

## The Forches Estate, Barnstaple, Devon Forches Youth Work Programme - 'So You thought We Didn't Care'

### Summary

The Forches Estate in Barnstaple, North Devon is a social housing estate with a number of pocketed deprivation issues and has recently undergone a community consultation process, including some housing demolition on the estate, through its social landlord North Devon Homes (NDH). This is part of the **'iN business for neighbourhoods'** initiative.

'iN business for neighbourhoods' initiative by the National Housing Federation explains how housing associations are taking an increasing role in providing neighbourhood services beyond the landlord function. Part of this initiative is the role that housing associations are playing in supporting children and young people.

NIF has been working on the Forches estate to support the consultation process which included consultation with young people

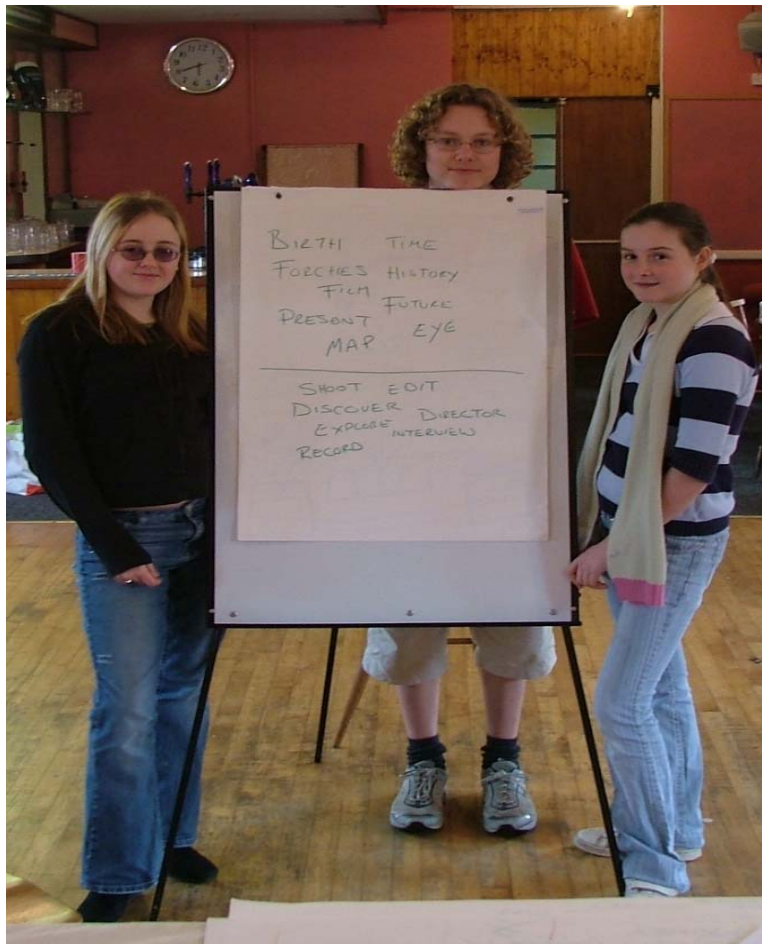
Working in partnership with North Devon Homes, NIF put together a plan of further consultation and action planning with young people. Below is the outline plan of work which has been undertaken, the progression and findings:

### Initial Delivery Plan for Forches March 2007

Action	When	Output
Planning Process Date setting Liaison with North Devon Homes (NDH) Preparation of consultation beyond PFR®	16 <sup>th</sup> March	Dates Preparation
Research and document the background, history and work undertaken to date with young people on the Forches estate Prepare a Presentation and handout for Youth Workers and young people on the background to the youth PFR results for Forches	21 <sup>st</sup> March	Written documentary of how young people have been engaged Presentation
Present findings to (NDH) and the newly emerging Youth Workers for discussion Plan and prepare the session with the young people based on the Riverside toolkit		Increased understanding and local ownership / leadership. Feedback Planned youth engagement

