

# Big Conversation

Consultation with Young People (0 to 19)

March to April 2017



Presented by Business Design Team & Community Enablement Team

Draft Version – April 2017





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Big Conversation Workshop – Mount Pleasant Primary School, Shrewsbury

# Building a bespoke toolkit to enable Shropshire Council to understand what makes young people in Shropshire tick.

## Background to the Big Conversation

By 2020, on-going Government cuts will leave Shropshire Council with approximately one quarter of the funding that paid for over 150 services in 2015. The £44m revenue support grant (money that is paid to councils each year to help provide services) will end. This means the Council will have to stop delivering some services, and make the remaining resources go further.

The Big Conversation is a five-year programme. It was launched in November 2015 and its overall aim is to engage with individuals, communities and stakeholders across Shropshire about the financial challenges that Shropshire Council faces, to better understand perceptions of service spending priorities, ways to make savings and increase local involvement in delivering services.

Over 2,400 residents and organisations have already taken part in The Big Conversation through surveys and workshops. In December 2016 Shropshire Council once again asked residents to take part in The Big Conversation and asked for your views on what they could do to ensure that Shropshire continues to remain a great place to live, learn and work.

The Council recognises that it is important to seek views from residents who can sometimes struggle to be heard. They asked the Business Design Team and Community Enablement Team to engage with 0 to 19 years olds across the county in order to understand more about how they feel about their communities, their health and their future. This report provides a summary of the conversations that we had with over 450 young people in primary and secondary schools, colleges and youth clubs across Shropshire (Oswestry, Wem, Shrewsbury, Bridgnorth, Craven Arms, Cleobury Mortimer and Ludlow).

## Introduction

The Council asked the Business Design Team and Community Enablement Team to work together in order to engage with 0 to 19 years olds across the county. We wanted to understand more about young people's hopes for the future, what their role was in their communities and what they valued most. In order to do this we decided to run 18 workshops with young people in various setting across the county. As well as running workshops to gather qualitative information, we also gathered quantitative information through questionnaires and surveys. The partnership worked well. The Community Enablement Team were able to exploit their local connections and arranged the workshops with each setting, whilst the Business Design Team were able to design a set of tools which enabled us to collectively engage with over 450 young people in just over one week, and co-facilitate the workshops. Following the engagement activity, we were able to collectively analyse the data and synthesis what we had learned in to a set of key learning outcomes.

Our key lines of enquiry for this work were be based around three Shropshire Council Corporate Plan themes:

- Prosperous Economy
- Resilient Communities
- Healthy People



### Key Statistics:

- 1 ½ Weeks
- 18 Workshops
- 78 Questionnaire Responses
- 476 Young People
- 14 Boxes of Maltesers
- 6 Bags of Kinder Chocolate
- 347 Post-it Notes
- 7 Key Learning Outcomes

# Finding out more about the lives of young people living in Shropshire in 2017.

## Objectives

Owing to the age groups we were working with, we decided to take a broad approach to questioning, focusing conversation around a set of high-level topic areas, rather than asking specific questions about specific Council services. Therefore, our overall objective was to simply find out more about the lives of young people living in Shropshire in 2017. We remained open minded about what we would find out throughout our work. However, we set the context of our enquiry broadly within the following three Shropshire Council Corporate Plan themes:

### Prosperous Economy

We wanted to understand more about how aspirational young people in Shropshire are and what they want and expect from life. We did this by seeking to:

- Understand what services (in their broadest sense) young people access online - *Why do they access them this way? What do they value about the online services they use?*
- Understand how young people both use and access the internet and what their expectations are around online content and internet access.
- Learn more about whether young people intend to access higher education, further education, apprenticeships or other employment - *Why do they make the choices they make? What motivates them? What barriers do they face?*

### Resilient Communities

We wanted to understand more about how well equipped young people in Shropshire are to deal with what life might throw at them (big or small) and who they turn to for help and support. We did this by seeking to:

- Understand what resilience means to you people - *What does resilience in life mean? What does resilience in school look like?*
- Understand what community means to young people - *Is community a geographic area or a virtual collection of likeminded individuals? What part do young people play in their communities? Are they activists or volunteers and what motivates them to take part in community activity?*

- Understand more about the support networks young people have - *Who supports them? Who do they support? What type of support do they need? What types of support do they value?*
- Understand what part public transport plays in helping young people to thrive - *How do young people move around? What types of transport do they use? What is the impact of using or not using public transport on both the young people and their families or support networks?*

## Healthy People

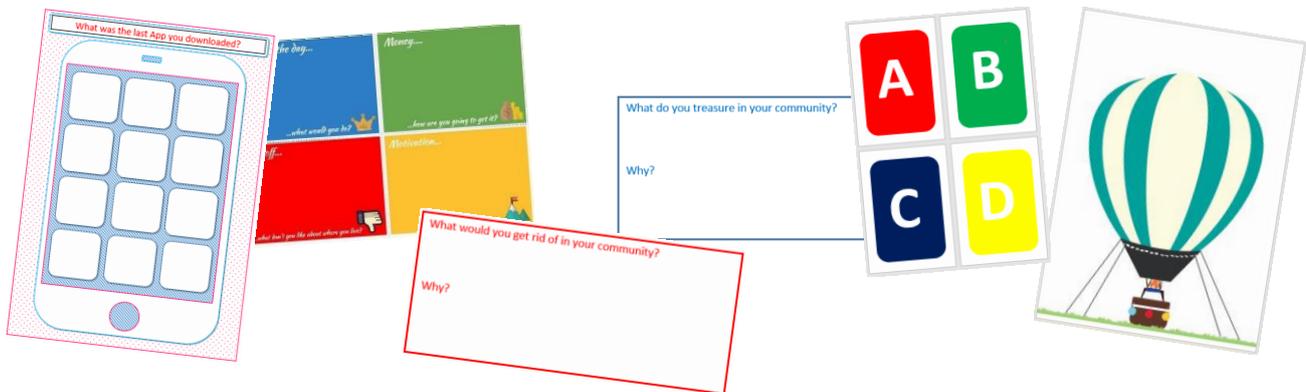
We wanted to understand more about how happy, social and active young people in Shropshire are. We did this by seeking to:

