

TYNESIDE 2030: A YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

A FINAL REPORT FOR THE CATHERINE COOKSON FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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Executive Summary

Following two years scoping the idea of setting up a town planning student volunteer project, receiving funding from the Catherine Cookson Foundation in the summer of 2015, has enabled the project team to achieve its aim of working with young people across Tyneside.

The aim of the project 'Tyneside 2030: A Young People's Plan', was to engage local young people in a dialogue about how they envisage Tyneside in 15 years' time. Being facilitated by town planning students from the School of Architecture Planning and Landscape, the focus of the discussion was town planning based, using resources and activities recently developed by the students for working in the community.

Receiving the funding has enabled the student team to work with upwards of 100 young people between the ages of 11 and 18 from the Boroughs of Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside.

The young people were enthusiastic about the project, maximising on the opportunity to discuss their aspirations and visions for the kind of Tyneside in which they wanted to become adults.

The outputs of the project confirmed that young people from Tyneside are positive about their future, placing an emphasis on using renewable energy, promoting sustainable living and encouraging a healthier society. Details of their visions are presented in a set of 3 posters, which together form 'Tyneside 2030: A Young People's

Plan'. The project team hopes that this initial envisioning work will be of interest to the local authorities and that it form a basis on which to build effective engagement with young people in the future.

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Context for the Project

Since September 2012, Newcastle University's fifth year Town Planning students have been involved in a series of research projects, aimed at understanding the challenges of engaging young people in the town planning process.

Remarkably, and despite significant progress in this field in throughout the world, as well as closer to home in Scotland, England still does not have a formal means by which young people can make their voice heard in local planning issues. Initiatives to include a young person's voice remain largely ad hoc and subject to funding restrictions and the availability of skilled staff to undertake appropriate engagement programmes.

Coupled with these practicalities, many local authorities are sceptical of either the value that young people can bring to a formal consultation process or of their ability to understand the wider needs of the local community.

Student survey findings in 2013, indicated that from the 55 young people questioned, 98% said that they felt it was important for young people to have a say in the future of their local area. In contrast to this 27% of respondents said that they did not know the name of their local planning authority and 75% said that they wanted to know more about town planning in their local area. These statistics presented a clear mandate to disseminate information amongst young people about local town planning and to develop a methodology to enable young people to have a say in that process.

Over the subsequent two academic years, different groups of fifth year town planning students in the School of Architecture Planning and Landscape have been trialling methods by which young people can be involved in a discussion about town planning. In July 2015, the School published an engagement toolkit

<http://toolkit.ncl.ac.uk/resource/planning-future-toolkit-engaging-young-people-town-planning> that would enable town planners, teachers and youth workers to start to explore young people's views about their local area.

As students have trialled the engagement methods, it has become increasingly clear that young people can contribute meaningful visions, opinions and local information that can contribute to an effective engagement process.

During 2014 – 15, the research project extended the scope of its work beyond just final year students to include those in stages 2 and 3 of the programme. This wider engagement programme is known as 'YES Planning'. 'YES Planning' is a student volunteer project which offers town planning students training in engagement skills and which, in turn, extends an understanding of town planning amongst young people in the community. Through this initiative, it is hoped that young people in the region will be inspired to become involved, not only in local planning issues but also in wider democratic processes in the longer term. For the town planning students, 'YES Planning' allowed them to learn how to share their subject with a broader audience and to learn how to listen to young people's views about the local environment.

During the previous academic year (2014 – 15), town planning students were able to see the richness of young people's opinion in relation to town planning issues. Working with pupils in Benfield School in Newcastle and Marden and Sir John Spence High Schools in North Tyneside, some very clear messages were emerging from the research. Young people highlighted their need to feel safe and their need to be able to access transport in their local neighbourhood.

About this Project

Building upon these early outputs and using the tested toolkit, the Catherine Cookson Foundation funding offered the opportunity to take a more structured approach to understanding young people's aspirations right across the Tyneside conurbation.

Taking a projected date of 2030, the project would ask young people to consider what their vision would be for a future Tyneside. Engagement methods that had been developed and piloted in previous years of the research project would be fundamental to the research project. The project leader considered that the aim of the project was entirely compatible with the aims of the Catherine Cookson Foundation and might well have been of interest to the late Dame Catherine Cookson herself. The driving force behind the project was to see how young people view their future and to consider how their relationship with the environment shapes those aspirations.