<p>Brief presentation to the young people followed by discussion / debate and action planning on how the young people can get engaged in delivering some of the priority areas.</p> <p>What do they want?</p> <p>How do they want to get involved?</p> <p>Anticipated Area of Delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the scene</li> <li>• Vision</li> <li>• Aims</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Actions</li> <li>• Help needed</li> </ul> <p>Anticipated tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graffiti wall</li> <li>• Story boards</li> </ul>		<p>Youth action engagement Young peoples 'Forward Plan for Forches' (vision and actions for working with young people on the estate)</p>
<p>Write up results Including Pictures / Quotes / Photos</p>		<p>Draft Vision and Action Document (based on the Riverside toolkit)</p>
<p>Consultation on draft Document Next steps / Exit meeting Final edits</p>	<p>31<sup>st</sup> March</p>	<p>Document</p>

**'SO YOU THOUGHT WE DIDNT CARE.....'**



## Summary

Young people are key stakeholders in local areas and want to have a say in the development and delivery of services in their area. It affects the way they live. This is certainly reflected in the report which captures and presents the work that is being undertaken to involve young people on the Forches estate.

The work began through the engagement of young people in the North Devon Homes Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> consultation which culminated in a report published early in 2007. The consultation looked at the future of Forches and identified what local people's issues and concerns were, and what they wanted to see improved. This process successfully engaged 143 young people who put forward 1326 suggestions for the estate.

Since the publication of the Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> report, North Devon Homes, working in partnership with local agencies, have worked hard to respond to the Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> outcomes.

This includes responding to the need for more activities for young people, whilst at the same time, continuing to engage young people in the process.

To take this forward, a prioritisation session was held with 30 young people in March to consider the 52 most popular youth suggestions. The focus was to narrow the overall 52 down to their top 5 short-term priorities and to find out how they wanted to be engaged in the planning and delivery of these:

- Out of School youth activities on the MUGA – to include Football
- Investigate the opportunity for a 'no charge' Cash Point
- Organise a Disco
- Erect floodlights at the MUGA to allow use all year round
- Work to reduce and address drug problems on the estate

Alongside these top priorities, a number of other youth initiatives are planned or underway and these were also consulted on, to get young peoples views and future engagement:

- Youth hanging out place
- Heritage Lottery Fund Youth Film Group
- Youth Action Group
- Cycle Recycle Project

The outcomes from the sessions were to acquire young peoples views and sign up, an indication of progress so far, commitment from local agencies and clear actions and next steps towards delivery of the 5 youth priorities and the 4 other youth initiatives for the Forches estate.

Young people have been involved in the Forche's consultation, the prioritisation of the outcomes and in deciding the next steps. It is the intention of North Devon Homes and the supporting agencies identified in the report to continue to engage young people in the regeneration of the estate and in the delivery of the action plans presented:

*“The planning for real process on the Forche’s estate has enabled North Devon Homes to develop a multi-agency action plan for the estate regeneration, based on the real experience and feelings of the community.*

*As in most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the issue of young people was highlighted as a priority – both in terms of young people being perceived as a problem – but also clearly identifying a lack of facilities as a concern.*

*The young people’s event provided an opportunity to find out what the young people really felt about their environment, their homes, the services they receive and their aspirations for the future.*

*This has been really important for ensuring that we are not reacting to residents who ‘perceive’ young people as a problem – allowing us to focus on solutions rather than symptoms.*

*Involving young people in the creation of the action plan – makes us accountable to them and will provide a vehicle for their on-going involvement and for future consultation.”*

Sheena Field, Regeneration Manager, North Devon Homes

## **Background - Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> Consultation**

Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> was identified as a project tool to involve residents, key agencies and community groups to help ‘design out’ problem issues and ‘design in’ new solutions on the Forches Estate in Barnstaple. Through December 2006 and January 2007, ten separate consultation events were held resulting in 297 residents attending to highlight their concerns and put forward a total of 2,150 suggestions for the estate.