- Understand what being active means to young people and what being healthy means to young people.
- Understand what social isolation means to young people.
- Understand how young people might use technology to help them achieve better health outcomes.
- Understand more about which health services young people access, how they go about accessing them, and when – *what are their expectations when it comes to health services?*



## Building a Toolkit

The business Design Team have a portfolio of tools that they are able to draw upon in order provide engaging content that allows facilitators to get the most out of workshops. Most tools have a specific function, but can be tweaked in order to provide a more tailored approach depending on the group of people being engaged. For example, a visioning tool might take the form of a blank newspaper front page, a magazine front page, a banker’s cheque, a Facebook status update, a tweet, a golden ticket etc. Prior to undertaking the workshops our two teams came together in order to select a toolkit that we could use in order to engage with the young people. During the session the Community Enablement Team were able to provide additional suggestions on how tools could be tweaked based on their knowledge of the groups we would be engaging with. It would not have been possible to design a single tool which would have been engaging to young people of all ages, so we decided to create a range of tools which could be used at the discretion of the facilitators. Before each session, facilitators decided which tools to use, but remained flexible.



The toolkit we designed comprised the following tools:

<b>Ruler for a day</b>	This tool can be used for all young people taking part
<p><b>Aim:</b> To understand young people’s ideas, motivations and issues that affect them.</p> <p><b>Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On blue quarter write “Ruler” and ask, “If you were ruler for a day what would be the first thing you would do to improve your area”?</li> <li>On green quarter write “Money” and ask what do you plan to do for money?</li> <li>On red quarter write, “Turn off” and ask what really is a turn off in your area?</li> <li>On orange quarter write “Motivation” and ask what motivates you? What helps you be more creative?</li> </ul>	

<b>Community map</b>	This tool is best suited to workshops in youth clubs
<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>To understand what community means to young people – actual and virtual. Gain a vision of their ‘community of the future’.</i></p> <p><b>Method:</b> <i>Using a range of art materials create a ‘community of the future’ on a large sheet of brown paper.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What would motivate young people to be part of a community?</i></li> <li>• <i>What motivates you to volunteer or be a community activist?</i></li> </ul>	

<b>Hot Air Balloon</b>	This tool is best suited to workshops in secondary schools
<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>To visualise a plan or the young person’s future – Higher education/University/Apprenticeship/Work</i></p> <p><b>Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On the balloon- write issues and factors that will be needed for the proposal to fly</i></li> <li>• <i>In the basket- write the names of people or organisations who can help and support your aims.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ropes- write what will hold it back, before the balloon/project has started?</i></li> <li>• <i>Clouds- write what could push the balloon off course? (once the project has started)</i></li> <li>• <i>Making it fly- above the balloon write factors that will make things happen and work.</i></li> </ul>	

<b>20 questions</b>	This tool can be used for all young people taking part
<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>To gather quantitative data using the Electronic voting system (and survey monkey). Questions are more suitable for older young people.</i></p> <p><b>Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Each participant has a key pad linked to a screen with 20 questions and they answer in a given time (countdown on screen).</i></li> <li>• <i>Each participant fills the questionnaire out using survey monkey.</i></li> </ul>	

<b>White boards (big and little)</b>	This tool can be used for all young people taking part
<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>To gather thoughts, feelings and quotes from young people about a particular topic, theme or question.</i></p> <p><b>Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Big Boards - Put a large white board or black board in a prominent place where many young people will pass it or see it. Pose a question and leave pens or chalk so young people can add a comment.</i></li> </ul>	

- *Little Boards - Ask participants to write the answer to a simple question on a small board. Take a photo of them holding it.*

<b>Phone apps</b>	This tool is best suited to workshops in secondary schools and colleges
<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>To gather an understanding of what young people are interested in, why they chose that app and how it 'helps' them every day.</i></p> <p><b>Method:</b> <i>Young people sit in a circle get out their phones and scroll through it and choose their favourite app on their phones and have the opportunity to use it for a few minutes – the group then take it in turns to share what it is and the young person records it on a sheet under 'app headings'. Next exercise is to open their phones again and open up the latest app they downloaded, again use it for a few minutes and then share with the group what it was, why they downloaded it and how it helps them every day.</i></p>	

<b>Community Ballot Box</b>	This tool can be used for all young people taking part
<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>To gather an understanding of what young people value in their community, and what they would like to get rid of in their community</i></p> <p><b>Method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ask young people to fill out a blue ballot slip to vote for the thing that they value most in their community.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ask young people to fill out a red ballot slip to vote for the thing that they don't value in their community.</i></li> </ul>	

<b>Pass the parcel (with questions)</b>	This tool can be used for all young people taking part
<p><b>Aim:</b> <i>For young people to come up with quick solutions to issues, problems or questions given to them. Starting to think about issues and what other young people think about them.</i></p> <p><b>Method:</b> <i>This game follows the format of traditional pass the parcel, but each layer reveals a question or issue that the person who has the parcel when the music stops can choose to answer themselves, nominate someone else in the group to answer or pose the question to the whole group (sweets/treats can be included). Encourages openness and honesty while allowing for creative thinking, encouraging young people to talk about issues at hand and find solutions.</i></p>	