Relevant Literature

'Tyneside 2030: A Young People's Plan' was not intended to be a typical research project which might aim to address a specific and pre-determined research question. Instead, it has been an exploratory process shaped by key academic research (Hart, 1979, 1992; Skelton 2007; Valentine, 2004; Percy Smith 2010) and delivered through engagement with young people.

Preliminary investigations into Participatory Action Research (Kindon et al, 2007; Greenway and Mallan, 2011) suggested that this approach would be an appropriate process by which to undertake the research/engagement programme. Such processes are cutting edge practice for research with communities. As a result, the project has been informed in both its preparation and delivery stages by the academic research in this field.

The project is also closely aligned to planning practice, with the project leader being a Chartered Town Planner of the Royal Town Planning Institute and having worked on community engagement projects both within and out with the University. Town planning students need to develop skills of working with the community in formulating plans or in producing considerate development proposals. Knowing how to engage with young people and being able to process these views alongside those of the wider community will be critical to effective practice as neighbourhood plans become more common place (DCLG, 2012).

The Project's Aims and Objectives

The aim of 'Tyneside 2030: A Young People's Plan' was to use an 'engagement toolkit' devised by fifth year town planning students, to establish a set of visions for the Tyneside conurbation.

This would be achieved through the following objectives:

1. Establishing what young people think about their local area. How do they value their environment and what is important to them?
2. Considering over the next 15 years, what would be the priorities that town planning should address and deliver for their part of Tyneside?
3. Establishing their views on a number of specific topics in their local area, such as crime, public space, shops and transport.
4. Working with the local authority concerned to identify a specific location where they can express their views about how it might change.

Preparing to deliver the Project

In preparing to deliver the project, a number of refinements were made to the original set of objectives. Firstly, the Ethics approval process required that the young people's responses should remain anonymous, without the outputs being traceable back to any of the workshop groups. This emerged as being a necessity of

the project because different groups of young people in different locations would have their own perspectives on planning in their area. As the project was not intended to be a critique of existing planning practice, the activities would remain more generic and visionary in nature.

Because the project would work across four neighbouring local authorities, it became evident that there was a wide variety of planning issues that could be explored and that there were a range of priorities for each locality. Once again, because of the need to retain the body of outputs as a single entity (without individual groups being identifiable), the decision was taken to choose a planning issue that would be equally appropriate to all locations. For this reason, activities asking 'What makes a successful town centre?' were considered to of greatest value to the project and to informing local planning practice.

The ethics approval also required that any of the young people participating in the project could withdraw from the research at any time, so it was important to ensure the gatekeepers would be able to manage this situation, if it arose. A number of supplementary activities were therefore designed so that anyone withdrawing from the research could do so but without being noticeably detached from the rest of the group.

Despite there being a substantial initial interest in the project in May 2015 from school teachers, when it came to recruiting participant schools for this project, there was a disappointing and delayed response. This meant that the project did not start its engagement stages until January 2016. In the local authorities where school

participants were not forthcoming, the local Youth Council was approached. The Youth Councils for Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside were very keen to be involved and the activities were subsequently adapted so that one two hour session, rather than two one hour sessions could be offered, so as to fit into their weekly evening meeting schedule.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect to the project was that it could not be linked to any planning proposals or specific plan making in the area. Extensive discussions took place over the early weeks of the project to try to determine local projects on which the young people's views could be sought. The timing of any real life projects was critical in linking them to this engagement project. Whilst there were some opportunities to deliver intense learning around a topic such as flood risk, other opportunities were considered to be too 'tokenistic' to be of real value to this envisioning project.

Therefore the decision was taken to pursue a more generic approach to the second part of the project, so that all groups would consider the future of the town centre closest to where they were based. It was considered that thinking about what makes a successful town centre would create an opportunity for some worthwhile principles to be established.