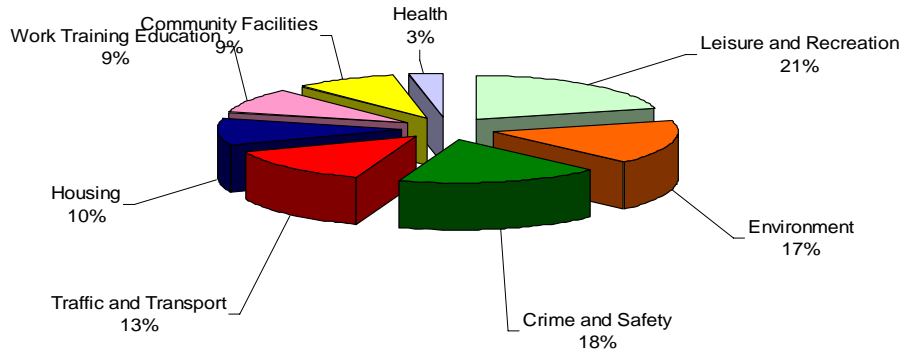
North Devon Homes and the Forches Community Association recognised the need and importance of involving children and young people in the consultation process, appreciating that they are key stakeholders in the community who often get overlooked.

To ensure young people got involved, two of the ten sessions were targeted specifically at young people. One was for 12-18 year olds held at the Borough Arms on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006 and the other, for primary aged children, held at Forches Cross Primary School on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

These dedicated youth sessions engaged 143 young people (76 male and 67 female) in the consultation process putting forward 1326 (62% of the total) suggestions for the estate.

The chart below demonstrates the breakdown of the youth consultation results by theme which shows Leisure and Recreation to be the highest area of concern:-

Overall Breakdown - Youth Consultations



The top three suggestions identified by children and young people under each of the eight themes are summarised in the following table:

Issue	Total number of Youth Suggestions	Top 3 Suggestions / Concerns
<b>Leisure &amp; Recreation</b>	298	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Football pitch/goal posts/local team</li> <li>2. Floodlights</li> <li>3. Discos</li> </ol>
<b>Crime &amp; Safety</b>	238	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drug problems</li> <li>2. Fireworks problems</li> <li>3. Lighting to be improved</li> </ol>
<b>Environment</b>	212	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dog Free Zone</li> <li>2. Dog Poop Bins needed</li> <li>3. Dog walking area</li> </ol>
<b>Traffic &amp; Transport</b>	180	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parking issues</li> <li>2. Cycle lanes needed</li> <li>3. Speed limit needs lowering</li> </ol>
<b>Work, Training &amp; Education</b>	140	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Activity clubs needed</li> <li>2. Bullying problem</li> <li>3. School needs improving</li> </ol>

<b>Community Facilities</b>	124	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cash point needed</li> <li>2. Disabled access needed</li> <li>3. Youth shelter needed</li> </ol>
<b>Housing</b>	120	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wheely bins needed</li> <li>2. Flats for elderly people needed</li> <li>3. Noisy neighbours problem</li> </ol>
<b>Health</b>	14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family planning service</li> <li>2. Chiropodist</li> <li>3. Baby clinic</li> </ol>

### North Devon Homes Commitment

North Devon Homes (NDH) have a commitment to involving young people at the heart of local decision making. They acknowledge young people are future tenants and recognise the need for young people to have a lasting voice and an opportunity to inform decision making. As part of their funding bid to the Heritage lottery, they stated that they would adopt the shared values of Hear by Right (Badham and Wade 2005):

- Children and young people's participation is a visible commitment that is properly resourced
- Children and young people's involvement is valued
- Children and young people have an equal opportunity to participate
- Policies and standards for the participation of children and young people are in place, evaluated and improved.

