



Report of: Jane Maxwell, East North East Area Leader

Report to: Inner North East Community Committee (Chapel Allerton, Moortown, Roundhay wards)

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For Discussion

Inner North East Community Committee – Community Engagement Activity

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to accompany the Community Committee Workshop and encourage discussion and input into the engagement activity of the Inner North East Community Committee.

Main Issues

2. The report provides some examples of engagement activity currently employed by the Inner North East Community Committee.
3. The report proposes some questions and discussion points for the Community Committee Workshop.

Background information

Why community engagement is important

4. Community engagement is a broad term used to describe how we communicate, consult, involve and encourage participation from communities. It is about giving people an opportunity to get information and have a greater say and influence what happens in their community and city. It helps people play a more active role in decision making and delivering improvements in their communities.

5. This is also essential to improving services. It helps to unite local people and communities, builds citizenship and community pride. By talking to local people, the council can make sure that good quality services are delivered where they are most needed and tailored to local needs. Feedback is also important as this checks that services are meeting needs and improvements recognised.
6. Community engagement also breaks down barriers and negative views of organisations. The council will become more open and accessible when communities have a better understanding of how it works and take part in decision making at all levels thereby gaining the trust of its citizens. We need to reach out to all of our diverse communities to ensure that the wide variety of views are taken.
7. However we engage with our communities, our engagement activities should be underpinned by these four principles:
 - Involve people at the earliest possible stage;
 - Make the engagement meaningful and honest;
 - Make it easy for everyone to take part;
 - Show everyone the impact the engagement has had.

Current Engagement Activities

8. The Inner North East Community Committee have employed various types of engagement activity over recent years:
 - **Themed Community Committee Workshops** – Attached to the quarterly Community Committee meetings and a particular theme that is sometimes influenced by key messages, policy changes or corporate consultation. Meetings are public and invites are often tailored to ensure that key partners and stakeholders are present. Recent examples of themes include Leeds Health & Care Plan, Leeds Culture Strategy, and the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy.
 - **Stand-alone Consultation Events** – Where the Community Committee meetings do not provide a timely opportunity or the right forum to engage on a particular topic, stand-alone consultation events can be used. These are also open events aimed at consulting the whole community or a specific demographic on a key issue, policy or service. Recent examples include Transport Conversation, and Youth Summit.
 - **Online & Social Media** – Digital tools are becoming more important as a way to get information out and to collect views. Online surveys have been used to consult communities on key issues both locally and citywide. Such surveys have been successful in reaching larger numbers and making it easy for the community to access consultation. Surveys can be promoted and supported with social media campaigns, but consideration must always be given to those sections of our communities who do not have digital access and alternatives must be offered.

Recent examples include Transport Conversation, Carr Manor Field Playground consultation, and King Alfreds Fields consultation.

- **Events** – Opportunities to engage with communities can often be provided by events. The Community Committee will look to identify these opportunities either through events that are organised/funded by the Committee or by having a presence at other key local or city events. Simple questionnaires can be used at events to collect views in a way that is voluntary and unintrusive so as not to detract from the event itself. Recent examples include the INE Volunteer Thank You Event.
- **Residents/Community Groups** – Residents associations, Friends Of groups, Neighbourhood Watch groups and other types of community led organisations present an opportunity for the Community Committee to collect views and get messages out to the community. Officers and elected members can work closely with groups, attending meetings or asking them to discuss key issues and provide feedback. As well as benefiting from established groups the Community Committee can support new groups and help promote their activity to increase participation. Recent examples of engagement with local groups include Team Beckhills, Chapeltown Neighbourhood Watch, Impact Residents Association and Newton Park Residents Association, Moortown Community Group, Meanwood Valley Partnership, and Oakwood Tenants and Residents Association.

Conclusion & Workshop Discussion

9. The above are some of the main methods of engagement used by the Community Committee. Some of them work better for specific issues or when trying to engage with certain sections of the community and some of them are employed in some way for all our engagement activity (social media). Whilst we will always try to maximise our community engagement, as with anything there is a finite amount of resource so it is important to get feedback from the community on what they feel works well and where we should be focusing our resources in terms of engagement activity.
10. For the workshop discussion we would like participants to consider any or all of the below questions and discussion points. Positive and negative feedback is welcomed equally and will be used to inform future engagement methods and activity.
 - **Does the community know/understand what the Inner North East Community Committee is and what its role is?**
Promotion / information / communication
 - **When engaging with communities on key issues, what works well and not so well?**
Public meetings / community committee meetings / workshops / community or residents group meetings / online or paper surveys / social media / door knocking / Are we catering for disabled citizens and other hard to reach groups

- **Are Community Events worthwhile and do they provide value for money?**
Valued in the community / positive image / 'feel good' factor / promote diversity / promote cohesion / engagement opportunity
- **Funding – Can the community access funding available from the Community Committee?**
Promotion / awareness / bureaucracy / barriers / process

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

11. Note the content of the report and outcome from the Community Committee Workshop, and consider how this can shape the future engagement activity of the Inner North East Community Committee.