

10 principles from earlier myplace projects

Theme 1 - Engagement

Principle number 1 - Engage with young people

myplace is about young people but you would be surprised how many projects forget that! There are many different ways of engaging with young people and there is no one 'right way' to do it. But we do know successful projects have involved young people from the very beginning.

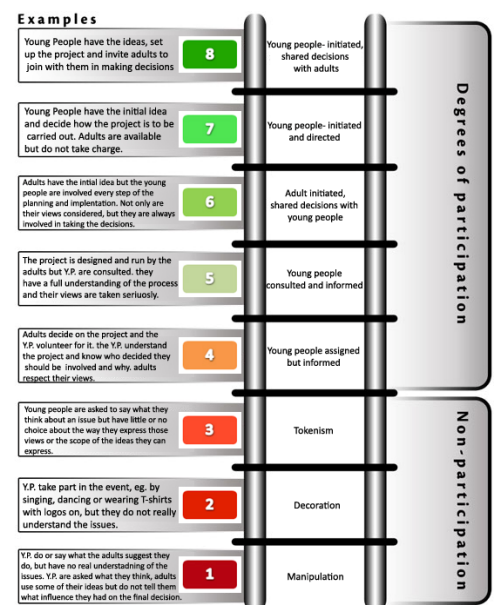
Knowsley - have a core board of young people who are involved in all meetings about the project. They led the consultation with different groups of young people and attend all the support team events (even the boring ones). This requires a strong commitment from a small number of young people, it can be time consuming but the trade off is ownership of decisions.

Middlesbrough - the youth service has led a large number of consultations with different groups of young people across the city. This gives each young person the chance to contribute, and is important for tackling territorial problems.

It is good to think about how you want to engage young people. The participation ladder is a good way of thinking about this. If young people are going to be involved in decision making then you need to have the structures in place that will provide them with the skills to do this.

Thinking about how you will engage young people will also help with managing expectations. This is a competitive process which means some bids will be unsuccessful. So build feedback into your consultation and consider other ways to harness young peoples enthusiasm if the bid is unsuccessful.

There are many consultation tools and techniques you can use to engage young people, make it interesting and fun. We have scoured the internet to come up with the best tools and put links to a few ideas on the website.



Principle number 2 – Partnerships

The first two rounds of **myplace** funding have shown us the difference between a signed piece of paper and genuine support. Partners may be happy to provide the signature but their commitment can wane when asked to commit to firm revenue funding.

A 'Partnership of Convenience' will not work for a **myplace** project. You need a strong set of partners who passionately believe in a shared set of values.

Nottingham – *This project is led by the local authority with a small number of key partners, including the local football club. This small group has developed the project based on a shared project ethos and approach.*

Solihull – *This project built on strong existing links. The organisation worked with 19 partners at the bid stage and got all to sign in principle agreements to work in the centre. When they had their bid approved they only needed to get the fine detail. The project engaged their partners strongly and in detail from early on.*

Building a partnership can be time consuming but there is some practical advice through the support team guide on the website.

If you are successful in your application partners will need to complete partnership agreements. These are legal documents agreed between BIG and the project. We found during the early rounds of **myplace** funding partners were unaware of this commitment. To help you think about what this involves we put together some guidance that you can access on the website. Being upfront with your partners early on about the commitment they need to make will help you pull together the best partnership and the best project.

Principle number 3 – Consult

Consultation does not start and stop with young people. The community, local authority, PCT, police, transport all need to come with you on your journey to a **myplace** centre.

It is important to start this early on. Know who your stakeholders are and involve them in your bid development. Start working with the community if your proposed centre is in a residential area.

Longbridge – *This project is part of a much larger master plan. High levels of unemployment and deprivation caused by the plant closure meant there are already many partners working in the area. The project also needed to integrate with other work on the site, liaise closely with planners to identify a suitable area and the local community, so the services in the centre would meet the local community's needs.*

Bristol – *The project is developing a site in the centre of Bristol. The area is identified for regeneration, but to introduce a youth centre meant they needed to work closely with planners and other stakeholders in the local authority and wider to make sure enthusiasm for the project extended to all decision makers.*

The key message is to allow time to get it done. Relationships need building with young people, communities and partners. Never expect people to be happy with an idea parachuted on to them, they need the opportunity to help develop the ethos, ideas and designs.

