the necessary language and cultural knowledge to assist with the needs of that underachieving group. For students who are home schooled or that are disaffected in any way, contracts are drafted and written in student speak to enable the students to successfully comprehend the essence of the contract. Additionally, Bushra Nasir stressed to the Commission the importance of working with other agencies and the significance of the role that they play in assisting the school. The work of the schools should focus on identifying the needs and then putting in the structures around the child to support them.

Cllr Chowdhury questioned whether the schools identify issues for the various communities that the students come from due to the fact that in some cultural communities, issues such as depression or others might not be known. Bushra Nasir commented that Newham has been an inclusive community for a long time and that provisions have been put into place to cope well with disabilities and other influencing factors. Cllr Chowdhury shared her concern about parent responsibilities and also about atmosphere at home for many of the school children. Bushra Nasir commented that it is very important for the school to have a good contact with the parents and also that it is important to listen to the parent's concerns and as a school be able to work around the issues and concerns that were raised.

Cllr Chowdhury further questioned whether focus is dedicated to ensure that teachers are not only qualified to deliver good educational services but that they also have a good understanding of the cultural background and communities that the students come from. Bushra Nasir commented that it is primarily most important that the teacher be a good practitioner and that the teacher must possess enthusiasm and energy to teach. She also stressed that the other necessary and beneficial skills, such as cultural knowledge can be learned and gained along the way.

Ellen Kemp questioned the ways in which young disaffected people can continue to be supported if or when the funding from the government is not present. Bushra Nasir commented that many times cover assistance has been used to cover classes because of cost. She also highlighted that it is important for schools to be able to manage their own budgets and to specifically serve the needs of the students at each particular school. If budget cuts will be present, then reductions in the school staff might have to happen. In the past and due to budget cuts, the number of teaching assistants had to be reduced.

Steve Wilson questioned whether disengaged students are pointed out in any ways or if they feel like they might be. Bushra Nasir informed the Commission that when students are, for example, sent to St. Angela's School then they are required to wear the St. Angela's school uniform and that is seen as the 'punishment'. Therefore, students are not being pointed out but they themselves are being made aware of implications and consequences of their actions.

Cllr Fibresima questioned the reasons for school exclusions. Bushra Nasir informed the Commission that exclusions are mostly due to poor behaviour, such as physically fighting with other students or being persistently rude to teachers or staff. There has been only one time when there were multiple exclusions at one time (3 permanent exclusions) and that was due to a drug issue. Since that time, there have been no more drug problems at the Plashet School.

Ellen Kemp questioned the effectiveness of managed moves for students. Bushra Nasir informed the Commission that for some students the managed moves work well, but that with other students the issues just move along aside them and therefore for some students the main stream education might not be the best provision. The People Referral Unit (PRU) is also used for some students on the permanent exclusions. Additionally, various private companies are also

setting up alternative provisions for students. Local provisions would be preferred over the offers of private companies due to the fact that the schools bear a responsibility to pay £6,000 out of the overall school's budget for any permanent exclusion student that is passed out of school. There is a financial implication for the school and there is also a report produced which states how many exclusions a school goes through on annual basis.

Steve Wilson questioned the activities and actions that all girl schools take in order to prevent the recruitment of girls into 'gang' type of activities. Bushra Nasir informed the Commission that the issues in all girl schools are different and that it is many times the case that girls are mimicking the behaviour of their older brothers who might be affiliated with or are in gangs. In all the cases it is important for youth workers to get the children off the streets and direct them to other activities.

The Chair questioned the common cause for youth disengagement. Bushra Nasir stated that there is not one specific case for disengagement but that there has been a trend for girls in year 11 in becoming disengaged when they were told by their parents that they could not continue with further education (post 16 education). In these cases it is very important for the school to be working with the parents or carers and inform them about the benefits of going on to college. In some cases, the parents themselves or even carers of these students might be involved in crime and therefore it is very important to take all of the facts into consideration when speaking with the parents.

The Chair praised the good practice of engaging the disengaged students at Plashet School and questioned the possibility of sharing this information with other schools in Newham. Bushra Nasir commented that Plashet School has worked on achievement together with other schools and that the school is very open to visits and sharing of information with other schools. Especially the Learning Support Unit at Plashet School is a good model and the information about its work can be shared if schools are interested.

The Chair further questioned whether disaffected youth is hostile or suspicious of the services or help that is offered by the school. Bushra Nasir informed the Commission that it is essential to figure out each individual student's reason for being disengaged. Sometimes it can be that the relationship between the student and the teacher is not working properly. Sometimes the demands that the teachers have of the students are very strict and there might need to be other alternative models of how to engage the students and focus on their specific needs in order to prevent a hostile or suspicious attitude.

The Chair thanked Bushra Nasir for her presentation to the Commission.

January 10th 2012

KEVIN BRAILEY, HEAD OF EARLY INTERVENTION, INCLUSION AND PROGRESSION AND DAVE STEVENS, GROUP MANAGER - INTEGRATED YOUTH SERVICES, TARGETED PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED YOUTH IN NEWHAM

Kevin Brailey, Head of Progression Service, informed the Commission about the Newham Youth Offer as well as the targeted practices for engaging the disengaged youth in Newham. The Commission learned that all of the Borough Integrated Youth Services have a role in engaging the disengaged. The Universal Youth Offer, Specialist Provision, Youth Information and Advice & Targeted Youth Support, NEET Intervention Team and Youth Street Action Teams all ensure that services reach all Newham young people. The point is that activities need to be available to all young people, not only those who are disengaged, even though special attention needs to be given to the youth who is disengaged in order to engage them in various activities.

The service that is currently on offer has started on 1st September, 2011. Young people, community organisations partners, as well as the community have been consulted in order to find out what would be most suitable to have in place in the new Youth Offer. A key centre and an additional provision are provided in each of the 9 Community Forum Areas. That serves as the basis of the universal youth offer. The Commission was informed about the Universal Youth Offer. The Universal Youth Offer is a combination of London Borough of Newham delivery and 3rd sector commissioned delivery. It is not quite 50/50 service split but a significant portion of the services are commissioned. The commissioning took place through strategic commissioning round, much of the work happened during the time before the actual tenders went out. There was also a lot of work with those organisations who delivered youth services in Newham to make sure the offer was built correctly.

Each key youth centre has also the additional responsibility for co-ordinating youth providers and youth activity in each Community Forum Area. There has now been a move towards a strategic responsibility for youth provision and in particular community forum areas it may lay with one of the 3rd sector partners. For example, there is an expectation that key partners from the key youth centres will attend the Local Service Reviews and to be able to account to Councillors about what is taking place in that Community Forum Area. It would not longer be just be local authority officers who would be to account to Councillors. Therefore, there is a slight change about how the Council commissions and also to what is expected of those particular centres. The report attached to the meeting agenda goes into more detail about each of the Community Forum Areas.

The Commission also learned about the specialist provision. Many of the services in the specialist provision are services which are commissioned from the 3rd sector organisations. The volunteer project has taken a significant financial cut over the last couple of years. LBN works specifically with "Be Inspired" and a significant number of those volunteers work in the youth centres. This is a good way for young people to find work through the service. Some of the staff who currently work in Integrated Youth Services first started with LBN services as very disengaged; showing that they have now gone through immense personal and professional development. Under participation projects, one area where there should be more youth participation is the Local Service Review. There should be potential for some of the young people to play a role within the Local Service Reviews on regular basis, not just about what is happening for young people but also more generally about what is happening in their area.

Kevin Brailey informed the Commission about Youth Information and Advice & Targeted Youth Support provision. Historically there have been 5 Connexion shops in Newham, now there has been a closure of 3 of those as well as a redesign of the centres. Since the redesign, there is YIACS, which is based at Stratford and serves the north of the Borough and YPOD which is based in East Ham and serves the south of the Borough. Essentially, they are daytime youth centres with a specialism with advice and guidance and targeted youth support. They focus on the older age range and target the most excluded and disengaged young people.

The Commission further learned about the NEET Intervention Team. In November, the last figures showed about 500 NEET young people in the range of 16-18 years in Newham. Staff will also carry out some targeted group work at Workplace, YIACS and YPOD. The staff will, for example, set CV workshops for the youth.

The Commission was also informed about the work of the Youth Street Action Teams. The Youth Street Actions Teams will many times work jointly with the police and go on patrol jointly with the police. Other times, the Youth Street Actions Teams might carry out their work on their own, depending on the nature of the issue. Recently, there has been additional provision that will look at the school's areas to look for muggers around the borough and see if a specific team can

do some particular work there. Many times these areas can be beneficial as areas for young people, but at the same time when young people congregate the local community might see that as a problem. At the moment there are 4 areas where the Youth Street Action Team is looking to do some work. These areas are: Priory Park, Stratford Park, Forest Park Road, and Britannia Village.

The Commission learned about Performance & Value for Money. The Commission was informed that the bulk of the savings was the reduction in management cost. The appendix to the report provides a more detailed breakdown of youth engagement. There are 2 key areas where measurements were provided. The first is the number of engagements with young people (e.g. when 50 young people attend a youth centre, that is then converted to 50 engagements) and second is the number of times there has been a meaningful contact with youth. From 2010-2011 there have been 9,000 young people who have engaged with the Integrated Youth Services and the goal is to raise the number of young people to 10,000 in 2012. It is very difficult to measure the impact that the services have on young people. Kevin Brailey discussed several ways to measure the impact. First, it is important to look at and assess the case studies about the impact that the services have had on the lives of the young people. The second way to measure impact is from self-declared impact outcomes, meaning that as a result of the service, the young people feel safer, healthier and more employable. Those are the 3 key outcomes of engagement with young people. The case studies which were included in the report attempt to illustrate the way the different services and elements (Universal Youth Offer, youth centres, Specialist Provision, Youth Information and Advice & Targeted Youth Support) integrate to deliver the needed outcomes.