## Making Sense of Data

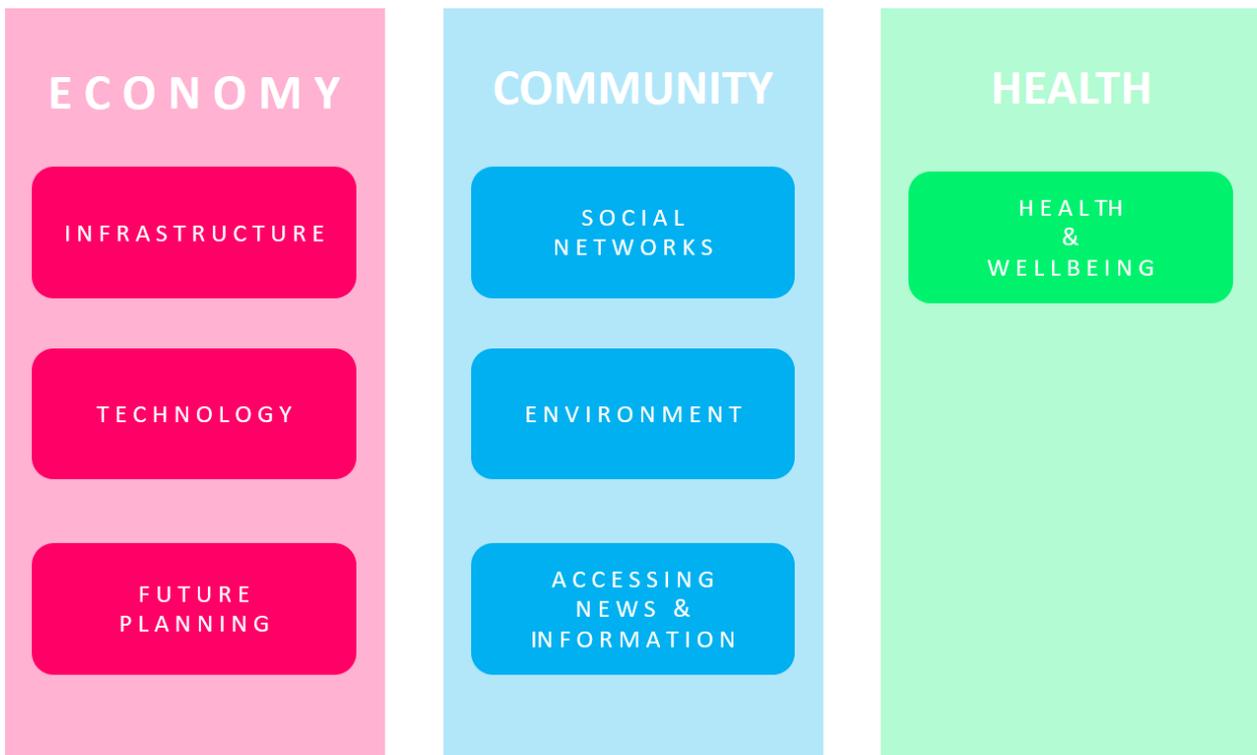
Following an intense 1 ½ weeks of workshops, the team had gathered a huge amount of data using a variety of different tools. We used a technique called 'design synthesis' to consolidate our research into key learning outcomes. This was trickier than usual owing to the wide range of tools used to gather the information. However, following two days of design synthesis we were able to make sense of what we found; seven key learning outcome themes emerged.



### Key Learning Outcome Themes

- Infrastructure
- Future Planning
- Technology
- Environment
- Social Networks
- Accessing News & Information
- Health & Wellbeing

In order to provide a structure for this report we decide to correlate each learning outcome theme with the corporate plan theme to which they were most strongly suited.



However, none of the learning outcome themes are distinct from each other or the other corporate plan themes. We have found lots of cross over. In particular:

- Infrastructure – Environment: *The rural nature of the county has a big impact on the infrastructure required to help young people thrive.*
- Environment - Future Planning: *The environments young people grow up in often have a key determining factor on their future plans, particularly on whether they see themselves living in Shropshire or moving away.*
- Future Planning - Social Networks: *Young people are influenced by their on and offline social networks.*
- Social Networks – Technology: *Online social networks are important, and so technology plays a big part in how young people connect with each other and their communities.*
- Technology – Health: *From wearables (i.e. Fitbit) to online health forums and accessing personal health records, technology plays a big part in health & wellbeing.*
- Health – Environment: *Young people value their ‘happy places’ which are varied in type, but all related to the environment around them.*

**NB:** *The images used to illustrate each of the learning outcome themes in the section that follows have been gathered from a variety of sources that, whilst illustrative of the theme, are not directly related to The Big Conversation or this project. All sources are referenced for information.*



Image: Shropshire Council: Have your say (consultation)



**Topics of Discussion:** *State care, Housing & Homelessness, Transport, Public transport, Driving / Cars and roads, Schools, Shops, Public Toilets, Public places, Clubs, Church, The Arts, Community activities*



**Quote:** *"I'd get rid of politics because it's too much of a cufufal"* College Student, Shrewsbury



**Key Statistics (from the 20 questions survey monkey questionnaire, 78 respondents):**

- **Q4 What device do you use to access the internet?** - Xbox or PlayStation 9.2%, Tablet or smartphone 50.0%, Laptop or computer 27.6%, Other 13.2%
- **Q5 What stops you accessing the internet?** - Lack of Wi-Fi or phone signal 64.5%, My parents or the school 6.6%, Running out of data 7.9%, Other 21.1%
- **Q13 Do you use public transport?** – Yes 81.6%, No 18.4%



**Observations:** For the purposes of this work, the term infrastructure is used in the widest sense and should best be thought of in terms of 'the structures that support young people to live their lives'. As well as encompassing basic physical and organisational structures and facilities across the county (e.g. public transport, public health and other public services), we are also including things such as internet connectivity, clubs, leisure facilities and the arts – some of which are provided or supported by the Council, others are not.

The young people we had conversations with often talked enthusiastically about schools, public transport and health services. However, key insights tended to focus around the following areas:

**Public Transport** - A large proportion of young people use public transport to help them get around, especially as they get older. Public transport is an essential lifeline for them, helping them access college, leisure/social activities and part-time work. Young people who live outside of the market towns find it more difficult to get around as public transport is less frequent, and can often rely on family members for lifts. During the community mapping exercise, young people from the Bridgnorth Youth Club demonstrated their creative imaginations by discussing 'flying cars of the future'.

**The internet** - All of the young people we spoke to across all age groups were able to access the internet and did so on a regular basis. A parent often controlled access, especially when young people were of primary school age, but it was also determined by other factors such as mobile phone signal, and broadband speeds. Many young people described patchy service, with those who never had any problems with connectivity very much in a minority.

**Housing** – Older young people were concerned about the price of housing. Many are worried about how they will afford to get on the housing ladder. Again, younger children at the Bridgnorth Youth Club had some creative ideas for the future of housing, discussing eco housing and the possibility of building underground. A problem that was often discussed was that of homelessness. Young people, especially in parts of the county where homelessness is more visible, feel concerned for those in need and felt that that homelessness was a visible problem that 'someone' should be solving.

