

Promoting the neighbourhood plan to children and young people

When promoting the neighbourhood plan and consulting on the direction of the plan it may be easy to overlook young people and children. But young people can make up a sizable proportion, if not a majority of the population of a neighbourhood area. Below are some thoughts on how you might involve young people in the planning process and why it's important.

Do young people care about planning?

If we go by levels of formal participation in the planning system, it is unlikely that we would be able to prove young people engage with the planning system to any significant degree. However, though young people and particularly children may be unlikely to engage formally, this does not mean that they do not have opinions or insights about the built environment. These may just need to be eked out in different ways.

Why is it important to engage children and young people?

Many issues that face young people can be related back to the built environment. For example, obesity, loneliness and safety; both real and perceived. Young people may also offer fresh perspectives and insights which may not occur to their parents.

It may be overly ambitious to assume issues affecting young people can be solved by a neighbourhood plan alone, but both statutory policies and non-statutory aspirations, particularly those on CIL may be drafted with these things in mind.

Most local authorities have a [children and young people plan or strategy](#) which lays out issues facing young people and a vision for addressing these issues. You may be able to use such documents in conjunction with consultation responses from young people to craft parts of your neighbourhood plan.

How to engage young people

Some neighbourhood plan groups have run sessions in local schools. This can be appealing to teachers too as there is the opportunity to teach children directly about government and politics in their own area.

Other neighbourhood plan groups have designed surveys both for adults and children in their neighbourhood (see Upper Beeding). Such surveys can include specific questions which children and young people may be better positioned to answer.

Mobile Apps are also an obvious, but effective way to get young people to respond to surveys, or think about issues in their area. These do not need to be apps created specifically for your neighbourhood plan, instead they may be existing survey apps such as Survey Monkey or mapping apps such as Map my Community.

Then there are always completely unique consultation strategies such as the rave in Tattenhall, Cheshire, that required attendees to complete a neighbourhood planning survey before they could get in.

Are there secondary benefits to engaging children in planning decisions?

Running engagement sessions at local schools may mean that children come home and talk to their parents about the neighbourhood plan and share materials from the sessions. For time constrained adults this may be a key way to inform adults about the neighbourhood plan and how they can respond to public consultation on the plan.

Can children vote at Referendum?

No. To vote at referendum you must be eligible to vote (being 18 or over a key criteria) and you must live in the referendum area set out by the independent examiner.

Neighbourhood Planning



Resources

Locality have our [How to consult your community toolkit](#)

You may also find it interesting to read the report on [Young people and planning for garden villages](#), produced by the University of Birmingham.

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