Gary Bird, Deputy Head of Communications, informed the Commission about the communication strategy that has been developed in regards to the youth offer in Newham. The messaging of the campaign is very simple. Focus groups were done with young people who have provided their suggestions and designs which were used in the actual marketing materials, such as banners and flyers. Within the Youth Offer campaign there are two main communication channels; one of which is the Newham Magazine and the information supplement. These are mainly used to advertise the Universal Youth Offer. In the magazine, there is a column called "Your Space" which is solely dedicated as a space to the youth and the communications team does not add to its content; it is all done by Newham youth. Young people in Newham send their pictures and letters to the magazine, which then publishes it with some minor help with the language editing and graphics. There is also a page called "Kid's Corner" that deals mostly with the younger readers and engages them through competitions, etc. All of the activities that are on offer are advertised throughout the Newham magazine and the in-focus supplement.

The Communications team makes sure that flyers which the young people are able to take away with them are provided in all of the Newham libraries and youth centres. All of the flyers are done for different centre and each community forum area has a specific flyer to that area. Many young people say that they do not visit and/or read the Newham website because they do not feel it is there for them. There is currently a development underway which focuses on the use of social media (i.e. Twitter and Facebook). Many young people do not read the local media or local newspapers, therefore there are no advertisements placed there. The young people mostly find out about the various activities and youth centres through their schools and through the word of mouth. In addition, the Young Mayor as well as the Youth Council serve as ambassadors to deliver communications messages and also get young people involved in the Community Forum events. In many instances it is also important to communicate the information with the parents about the possible ways for their children to become involved through a youth centre or participate in other community activities.

Cllr Mahmood questioned the use of other marketing channels, such as advertising for youth activities at cinemas or during football games. Gary Bird informed the Commission that it is difficult sometimes to get permission or advertise in their public forum areas or public notice boards. There have been for example, discussions with Westfield Shopping Centre to put up some advertising there.

Ellen Kemp questioned whether there is an awareness or links with the third sector un-commissioned groups, such as faith centres with youth groups, sports, and others, who are most of the time attracting the majority of the disengaged young people. Kevin Brailey informed the Commission that the CYPS is informed about these groups but that many times it is not easy to get into contact with them. Kevin Brailey also acknowledged the fact that the youth offer marketing has to be done better and that it needs to be clear as to what the Youth Offer in Newham is. In each of the 9 Community Forum Areas, the organisations and their work needs to be communicated and marketed to the community in much more effective ways.

Cllr Scoresby shared her concerns about the youth services targeting 11 to 19 year olds and reputation of youth centres and questioned whether it would be more appropriate for youth centres to be open more frequently on weekends when children do not have as much homework to complete as opposed to during the weekdays when there is more homework given to students. Linzi Roberts-Egan informed the Commission that historically youth services or even youth centres did not have a good reputation. Re-establishing the reputation of the youth centres will be necessary for the future and there are already measures underway that deal with breaking down the stereotypes. Newham now has a more coordinated approach in delivering youth services, which has been developed over time with careful consideration from Councillors, focus groups, youth, parents and the community. Local Service Reviews are very important in challenging historical criticisms around youth services. Many headteachers now also feel enabled and knowledgeable to articulate to their students what the youth offer looks like. Previously and historically there has not been enough liaising work done with the schools and headteachers, but that has now changed. In terms of keeping the centres open during more flexible hours for the youth, it has been a challenge to reframe the terms and conditions of the staff. Youth centres are now open at different times to meet the needs of the community as opposed to meeting the needs of the staff, which was unfortunately the way some of the centres were operated in the past.

Cllr Chowdhury praised the case studies included in the report as well as the report and presentation overall. Cllr Chowdhury also suggested that it might be helpful for Councillors in general to receive information about youth centres and services that are available in their area because then they could pass this information on to the parents.

Cllr Ahmad MBE questioned the frequency of youth engagement and whether any young person can come to the youth centres and use the facilities as well as whether permanent exclusions can take place at the youth centres. Kevin Brailey informed the Commission that it is important for Councillors to raise concerns for the local area and provide suggestions as to what youth services might be needed. If there is a demand from the community for certain type of activities, the Councillors should address the centre with the concerns and suggestions.

Additionally, the Commission has been informed that there are no permanent exclusions from the youth centres, but that there is, however, a formal process in place where a young person cannot attend a centre for a certain period of time because that young person might have done something that requires a sanction. There is a formal process for that, and there needs to be a referral for the Targeted Youth Support, where staff then will try to engage with that person specifically, either by a phone call home or a home visit (then the young person might be encouraged to attend a different centre or engage in a different activity in the community).

Cllr Robinson questioned the move to the new youth offer and what can be learned from the transition to the new offer acknowledging the fact that some of the centres no longer exist and do not have the same activities or staff who was previously there and whom the youth became familiar with. Kevin Brailey informed the Commission that before some of the youth centres closed down, there was a transition period allocated, where new relationships were built. Thanks to this overlap of time, there was no stress felt amongst the youth which attended the centres or the staff who worked there. There is, however, the issue of territoriality many times, especially if young persons then are to attend a different youth centre. The task for CYPS is to break down that territoriality and be able to manage the relationships between staff and new youth centre participants. The important message here is that relationships are key and they are an important factor in engaging the disengaged. It is, however, also necessary to build up and create resilience with young people so that they are not dependent on the youth centre workers. This is many times a difficult task, especially with the youth which is the most vulnerable. There is the need to shift allegiance and become more independent. Linzi Roberts-Egan suggested that honesty has proven very important in making the young people understand the issues at hand (whether a youth centre is closing down, or their favourite youth worker moves).

Cllr Christie questioned the number of staff which are employed at the youth centres. Cllr Christie further questioned the status of Newham against other boroughs in terms of youth centre services as well as the length of contracts for the commissioned organisations. Linzi Roberts-Egan informed the Commission that nationally many Councils decided to cut some statutory services, such as the youth services, whereas the Councillors in Newham made it very clear that Newham would take a different approach. The contracts in Newham are for duration of 1 year and that does pose some problems in terms of continuity. When these organisations will be re-commissioned again, hard data will need to be presented to the Mayor. Overall, there are 55 members of staff. The bulk of the youth centres that are run by the Council are staffed by sessional workers who carry out most of the work. This might be convenient in some ways but in terms of management it was not appropriate and underperformance of the staff was not manageable, therefore there has been an arrangement made to not have sessional workers but instead to have fractional staff (staff employed either 9 hours or 18 hours a week). This change was beneficial in terms of consistency and in training the staff. In terms of comparison, Newham is trying to get itself into a position so it can compare itself to other boroughs (e.g. compare the cost of delivery of services) as it was not able to do that previously. Now, it is known that the cost per engagement is roughly about £26 or £28 and these figures put the CYPS into a position to be able to compare itself to other boroughs. CYPS is trying to put itself into a position where it can answer whether the services provided are good value for money.

Ellen Kemp questioned the ways the NEET young people are reached out to and also suggested that many young people are not always interested in engaging in activities but many times just need a hangout place (e.g. a café, a non-alcoholic pub place, etc.) Kevin Brailey informed the Commission that reaching NEET young people is not an easy task to accomplish. The Commission learned that many times, it is essential that an initial contact is being made and a conversation takes place, because even to accomplish this much is many times difficult and requires constant repetition. The resources are limited and a lot of the data about NEET young people is outdated. Kevin Brailey and Linzi Roberts-Egan noted that a conversation around cafés for young people as well as other opportunities is worth pursuing.

Cllr Mahmood shared his concern about the lack of opportunity for those young people who are interested in trade and manual skills (plumbing, electrical skills, trade skills, etc.) and he also questioned the role of Skillspace at Westfield. Linzi Roberts-Egan informed the Commission that there is a lot of dedication to vocational learning and that talks have now begun with a range of providers to focus primarily on retail skills through Skillspace, construction and semi-

engineering, as well as ICT and media development. Kevin Brailey further informed the Commission that the development of manual labour skills is part of the training offer instead of the youth offer.

The Chair informed the Commission of reasons for disengagement. There are many reasons why young people become disengaged but most of the reasons stem from bullying in school, from the children being overweight, and not fitting in with the rest of the children at school. Speaking with young people directly, the Chair informed the Commission that many times the young people need a “chill out” centre where they can listen to loud music and be able to behave as teenagers (speak and laugh loudly, talk over one another and just be ‘normal’). It is important to identify their needs correctly, because many times these young people will not be able to behave this way at home and therefore they go into the street.

Furthermore, the Chair questioned about the section on Newham website for youth and its launch date as well as questioned the usability of the site for youth if it is to be dedicated to parents and professionals alike. Gary Bird informed the Commission that it is necessary to make the website attractive to young people. Focus groups have been formed to develop an appropriate language for the website that will be more engaging and relatable for the young people.

