

“Working Together”

Community Engagement Strategy 2010-11

Inner North East Area Committee

Covering the wards of:

Chapel Allerton, Moortown, Roundhay



1. Introduction

This is a strategy for how we will interact with residents across the neighbourhoods of Inner North East Leeds to identify and tackle issues that require services to plan and work together.

The strategy seeks to take commitment to engage beyond simply organising public meetings and events, but to support frontline staff in everyday contact with residents and being smarter about using existing resident “user groups”.

It is **not** a strategy for how individual services will engage with their own clients on delivering their own business objectives; although there will often be a cross over which does need reflecting in the strategy and adds value to partner participation.

There is a strong tradition of partnership working in the Inner North East area and the strategy seeks to build on that. It sets out for the first time a formal structure to how engagement will work in neighbourhoods, the roles to be shared amongst partners and how the strategy will support the development of a “team neighbourhood” approach to locality working in the priority neighbourhoods.

The strategy sets out a minimum level of engagement per ward which will lead to a ward “annual planner” of partnership engagement for the year. This is not to say that this is everything that will happen, but will provide a framework on which further local activities and events can be developed as opportunities and need arise.

Also included is how additional engagement will be approached in priority neighborhoods to support greater involvement in and accountability of neighbourhood improvement plans for these areas.

2. Background

Area Committees in Leeds have a number of roles that have been delegated to them by Executive Board. One of those roles is “Community Engagement”. The role is defined as follows:

Overview of local engagement activities linked to improvement of local services and Area Delivery Plan priorities.

Area based community engagement plan to be produced setting out minimum standards including:

- Community profile – update of local intelligence twice a year with information about local stakeholders and how to reach local communities
- Calendar of planned communication and engagement activities - including information in About Leeds for all households, minimum of one ward based engagement event per annum linked to priority setting and themed discussions at Area Committees
- Additional activities with particular neighbourhoods and communities linked to Area Delivery Plan priorities
- Annual report to Area Committees and Executive Board to give overview of progress.

The Area Committee has previously agreed a Community Engagement Strategy based around holding three community events per year in each ward.

The events are based around the service planning cycle of organisations so that the issues raised and priorities identified had greater opportunity to influence how services were delivered in the year ahead. This fits with the Area Delivery Plan process. Some events build in opportunity for information and debate on issues of the day – with a “debating room” set aside with scheduled discussion on hot topics. Examples of debates that have been held include traffic issues in Roundhay, concerns on the King Alfred’s estate, better use of open and green spaces in Moortown and how the programme to replace street lighting will work across the area. Further outcomes sought from the events are to build better relationships and trust between residents and frontline staff/services and to promote the role of local voluntary and community sector organisations.

The numbers of residents attending the events varies. The events are also quite resource intensive – in time spent organising the events, cost of materials/facilities and attendance from staff. Although this has reduced as the format of the event has established itself and roles are clearer. The direct cost to the Area Committee (materials, publicity, refreshments, venue) per resident attending the events in 2008/09 worked out at about £x (*figure to be provided at Area Committee*). The strategy will aim to bring that cost down.

The feedback from Elected Members is that the events are more successful and worthwhile to residents where they build in opportunity to debate local issues.

3. Making More of What is Already Out There

What the existing arrangement have shown is that holding event/meeting led engagement alone will only reach those able and willing to come along. The capacity of local services to attend and hold such events are limited and so therefore are the opportunities for residents to have a say on how priorities are agreed.

There are however a number of existing opportunities where services/organisations already bring together residents that could potentially be used as mechanisms for discussion, debate and consultation. With a little planning, some moving round of dates and filling of gaps where necessary the following list could provide a good platform for local engagement:

- ⇒ School /Youth Councils
- ⇒ Good Neighbour Schemes/Luncheon Clubs
- ⇒ “Friends of” Groups
- ⇒ Conservation Societies/Groups
- ⇒ Parent Associations/Children Centre Parent Groups
- ⇒ Tenant and Resident Associations
- ⇒ Police and Communities Together (PACT) Meetings
- ⇒ Community galas/school and church fairs

If added to the customised ward engagement events, development of “community leadership teams” in priority neighbourhoods, continued support to resident networks and analysis of resident surveys the strategy would ensure that:

- (a) all residents have an opportunity to have say if they choose to in an accessible and un-intimidating way
- (b) there is a measurable, representative response to consultation

- (c) residents feel confident that services are listening to their views and they are influencing decisions on how improvements are made
- (d) residents feel more informed about how public services work
- (e) the role of the elected member as a community champion is strengthened
- (f) there is a mechanism where by residents are able to call for public meetings to be held to discuss a particular local problem/issue that normal processes do not seem to be resolving and expect appropriate staff to attend

This strategy sets out how that will be achieved.