**Places** – Clubs, sports facilities, skate parks, swimming pools and youth centres were obviously cherished by young people. Young people often joined clubs that were available locally and were often influenced by friends who attend, or to a lesser extent parents. Young people often attended two or three different clubs (sometimes more). There was a broad variety of clubs discussed, from gardening to martial arts. Young people value spending time with friends and learning new skills in an environment that gave them a certain amount of freedom to express themselves. For those young people who attended sports clubs it was often obvious that they were proud of their achievements and were happy to be working towards a specific goal or objective. Libraries and churches were also discussed frequently with many young people voting for them as places that they valued in their communities. Shops and local businesses were also treasured and missed when they closed.

**State care** – Younger children often showed a keen respect for older people and often voted for care homes for the elderly as places that should be treasured in their community. Even at a young age primary school children see state care for the elderly as a right for a good life served. Respect for older people at a young age was commonplace. However, teenagers often talked about how older people viewed them negatively.

The Arts – Young people told us about how they valued the various festivals that took place around the county. Older young people talked about the value that festivals bring to the market towns, both culturally and financially. Young people based at Ludlow College contributed well to this topic area.

Community – Young people understood the term community, with many understanding the difference between online communities and geographic ones. Many described community as a place where they felt ‘safe’ or ‘supported’, often using words like ‘friendly’ to describe them. As with older adults, localised issues affected young people. Surprisingly paying for toilets in Ludlow was a particular bugbear for some, whilst pub noise and people smoking and getting drunk in public were concerns for others. However, it was apparent that the young people, especially the younger age groups, could often be influenced by their parent’s views on these topics.



Image: UCS – Original Shrewsbury



**Topics of Discussion:** *Working in Shropshire and elsewhere, University, Travel*



**Quote:** *“I’ve got to leave Shropshire do my chosen career” College Student, Shrewsbury*



**Key Statistics (from the 20 questions survey monkey questionnaire, 78 respondents):**

- **Q1 Where will you be in 5 years time?** - At university 41.0%, In employment 43.6%, Travelling the world 14.1%, Sat on my parents sofa 1.3%
- **Q2 Where will you be living in 10 years time?** - Shropshire 19.7%, London 5.3%, Somewhere else in the UK 56.6%, Abroad 18.4%
- **Q3 Do you know what you would like to do when you leave school?** - Yes 75.0%, No 25.0%
- **Q7 Do your parents have job?** - Yes both parents/carers 60.5%, Yes one parent/carer 36.8%, No 2.6%
- **Q8 Do you have a part time job?** – Yes 32.9%, No 67.1% (answers including - no time, need to chill, will look soon)



**Observations:** Having a plan - Most young people did have some kind of plan or vision for the future, even the younger ones. However, not all young people seemed sure about how to get there. This

became more prevalent the older the groups got. It was clear that even up to the age of 19 young people were influenced by their support networks (family and then friends), and their ability to have a clear plan was directly linked to the people within their support network. Often there seemed to be a perception that if you are bright you go to university, and if you are perceived not to be, you don't.

Home and family life affect the decisions young people were making. Those who saw themselves staying in the county after they left education would often talk about staying because it is the place where their family live. Conversely, many of the younger age group children who said that they wanted to live elsewhere often cited their families as a reason to move to another town or city – 'my nan lives there' or 'my aunty lives there'. In their later teens, young people often seemed to want to break free of their local surroundings and experience life elsewhere. Often young people wanted to experience new and diverse surroundings and cultures. One young person who had a distinctive style told us how she liked to spend time in Liverpool and other cities because she blended in.

When older young people talked about their careers they often felt as though they would have to leave Shropshire in order to pursue them at a high level. From law to the creative industries young people told us repeatedly that they didn't see a place for themselves in Shropshire. Less frequently, but often enough to mention, young people spoke about following their parents in to a career. However, this tended to be those young people who had parents in trades or parents who owned their own business.