Steve Wilson questioned whether there is a pressure from the churches to be involved in church activities instead of being involved in the activities that the Council has on offer. Dave Stevens informed the Commission that CYPS is trying to do this through Newham Youth Providers Partnership (there is a link with the voluntary sector in Newham and faith groups) and the offer is being advertised through them. It is also important for the local Community Forum Areas to break down the barriers and make links to the youth centres.

Steve Wilson further questioned whether there is an existing program similar to the autoshop classes which they, for example, offer in the schools in the United States. Linzi Roberts-Egan informed the Commission that there are similar programs in primary schools as well as in the various youth centres.

Cllr McLean questioned the number of persons in each Youth Street Action Team. Dave Stevens informed the Commission that each time the team is out on the street, there needs to be at least 3 persons working (safety issue). Sometimes, the teams are also paired up with the police, in which case then, it is a team of 4. Overall, there are 4 teams with 5 staff on each team which cover the 4 Community Safety Quadrants (these do not match with the Community Forum Areas). Many times, some of these teams come together for specific issues.

The Chair thanked Linzi Roberts-Egan, Kevin Brailey, Dave Stevens and Gary Bird for their contribution and evidence.

February 14th 2012

RACHEL FLOWERS, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH: A PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVE, CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS ON DISENGAGED YOUTH

Pertaining to young people’s health issues and suicide rates, Rachel Flowers informed the Commission that over the last 3 years, nearly 3,000 years of life were lost to suicide, not because Newham has a high number of suicides but mainly due to the age at which people in Newham commit suicide. There are also many complex issues around sexuality.

A key area that should be focused on should also be the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services who work with young people up to age of 18. The model of care becomes the same for everyone aged 18- 65 but it is necessary to figure out an optimal way of how to address the transition better, particularly for the vulnerable children and young adults.

Following the presentation that Rachel Flowers gave to the Commission, the Commission questioned the programmes in place to prevent and reduce the number of youth suicide and their publicity towards the young people in Newham. Rachel Flowers informed the Commission that there are programmes that focus on self-esteem and confidence building but Rachel Flowers will also report back to the Commission the exact programmes which are in place at present.

The Chair questioned whether there are any ways to identify child and youth problems the same way as are identified those in adults. Rachel Flowers informed the Commission that a lot has to deal with observing childrens' and young peoples' behaviour. Rachel Flowers also stressed the importance of working with young people in terms of self-esteem, peer pressure and saying 'no' as well as finding about the experiences of the young people today because they differ from year to year and new issues arise as time moves forward. The issues that were pertinent to an 18 year old ten years ago are not the same as they are to an 18 year today and this is very important to consider.

The Chair also suggested that it is necessary for young people to be encouraged to talk about the issues and problems that they have and identify the associated risk factors. Rachel Flowers suggested that a lot of the problems need to be and should be picked up by health services and there is also the need to ensure that all people have access to the right kind of service.

The Chair additionally questioned the ways of reaching disengaged young people who are disengaged due to health issues. The Chair suggested that one of the ways to reach out to the young people would be through the Young Mayor and the Youth Council. Rachel Flowers informed the Commission that such an approach would have many benefits but that there is a challenge in the fact that the Young Mayor is only elected for a 1 year term. The Young Mayoral term duration poses challenges in that by the time he or she feels settled into the role, it is time for them to move on.

The Chair thanked Rachel Flowers for coming to the meeting and giving evidence.

APPENDIX C: SITE VISITS NOTES

Site Visit #1: Little Ilford School

Details of meeting: 12 January 2012, 5:30 p.m., Little Ilford School, Browning Road, Manor Park, London E12 6ET

ATTENDEES

Councillors Kay Scoresby, Shama Ahmad MBE, Charity Fiberesima and Sharaf Mahmood and Scrutiny Manager Johana Fiserova and Overview and Scrutiny Intern Rachael Davey met with Maddi Austin, the Aim Higher and Destinations Coordinator. The other representatives from Little Ilford School who attended were as follows:

- Mr. Ravinder Bansal (Deputy Headteacher)
- Ms. Annette Henry (Projects, Marketing and Communications Manager)

DISCUSSION

The meeting gave Members of the Commission an opportunity to listen to and question the above stated persons about the Deep Learning Day, which was a program piloted (now in its 2nd year) to build transferable skills the students will need when going into the workplace. The aim of the Deep Learning Day was to prepare students for work experience through helping them to develop some of the soft, transferable skills needed in the world of work as well as to give students an experience of a formal interview which will help to prepare them for work experience interviews and college interviews next year.

Below are notes from the site visit including questions Members posed to the project leaders at the Little Ilford School:

Background and Statistics about Little Ilford School

- The Little Ilford School ethos is to raise expectations and aspirations.
- Learning in school is linked to world of work and done very explicitly.
- Little Ilford School believes in developing independent students, providing them with a 'currency for life' so every student can compete with students around the country for university places and jobs.
- Little Ilford School has 60% of boys and 40% of girls. This is due to higher number of girl's schools in the area.
- 52% of pupils get free school meals
- 96% of pupils come from ethnic minority groups
- For 90% of pupils English is not their 1st language
- 13% come from high social class households
- 2% of pupils were NEET in 2010
- Practises

- RPA, celebrating best practice
- Yr 7 transition coordinator (start visiting in year 4 and 5)
- Creative concept learning (20 hrs in 2 weeks)
- Developing key skills, cross curricular approach
- 2hr, 3hr, 5hr lessons, deep immersive learning (trips)
- Mentoring programme every Wednesday, work with significant adult
- Milestones – **FLIS** (Friends of Little Ilford School) – done to break down barriers for adults and to educate parents on how they can best support their children.
- **DLD** (Deep Learning Day) – immersive learning experience
- The Little Ilford School has a relationship with University Arts London

Deep Learning Day (DLD)

The program has been designed for Yr 10 students (in total 270 students) and it has been developed after, in the previous year, students struggled to secure work experience places because they did not come across well in interviews. The day consisted of a mock interview with one of the volunteers and then groups of students were being judged on a challenge to produce a soft drink with an Olympic theme.

The 25 volunteers for the mock interviews were recruited through an online careers community database and consisted of persons from Local Council, local businesses, and staff from local and city colleges. The volunteers who were chosen to be contacted and invited to participate in the DLD were from career sectors in which the students expressed most interested in.

The Yr 10 students were prepared for the DLD through the school mentoring programme and two weeks before the program occurred the students had interview preparation workshop and were provided with sample questions. The reason why this activity was designed for Yr 10 students was to prepare them for their work experience interviews that same year.

After the mock interviews were conducted, the students were evaluated by the volunteers both verbally and in a written form and were provided with an overall performance score. The interview and evaluation time lasted from 10-15 minutes. The staff praised the students who scored highly and did more in-depth work with students with low scores.

The gifted and talented students were separated from the rest during the DLD Olympic challenge and this received mixed opinion reviews. Many volunteers felt that within a real working environment people would have to work with others of different abilities and therefore that this was not the best approach. Gifted and talented students did generally score highly although a few scored very low. Overall, 78% of the students felt that the day was challenging enough while 29% did not feel that the DLD challenged them as much as it possibly could. The winning group of students was awarded £50 to donate to a charity of their choice and certificates were given to outstanding students.

Other Observations and Discussions from the Site Visit

- The Little Ilford School also has a connection with Brokerage, Barclays and The Hilton group – they arrange visits with them and this is very inspiring for the pupils.
- The Little Ilford School feels that they are very good at working with students with different needs, e.g. language EMA department
 - If a student does not have English as a 1st language the school will work to match work placements with the students needs – may find them a placement with a

relative or in one case the school made an initial contact with the company to explain the situation after concerns were raised by the student's mother. This action resulted in a very good relationship between the student and the company.

- Work experience placements are generated across the borough for all schools by Newham Education Business Partnership (NEBP) and students have to select a number of preferred placements which will then go through a computer selection process to determine which student gets which placement.
 - Only issued enough placements for each student though some end up very unhappy with what they are left with as most students choose the retail jobs.
 - There is a greater need for council involvement as there are too many restrictions (i.e. health and safety, health and risk assessments, etc.)
 - Students are encouraged to find their own placements. 80/270 students did find their own placements last year. Yet, this still remains difficult because of the restrictions and cost involved in changing placement by NEBP. The school is charged £37.50 per student when a health and safety assessment needs to be done.
- School also has good connections with Royal Docks School and Seven Kings School.
- Little Ilford School has good relationships with the community, local shops and others—leads to limited trouble outside of school as the students know that numerous people are watching their actions and are aware of their behaviour.
 - Students are also well managed and contained as the senior staff are visible in and outside school everyday.

Site Visit #2: Peacock Gym

Details of meeting: 19 January 2012, 5:30 p.m., Peacock House, Caxton Street, Canning Town, London E16 1JL

ATTENDEES

Chair of the Commission, Cllr Freda Bourne, Councillors Ellie Robinson, David Christie and Co-opted member Ellen Kemp and Scrutiny Manager Johana Fiserova and Overview and Scrutiny Intern Rachael Davey met with Fred Cuts, the Projects Coordinator and Rob Barnett, the Director of Education. The other representatives from Peacock Gym who attended were as follows:

- Martin Bowers – Peacock Gym Chairman
- Brenda Thornton - Peacock Steering Group Secretary
- Laura Bowers - Performance Co-ordinator
- Danny Steadman - Student Mentor
- Bradley Stone - Student Mentor

- Alf Raper - In charge of bicycle project
- Sharon Grainger - Newham Additional Provision Operational Manager, Employability and Skills, 14-19 Partnership Team

DISCUSSION

The meeting gave Members of the Commission an opportunity to listen to and question the above stated persons about Peacock Gym's programmes that strive to engage the disengaged youth. During the site visit, the members which attended had an opportunity to speak with the young people at Peacock Gym directly as well as tour the facilities. Additionally, the Chair of the Commission briefed the staff at Peacock Gym about the role and purpose of the scrutiny commission as well as provided an overview of the in-depth review into engaging the disengaged.

