

Council 23 May 2013 Written Questions

1. Councillor Rosenstiel to the Leader of the Council.

What are the objectives of the Construct programme, which has been funded by the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership and run by the City Council's ChYPPS team and was referred to in the Cambridge News of 11th May?

Who participates in the programme and how and why are they invited?

What type of activities are undertaken by participants on the programme?

Over the times that the programme has been run, what outcomes have been assessed?

What is the relationship between this programme and the application of sanctions for wrongdoing through the criminal justice system?

Response:

"What are the objectives of the Construct programme, which has been funded by the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership and run by the City Council's Children and Young Peoples Participation Service (Chypps) team and which was criticised in the paper last week?

- A reduction in Antisocial Behaviour in a particular hotspot area or
- That the offending behaviour of a young person is significantly reduced, stopped or averted altogether.
- Helping young people to engage beyond the project in a positive way
- Helping young people to resist pressure to get involved in ASB

Who participates in the programme and how and why are they invited?

Young people between the ages of 9-12 who have been identified as being at risk of engaging in or are engaging in ASB, for example they may have been causing a nuisance to other residents, entering their gardens without permission, swearing in the street or throwing objects.

They are referred by Police, Safer Communities Team, City Homes, Housing Associations and Fire and Rescue

On the 2012/13 programme 7 were referred by Police, 2 by the Council's Safer Community Team, 1 by Chypps.

What type of activities are undertaken by participants on the programme?

- A family event to introduce them to the programme
- A team building activity or residential to introduce the young people to each other and establish rules
- Weekly meeting after school to take part in positive activities such as cooking, art, music making/playing and Urban Adventure playground activity
- End of project residential

These activities also include some group exercises that are designed to address discriminatory attitudes and to explore the consequences of actions and accepting responsibility.

The various activities are used as learning and development opportunities around attitudes and behaviour. One to one interventions are also used to challenge attitudes and behaviour and to recognise and praise positive outcomes.

The young people are signposted to other activities when the programme ends.

Over the times that the programme has been run, what outcomes have been assessed?

- ASB overall is down 23% in the City
- ASB in Abbey Ward where the last Construct programme was focused is down 30% - 84 incidents from Nov – Feb compared to 120 incidents for the same period last year
- The Cambridge Community Safety Partnership in their plan for 2012/13 had pledged to do preventative work with young people that would contribute to 'having no more than 130 first time entrants to the criminal justice system from Cambridge for 2012/13' and this has been achieved.
- Three of the young people referred to the Construct programme 2012/13 had been the subject of discussion at Problem Solving Group (a multi-agency group working together to take enforcement and/or preventative actions to address ASB) and the cases relating to them have been closed as there has been no further reported problems with the young people.
- Three young people who took part in an earlier Construct programme were known to the Youth Offending Service but none have committed an offence since taking part.

What is the relationship between this programme and the application of sanctions for wrongdoing through the criminal justice system?"

This programme is aimed at very low level ASB or behaviour that indicates a young person may be at risk of engaging in ASB. It is primarily aimed at stopping a young person entering the criminal justice system and steering them away to more positives activities. Criminal justice sanctions are applied in the normal way if individuals offend before, during or after participation in the programmes if this is appropriate. The programme is designed to change behaviour that might escalate to a point where sanctions are appropriate, it is not in lieu of these sanctions.

Quote from Tom Jefford Head of the Youth Offending Service

“There is a clear case for prevention to reduce the higher costs of later interventions should young people enter the criminal justice system. This should also be thought about in regard to the reductions in the number of victims of offences and the general safety of the community at large. The thrust of Government policy is towards effective and targeted early intervention as expressed by the Troubled Families agenda of which the City Council is an active partner in seeking to intervene positively and with a real chance of sustained behavioural change, for families where problems have become entrenched. Taking action before a crime has been committed or a victim has been harmed must be the preference for policy and practice.”

2. Councillor Hipkin to the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change

What weight of support was there (judged by numbers of representations) in the recent Local Plan Options and Issues consultation for 14000 homes in the city up to 2031 (the figure going forward in the Draft Local Plan) compared to the three other options offered?

Response attached separately