One of the key commitments highlighted by NDH has been:

*The NDH Community Chest fund for the Forches estate has also ring fenced 50% of the 2007/08 budget for projects for and with young people to help take forward the outcomes of the Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> exercise.*

NDH are also committed to engaging young people in the next steps of the process and in the regeneration area on Forches estate, through encouraging input into the estates design and development. Young people will be invited to sit on the Customer Forum and engagement will spring from the youth engagement undertaken so far and from the sign up to the different youth action projects highlighted in this report.

### The Approach

It was clear from the Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> consultation results that young people:

- Have very little to do on the estate
- Are bored
- Are seen by adults as problematic
- Have lots of ideas and solutions for the problems.
- Are keen to get involved.

From this North Devon Homes and the Forches Community Association have recognised the benefits of actively involving young people in service planning and delivery, working with young people as engaged residents.

### **Preparation, Promotion and Publicity**

To encourage young people to get engaged in taking forward some of their ideas that came out of the PfR consultation, a youth “prioritisation and action planning” session was planned. The session was promoted using a flyer, through outreach and word of mouth, contacting the young people from the previous Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> consultation and using the local Connexions database.

Since the Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> consultation process, lots of activity has already started to get underway to get some of the outcomes off the ground and to develop the work with young people.

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### **Tricks and Tools**

The tools used in these sessions to support youth engagement were:

- Pizza and music
- Brief PowerPoint presentation – presenting background and findings
- 8 displays by theme presenting the 52 most popular youth suggestions
- Sticky dots for identifying priorities (5 each)
- Post-it notes for young peoples ideas and views
- Graffiti wall – to obtain young peoples’ views on some key questions
- Ideas and sign up sheets – for the 5 priorities identified in the session and for existing youth activities
- Flip charts and pens
- Finally, flexibility to adapt the session as required and common sense!

### **Setting Priorities – The Journey**

After a quick presentation on the Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> findings identified, the 52 most popular youth suggestions under each of the 8 themes were placed around the room. It was agreed 52 is too many to deal and we needed to prioritise 5.

The challenge was to get 5 from 52 so young people had 5 dots each and got sticking to identify what they would like to be tackled first on the estate.

### **From 52 to 5!!**

The results of the sticky dot voting are presented in the following table which highlights the top 5 short term and medium term priorities:

Priority	Suggestion	Votes
<b>Short Term Priorities</b>		
1	Football	27
2	Cash Point	13
3	Disco	11
4	Floodlights	9
5	Drug problems	9
<b>Medium Term Priorities</b>		
6	Dog poo bins	8
7	Family planning	6
8	Activity clubs needed	6
9	Skateboard / Rollerblade Park	4
10	Cycle lane needed	4

### **Suggestions can get Actions**

The top 5 issues, alongside other key activities that are underway on the estate for young people, were then laid out on separate tables and young people were encouraged to give us their ideas, let us know how they want to be involved and, where appropriate, sign up!.

- Ideas of what can be done - actions?
- How do you want to be involved?
- Who else do we need to know?

Graffiti Wall gets Feedback...

Meanwhile the graffiti wall was hanging up and throughout the session young people were encouraged to put their views on the Graffiti wall using post-its for the following questions about the estate:

### **Conclusion**

The Planning for Real<sup>®</sup> process on the Forches estate has enabled North Devon Homes to develop a multi-agency action plan for the estate regeneration based on the real experience and feelings of the community.

As in most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the issue of young people was highlighted as a priority – both in terms of young people being perceived as a problem – but also clearly identifying a lack of facilities as a concern.

The young people's event provided an opportunity to find out what the young people really felt about their environment, their homes, the services they receive and their aspirations for the future.

This has been really important for ensuring that we are not reacting to residents who 'perceive' young people as a problem – allowing us to focus on solutions rather than symptoms.

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and will provide a vehicle for their on-going involvement and for future consultation

#### **Public Service Agreement Target(s)**

- Create attractive and welcoming parks, play areas and public spaces.
- Improve the physical fabric and infrastructure of places..
- Engage and empower local people and communities
- Provide appropriate provision for children and young people, and tackle inequalities