Below are notes from the site visit including questions Members posed to the staff at Peacock Gym:

Background and Statistics about Peacock Gym

- Peacock Gym is based in Canning Town and has advanced significantly since 1973 when it began in a disused room at the bottom of a local tower block. The initial aim was to keep youngsters occupied and away from vandalism and street crime. Today Peacock Gym promotes their work as striving towards improved health and well-being of local people through the provision of sport and leisure, and through education and training skills. Courses have been designed in education, first aid, health and safety in the workplace and training is available for youth with learning difficulties. Peacock Gym became a registered charity in 1993.
- Peacock Gym works constantly with private and public sectors, including the local police and probation service, and it is run as a social-type enterprise and is privately funded by income generated by use of the gym and entry fees. It also benefits from time to time by small grants which are spent largely on new equipment programmes. The gym timetable includes a wide range of sports including, boxing, yoga, dance and karate. Additionally to this, the gym also benefits from a hair salon and a café.
- Facilities include boxing, wrestling, karate, weight lifting, fitness. Boxing gives the centre its street credibility and brand name. Through sports the young people get the opportunity to work at different skills (i.e. mathematics: by calculating and measuring the radius and diameter of the mats, etc.)
- The gym is managed by Fred Cutts and Rob Barnett; Rob is a former teacher and has been quoted as saying "The education system just doesn't work for these kids", "It's about giving these kids some confidence in themselves again." Along with estimation of 70% of the young people who have come through the academy going back to college or securing a job, it shows this new style of education is successful.
- Peacock Academy is headed by Rob Barnett

Peacock Gym's Work with Disengaged Youth

- The needs are the same now as they were when the gym initially started; the aim is to simply get kids off the streets and therefore out of trouble.
- Peacock Gym has always had the interest in the value of education (in the beginning Peacock Gym used to run a homework club).

- Students are taught functional mathematics and English
 - All students do portfolio work which therefore includes English work; everything is used to incorporate English and Mathematics. Peacock Gym receives a lot of support from Cumberland School – i.e. computer software in order for the students to complete their exams.
 - Many skills are learned through the vocational element,
 - Some students even after 7/8 years cannot read or write, but after 1 year at Peacock Gym they have achieved such level and are mentoring or are at college.
 - Peacock Gym has started doing Sunday sessions; the young people realise after being allowed to do fun activities (such as hip hop dancing, etc.) that they have to do mathematics, English, etc. after and they seek it out themselves without being forced into it. Some Peacock Academy students decided to go back to school (in the last 6 months 4 boys have gone back to school).
- Peacock Gym has 4 main school partners:
 - Lister secondary school (mixed-community school)
 - Langdon secondary school (mixed-community school)
 - The Royal Docks secondary school (mixed-trust school)
 - Cumberland secondary school (mixed-community school)
- For many children, the Peacock Gym provision might be more appropriate and is very well suited to specific students.
 - In addition, it is very cost effective and this fact has been recognised by The Royal Docks and Cumberland School.
- At Peacock Gym, there are no racial issues at all since all young people are taught about respect and no bullying policy. Peacock Gym welcomes young people from all ethnic backgrounds, races and even those who cannot speak English.

Meeting the Young People at Peacock Gym

- The young people do not like when teachers talk down to them; the young people said they are not shown any respect in school. Coming to Peacock Gym has resulted in fewer conflicts at school (when they do have to go in) as well as less conflict at home.
- At Peacock Gym the staff never shows any signs of negativity.

Peacock Academy: “You have to be different in order to make a difference”

- The Peacock Academy was started 5 years ago and came as an addition to the already established Peacock Gym.
- Peacock Gym sees the attendance of 150 young persons per week during the day and even more at evening amateur boxing classes.
- Funding of Peacock Academy: generally it is hard to generate and secure funding.
 - Some funding is provided through lottery.
 - Alternative provision provides some funding, other funding comes through the schools (referrals).

- The peacock brand means a lot within the community and the kids are proud to attend the Academy. The brand works because it attracts the attention of young persons on the edge of exclusion, some of who have not been to school for years but come to Peacock Gym everyday. The young people are absent from school with cause and Peacock Gym works as an alternative education. The young people are drawn in off-the-street by the Peacock Gym's status which has developed over time and carries a powerful brand name.
- All young people attending Peacock Academy are engaged in Maths, English, ICT and extra vocational skills such as hair and beauty, fashion, bicycle repair, music, etc.
- The schools are satisfied as the kids do have a chance to get qualifications at Peacock Gym.
- The young people who first come to Peacock Gym are very unhappy and most of them feel miserable.
- All the young people attending Peacock Gym get one free meal a day and they all eat together at 12:30 p.m.
 - Peacock Gym struggles to get funding for the food.
 - Schools do not pay for meals for all students; Peacock gym loses money feeding all the children (schools do not want to for the meals, even though they receive the Free School Meals allocation).

Discussion raised by Sharon Grainger: Newham Additional Provision Operational Manager, Employability and Skills->14-19 Partnership Team

- Sharon works between schools and providers; she also works with schools to review students who are likely to fall through the net. She feels that schools also need to seriously identify their students who have special needs (the work of the 14-19 Partnership Team is to encourage schools to do more for their pupils).
- 3/15 schools do not sent their pupils to other services.
- Funding of the 14-19 program has been cut this year and with more funding the service could help many more students who struggle in schools.
- Next year, Sharon should be able to identify 190 students who need such special assistance, but she is doubtful that she will be able to have that many signed-up students due to the fact that schools simply won't identify these pupils.
- School exclusions are charged at £6,000 to the school as opposed to the £850 per year for school per student to come onto the program.

Other Observations and Discussions from the Site Visit

- The Chair, Cllr Freda Bourne, praised the good work of the Peacock Academy as well as the fact that there are no games consoles at Peacock Gym.
- Peacock Gym is really not a gym and it would work just fine without a gym.
- Peacock Gym has to have a different approach to education, for the children the journey at Peacock's must be different than their journey in school.
- Education is about relationships, it is about the relationships with the headteachers.

- The funding for Peacock Gym comes from partnerships with schools and also other donations (it is generally working with a very minimal budget).
 - What success means at Peacock Gym is growing out of the gym and getting qualification in class subjects.
 - Peacock Gym's work is about instilling and building confidence into young people (student mentoring also on site).
 - Peacock Gym success stories:
 - The fact that Peacock Gym still functions as it always did.
 - 1,800 rolling membership, local people use the gym and the membership goes back for many generations.
 - 4 to 5 films were filmed at Peacock Gym (good vehicle for publicity).
 - Peacock Gym brand name recognition.
 - 90% attendance rate, this is considered a great success considering the fact that these young people had previously terrible attendance at school.
 - Student mentors.
-

Site Visit #3: Fight for Peace Academy

Details of meeting: 1 February 2012, 5:30 p.m., Fight for Peace Academy, Woodman Street, North Woolwich, London, England, E16 2LS.

ATTENDEES

Chair of the Commission, Cllr Freda Bourne, Councillor Sharaf Mahmood and Co-opted member Paula Daly, Scrutiny Manager Johana Fiserova and Overview and Scrutiny Intern Rachael Davey met with Emma McGuigan, Institutional Relations Manager and Marigold Ride, Project Manager.

The other representatives from Fight for Peace who attended were a selection of members of the Youth Council.

DISCUSSION

The meeting gave Members of the Commission an opportunity to listen to and question the above stated persons about Fight for Peace Academy's programmes that strive to engage the disengaged youth. During the site visit, the members which attended had an opportunity to speak with the young people from the Youth Council directly as well as tour the facilities. They were also shown a short video which describes the history of the project in both areas. Additionally, the Chair of the Commission briefed the staff at Fight for Peace about the role and purpose of the scrutiny commission as well as provided an overview of the in-depth review into engaging the disengaged.

Below are notes from the site visit including questions Members posed to the staff at Fight for Peace Academy.

Background and Statistics about Fight for Peace

- Fight for Peace Academy is based in North Woolwich, although it was founded in Rio de Janeiro by Luke Dowdney a former English amateur boxer in a complex of favelas. It was set up to help young people use sport to fulfil their potential in an area with high levels of poverty, exclusion and a lack of social services.
- Since its establishment in 2000, Fight for Peace has developed a prevention and rehabilitation model to confront the problem of child and youth participation in crime,

gangs and gun violence within disadvantaged communities. This strategy is based on the 'Five Pillars' model. Fight for Peace was set up in London in 2007.

