



Report of the North East Area Manager

North East (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 23rd June 2008

Subject: Community Engagement

Electoral Wards Affected:

Chapel Allerton
Moortown
Roundhay

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the 'Make your Ideas Count' community engagement events undertaken in March. The report also seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the engagement events and asks the Area Committee to consider the outcomes of the events, address the issues that have emerged and support proposals for the next events in summer 2008.

Purpose of This Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the 'Make Your Ideas Count' events held in each ward this Spring to enable the Area Committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the events in helping to identify issues and priorities for the 2008/11 Area Delivery Plan which in turn will shape service delivery arrangements and influence decision making.
2. The report seeks to inform members about:
 - The extent to which the objectives of the event were met. Evaluating the effectiveness of the events can help the Area Committee know whether the engagement methods used are helping them respond to the public.
 - The extent to which the events met with participants expectations. A measure of success in community engagement activity is whether local residents feel that we listen, inform and involve them.
 - General feedback on the success of venues, publicity and promotion and how resources have been spent.
 - Proposals for the next events in summer 2008.

Background Information

3. The Area Committee has made a commitment to empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision making and delivery of services and to build the role of the voluntary, community and faith sectors. This is an identified priority in the current Area Delivery Plan and is integral to the objectives of establishing Area Committees.

Spring 'Make your Ideas Count' Events

4. Ideas and issues identified at the Planning for Real events held in autumn 2007 were summarised under the themes of the Area Delivery Plan. In an innovative and interactive activity, including refreshments and a free prize draw, residents were invited to "make your ideas count" and given an amount of Monopoly money to spend on ideas and issues they felt were most important. The Area Committee will consider these findings to help inform the budget setting for commissioning Well-Being Funds in 2008/09 thus fulfilling their commitment to empowering local people to have a say in the delivery of local services.
5. In total £200,000 was spent by residents at all three events. The events were successful in terms of local resident's understanding of the purpose of the events, however in terms of attendance, attendees were less in number compared to the autumn events. An evaluation of this and ward totals are provided in more detail later in this report.
6. Letters have been sent to all participants advising them of the results of the events and how any immediate issues they raised will be dealt with. Further evaluation will be fed back to the participants and the wider community at the summer events.

For details of attendance and a breakdown of the attendees by age, ethnicity and gender please refer to Appendix 1.

Moortown

7. The event was held at Cardinal Heenan School from 5.30 pm – 8.30 pm. The total number of attendees was 36 with females outnumbering males 60% to 40%. The school helped promote the event by circulating flyers to parents. In addition, they arranged for several members of the school council to take part in the event. The majority of attendees at the event were under the ages of 17 and over 45 with only a few residents in between the ages of 17 – 44 years. Generally participants were very enthusiastic to take part in the Monopoly money exercise and stayed at the event for a prolonged length of time. In addition, the opportunity to talk to ward councillors and officers, together with the provision of good quality refreshments and a free prize draw created a lively atmosphere.

Chapel Allerton

8. The event was held at Technorth from 5.30pm – 7.30pm . The total number of attendees was 35 with females outnumbering males 67% to 33%. There were no representatives under the age of 30 years with the majority of attendees being between 45 and 64 years. The event took place in a relatively small room which helped to give the impression of a busy event despite the relatively small number of attendees. Similarly to the Moortown event, participants were very enthusiastic to take part in the events and stayed a long time to enjoy the free prize draw and refreshments. Unlike the other two events this event mostly attracted attendees who have attended previous events. This is because the event was promoted by inviting residents on our mailing lists rather than leaflet distribution.

Roundhay

9. The event took place at Roundhay High School from 4pm – 8pm. The total number of attendees was 38 with females outnumbering males 57% to 43%. The event was held on the day before Good Friday and unfortunately many service providers were on annual leave which meant that not all the theme tables were staffed. Consequently participants were not able to discuss specific issues in detail and did not remain at the event long enough to create a lively atmosphere for the 4 hour duration of the event.