The Activities

The refined set of activities comprised the following:

Activity	Delivered through
1. What do we understand by town/urban planning?	Question/ answer session at the beginning and end of the session Picture cards to prioritise different planned components of a new town Creating a vision for the new town
2. Creating a vision for Tyneside 2030	Continuing on from the previous visionary work the young people had done around their new town planning and thinking through key values and principles in planning
3. What makes a successful Town Centre?	Spider diagrams Diamond Ranking to consider the criteria the young people might use for creating a successful town centre.
4. Designing an Eco Town This was the principal activity when the young people attended the University workshop, on campus, on 8 th June, 2016.	Eco town models using craft materials, drawing on earlier planning principles and criteria that they had established. The young people then re-affirmed their group visions for Tyneside 2030.

Project Outputs

A total of 93 young people were involved in the Tyneside 2030 project, drawn from the four Tyneside local authorities (Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside), comprising the following groups:

- Year 9 pupils (13/ 14 year olds) at Benfield School, Newcastle
- Ages 11 – 16, South Tyneside Youth Council
- Ages 11 – 15, North Tyneside Youth Council
- Ages 11 – 18, Gateshead Youth Council

Fifteen student volunteers, working through the University 'YES Planning' volunteer initiative, helped to deliver the project, representing Stage 2 and 3 Urban Planning, Stage 2 Architecture and Urban Planning and 2 PhD students who had previously been undergraduate planning students.

Key outputs for Activities 2 and 3 in the table above are shown in the posters 1 and 2, on pages 13 and 14. The outputs of the envisioning work undertaken on the visit to the University are shown in Poster 3 on page 15. The key findings for all activities are summarised below.

Young People's Responses

As stated above, the intention of the engagement project was to draw out some broad conclusions across the different groups of young people to present a voice for the young people of Tyneside. It did not intend to compare opinions across the different groups or to highlight any differences between them. The results below are therefore a collated set of responses.

1. What do we understand by town/ urban planning?

With most of the groups of young people it was possible to ask them at the beginning of the workshop and again at the end what they thought town planning meant. The purpose of the question was to have some indicator of what learning had taken place. However, it was soon apparent that even before the workshop had taken place, that they were able to offer a fairly clear definition and broader understanding of the term 'town or urban planning':

"Creating buildings; buying land and building on it; buying buildings and improving them; buying abandoned buildings; finding land to build on; deciding what should be built".

After the sessions, the same question was asked and the responses reflected a much more insightful understanding of the planning process:

"Trying to please everyone; a local authority process of trying to please everyone; visualising how people are

going to live; looking back to inform the future; creating sustainable places that are going to last; working with what's there – preserving historic buildings; no magic pot of money”.

2. Creating a vision for Tyneside 2030

The responses were recorded from the workshop activities and it was felt that the visions that the young people nurtured could be grouped into four key themes:

- Place and Community Values
- Range of Facilities
- Quality of Services
- Other things to consider

A complete list of the young people's visions for Tyneside 2030 is given in Poster 1 on page 13. The data was not analysed in terms of the frequency with which words or phrases appeared, but the responses do give a clear indication of the types of issue that are important to our young people today as they think about their future.

Looking at place and community values that they identified for Tyneside in 2030, the young people expressed their need to 'feel safe', for less crime and less noise. There is a suggestion that they look forward to having independence when they can 'move out of their parents' houses sooner', which is mirrored in their statements about having more affordable, better quality and cheaper houses.

In terms of the range of facilities that would be important, good health care and good schools were common responses, matched by an appreciation of the need for

'green land', farms and parks. Other suggestions included 'big stadium football', 'shopping' and nightlife'.



Figure 1 What is important when Planning Tyneside in 2030?

The young people had also thought about the quality and type of these facilities or services, saying that 'more jobs' and 'well paid jobs' would be important as well as 'better quality' transport, bigger and better shops and better entertainment.

Outside of these more specific items on their 'wish list', the other things that the young people highlighted for their future Tyneside were 'free wifi everywhere', 'improved technology', 'cutting down on pollution and the use of solar panels that would make houses 'more economical'. They also underlined the need for more schools and an increased education provision and attracting more wildlife.