- The 'Five Pillars' Model is made up of:
 - Boxing and Martial Arts training and competition
 - Personal development and education
 - Youth Support Services (mentoring and case work)
 - Job training and work access
 - Youth Leadership
- Fight for Peace facilities are open to both sexes aged 11-25 who are interested in participating, regardless of their ability level.
- Fight for Peace advertise their service in colleges, universities, hostels, through YOT, showcasing, street outreach, Facebook and through twilight sessions. In terms of the Twilight programmes, Fight for Peace works in partnership with local schools and other education providers to develop tailor made programmes geared towards prevention for junior aged participants combining sport and personal development. This service is free of charge on the condition that the child's school will provide the transport for the young people.
- Fight for Peace is a registered charity and therefore most of their funding is provided through grants (lottery), trust foundations and for example, through credit Suisse. Additionally to this, they have set up with private investors a brand called Luta which makes sports clothing and from this they receive 50% of the profits. Their plan for funding in the long term is through the training workshops they have begun to provide. It consists of a 10 day training session in Rio de Janeiro followed by 6 months of remote support after which the organisation will become part of the Fight for Peace Alumni. Last year they trained 17 organisations from across the world.

Fight For Peace Academy's Work with Disengaged Youth

- Fight for Peace has a Youth Council made up on 20 young people across a wide age range. They are able to stay in the Youth Council for up to 2 years and the 2nd year members mentor the 1st year members. The council meets every 2 weeks and there are currently 17 council members aged 13-22. They become very good role models for the rest of the academy and also are involved in meeting with funders. Last year they went to Brazil to build links with the Fight for Peace Academy there. The Youth Council receive Youth Leadership Award accreditation.
- Pathways education is targeted at NEET young people. Student come onto the Pathways education course through referrals, YOT and outreach. They do one module in level 1 and have the option of a second module of level 2 which involves a higher level of numeracy and literacy and YMCA gym instructor course. The students do a sport alongside their personal development, in level 1 they do boxing and in level 2 they do Muay Thai.
- Before the programme starts the students have a 3 week preparation programme where they get to know each other, the academy, the staff, ethos and the values so that they are ready to learn together by week one.

- The students are supported all the way through, they have 1:1 meetings with staff where they can discuss any issues they may have with their education or at home, they also have career guidance, signposting to jobs, CV writing tips and interview techniques.

Councillor Freda Bourne asked if going to Fight for Peace has changed their behaviour and relationships at home and at school.

- One young boy said that going to Fight for Peace had turned his life around, he now has a better relationship with his family and his behaviour at school is much better as well. He said he will not stop coming.
- Another young girl said that being at Fight for Peace has taught her to respect adults whereas she didn't have much respect for them before.

Discussion raised by Paula Daly as to any similar projects they are aware of or any competitors.

- They have a relationship with Peacock Gym, they hold events for the amateur boxers and the young people have a chance to mix.
- They have the same funder as a project called Active Communities, however, they do not do any boxing there. They do mix with the other project and put on training workshops for them.
- In Tottenham there is a similar centre, however, it is only for young people who have been excluded from their schools, therefore differs from Fight for Peace as it does not cater for the whole community. They still do use the combination of boxing and education. Also the funding is different as the money a school would receive for having that pupil is simply passed over to the project; therefore it is technically not a free service.

Other observations and discussions from the visit

- The young people at the academy were very enthusiastic and praised the project very highly.
- Some of the young people who have been through the course or reached the maximum age have chosen to come back and volunteer rather than leave Fight for Peace, one young man described the centre as addictive and like his second home.
- The students expressed how they like learning boxing and martial arts as 'it teaches you without you realising; discipline, respect, control.'

Site Visit #4: Education Links

Details of meeting: 2 February 2012, 9:30 a.m., The New Canteen, 195 Vicarage Lane Stratford London E15 4HJ

ATTENDEES

Chair of the Commission, Cllr Freda Bourne, Councillor Ellie Robinson, and Co-opted member Ellen Kemp and Scrutiny Manager Johana Fiserova met with Sandy Davies, the Principal of Education Links and Mark Steer, the Future Links Project Manager. The other senior staff from Education Links who attended were as follows:

- Student Services Manager – Gary Partridge

- School Finance and Administration Manager – Paul Smith
- Student and Staff Development Manager – Sophie Groenvynck

DISCUSSION

The meeting gave Members of the Commission an opportunity to listen to and question the above stated persons about Education Links as well as Future Links and their programs as well as curriculum that strives to engage the disengaged youth. During the site visit, the members which attended had an opportunity to speak with the young people attending Education Links as well as visit some of the classes which were taking place that day. Additionally, the Chair of the Commission briefed Sandy Davies and Mark Steer about the role and purpose of the scrutiny commission as well as provided an overview of the in-depth review into engaging the disengaged.

Below are notes from the site visit including questions Members posed to the staff at Education Links and to Mark Steer from Future Links:

Background and Statistics about Education Links

- Education Links is an independent school which runs within the wider charitable Community Links organisation. The school is based over 5 sites across Newham (will soon start in their 6th site), with the main site being in Stratford. Education Links provides schooling for students who have not got on well at a mainstream education, some of which who have been excluded. Students are referred from either local authorities or schools to Education Links. At present Education Links has 68 students but the capacity is up to 150 students.
- Education Links works to educate students and also to care for their emotional, intellectual and social needs. They provide a structured timetable and curriculum, whilst ensuring that there is the flexibility to cater to individual needs. All of the students have the opportunity to leave with some form of accreditation; appropriate to their academic ability. Other elements of the provision are aimed specifically at their personal development, but the ethos of the school is to support students to overcome the difficulties that have brought them to Education Links, and remove the barriers to their learning.
- Funding is provided through the local authorities and schools which refer the students to Education Links, further funding is then gained through grants and corporate sponsors. The corporate sponsors support Education Links both financially as well as in development activities for the students. For example, UBS fund the staff training and the funding for the wages of some staff; as well as they also run mock interview days for the students in their Canary Wharf offices.
- The qualifications which are available at Education Links vary to meet the variety of abilities of the students they have. Students are able to gain functional learning qualifications in English, Mathematics and ICT. They are also able to gain their GCSE qualifications in English, English Literature, Mathematics, Science and Additional Science. Education Links also offer Level 1 courses in Music Technology and Performance Arts.
- Education Links had their first Ofsted inspection in May of 2011 and received a 'Good' rating which is a strong indication of their hard work.

Background and Statistics about Future Links

- Future Links was formed in September 2009 through funding from the corporate supporter BNY Mellon.
- The aim of the Future Links project is to identify, target and support young people aged between 16-18 yrs who live in Newham and are not in education, employment or training – otherwise known as NEET. This has been achieved through the development of a 10 week course which Future Links delivers three times a week and on three separate occasions through out the year.
- The project has engaged and supported over 50 young people throughout 2010 and is designed to provide its participants with the support, motivation and necessary skills, including work-related accreditations that will help them to find suitable and positive destinations as they make the transition in to adulthood.

Education Links Work with Disengaged Youth

- Additionally to their in-class academic teaching, Education Links have also provided further opportunities to their students. In 2010-2011 alone they worked with their sponsors to have a Team Building Activity day at Outdoors in the City with UBS, visits to Bank of New York Mellon and Morgan Stanley for International Women's Day, media project at the Museum of Docklands 'London Calling', a gardening day with Bank of New York Mellon at East Ham Nature Reserve, a drama workshop at the Old Vic Theatre and a Presentation by the Only Connect Theatre Company to raise awareness of issues around violence and crime.
- Other events Education Links hold include: International Day, celebrating diverse community Health Day, a Sports Day which was supported in 2010 by an award from the Jack Petchey Foundation, a dance and drama presentations drawing students from several groups and performing for the whole school and including the parents.
- As Education Links works within Community Links it means that they are able to benefit from the use of the other Community Links services and provide wider opportunities to students, examples include: Sports at Outdoors In the City, an adventure and climbing centre in the heart of Newham, vocational courses at Peacock Gym, short-term projects locally and in central London, workshops in interview techniques and CV writing, transition to Future Links or the Education and Employment support within Community Links.

Meeting the Young People at Education Links

- The young people at Education Links had a very positive reaction to the Commission coming in for a visit. The young people were happy to share personal stories and were interested in engaging with the Members. Many of the young people were willing to share their reasons for their disengagement and a majority has expressed their satisfaction with Education Links.

Other Observations and Discussions from the Site Visit

- It is very important that the parents of the students play a vital role in the student's education and that they are well aware of their child's accomplishments. Education Links does a very good job in letting parents know the success their child has had at school by calling the parents personally and letting them know of the positive progress their child has made. For some parents, this is the first time, they are hearing something positive in a while (instead of negative feedback about the child's behaviour) and it has proven to make a difference.
- More empathy for children and young people needs to be installed within our society and a wider understanding of the community's needs to be created and fostered. In the past,

Education Links would engage in a program where the young people would visit the elderly or other residents of the Community and engage in discussions to create mutual understanding.

- It is important to not underestimate or fail to recognise the disengaged young people who usually have good academic record at school, but still show bad behaviour and disengagement in school.
- Postcode issues and the reluctance to attend activities and programmes which are located at postcodes outside of one's own postcode are a constant struggle.
- Independent school framework from Ofsted is different than mainstream school; for example, independent schools are not assessed on leadership.
- Many corporate sponsors and especially banks are impressed with the fact that Education Links is an independent school within a charity (Community Links).
- A lot of the work at Education Links is also centred on creating partnerships with other organisations which offer other services in which the students might be interested in (i.e. Education Links sends one of its students to Peacock Gym).
- Marketing techniques for Education Links: Facebook page, Twitter as well as a separate website from Community Links will be launched soon.
- Marketing techniques for Future Links: Facebook page- it is a way to track students who go through the program and it also tries to connect them to students who are in the program currently.
- In Future Links it is important for students to visit and see the way the corporate world functions and it is important to let the students know that their future can also be that they have a corporate job and that they can actually achieve that. Many of the children believe such life goals are unattainable.
- At Education Links, corporate sponsorship makes up 13% of the funding.
- Future Links programme has been successful because it helps the young persons' personal development.
- Increasingly it has been harder to find apprenticeships for young people and with the increase of youth unemployment; there are not any projections for the number of available apprenticeships to increase.

