



Report of the North East Area Manager

North East (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 1st September 2008

Subject: Community Engagement Strategy – Update on Summer Activity

Electoral Wards Affected:

Chapel Allerton
Moortown
Roundhay

Ward members consulted
(referred to in this report)

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 provides an update on progress implementing the Area Committee's community engagement strategy, in particular the efforts to ensure the annual cycle of community engagement helps inform the development of the Area Delivery Plan and Wellbeing spending programme.

The report summarises the ward based community events held during the summer which focused on feed back to residents how their priorities and ideas shaped plans and actions.

Purpose of this report

- 1 This report provides an update on progress implementing the Area Committee's community engagement strategy, in particular the efforts to ensure the annual cycle of community engagement helps inform the development of the Area Delivery Plan and Wellbeing spending programme.
- 2 The report summarises the ward based community events held during the summer which focused on feed back to residents on how their priorities and ideas shaped the plans and actions of the Area Committee.

Background information

- 3 The Area Committee has an agreed community strategy in place which seeks to engage with residents through an annual cycle of events that complements the service and budget planning processes.
- 4 In the engagement process leading up to the first Area Delivery Plan for 2008-2011, the following cycle was followed:
 - Planning Ahead/Have Your Say – a focus on gathering residents views on what issues are of most importance to them
 - Make Your Ideas Count – presenting the ideas gathered back to residents, by theme, asking for prioritisation through a monopoly money exercise
 - Feedback – open events, but targeting those residents who participated in earlier events/exercises, to feedback on actions that have been taken and what is planned.
- 5 The first two elements of the process have already taken place and reports provided to the Area Committee on the information gathered.
- 6 At its Special Meeting in August, the Area Committee agreed to allocate an element of its Wellbeing Budget based on the combined results of the "Make Your Ideas Count" community engagement events. With the earmarking of budget against the relevant strategic theme of the Area Delivery Plan, in direct proportion to the combined results of the monopoly money exercises.

Summer Feedback Events

- 7 Three community engagement events were organised in the Inner North East wards in summer 2008.
- 8 The summer community engagement events provided a clear link to previous events and gave residents who had attended either 'Make Your Ideas Count' and/or 'Have Your Say' the opportunity to see clear progress, while enabling new residents to find out more about the Area Committee and Area Management.

- 9 The summer events were about informing residents how their ideas had been used to influence service delivery in their area. The Community Engagement Strategy is about finding out what residents want and about keeping them informed of how their ideas are being used - to ensure residents feel they have influence on how decisions are made which affect change in their community. The events were also an opportunity to launch the 'Take Action' cards, which give residents an easy, alternative way to inform the Council of local problems.

Roundhay – Oakwood Farmer Market

- 11 The event took place at Oakwood Farmers Market on Saturday 19th July. This location was chosen by Roundhay ward members because it was popular with residents. In addition, as the North East (Inner) Area Committee had contributed funding towards the market, it seemed appropriate to have a presence there. In addition to a representative of the Area Management Team there were also representatives of Youth Service and the Police. The market was extremely busy and many shoppers, when asked, were happy to listen to information about the Area Committee's role in Roundhay. There were also many residents at the market that had attended previous community engagement events and it was very useful to update them on the achievements of the Area Committee. Some residents had never heard of the Area Committee and were interested to find out what its responsibilities are and how they might attend future community engagement events.
- 12 It is worth noting that there were many residents who expressed no interest in attending any community engagement events and who had no wish to discuss service delivery in Roundhay. The main reason offered for this was that they were happy with services in their neighbourhood.

Chapel Allerton

- 13 The "picnic in the park" event took place in Buslingthorpe Park, just off Chapeltown Road. Activities were organised that would appeal to children and encourage families to come along. This included face painting, a circus workshop, a game of rounders and a sack race with prizes. The event was attended by approximately 100 people. This event also had displays illustrating Area Committee achievements. All partners had a good level of interest from the community and the event was well received by local residents and helped raise the profile of the Area Committee and its work.

Moortown

- 14 The event took place at Moortown Community Fair. There were representatives of Area Management, Youth Service, Recycling and Waste Education Team and the Police. Many residents were interested in finding out more about Area Management and some Take Action cards were completed. The recycling information was particularly popular. The event was well attended by both children and adults and again helped raise the profile of the work of local Councillors and the Area Committee. The Moortown Community Fair was an inter-faith event, encouraging

community cohesion and as such it was appropriate for the Area Committee to demonstrate its support.

15 **Publicity**

For all three summer events eye catching posters were displayed in shops and community centres and letters were sent out to residents on the mailing list to inform them of the event. In Chapel Allerton leaflets were also distributed amongst school children.

Overall Assessment

16 One of the main advantages of the three events was the opportunity to increase the visibility of Elected Members and the Area Committee's profile. Previous community engagement events have generally attracted residents who have something specific in their community that they want to see tackled. In contrast, the summer events were an opportunity to feedback on the work undertaken by the Area Committee and the improvements made in the community in a positive atmosphere.

17 As a way of engaging with the community these events were extremely successful. One of the more positive aspects of the events was the way in which they attracted a cross section of all members of the community. Previously it has often been difficult to engage with different ethnic groups and younger adults in the community. At the summer events many young parents were present with their children, as well as many residents of various ethnic backgrounds.

18 These events were relatively cheap to organise. Altogether the cost of the events (excluding staff time) totalled £717.52.

Conclusions

19 The community engagement events held since Autumn last year have demonstrated a sustainable framework for regular consultation with residents in each ward. When including the Volunteer Thank You event the strategy shows four seasonal events:

Autumn – Have Your Say (Planning Ahead)

Winter – Volunteer Thank You Event

Spring – Make Your Ideas Count

Summer – Celebratory/Feedback Events

20 If Members would like the Volunteer Thank You Event to continue as part of the community engagement framework, funding will have to be allocated in the Well-Being fund in September. Last year £700 was allocated to the event and a similar amount would be needed this year.

21 The community engagement strategy of having quarterly events appears to be successful in increasing participation and allowing residents to have greater influence in service planning and delivery. The addition of the 'take action' cards give residents more opportunity to contact and be aware of Area Management. It is

recommended that this strategy continues. It is suggested however that the focus of the planning ahead event is shifted away from identifying broad priorities to actual local actions.

Recommendations

- 22 The Area Committee is asked to note the content of this report. In particular the achievement of completing the first annual cycle of resident engagement culminating, for the first time, in an area budget that has been allocated according to direct resident participation in the prioritisation of resources.
- 23 The Area Committee is asked to approve the allocation of £700 from Wellbeing to support the Volunteer Thank You Event for 2008.

Background papers

There are no background papers to this report