3. What makes a successful town centre?

This activity evolved during the course of the project. During the first workshop at Benfield School spider diagrams were used to collect the young people's ideas

for a future town centre. However, it was considered that the activity did not offer enough scope for creative discussion, so it was decided that a diamond ranking activity would be used instead. The 'YES Planning' project had piloted diamond ranking as a means of researching with young people during 2014 – 15 and it had proved to be extremely successful as an interactive and engaging method of research with this type of young audience.

Again the responses were analysed under a number of recurring themes as in paragraph 2 above. The full set of data is shown in Poster 2 on page 14.

In terms of place and community values, the young people echoed their vision for Tyneside, expressing their need to feel safe. They understood the need for equality of access to facilities for the local population and the importance of a healthier lifestyle. They stated that a town centre should be clean, green, pleasant, comfortable, social, fun and wildlife friendly. There were also comments made about the need to keep places well maintained and looking nice.

Many comments were made about food outlets, suggesting that they should better and reflect different cultures. Good shops and leisure activities were also cited, along with the importance for medical care nearby and opportunities for work. There were a number of comments that indicated the value that educational buildings (such as colleges) and libraries can bring to the town centre in terms of them being friendly and safe places for young people. Green space, youth friendly parks and fewer roads were also recurring suggestions.

The young people frequently commented that transport should be better, more frequent and easier to access. Security was also important, as well as being able to access to 'free wifi'.

Under the 'other things to consider' theme, young people had a strong sense of the need for healthy lifestyle in the town centre of the future. They also thought it would be important to consider visitors' first impressions of a town centre, the need to include eco-friendly energy resources and to be 'wildlife friendly'.

The Diamond Ranking exercise aimed to allow the participants to consider a number of photographs showing different elements of a town or city centre. Taking nine photographs, the young people worked in groups to arrange them in order of how important they were in creating a successful town centre.

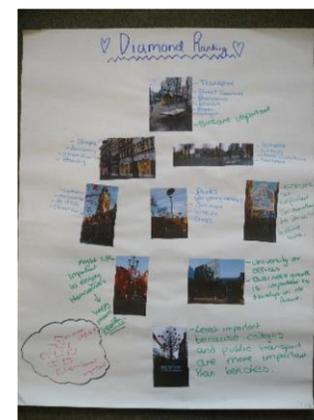


Figure 2 What makes a successful town centre?

The one image that consistently appeared at the top of the diamond shape, as being most important or second most important, was a photograph of a tram and open space in Manchester City centre. The young people were asked to explain why they had ranked each of the images in the way that they had. They explained that this type of transport is 'good for the environment', 'good for old people', 'people are able to get to work if they live out of town', 'people need effective and cheap ways of getting into and around town' .



Figure 3 Photo of tram and open space consistently highly ranked

Other components of a successful town centre were considered to be attractive shopping and business opportunities; open space and street furniture; and old buildings and heritage. Other components scored highly with some groups and not with others, but it was more the discussions and the reasoning for their ranking decisions that were of interest. The young people could see the value of having an efficient transport system and then a lot of the discussion focussed around making sure that services and facilities were attractive, new and well kept.

4. Designing an eco-town.

A small group of the young people, who had already been involved in some of the workshops, visited Newcastle University on 8th June. The visit firstly comprised a tour of the campus, seeing the range of important buildings representing the University's development and secondly thinking how a town planner might make changes to some of the locations when thinking through the needs of the different users of those spaces.

The young people were then challenged to create a model for an Eco town on a site in Northumberland, using some of the town planning principles that they had identified as being important in previous workshops.



Figure 4 Creating an Eco Town

From the discussions generated throughout the model making activity and in the short presentations afterwards, the young people stressed how their Eco Town would be based on sustainable principles that would make it self-sufficient in terms of energy provision. They created public spaces without cars, giving priority to pedestrians. They emphasised the need to provide jobs within their

town, but having the opportunity to travel to neighbouring places for some services and facilities. Significant value was attached to retaining existing wildlife, nature and historic settings.

The young people who attended this workshop were then invited to compose their individual visions for Tyneside in 2030. These visions are shown in Poster 3 on page 15.

Poster 1

Tyneside 2030: A Young People's Plan

PLACE & COMMUNITY VALUES

“ We want it to be very very sunny.
A safe place.
Reduced crime and more security.
More peaceful. People can feel calm.
Young people can move out their parents' houses sooner and have more independence. Less noisy.”