APPENDIX D: NOTES FROM MEETINGS WITH CEZ JAMES AND ABRAHAM MALE

Notes from meeting with Cez James: Service Manager - Professional Development and Quality Improvement, Cllr Freda Bourne: Chair of the Children and Young People and Scrutiny Commission, and Johana Fiserova: Scrutiny Manager

The following is a summary from the Chair's meeting with Cez James, Service Manager - Professional Development and Quality Improvement.

- Since October, CYPS has been developing a marketing strategy with the Communications Team
- Historically, CYPS marketing services have been well managed but in order to be successful in the future and keep alongside new media developments, marketing will need to be boosted by employing new and current media trends and technologies
- The Council website which is to feature the Newham Youth Offer and which is currently under development has been prepared in conjunction and consultation with young people of Newham
- There is a need in Newham for greater sharing of information about services and activities available for young people
- It is necessary to establish a launch date for the website as the hard copy marketing materials already advertise the website as a central point and conduit for information about the Newham Youth Offer.
- There is a strong value in incorporating the use of popular social media sites, such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.
- The website needs to and will embody three main functions
 - It will be a multifunctional space for the young people of Newham
 - It will be a space for parents to receive information
 - It will be a space for practitioners who want to share good practice

Notes from meeting with Abraham Male: Young Mayor 2011-2012, Dominic Mundy: Youth Representation Officer, Cllr Freda Bourne: Chair of the Children and Young People and Scrutiny Commission, and Johana Fiserova: Scrutiny Manager

The following is a summary from the Chair's meeting with Abraham Male, Young Mayor of Newham 2011-2012.

- The Young Mayor believed that some of the main reasons for youth disengagement in Newham included the misunderstandings between students and teachers in schools. One of the ways that such misunderstandings could be alleviated would be to install confidence in the young people by being able to connect with role models their own age, by making Newham a safe place, by enabling young people in participating in creative projects.
- The Young Mayor informed the Chair that one of best ways to provide more information to young people would be through creative mediums. Some of these would include school assemblies, through the use of PowerPoint presentations, through the use of social media sites (such as Facebook) and an informative website that even parents could visit to see what their children can participate in at the variety of the activities that Newham has to offer.
- The Young Mayor shared with the Chair that the following programs and activities are appealing and interesting to the young people and keep them from being disengaged: creative writing, poetry, drama, acting, playing music, debating, and photography. He also

stressed the fact that not all young people enjoy participating in a sport and therefore he suggested that Newham should also focus more on offering more creative projects for young people to become involved in. The Young Mayor acknowledged the fact that sport was advertised more than other activities on offer in Newham.

- In order to keep young people prepared and ready to apply for work placements as well as jobs, the Young Mayor saw it as important for schools to provide an enjoyable way to learn the necessary skills for success. The Young Mayor suggested that role playing sessions with other students, similar to mock interviews, would be a good way to engage the students and to teach them interview techniques. He also felt that more creative ways of advising and guiding the students were needed in order to ensure successful interviews as well as presentable CVs.
- The Young Mayor saw it as important for young people to be able to communicate with the Council and with the Youth Council through Facebook and Twitter as these are widely recognised mediums for young people.

APPENDIX E: BRUNEL UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S REPORT

Some of the evidence we have gathered in support of the recommendations we have made in this report have come from a student intern who is studying Social Anthropology. It is for this reason, and in order to ensure correct ethical practice as well as anonymity of informants, that we have decided to use an ethnographic methodology and style of analysis. By this we mean focusing on the fundamental principles shown, reporting on more general observations, and only using snippets of the young people's life histories. For the purpose of anonymity, we have avoided individual case studies and discussion of specific locations or group names.

This document focuses primarily on three key questions:

- Why were the young people disengaged?
- Why and how did they become engaged?
- What has made them stay engaged?

After researching numerous youth services in Newham, it has been apparent that there is an enormous range of reasons as to why young people become disengaged. A 'disengaged' youth is not a term however that a young person would ever use to describe themselves; it seems that it is not until a young person has become engaged within a project that they are able to reflect and see that they were disengaged. This appears to be the reason that a common response, as to why a young person was disengaged may be something similar to, *"I don't know- its boring round here and there is nothing to do"*. Once a young person has been able to accept how they were behaving previously, it is then that through discussions with others they begin to assess the factors in their lifestyle which were leading them in that particular direction or to have a change in opinion about what they value and want from their lives. Through observations within the organisations, it seems that such a change can be drawn from having new role models in their lives. This therefore shows the significance of the issue of development of geographic concentrations of unemployment, as young people are in some cases around numerous adults who are unemployed and/or do not see a value in education, this may then influence the young person's work ethic in school. Many young people when in discussions would immediately place the blame for their disengagement on their school (i.e. bad teaching and *"pointless subjects"*). The thought that basic Mathematics, English and Science qualifications were pointless unless *"you want to become and Mathematician, English teacher or Scientist"* appears to have become very common. This thought is then enhanced further by the opinion by some that an education in general is pointless as it is possible to *"survive just fine without a job"* and the understanding that it is sometimes the case that one can end up in a worse financial situation by having a low paid job than by receiving full government support.

It is possible then to understand how young people can become disengaged as they are entering school with a negative mentality which has been reflected through the opinions of their parents/guardians and peers. In addition to these, further problems with a young person's education seems to emerge in response to it being a regular occurrence for parents to support their child, rather than the staff within a school who are trying to discipline them. Each of these factors lead to young people viewing teachers negatively and as someone who does not deserve their respect. A similar opinion seems to be felt towards the Police as well, again leading to groups of young people being influenced by the opinions of the adults they are around and then influencing other young people in the process. Young people in Newham seem to unite over a shared grievance with the police and other people who are seen to hold a position of control within society such as social workers, teachers and the council. The main emphasis is placed on the police however, as it is felt they simply do not understand young people and do not show them any respect yet have a large amount of power over the way they live their lives. The young people made regular reference to the police in a negative manner; one young person described the Police as *"the biggest gang out there"* and others often explained how the Police

do not understand what it is like to live in certain areas of East London. It is believed by some that the Police Officers are always wealthy and therefore cannot understand why some young people steal, as they have never experienced what it is like to not be able to buy what one may need. It became apparent through discussion that for some young people, they feel they can often justify criminal behaviour by their reasoning for doing it. Additionally some of the young people do not trust people who they would consider to be in authority, in the same way that many of them feel the Police do not trust them just because they are young. This lack of trust from anyone who is thought to sit higher in the hierarchy of society has been demonstrated by the suspicious approach to this research which was found. All discussion varied initially due to the circumstances and who was present at the time. When working with disengaged young people it has been shown to be essential to be able to prove both ones motivation and also reliability, as trust is not immediately granted.

Another reason why young people in Newham appear to have become disengaged, especially with regard to young people getting in trouble at school, is not being suited to a school environment or being able to complete academic work. For a child who is struggling in school academically and not receiving the additional support they require, it appears that one of the easiest ways to avoid the embarrassment of admitting to struggling is to be disruptive in class. This behaviour can then continue for many years in a mainstream school as each time a child will be asked to leave the classroom, and as a result not have to participate in the work that they felt they could not do. For a young person then, bad behaviour can be the simplest route to not having to complete work. Continuous bad behaviour can in some cases lead to exclusion and therefore again provide the young person with the result they wanted; time away from school. Some discussions with various young people in the different projects visits have expressed the problems with excluding young people in this way. By allowing young people who have been badly behaved to have time away from school (in many instances their parents will not enforce that they stay at home), it is a prime opportunity for them to get involved with other young people who are not at school or be picked up by gang leaders whereby they are incorporated into further trouble. Common activities for disengaged young people in Newham from the research conducted included drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and cannabis, staying out late, getting up to mischief and generally hanging about on the streets. This sort of behaviour is apparent in people as young as 13 years.

The research also gave light to reasons why the young people at these services became engaged and more importantly what these services are doing that keeps them engaged in the project. For services which are offering an alternative to mainstream education common reasons for becoming engaged include being offered a part time school timetable and part time timetable at the specific youth service. Also for young people under the age of 16 who are at risk of or have been expelled from mainstream education, becoming engaged was due to the legal requirement to be registered at a school. Further reasons for engagement stemmed from the opinion of a higher value being placed on practical tasks and practical learning for those who struggled with academia and also for those who for a number of reasons had missed a significant amount of schooling and were therefore not expecting to pass their GCSE's. As a result it appears to be a common alternative to gain qualifications through functional learning, whereby students are able to learn key skills (Mathematics, English, Science, Work Skills) through doing other more appealing activities or ones they can see a direct career path from. In other words the teaching of the essential skills needed for the qualifications are integrated into non-academic activities which the students are willing to participate in as it does not feel like school work; and the practical element means they are not required to sit and work for any length of time, reducing disruptions. In addition, as the students can see the skills being used in daily life it counteracts their previous thoughts that Mathematics, for example, is only useful if a young person wants to be a Mathematician. It appears to enforce the need to learn such skills to get by in life and as such the value is increased in the minds of the young people. Unfortunately

however, once the young people leave such specialist services and go onto further education or employment and are required to complete work which they cannot see a direct purpose for, it seems to frequently lead to the young people quitting. It appears that many of the young people are unable to appreciate the long term gain they could have from completing short term activities.