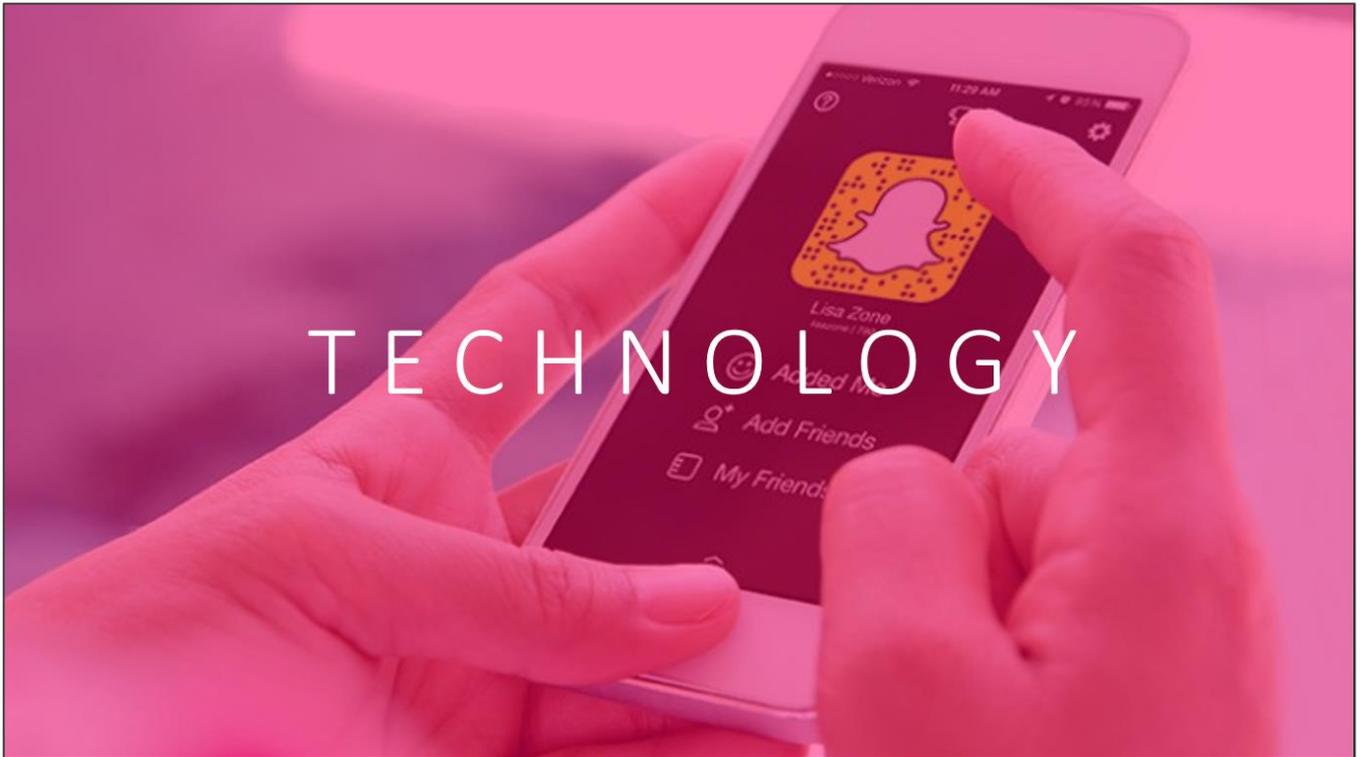


Image: Snapchat



**Topics of Discussion:** *The Internet, Hardware, Software/apps (including Email, Games, Travel, Shopping, Social Media, Entertainment, Photos, Learning, Banking, Food & Cooking).*



**Quote:** *“Without my phone I’d die”* College Student, Shrewsbury



**Key Statistics (from the 20 questions survey monkey questionnaire, 78 respondents):**

- **Q4 What device do you use to access internet?** - Xbox or PlayStation 9.2%, Tablet or smartphone 50.0%, Laptop or computer 27.6%, Other 13.2%



**Observations:** Young people use a range of online services, although most don't use the Shropshire Council website. All of the young people we spoke to were born after 2000. This means that all young people currently in the education system in Shropshire can be thought of as true 'digital natives'. Most of the teenagers we spoke to are unable to remember a time without broadband, let alone a time without the internet. To our young people access to internet connectivity is an essential part of life, with technology of all kinds being seen as an enabler to a 'normal' life. Primary school aged children told us that they used google everyday, and older young people said that they would 'die' without their phone.

The internet is accessed over a variety of devices, from smartphones to games consoles.

A key insight is the popularity of ‘coding’ with many primary school aged children. Young boys in particular often told us how they liked to code. Many of the young people we engaged with in primary schools had linked technology of some kind to their aspirations for the future. Some of those that coded saw it forming part of a future career, many outside of the county. This was in part due to the fact that they saw many of the big IT companies as being situated in London or California.

When it comes to the types of apps used by young people, the results were surprising. Snapchat was by far the most popular form of communication between friends. Some young people are having upwards of 10,000 interactions a year on Snapchat, and one young person told us that a friend had made upwards of 30,000. This level of adoption is reasonably common amongst certain groups of older young people. Instagram come a close second. Girls tended to prefer Instagram. We found that the apps used by young people depended largely on those being used within their peer groups.

Perhaps surprisingly, Facebook is not used as a default social network for many of the young people we spoke to. Many tended to use Facebook to keep in touch with wider family, but not with friends, even viewing messenger as a poorer relation to Snapchat. Twitter didn’t feature in our conversations at all.

App Name	Genre	No. of young people using this app	No. of young people who use this app the most	No. young people who downloaded this app most recently
Snapchat	Communication & Social Media	35	26	9
Instagram	Communication & Social Media	31	23	8
You Tube	Music & Entertainment	10	8	2
Facebook	Communication & Social Media	9	6	3
Spotify	Music & Entertainment	8	4	4
Facebook Messenger	Communication & Social Media	8	8	0
Driving Theory Test	Knowledge & Education	5	0	5
Netflix	Music & Entertainment	3	1	2

Google Chrome	Access to the Internet	3	3	0
WhatsApp	Communication & Social Media	3	3	0
BBC iPlayer	Music & Entertainment	3	1	2

Table 1: *The types of mobile phone app being used by young people*

Young people utilise apps to communicate and listen to music or access other entertainment. Amongst the older young people, a trend is emerging of accessing TV on demand, using mobile devices, rather than watching in line with the schedules on a physical TV – perhaps an indication of a wider emerging ‘on demand’ service expectation?



Image: Severn Valley Country Park



**Topics of Discussion:** *Tranquillity, Litter, Parks and Play areas, Countryside & Animals, Dog mess, Crime & Violence, Alcohol & Drugs, Safety, History, Pollution*



**Quote:** *“I like the fields and the farms because they are pretty and farms keep the heritage of the area”*  
Primary School Student, South Shropshire



**Observations:** Young people value the green spaces in Shropshire. Young people outside of the towns value the countryside, with young girls in particular often talking about animals (both farm animals, pets and more exotic varieties). It is only as young people get older that they also talk about the countryside as being restrictive both socially and culturally, often discussing mobility as a limiting factor. As young people enter their mid to late teens they start to see the attractions of moving to bigger city areas. However, many still saw the benefits of living close to the countryside. Some that we spoke to were attracted to the anonymity or opportunity that a city would provide, but liked the idea of living in a peaceful environment, perhaps on the outskirts of large cities like London – balancing the best of both worlds.



Image: Shropshire Star - Rally in The Valley, near Bridgnorth 2013



**Topics of Discussion:** *People, Influencers (i.e. family or friends), Helping others, Home*



**Quote:** *“Community is anywhere you go, online or offline, where there are people who can help you”*

Primary School Pupil, Oswestry



**Key Statistics (from the 20 questions survey monkey questionnaire, 78 respondents):**

- **Q9 Who do you turn to when you need help?** - Family member or friends 43.4%, School or clubs 2.6%, I manage by myself 31.6%, Other 22.4%
- **Q11 What is most likely to keep you going through difficult tasks?** - My family 39.5%, My teachers 3.9% My friends, 25.0%, Other (answers including - music, animals) 31.6%
- **Q13 Do you regularly speak to you neighbours?** - Yes 55.3%, No 44.7%



**Observations:** Support - Family was the number one, overwhelming factor when it came to support for young people. Feeling supported and being supported is important – knowing that they have family, friends, community, and inspiring people nearby, that they can call upon, or rely upon their support,

is key to a prosperous future. Financial support (or Money) for young people to go to a 'good' University was going to come from Mum and Dad.