RANGE OF FACILITIES

“ More and bigger schools so more people can get a good education. Free public hygienic toilets.
More houses, better quality, cheaper, safer. There should be separate roads for cyclists and they could be safe.
Big stadium football.
Hospitals, because we would be able to help more people at once. Parks should be more fun.
Farms because we need more green land and we would be able to grow our own food.”

QUALITY OF SERVICES

“ Entertainment will get better for both adults and children. Different school opening times.
More well paid jobs so that people can afford food and houses. School buses. Transport would be better quality.
Shorter waiting times for appointments in A&E. More jobs and better pay for skilled jobs.
Wouldn't have to pay for prescriptions. Shops and markets selling bigger and better and more brands.
Jobs so that not as many people on the dole as they are now.
More jobs so that less people have to go to the job centre. Public transport, metro and buses.”

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

“ More schools in more popular places.
More economical houses, solar panels, keeps heat in. Improved technology.
Solar panels, because it is healthier in stead of putting pollution in the air. Cut down pollution and attract wildlife.
There should be free 'wifi' everywhere.
Wildlife, because there aren't enough animals like birds and cows.”

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Poster 2

PLACE & COMMUNITY VALUES

- 1 For public use; Equal chance to travel; Good access; Local to people; Less homeless people; Things for homeless people.
- 2 Indoor places; Streets busy with people; My mates would want to go there; Hang out with friends; Public space for everyone; Historic places; Clean; Green areas that invest in public art; Pleasant; Comfortable to live and shop; Cheaper flats for students; Social spaces for young people to hang out, fun activities, where young people can get involved; Wildlife friendly – variety of parks and fields for wildlife to grow and develop in a happy and healthy way.
- 3 Security; Feeling safe; Respect; Healthier lifestyle.
- 4 Upkeep (Maintenance); Regeneration; Public buildings utilised.

RANGE OF FACILITIES

- 1 Better food facilities; Fast foods; Restaurants for different cultures; Like the Bistro on the Quayside; Pubs.
- 2 Good shops and shops that look pretty so people would go in and buy their stuff; Designer shops; Shop superstore; Shopping centres; Temperature control and air conditioning for shops; Better variety of shops.
- 3 Sport attraction; Swimming pool; Leisure centres for all ages; A football stadium.
- 4 Student orientated businesses, places to work, study halls, pensions centres, study cafes (encourages work and study); Library (being safe and friendly places for youth).
- 5 Fewer roads, more space for buildings; Less land usage and more green belt; More flats/ apartments to save space on land.
- 6 Public toilets; Free parking.
- 7 Parks (Skate Parks); Youth/ Child friendly parks; Green space & fields.
- 8 Medical care nearby.
- 9 Loads of companies; Local businesses; Student orientated businesses.
- 10 A few shows; Nightlife; Theatre; Entertainment; Live entertainment.
- 11 Education; College.
- 12 Street furniture; Bins to stop littering.