In the same way that these projects use the latest products and activities that the young people enjoy as part of their education it seems necessary to do the same when advertising and promoting the organisation to other young people. Social media sites are used on a regular basis by the majority of young people and often on mobile phones; they reflect the desire by the young people to have everything now and have instantly available. This then means that sites need to be designed in a way to deliver instantaneous results and information and also be available on multiple devices. It appears that Blackberry's are the most used phone amongst the young people in this area; the free Blackberry Messenger service is very popular especially as it is seen to be something which is designed for young people and which is private. The young people are very aware that the police are not able to track Blackberry Messenger (BBM) conversations also and therefore it has become the central point of communication for young people in the borough.

During research, a key trend emerged in that youth services-which are highly successful and which are also attracting large numbers of young people-either offer Boxing and/or Martial Arts or work in connection with a project which does. Young people are attracted to services because of these sports as they are regarded with a high status in the community, and the combination with education seems to be working very well in Newham. The Boxing and Martial Arts training, which has been witnessed firsthand through conducting this research, has displayed these sports as requiring a great deal of skill, discipline, determination and respect rather than simply violence as may be commonly perceived in the media or in society generally. The students show great respect for each other and for their coaches in the ring and the focus is very much on learning skills rather than strength or any malice.

It appears that Boxing and Martial Arts is what draws the young people to such organisations and also why they then remain engaged as they can see the skills they are learning (e.g. control, self discipline and motivation), and appreciate how they will help them in life. Additionally to the functional skills they are learning, the Boxing and Martial Arts training seems to make young people feel safer and able to protect themselves on the streets. Research has found frequent reference to the fear of being in the area, especially in terms of fearing gangs and the issues of territory and postcode wars. Young people in Newham seem to be very aware of the potential danger they could be in by being in the wrong area or on the wrong street. This fear is significant enough to influence the young people on a daily basis and the way they conduct their lives. It has been shown specifically in multi-sited organisations whereby staffs sometimes have to plan timetables around where the students feel safe to go, rather than which site best suits their needs. Additionally, the restrictions young people feel can often impact their future career plans both in seeking employment or training and in where they can work. Our research has shown occasions whereby a student cannot attend a careers fair, open day or advice day for example, as by crossing into a different area they may be putting both themselves and the rest of their group in danger if they are seen. Furthermore, the fear goes beyond being harmed due to being in the wrong area, to young people fearing being made to harm others in order to be seen to be protecting their own area. It appears in many instances, the younger members of the gangs fear the pressure from the older members to commit crimes in order to defend their area or other member or the gang. Young people also feel compelled to commit such crimes in order to increase their reputation, some young people expressed that this can go as far as wanting to get caught for a petty crime just so they can say they have been put on tag or have been to prison. It also seems that a whole selection of slang language has come about as part of this territorial

gang culture, for example the different levels of the hierarchy consist of the 'olders' and the 'youngers'; the 'olders' are not just older in age but also tend to have a higher 'rep' in the community whether this is because they have been in the 'bin' or because they carry a 'strap'.⁷⁷

Such organisations enable the young people to feel part of something and to be part of a united group just as they would be in a gang. Although many of the young people fear the gangs which are present in the borough or have left one of them; these organisations seem to fulfil a similar role and desire, whether it may be feeling safe, having a leader or feeling loved and cared for. This unity can come in many ways whether through sharing a common interest, through eating together every day or by having branded T-shirts. For others the organisations seem to fulfil the role of a second home or family; research has shown that parents, teachers and authoritative figures in general within the community are no longer seen as role models by many young people. Instead it is the likes of older siblings, gang leaders, celebrities who the young people look up to. Except for the young people involved in these services, it is the staff and peer mentors who become their positive role models and at the same time many take on the role of surrogate parents and councillors too. For young people in Newham who perhaps have broken homes or unstable backgrounds such services provide the support and protection these young people need in many ways. It seems in many cases as well as helping the young people gain recognised qualifications they are also able to provide enough additional support to stop them finding that protection elsewhere in the form of gangs.

In terms of the methods and explanation, as to the practices these particular services operate that keeps previously disengaged youth engaged, are generally bound around issues of respect. The young people who attend such services make continuous reference to problems of respect; this is both respect from adults towards themselves and also a common topic as to why they argue with adults as they are told they do not show enough respect to their elders. It is for this reason that the key factor for keeping the young people engaged is by having an environment whereby mutual respect is insisted upon and whereby both adult and young people, staff and students are treated as equally as possible. Additionally, as demonstrated by the Peacock Gym Academy slogan "*it is the difference which makes the difference*", being unlike a school is very important, for many students being in smaller groups, not being shouted out, not having to sit for long periods of time and being treated as an individual are all factors which contribute to them wanting to attend each day which they did not do in mainstream school. These organisations also often seem to have the additional service of having simply "*someone to listen whenever you need them*". Whether through the use of organised 1:1 meeting sessions with a member of staff or a counsellor, peer/student mentors or just the knowledge that there will always be someone who is able to make time to listen to their problems, makes a significant difference as the young people's needs are met on an individual basis both in terms of educational needs and needs in their personal lives. The young people explained that it is very comforting going to the organisation and feeling like they are treated as an individual, that there are people their who are always willing to help them and that it is accepted that they may have external problems. However within schools they felt like a number, just another naughty child that the school would rather not have that day. Through discussions with many of the young people, it has been made apparent that much of the disengagement or bad behaviour stopped as a result of solving other problems in their personal lives. Overall, these organisations all allow young people to be treated as an adult, to be part of a group but also to be cared for on an individual basis.

⁷⁷ Collection of slang terms used by the young people when discussing gang culture.

'Olders/Elders' – older members/higher reputation, 'youngers' – younger members/lower reputation, 'rep' – reputation, 'endz' – area they are from, 'bin' – prison, 'feds' – police, 'strap' – gun, 'piff' – good/complimentary, 'touch road' – spend time on the streets, 'ride out' – retaliate, 'bare' – a lot, 'rolling together' – hanging out, 'banged' – shot, 'pagan' – offensive term/from the rival gang, 'benis' – Cannabis, 'slippin' – not being careful or off-guard.

Furthermore by having a relaxed atmosphere between staff and students, as demonstrated by the use of Christian names and the openness around details of their personal lives, it breaks down the barriers the young people tend to put up, removes the feeling of hierarchy and also *'makes the staff seem more human'*. As well as this, having somewhere in which the young people are able to 'hang out' as well as learn is very important. Research has shown that throughout Newham 'chicken shops' are the places that people go in the evenings if they do not stay late at an organisation. Young people are spending large amounts of time congregating in these takeaway stores as they feel they have nowhere else to go. These shops are very popular amongst young people as they are not chain stores; they tend to be considerably cheaper than other fast food retailers and also tend to be open later into the evening. Additionally, the young people like that the shop workers do not try and control their behaviour or act in an authority; they are free to do what they want. Many of these youth organisations researched are open to the public in the evenings which means that the young people are able to 'hang out' with their friends within the safety of the establishment rather than on the street or in a 'chicken shop'. It may be thought that this also helps with the young people associating the organisations as a positive and social place rather than simply somewhere they have to go to partake in education.

In sum, when analysing the key components of producing and maintaining a successful youth engagement project it would appear that the following are essential:

- Flexibility in timetabling.
- Using practical, meaningful and useful tasks.
- Having things progress rapidly to keep concentration.
- Offering an activity or having a name which carries a high status.
- Having staff/mentors that have the time and compassion to listen, care and help.
- Treating the young people as adults and having mutual respect insisted
- Working to remove the organisation from a school like environment and set up.
- Being somewhere very informal and unstructured.
- Having an area where young people are able to 'hang out' outside of activities.