Community spirit or helping others (including being kind) often makes young people feel happy. Many felt that helping others would result in those people reciprocating when they need support themselves. Being respectful of others and having respect from older people and the community around them was extremely important to young people, as they all like spending time in parks, green spaces and the countryside, with friends, family and their animals.

Influences - Not all influences were good, many young people viewed a divide between the generations. Many young people have adopted issues or causes that family members (usually Dad or Mum) have been exposed to or struggled with; particularly negative experiences e.g. noisy ('psycho') neighbours, dog poo, migrants, and litter. These feelings have been passed down and become the young person's issue. In addition, many wanted to 'get rid' of their siblings. However, many children we spoke to told us of 'personal influences', people in their community who had influenced them greatly, in a positive way; music teachers, Air-Cadet and Scout Leaders, Youth Club Workers, all 'teaching' them life skills that they need, but that aren't necessarily taught in schools. Grandparents had a positive influence on young people too; many said how proud they were of their grandparents achievements in life.



Image: Facebook Live



**Topics of Discussion:** *Trust*



**Quote:** *"I don't trust the media"* College Student, Shrewsbury



**Key Statistics (from the 20 questions survey monkey questionnaire, 78 respondents):**

- **Q10 How do you prefer to find out about what is happening in the world?** – TV 30.3%, Social media or apps 57.9%, Radio 5.3%, Asking people I know 6.6%



**Observations:** In general, young people were happy to answer this question. Younger children tended to get their news from their parents, or in some cases from programs such as a Newsround which some did watch at school.

The young people of college age that we spoke to were often keen to convey their mistrust of the mainstream media. They preferred to get their news from their own trusted sources, such as through their online networks and social media. It seems that in many ways these young adults preferred to take in a variety of information and edit it themselves into a version of events they perceived to represent reality, based on their own frames of reference and instincts. Whilst newspapers weren't by any means the primary source of information, some young

people were keen to show support for them and did tell us that they both bought and read them. This suggests that even digital natives can still appreciate tangible experiences.

Other young people spoke about getting non-news based information face to face or through social media like Snapchat. They caught up with wider family networks using Facebook and friends using Snapchat or Instagram.



Image: Geocaching – Shropshire Hills



**Topics of Discussion:** *Physical Health (Health Eating & Being Active), Mental Health (Feelings, Worries, Happy Place), Medicine & Conditions*



**Key Statistics (from the 20 questions survey monkey questionnaire, 78 respondents):**

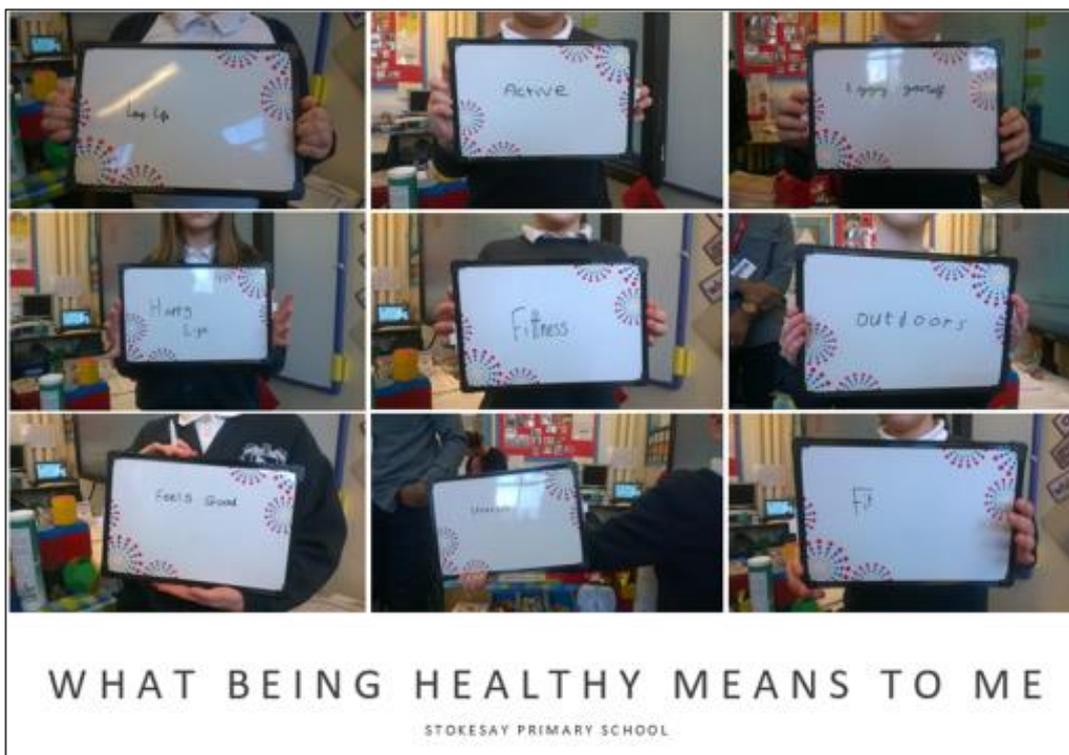
- **Q14 What do you think is the most important part of being healthy?** - *Eating a good balanced diet 27.6%, Keeping fit and active 21.1%, Not being poorly 3.9%, They are equally important 47.4%*
- **Q16 How important is your health to you?** - *Very important 36.8%, Quite important 1.3%, A bit important 9.2%, Not important 2.6%*
- **Q17 Which was the last health service you used?** - *Doctor / GP 35.5%, Dentist 42.1%, Hospital 14.5%, Other (most chose not to answer) 7.9%*
- **Q18 When was the last time you used a health service?** - *In the last month 42.1%, In the last 6 months 40.8%, In the last year 6.6%, Can't remember 10.5%*
- **Q19 Have you ever used the internet to find out information about your health?** – *Yes 71.1%, No 28.9%*
- **Q20 How often do you think about your health?** - *Everyday 47.4%, Once a week 18.4%, Once a month 10.5%, I don't really think about it 23.7%*
- **Q21 I would rather** - *Play a sport 15.8%, Volunteer 11.8%, Hang out with friends 56.6%, Learn something new 15.8%*