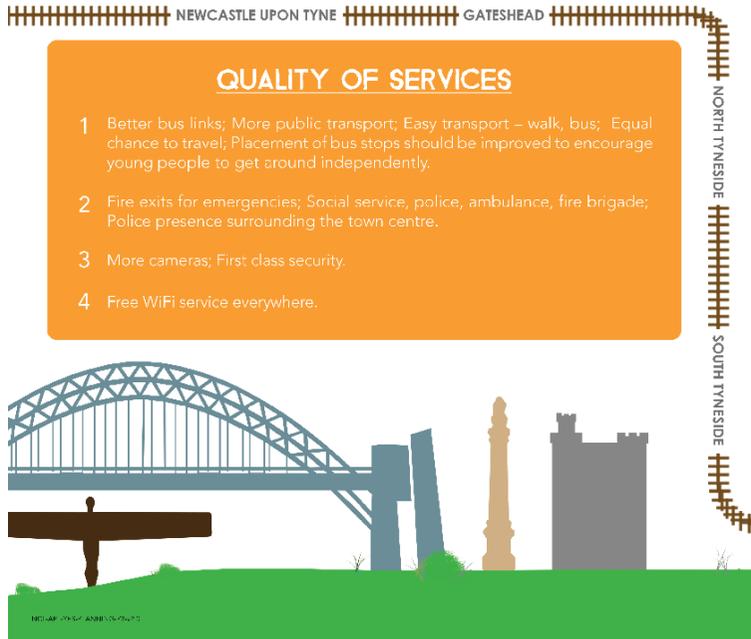
QUALITY OF SERVICES

- 1 Better bus links; More public transport; Easy transport – walk, bus; Equal chance to travel; Placement of bus stops should be improved to encourage young people to get around independently.
- 2 Fire exits for emergencies; Social service, police, ambulance, fire brigade; Police presence surrounding the town centre.
- 3 More cameras; First class security.
- 4 Free WiFi service everywhere.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- 1 Tourists/ visitors' first opinion is important and first impressions of town centre count the most so centre should be improved to be a nicer and pleasurable place.
- 2 Eco-friendly features; Renewable energy resources; Wildlife friendly.
- 3 Healthy eating; More fruit and veg; Health benefits.
- 4 Jobs; Events.

OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR THE TOWN CENTRE



Poster 3

The poster features a stylized map of Tyneside in shades of blue and grey. A light blue wavy line representing the River Tyne flows across the map, with the text 'RIVER TYNE' written vertically along it. Four colored boxes contain young people's visions for 2030. The title 'TYNESIDE 2030: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VISIONS' is written vertically on the right side of the map.

In my opinion, I think that by 2030, Tyneside will be an Eco-friendly town with other, more imaginative ways of collecting water, creating energy etc. And perhaps we won't use up all of our coal, oil and gas - our main non-renewable sources which will soon be gone. This will mean that Tyneside will be more Eco-friendly, and perhaps more people will be attracted to the area because of the nature.
(Young People A)

In 2030 I would like Tyneside to have a more healthy and clean society. It would use as much green energy as they could and use bikes more than cars. They would have more wind turbines and lots of solar panels.
(Young People B)

My personal vision would be a greener North Tyneside with fewer cars. There might be more cycles and people may walk more. There would be more houses with solar panels and the whole place would be a lot less polluted. Thanks for the amazing trip.
(Young People C)

My personal vision would be to see a more eco-friendly country. I want to be able to know that the way I am living is sustainable and future generations can live without the worry of global warming and climate change.
(Young People D)

TYNESIDE 2030: YOUNG PEOPLE'S VISIONS

RIVER TYNE

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Reflection on the data outputs

This project did not set out to offer a quantitative analysis of the young people's preferences for what Tyneside might look like in 2030. Instead, it was primarily aimed to be an exploratory and qualitative discussion of young people's aspirations for their conurbation in 2030, drawing on the support of town planning students from Newcastle University and using the principle that the environment is essentially a planned one.

The activities and resources used may have led the young people to suggest ideas that they may not have previously considered, but to achieve the project's aim for developing a young people's plan, it was important to allow them to be able to discuss a wide range of issues in a creative and informative manner. The use of the engagement toolkit and the model building activity enabled these envisioning discussions to take place.

The young people's priorities for their Tyneside of 2030 focussed less on a specific visual aspiration and more on creating a place in which would be sustainable, where they could feel safe, have access to medical services, cheaper housing, accessible transport and good education. The cost of living and the ability to pay for housing, transport and medical services was an underlying concern, but they did not claim that such services should be generally free, just that there would be sufficient provision. They did suggest, however, that free 'wifi' should be available everywhere.

The project confirmed that young people hope for a more sustainable built environment that uses renewable energy sources, protects green land and promotes/ protects wildlife. There is a real

sense that they believe that this approach will protect future generations from the worry of climate change that it will give a place a longer legacy and will be more attractive because of how it works with nature.

The young people were encouraged to think about their own situation in another 15 years' time, what their family situation might be and what sort of Tyneside would meet those needs. This was quite a difficult task for them, as it is hard to anticipate priorities in the future, so the outputs were a combination of the young people's current opinions, thinking through how Tyneside could meet these but taking on board wider agendas such as global warming. **The outputs reveal a future Tyneside that is a place of equality, accessibility, good health, good education and opportunities in jobs and housing, whilst at the same time being respectful of its natural environment.**

The young people have demonstrated their pragmatic approach to the issues that face Tyneside in planning for the future. It is somewhat reassuring that despite media negativity about the environment and about young people, they are not in fear of the future, but have a strong sense of responsibility to make things better for future generations.