Theme 2 - Plan

Principle number 4 – Plan the project not the application

A **myplace** project is a big commitment, it is a resource hungry building needing a large amount of money just to get the door open, let alone put on any activities. But in the right location it can be a fantastic opportunity for young people and real catalyst for change about attitudes to and opportunities for young people.

To make it happen you have to be realistic and think not about the application but delivering the project.

Blackpool – *The local authority worked on a capital strategy for investment in youth facilities. Before the funding was available they had a vision for the town's youth facilities that would see the town split into three areas each covered by a large youth facility. When myplace funding was available they were able to target their priority area;*

Staffordshire – *The project set up a set of project groups. Each had responsibility for shaping a part of the project. Members of these groups also formed the main board meeting regularly to discuss progress. Young people are members of each group and are part of the decision making of each group.*

When planning your project you should think about:

- A realistic work programme – recognise the effect of being part of a campus development, acquiring sites, developing partnerships and planning for the unexpected.
- Bringing in the right people – developing a **myplace** project needs a wide range of skills from youth workers and designers to project managers and planners. A well planned project will consider all these people's views (and build their time into a resource plan!).
- Ambition – don't be afraid of trying new ideas and aiming for something truly spectacular!
- An unexpected outcome – your plan may result in a project which is not right for **myplace**. But if it is right for your area you have a better chance of winning money from other sources.

The biggest challenge for any **myplace** project is thinking of how it will be funded in the long term. Once the building is built where will the revenue streams come from? How secure is the funding being promised to you?

To help the support team have put together some Business Planning questions. These are available on the [website](#) and will help you think about where the money will come from.

There are also some excellent examples from existing **myplace** projects of securing funding from different sources.

Onside – *these projects use a model that brings together local authority, private sector and grant funding to provide centres entirely focused on young people;*

Colebridge – *this third sector organisation has a dedicated Corporate Social Responsibility Officer who builds links with local businesses. They have a policy document setting out how they approach this that can be accessed on the [website](#).*

Principle number 5 – Location, Location, Location

The location of your **myplace** centre is one of the most important decisions you will make. The driver for your site must be a location that is best for young people.

It is important however for projects to be practical. Some of the biggest delays from early **myplace** projects have been around site acquisition. From negotiating swapping small “ransom strips” to handling developer going bust, there is potential for lengthy delays to your timescales. Some examples from the projects so far that have bought both benefits and delays include:

Campus projects (several) – linked to BSF or PCT centres these projects often have the advantage of reduced site costs but delays to other parts can knock on to the **myplace** project. The location is also pre-determined and target groups could be suspicious of activities linked to schools. However, these projects are often built around the needs of young people with excellent transport links, a familiar location and access to other facilities on the same site.

Torbay – on the sea front, this project is in the town centre so easily accessible by all young people. It’s prominent location is also contributing to improving the town centre.

Middlesbrough – the site for the centre was chosen because of its neutral location. It was not ‘owned’ by one group. The young people thought a neutral location in a regeneration area would suit both the young people and the town.

Public transport is a major issue for young people. Existing projects have tackled this in different ways although many have yet to reach a perfect solution, examples of the approaches taken so far include:

- Only identifying sites within 200 meters of a major bus stop;
- Working with transport providers to re-route buses past the centre;
- Exploring existing services (e.g. dial- a-bus) to act as a link between the centre and other areas; and
- Including mobile provision as part of the **myplace** centre.

Principle number 6 – Strategic fit

Whether you are a public or third sector project you should link into your Local Authorities *Strategy for Change for Youth Facilities*.

There is a good chance your local authority will not have completed their *Strategy for Change for Youth Facilities*! However your **myplace** project should fit within a wider capital strategy for your local area. This will help secure any revenue funding and ensure longer term local authority support.

The support team has put together a detailed case study about **Islington**, showing how they developed their strategy, available on the [website](#).

The support team can also help you develop your strategy (whether you are successful or not) once your full application is submitted.

Theme 3 - Vision

Principle number 7 – Have a world class vision (and sell it)

World class is a term you will hear often when it comes to **myplace**. But what does it actually mean? What does a world class facility look like? What does it feel like? This is a question you should continually ask yourself. Challenge your ideas and stretch to world class.

myplace will generate over 65 centres, all of them should be aspiring to world class status. The ones that will achieve it will all have been built on a common ethos that they were able to articulate and share with others.