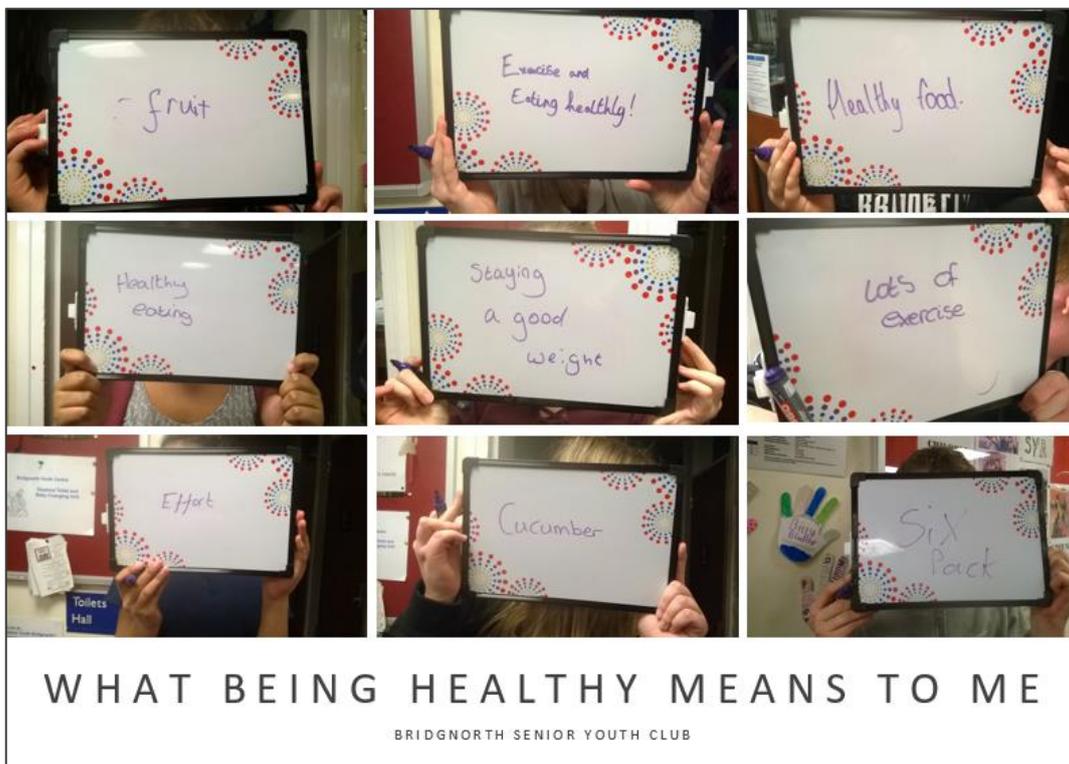
**Observations:** All young people talked about mental health in some way - being happy, feeling happy and discussing a happy place were common topics of conversations. The younger children spoke about happiness, making other people happy as well as themselves, although they didn't refer to 'mental health' directly, however the older young people did discuss 'mental health' - body image, feeling good and being active or fit all influenced young people's mental health. Many felt that having money was a route to happiness, not for the love of money itself, but because they recognised that you could do things with money that made life easier. A typical example of what was often supposed is 'if you have no money at all you would be unhappy, as you would not be able to afford food, clothes, a home or experiences'. Young people recognised that having too much money may not bring you happiness and that money could not buy you better health.

Drinking water, exercise, quality sleep, keeping fit and eating healthy foods and fewer sweets was common to all conversations of all age groups. Young people said that advertising campaigns need to focus more on healthy foods; fruit and vegetable and steer away from sugary drinks and snacks. Also, making fruit and vegetables cheaper as they currently cost the same or are more expensive than sugary or fatty foods.

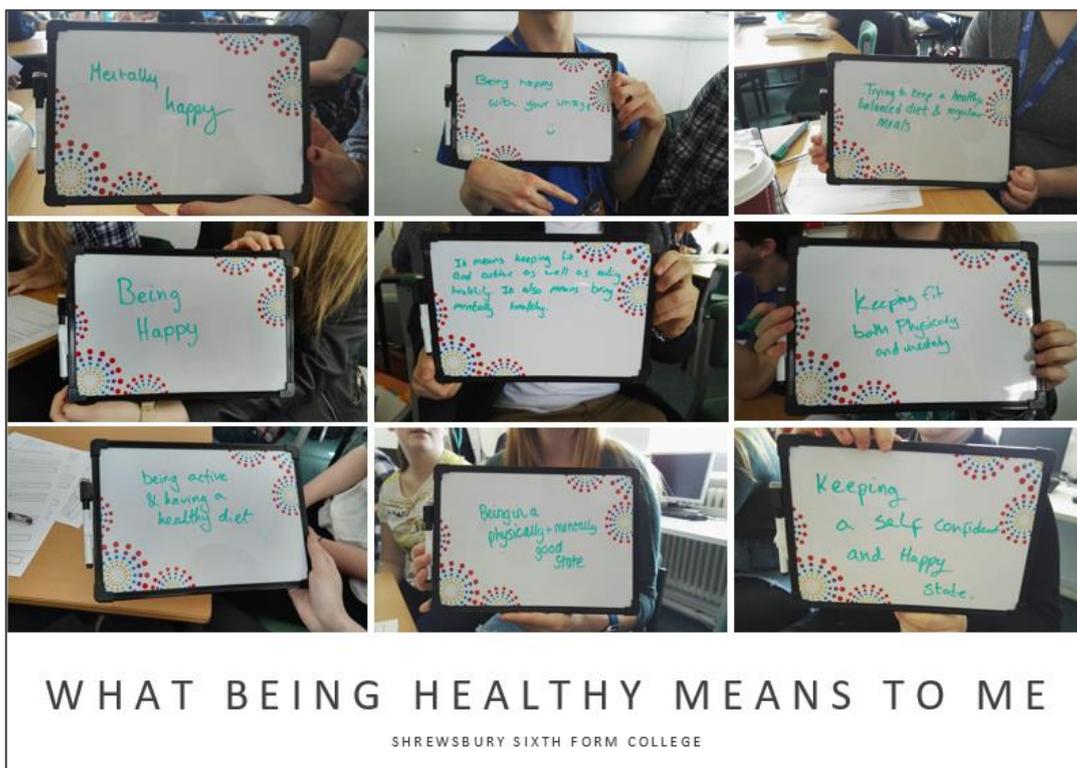
Some health apps were downloaded by older young people; fit bit and workout apps. Medical conditions; cancer, diabetes and people dying were discussed in many of the groups and it was often felt that looking after yourself when you are younger will aid and benefit your health when you get older. Young people who had looked up health information online often told us that felt it gave them the worst-case scenario information.