Seeing the young people work in groups to discuss issues such as where Tyneside's energy is going to come from, how they can create a new form of sustainable transport that links into what is already there and how to plan for job creation has been an immense privilege.

The Participants' Evaluation

As with all research projects involving young people, the participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any time. However, no one did withdraw from the project. Using previously tested methods of engagement, the young people were able to work with minimum supervision and all had an opportunity to express their opinion about the issues being discussed. Whether the young people feel that they want to take up a career in an environment related profession in the future or just feel that they now have a heightened interest in what is happening within Tyneside, then both are equally valuable. If they feel that their views are important and that they have been listened to, then this will also have longer lasting benefits in terms of their confidence to make their voice heard.

After the visit to the University, one of the youth leaders explained:

“We thoroughly enjoyed the sessions so thank you for organising them! I think that these sessions raised aspirations, it gave them insight into University that is usually not given until they are almost University age. I personally think this is too late. The sessions were centred around them and their future which is great, their opinions were really valued. I really liked the campus walkabout so they could understand how a Town Planner thinks.”

Two of the young people wrote:

“Thank you for the opportunities you have given me over the last couple of meetings.”

“Thanks for the amazing trip!”

Student Evaluation

For the student volunteers, it helped them to think about the value of the profession they are training for, how you explain town planning to the community and to young people. It especially helped them to develop a sense of what the next generation's environmental priorities are.

“I learnt that the most effective way of learning is to allow young people to have a hands on approach to their own learning and for myself to just be there to guide. I also enjoyed the opportunity for me to showcase what I have learnt over the past 3 years, but explain it in more simple terms so that the younger people could understand, and this in turn made me realise just how much knowledge I have gained in the past 3 years.”

Were the Project Objectives met?

The project objectives:

1. Establishing what young people think about their local area. How do they value their environment and what is important to them?
2. Considering over the next 15 years, what would be the priorities that town planning should address and deliver for their part of Tyneside?
3. Establishing their views on a number of specific topics in their local area, such as crime, public space, shops and transport.

4. Working with the local authority concerned to identify a specific location where they can express their views about how it might change.

Overall, the objectives were met, but there had been a slight reshaping of what could be achieved following the ethics approval process and the initial discussions with representatives from the four local authorities. Young people thought about the wider Tyneside conurbation at a future point and used resources to consider how town planning would cater for theirs and other's needs. These ideas were then focussed down onto how a local town centre should cater for the needs of the population in the future. Taking this approach, a multitude of issues were discussed under the town centre planning 'umbrella'. All the responses have helped to create a more rounded view of young people's wider priorities.

A key frustration throughout the project has been the lack of engagement around any specific real life planning project. However, discussions have generated stronger relationships with local authority planners and especially with teachers and youth leaders in those local authorities.

The project leader would now like to take this experience to the next stage to engage young people on a specific proposal or project within the Tyneside region. Having established the young people's visions at a more strategic level allows this next step to be taken with greater confidence.

Other benefits have emerged from the project, including giving young people an opportunity to have a voice about the future of their area, and enabling student town planners to develop their own skills of engagement. These outputs suggest that planning practice

might have a better chance of being informed in the future. The outputs of the project will also serve as an initial source of information for any locally based engagement projects.

Acknowledgements

The project leader would like to thank the Board of Trustees for the Catherine Cookson Foundation for the opportunity to undertake this research through engagement with young people. The young people had heard of Catherine Cookson, so it was good to be able to link the aim of the project with their existing knowledge of her work.

The support of the various participating groups, their teachers, youth leaders and the young people themselves has been invaluable throughout this project.

The enthusiasm of the 'YES Planning' student volunteers has been unstinting, even when asked to attend what might be regarded as out of hours workshops in locations across Tyneside. One of those volunteers, Skyz Ma, has designed the graphics which showcase the young people's visions for Tyneside 2030, so a special word of thanks is extended to him.

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