A world class building is important but it's what you do and how you engage people that really matter. Your building design will only be World Class if it supports World Class delivery. The starting point for a great design has to be a clear and compelling ethos.

Having an ethos is only one part of it, you need to be able to share it with others and that's where the branding and promotion of your project comes in. If your project simply provides a better environment for existing activities and existing participants you will have failed. Providing new opportunities and engaging young people who are not currently involved in any activity is the real goal.

Bolton Lads and Girls Club – this club started in 1889. It opened a new £5.1 million centre in 2002. It provides young people with a dedicated building, solely for their use. The centres ethos is quality and it boasts top quality sports equipment and places for young people to meet and eat.

Open – the first **myplace** to open, this project builds on a vision for the young people of Norfolk and Norwich. Built to provide activities they want it is a drug and alcohol free nightclub, live music venue and sports club. A world class vision, turned into reality.

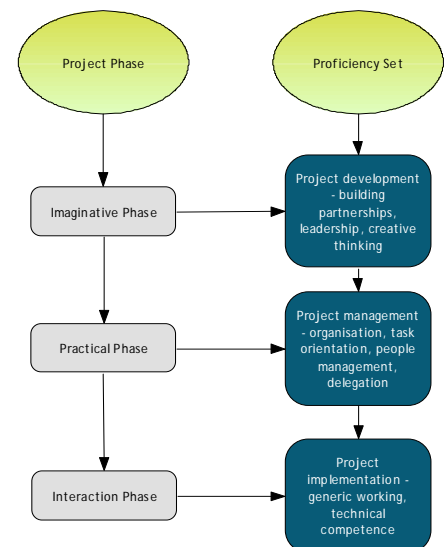
Principle number 8 – Leadership and people

The successful **myplace** projects are all built on passionate people with strong leadership. You need to have a great project champion that can drive the project and bring in the key people.

Some passionate people involved in myplace include:

Janet Johnson at Colebridge Trust – the project manager for the project, she is constantly looking for new ideas and ways of working. She has worked to raise the aspirations and quality of the project.

Reg and Jeff from Hinckley – Reg has run Hinckley Club for Young People for 30 years. Through myplace they are taking the opportunity to give the young people of Hinckley something world class. Reg and Jeff work passionately to make the project a success.



Often the mistake projects make is thinking they need one person to cover all parts of the project. But there are different skills needed at different times and the challenge for a strong leader is to draw on these at the best time. The figure above shows some of the skills you need at each of the stages of a projects development.

Principle number 9 – Be Enterprising

Most **myplace** projects will be run as social businesses. Even those lucky enough to have ‘secure’ local authority funding may find that tightening public expenditure means they will need to generate income from other sources.

To run an enterprising project you need enterprising people. People have a great capacity to change and to become more entrepreneurial given the right support and training. You can do a short quiz (link on the website) to find out how enterprising your team currently is. If you lack any enterprisers see if you can provide training or support to members of your team. This will pay dividends for the projects long term future.

Getting the right legal structure for your enterprise is also important. If you are planning to generate income from your activities you may need a different governance or legal structure to allow you to do this. We have provided some advice on the website that will help you plan this into your delivery.

***Hunslet** – this club provides young people with activities when they want, in the evenings. But it funds them by using the club in the day to deliver contracts for schools. The club is entirely funded by providing a space during the day for vocational training.*

***Bolton Lads and Girls Club** – this club is always looking for different income streams, they know income is always at risk. They seek a balanced income that does not rely too heavily on one source and takes opportunities wherever they are including fund raising events, business sponsorship and contract delivery. The club adapts to available funding streams, but keeps its ethos to provide out of school access to all the young people in Bolton.*

Theme 4 – Use the Website!

Principle number 10 – Learn from others

You are not an island but part of a bigger, exciting programme. There are already 62 **myplace** projects funded and nearly all are happy to share there trials and tribulations with you. The contact details are available on the website, you might also want to visit some successful projects (but please check if they have time to spare).

The website is a resource for you to use there are case studies, guidance notes, stories and information that you can access from the website.

You can also ‘Ask an Expert’. If you submit your query about your bid through the website you can get an answer (shared with everyone) www.myplacesupport.co.uk

August 2009