Stokesay Primary School – What healthy means to me: *Long Life, Active, Enjoying yourself, Happy Life, Fitness, Outdoors, Feels good, Strength, Fit*



Bridgnorth Youth Club (Senior) – What healthy means to me: *Fruit, Exercise & Eating Healthy, Healthy Food, Healthy Eating, Staying a good weight, Lots of exercise, Effort, Cucumber, Six Pack*



Shrewsbury Sixth Form – What healthy means to me: *Mentally happy, Being happy with your image, Trying to keep healthy balanced diet and regular meals, Being happy, Being fit and active as well as mental health, Keeping*



The **young people** we spoke to will be eligible to **pay tax and vote** within **10 years** or less. Government at all levels will need to **move faster** in order to meet the expectations of these **digital natives!**

### Key Learning Insights

From this work, we have identified several key insights that we have turned into what we call 'how might we' questions. We feel that based on our engagement activity with over 450 young people aged between 0 and 19 that there would be sufficient value for the Council to spend some more time investigating the following questions:

#### *How might we find ways of helping teenagers feel part of a supportive community?*

What community means to young people becomes less clear the older they get - Primary schools do a great job of teaching children about their communities. The primary school children we spoke to could articulate quite clearly what community meant to them and how they fitted in. Quite often they referred to different types of community structure i.e. geographic, relational, virtual. However, when we spoke to secondary school and college age young people we observed that they were less sure. This may well be due in some part to intergenerational tensions between teenagers and older adults. It seemed that many young people lost the sense of being part of their community the older they got.

#### *How might we find ways of supporting intergenerational networking between young people and older adults?*

Young children respect older people, but something often changes the relationship between older people and young people as they enter further into their teens. Finding ways to bring both parties together could help to breakdown negative perceptions held by both groups and could help strengthen communities.

### ***How might we find ways of helping young people extend beyond their existing social networks?***

The networks to which they belong heavily influence young people. From accessing news and information, to making difficult life choices, young people often turn to their physical and virtual networks for support, advice and guidance. Older young people told us how living in Shropshire can sometimes feel isolating often driving a desire to move to towns and cities where they can ‘feel themselves’. Is there a way that Shropshire Council could use technology to help young people extend their networks and broaden their sphere of positive influence whilst they are living in the County? Could partnering with the VCS to create new types of service help young people find positive role models that they didn’t know existed within their own geographic communities?

### ***How might we find ways for the Council to form a better relationship with young people?***

Young people use range of apps and social networks, but perhaps not the ones that the Council currently uses. Which ones they use are often dependent on what is available in the market place, who they are engaging with and what they are trying to do. Young people tend to use apps like Snapchat and Instagram to link with their friends, and only use Facebook for keeping in touch with family overseas or living elsewhere in the UK. The platforms they used are determined by wider social trends. A key takeaway from this work is the understanding that the Council needs to engage with young people in the places they visit, not just physically, but online too.

### ***How might we find ways of busting negative perceptions relating to the range of opportunities available for young people in Shropshire?***

We know that at a certain age most young people will want to explore the world around them and experience life outside of the environment in which they grew up, regardless of where that is. However, the driving force within most young people in Shropshire is based upon a perceived sense that the county does not offer what they want from life. For example, we heard young people talking about moving to London to work in the creative industries, but we know that hidden in Shropshire are many small companies working in the creative sector who work with large global brands. This is just one sector. There is perhaps therefore some myths to bust when it comes to what opportunities young people feel Shropshire holds for them. Could we do more to smash these myths in order to do more for the young people we would like to retain in Shropshire and attract to the county?

### ***How might we find ways to support young people to make the right choices before leaving education?***

It can sometimes feel like University is the expected route for young people to take. However, we know that there are more opportunities than ever available to young people today. For example, the new Apprenticeship Levy is making apprenticeships more accessible to young people across a range of employment sectors. Are the ways in which the Council can support young people to make the choice that is right for them, rather than defaulting to the expected norms?

## Big Takeaway

### *How might we find ways to exceed the expectations of digital natives?*

All of the young people we spoke to will be eligible to pay tax and vote within ten years or less. Government at all levels will need to move faster in order to meet the expectations of these digital natives!

The young people who we spoke to have been brought up using slick online services. The expectations that our young people will have around the way in which they receive and engage with public services will be based on their experiences of using private sector services like Uber, AirBnB, Amazon, Netflix, Spotify and others which will emerge in the coming decade. The Council will need to be able to provide similar levels of 'on-demand' service in order to meet a *new set of expectations* placed upon it by a *new type of customer*.

# Appendixes

## **Survey Responses**

Appendix 1 – 20 Questions – Survey Monkey (78 respondents)

Appendix 2 – 20 Questions - Button Voting, Thomas Adams School (50 respondents)

## **Workshop Activity**

Appendix 3 – Original workshop materials and synthesis post-it notes



Hot Air Balloon Tool

Created in partnership

Business Design Team & Community Enablement Team

Shropshire Council



April 2017