



Coventry City Council

6.3

Public report

REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

9th December 2009

REPORT OF: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TITLE: Report back on Visit to Auschwitz & Krakow in Poland – Anti-Racist Project

DATE: 5th – 7th January, 2009

VENUE: Krakow and visit to Aushchwitz

1. Recommendation

Members acknowledge the benefits and outcomes resulting from the visit to Auschwitz for both the young people involved and the officers/agencies.

2. Background

The visit to Auschwitz and Krakow in Poland was part of a wider Anti Racist Project involving young people who live in the Coventry NDC area. Ten young males were identified through the Youth Inclusion Project to participate in the project. The project aimed to challenge and tackle racist views and behaviour.

- 2.1 The project was delivered over a nine month period and was developed by the City Council's Hate Crime Reduction Officer together with REWIND, an Anti Racist Training Provider who were commissioned to deliver the programme. The programme included sessions on what is racism, myth busting, identity and demonology, DNA profiling and a visit to the International Slavery Museum.
- 2.2 The project enabled the young people to discuss controversial issues in a safe and supportive environment. The participants recorded their learning through photographs, films and interviews. There was 100% attendance throughout.
- 2.3 At the end of August 2008, four of the young people attended a wider hate crime event to launch a Hate Crime Resource Pack and deliver a presentation of their work. They were presented with certificates by the Lord Mayor of Coventry, Councillor Andy Matchet. The Lord Mayor showed interest and support for the project and asked for it to be extended by linking it to the National Holocaust Memorial Commemoration Day event which was to be held in Coventry in January 2009. This included asking them to accompany him on an official visit to Auschwitz in Poland.

2.4 The visit took place at the beginning of January 2009 (5th - 7th) and a range of people were invited to attend including eight young people, the City Council's Hate Crime Reduction Officer, the Advisory Teacher for Citizenship and PSHE, 2 Youth Offending Service Officers and a REWIND officer, together with the Lord Mayor. The group were supported by a Holocaust Education Trainer.

3. Cost of attending

3.1 The cost of the trip was £7,817.53.

4. Benefits

- The young people gained a greater understanding of the holocaust and its impact on not only the Jews but other groups of people who were victims and survivors.
- The experience had a profound impact on a number of the young people and in particular, changed the way they think about racism.
- Some of the young people continued being involved in the National Holocaust Memorial Day event held in Coventry, which demonstrates the shift in their behaviour/perspectives.
- Two of the young people spoke at a 6th form conference and a citywide year 9 conference.
- The group were filmed by Central News and were interviewed for an article produced by local and national press (The Coventry Telegraph and The Guardian).
- Members of the group acknowledged that the experience gave them the confidence to challenge and stand up against hate crime in their communities.
- There was an immediate positive visible change of half of the young people who attended which has been acknowledged amongst school staff and parents.
- Two of the young people feel they are more focused in terms of future career options.
- Whilst one cannot equate that the direct result of this positive change was solely due to the visit, the experience itself has been one that these young people will remember and no doubt will have a lasting effect.

List of background papers	
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Papers open to public inspection	
Description of paper:	Location
Nil	