Publicity

10. The events were publicised through coverage in the local media, a large banner at the venue, posters and emails and letters to residents and via local community groups and leaflet distribution.
11. With the exception of Chapel Allerton ward, the events were publicised by a ward wide leaflet drop. Initially it was agreed that “Slivers of Time” would be contracted to distribute to Moortown and Roundhay. Unfortunately the quality of service we received during the distribution of Moortown leaflets was very poor and the contract was terminated. Evaluation sheets completed at the Moortown event indicate that less than a third of attendees found out about the event through this method. It is likely this is due to the poor quality of the distribution.
12. Consequently, Roundhay ward was leafleted through a professional distribution company. Over two thirds of the residents who came to the event found out about

it through this way. The cost of this delivery was also approximately the same price as the delivery in Moortown.

13. In Chapel Allerton a leaflet delivery did not take place. Databases of previous attendees of community engagement events and community groups were used to mail leaflets and a letter to invite them to attend. Two thirds of residents who attended found out about the event through either a letter or through a community group. This suggests that this method of publicity was successful. Inevitably however this resulted in few new people attending, unlike Roundhay and Moortown that attracted many new faces.
14. In addition to this form of publicity eye catching posters and flyers were displayed across the wards in GP surgeries, supermarkets, schools, libraries and shops.

Priority Themes

15. The Area Management Team has undertaken a full evaluation of the issues raised by residents. These are presented in appendix 2. These include the totals of the amounts of monopoly money that was given by residents to each theme and issues that have been raised by residents across each ward.
16. The totals of money allocated to each theme indicate participant's priorities for their local area. Some themes, for example, environment and community safety were consistently popular themes. This reflects other evidence, such as the Leeds Annual Survey, that shows how safer and cleaner streets and improving people's quality of life within their local environment always comes out top.
17. These events and particularly the Monopoly money exercise has been a key part of meeting the Area Committee's commitment to empowering local people by giving people the opportunity to have some influence over how the Well-Being Fund might be spent in 2008/09.

Evaluation sheet findings

18. A short evaluation sheet was handed out at each event. An analysis of the evaluation is provided in Appendix 3. A total of 54 were completed. Overall when asked whether the event allowed them to give their point of view, 93% said yes. Every resident who filled in an evaluation form said they had enjoyed the event would consider attending another and all but 2 residents understood the purpose of the event. Residents highlighted as a positive aspect the opportunity to meet ward councillors and the effective organisation of the event.
19. Most participants were very enthusiastic in taking part in the Monopoly money exercise. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some residents attended specifically to speak to their ward councillors and having done so extended their stay to take part in the Monopoly money exercise. The excellent food and refreshments provided by a local food supplier and the free prize draw helped to sustain the lively atmosphere at all 3 events.
20. The method of engagement, particularly the Monopoly money exercise was particularly useful in promoting the work of the Area Committee. Many participants

were not aware that the Area Committee has a budget to spend on local priorities and anecdotal evidence suggests that participants enjoyed the practical nature of the event while being given the opportunity to have a say in the decision making process.

Summer Events

21. The Area Committee agreed that further events will be held in summer to celebrate the work of the Area Committee and to feedback the findings of the spring events. Members across all 3 wards have indicated their preference for a celebratory community fun day event, preferably outdoors with food and entertainment. Where possible the events will “piggy-back” other such celebratory events or existing community activities. Discussions are taking place with Members and the Area Management Team through individual ward member meetings to organise these events.
22. The Well-Being Fund report presented to the Area Committee at the June meeting requests that the Area Committee use the findings of these events to help inform how the Well-Being Fund is allocated for 2008/09. If this is agreed it is proposed that the summer events will be an opportunity to promote this under a banner of “we have listened “and in addition “ launch” the Inner North East Area Delivery Plan to the wider community.

Recommendations

23. The Area Committee is requested to:
 - a) Note the contents of this report
 - b) Endorse the theme and focus for the summer events