4. How It Will Work

The strategy will have 3 main strands to it:

1. Improving everyday engagement between local staff and residents
2. Influencing the planning and improvement of services to tackle local priorities
3. Improving accountability for promised actions

The overall strategy showing how these three strands will be approached across the area is set out in appendix A.

The delivery of the strategy will be coordinated at ward level through an annual ward engagement programme.

Each ward would expect to see the following minimum partnership led community engagement during 2010/11:

- ✓ 2 x community based events (one in autumn, one in late winter/spring) to incorporate public discussion/debate on 1-2 key local topics as agreed through local ward members
- ✓ Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings in each ward focusing on crime and ASB; with invited guests as appropriate from partner agencies depending on priority issues raised by residents
- ✓ Up to 10 x facilitated sessions with local groups (e.g. school councils, older people networks, parent groups, friends of groups) – i.e. 5 sessions in autumn and 5 sessions in late winter/spring to fit in with the ADP planning cycle.

On top of this would be:

- (a) support to community galas, school fairs and other events held during the summer months; with opportunities taken to consult, provide information and build community relations
- (b) development of new Community Leadership Teams in priority neighbourhoods to oversee engagement, neighbourhood improvement plan progress and report to Area Committee (see appendix B for possible model)

Community Engagement Strategy for Inner North East

Appendix A:

Aim	Local Strategy	How This Will Be Done
To improve everyday engagement and relationships between local staff and residents	(i) Development of a Team Neighbourhood approach in priority neighbourhoods in order to build the capacity of frontline staff in responding to residents. (ii) Provide ways for residents to raise issues with local staff and find out what is available in their area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Crime and Grime and Preventative Tasking ▪ Training and induction programmes for local staff on cross cutting issues ▪ Harness new technology to build working relationships and knowledge ▪ Neighbourhood Managers to develop Team Neighbourhood approach in priority neighbourhoods ▪ Development of Community Champion roles ▪ Development of Community Leadership Teams for priority neighbourhoods
To increase the influence of residents in the planning and improvement of services to tackle local priorities	(i) Engage and involve residents at key parts of the service planning cycle to help identify local priorities and perceived weaknesses in order to improve how services plan and work together to tackle problems. The cycle will be: <i>Autumn (Oct/Nov)</i> – identify priorities for the next year that will see promises for actions developed by services <i>Winter (Jan/Feb)</i> –consult on the draft list of proposed promises, identify specific local actions for each. <i>Summer (Jul/Aug)</i> - provide information on what is being done and available locally to meet promises and gather feedback on the Community Charter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community engagement events: <i>Autumn</i> – participatory activity enabling residents to review last year’s promises and decide which should remain and add new ones against each ADP theme. <i>Winter</i> – participatory activity that enables residents to comment on the proposed promises for action, prioritise them through allocation of “money” and identify specific local actions they want to see. ▪ Targeted work with representative groups: Similar activity as set out above to be undertaken with existing local mechanisms that bring together different groups of residents that ensure a representative sample of the community has been engaged. This will include: Young people – School/Youth Councils Older People – Good Neighbour/Elderly Action networks Parents – through Children Centre and School parent networks Disabled people – method to be agreed ▪ Resident Networks: Same as above but using resident networks where they exist to undertake consultation and gather views e.g. “friends of” groups. ▪ Summer galas and community events/fairs: Support the variety of events held throughout summer in communities including school and church fairs. Using the events to help build community relations, provide information on what is available and gather feedback on the Community Charter. Attendance where possible by local services to be coordinated through the tasking network and financial support to events encouraged through the Small Grants Scheme.
To improving accountability for promised actions	(i) Provide clear and timely information to residents in response to priorities they have helped set, including what is to be done, progress made and how resources have been allocated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public facing version of the Area Delivery Plan – publish an annual Community Charter and a quarterly progress report. ▪ Development of Community Leadership Teams for Chapeltown, Meanwood and Moor Allerton priority neighbourhoods ▪ Utilise resident networks to communicate progress ▪ Feedback sent to all residents who attend consultation events etc.