The Newham Mag

September 2011

Canning Town
Thursday 4-6pm
Custom House
Thursday 4-6pm
East Ham
Monday 4-6pm
The Gate
Tuesday 4-6pm
Green Street
Tuesday 4-6pm
Manor Park
Thursday 4-6pm
North Woolwich
Monday 3.30-5.30pm
Plaistow Thursday 4-6pm
Stratford Monday 4-6pm
Games Clubs - Sony PS3 or Xbox 360 and Nintendo Wii games, board games and many more free activities for eight to 13-year-olds.
Custom House
Tuesday 3.30 to 5.30pm
East Ham
Tuesday 3.30-5.30pm
Manor Park Monday 3.30-5.30pm
Stratford Playerz - Free activities for young people aged 12 and over.
Stratford Thursday 6 October 4pm-6pm
Teen Xtra Evenings - Free activities for ages 12-21.
The Gate Thursday 6-8pm

EAST LONDON LIBRARIES FESTIVAL

Monday 3 October
We Love Chick-Lit
Writers Panel
Some of the most popular Chick-Lit writers join together



to discuss their love of the genre. Award-winning Jean Fullerton chairs and the panel includes Sue Moorcroft, Sue Norton and Kate Lacey.
Admission: Free
Time: 6.30pm-8pm

Thursday 6 October
Tyger! Tyger! Poetry with Anna Robinson
Celebrate National Poetry Day with a playful look at the poetry of William Blake. Ages 8-12.
Admission: Free. Time: 4pm-5.30pm

Venue: East Ham Library
Enquiries: 020 3373 0827

LIBRARY CONTACTS

Beckton Globe 1 Kingsford Way, E6 5JQ. 020 3373 0653
Custom House Prince Regent Lane, E16 3JJ. 020 3373 0855
East Ham High Street South, E6 6EL. 020 3373 0627
The Gate 4-20 Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, E7 0QH. 020 3373 0856
Green Street 337-341 Green Street, E13 9AR. 020 3373 0857
Manor Park Romford Road, E12 5JY. 020 3373 0658
North Woolwich 5 Pier Parade, E16 2LJ. 020 3373 0843
Plaistow North Street, E13 9HL. 020 3373 0859
Stratford 3 The Grove, E15 1EL. 020 3373 0826
Archives and Local Studies 020 3373 6881
Community Outreach Services For more information call 020 3373 0813

SPORTS PROGRAMME

Basketball
Newham NSP (free)
- Basketball coaching, 8-19
Mon, 7.30-9pm
Little Wford Youth Centre, E12
- Basketball Competition, 8-19
Tues, 6-7.30pm
Lister School (Sports Hall), E13

- 3 vs 3 league, 8-19
Thurs, 5-7pm
Forest Gate Youth Centre, E7

Youngbloods Basketball
- Under-12s, mixed
Saturdays, East Ham Leisure Centre
1-3pm
- Under-13/14s, boys
Mondays, 6-8pm, St Angela's School
Tuesdays, 5.30-7.30pm
Newham Leisure Centre
- Under-14s, girls
Mondays, 4.30-6pm, St Angela's School
Tuesdays, 5.30-7.30pm, Newham Leisure Centre
- Under-15/16, boys
Tuesdays, 6-8pm, East Ham Leisure Centre
Fridays, 6-8pm, St Angela's School
- Under-17/18 boys
Tuesdays, 8-9.45pm, East Ham Leisure Centre
Thursdays, 7-9pm, St Bonaventure's School
Fridays, 6-8pm, St Angela's School
Each session costs £1. Contact Caroline on 07958 307 657 for more details.

Football
Newham NSP (free)
Five-a-side
- U14 & U18
Mon, 6.30-8.30pm
Newham Leisure Centre, E13
- 11-18
Wed, 5-8pm
Priory Park MUGA, E6
- 8-19
Wed, 5-6.30pm
Kair Hardie Park, E16
- Five-a-side, 8-19
Fri, 6-7.30pm
Scud Park, Tant Avenue, Canning Town, E16.
- Mayor's Football League, U14, U18,
Thurs, 4-5pm
Memorial Park
- Coaching and competition,
8-19,
Sun, 1-2pm
Winsor Park, E8

WHU Kickz (free)
Mon
- U14, 4-5.30pm
- 15+, 5.30-7.00pm
West Ham Community A Turf (Beckton)
- 11-18, 5-8pm
Forest Gate Youth Centre
Tues
- U14, 4-5.30pm
- 15+, 5.30-7pm
West Ham Community A Turf (Beckton)
- 11-18, 6-9pm
Priory Park MUGA, E6
Wed
- 11-18, 5-8pm
Priory Park MUGA, E6
Thurs
- 11-18, 4-7pm
Priory Park MUGA, E6
Fri
- U14, 4-5.30pm
- Girls 11+, 5.30-7pm
West Ham Community A Turf (Beckton)
- 11-18, 5-8pm
Forest Gate Youth Centre

Air Football 16+
Tues
1-3pm, Stratford Park, E
Fri
3-5pm, Beckton Powerfa
For more info visit
www.airfootball.co.uk

Ascension Football Academy
For info call Beryl Callison
020 7511 1232.



School years R-3: 9.30-10.30am
School years 4-7: 10.45-11.45am
School years 8-11: 12noon-1.30pm
All sessions £2.50
King George V Park, E16

Basketball
Newham All Star Sports Academy (NASSA) Junior programme
Gifted & Talented
8-11yrs boys/girls
Cumberland school, Oban close, E13
Fridays, 4.15pm-5.30pm
U13/14, Thursdays 4.30-6.30pm and Saturdays 10am-12.30pm
U15, Thursdays 5.30pm-7.30pm, Newham Leisure Centre, 281 Prince Regent Lane, E13
U16/18, Monday 5.30-7.30pm
Rokeby School, Canning Town E16 4DD

Senior Men/Women Programme
Division 2 Women and Division 3/4 Men
Monday 7.30-9.30pm
Rokeby School, Barking Rd, E16
For details contact coach Chris on 07703 503 995
or Coach Aurimas on 07712 176 301

Handball (free)
- Newham Flames, Tues
U15, 3.30-5pm
U18, 5.30-8.30pm
Newham Leisure Centre, E13
(Multi-Sports Hub)
Call Ari Bekker on

Multi sports (free)
- Handball, football, competition
5-7pm, Stratford Park, E12
- Coaching and competition
4-5.30pm, 8-19
Fri, St John's Community Centre, Albert Rd, E16

Athletics at Newham Leisure Centre
- Get Set Go Group, 11-16
Mon, 4-5.30pm, E1
- Met Track 10-17
Fri, 4.30-6pm
- Newham and Essex Beagles Athletics Club, 10+
Mon and Wed, 6.30-8pm;
Sun, 10am-1pm
Email jacqueline.napier@btinternet.com

Cricket
- Tapeball cricket league (free)
11-15, 16+, 6-9pm
Kingsford Astro Turf
- Newham Cricket Club
Monday 5-7pm
8-16, £2 per session
Flanders field, Napier Road, E6
Visit www.newham.gov.uk for information.

Boxing
West Ham ABC - community boxing, 11-19 years
FREE Olympic style amateur boxing sessions. Improve your fitness and make new friends in a safe friendly non-contact environment.
Hathaway Community Centre
Hathaway Crescent, E12

Dare 2 Dance
Free street dance classes for girls aged 14-24 including break dance, krump, waacking and popping.
Newham Leisure Centre (New Indoor Multi Sports Centre), 281 Prince Regent Lane, E13
Friday 3.30-5.30pm (3.30-4.30pm Open Technique Class, 4.30-5.30pm Choreography Class)
For more information contact Nicole on 07970 783 526 or email nicole.napier@newham.gov.uk

Newham Striders
Free, sociable walking group that go striding in the local area seven days a week. Visit www.newham.gov.uk, email paula.peaty@newham.gov.uk or call 020 8430 2000 for more information.

Newham Shoujin Karate
Sessions for beginners:
Wednesday 4.30pm-5.30pm (4-15), term time
Thursday 6-8pm (16+)

020 8430 2484

Multi sports (free)
- Handball, football, competition
5-7pm, Stratford Park, E12
- Coaching and competition
4-5.30pm, 8-19
Fri, St John's Community Centre, Albert Rd, E16

Athletics at Newham Leisure Centre
- Get Set Go Group, 11-16
Mon, 4-5.30pm, E1
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Fri, 4.30-6pm
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Sun, 10am-1pm
Email jacqueline.napier@btinternet.com

Cricket
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Kingsford Astro Turf
- Newham Cricket Club
Monday 5-7pm
8-16, £2 per session
Flanders field, Napier Road, E6
Visit www.newham.gov.uk for information.

Boxing
West Ham ABC - community boxing, 11-19 years
FREE Olympic style amateur boxing sessions. Improve your fitness and make new friends in a safe friendly non-contact environment.
Hathaway Community Centre
Hathaway Crescent, E12

Wednesdays, 7pm
Ascot Community Centre
Hermit Road, E16
Saturdays, 2pm
Email carl.barton@newham.gov.uk or call 020 8430 2000 (ext 36034) for more details.

- West Ham Boys ABC
9-years +, boys and girls
Mon, Wed, Fri, 5-6pm
The Black Lion, 59-61 High Street, E13
Call Lianne Jameson on 020 8472 3614
- Peacock ABC 8-years +
Mon, Wed, 6-8pm
boys and girls
Coxton Street North, E16
Call Martin Bowers on 020 7511 3799
- Newham Boys ABC
6-years +, boys only
Mon, Wed, Fri, 6-7.45pm
Old Bath House
141 Church Street, E15
Call Ravinder Atwal/Jo Chapman 020 8519 5983
- Fight For Peace 11 years +, boys and girls
(Phone for session details)
Woodman Street, North Woolwich, E16
Call Marigold Ride on 020 7474 0054

Contact clubs before visiting
Free non-contact boxing
Non-contact boxing is the perfect way to increase your fitness, lose weight, build strength and learn to defend yourself.
Osmani Boxing Club is open to males aged eight to 25
Fridays, 4-6pm
Froud Centre, 1 Toronto Avenue, E12

Newham Striders
Free, sociable walking group that go striding in the local area seven days a week. Visit www.newham.gov.uk, email paula.peaty@newham.gov.uk or call 020 8430 2000 for more information.

Newham Shoujin Karate
Sessions for beginners:
Wednesday 4.30pm-5.30pm (4-15), term time
Thursday 6-8pm (16+)

