

“Working Together”

Community Engagement Strategy 2010-11

Inner East Area Committee

Covering the wards of:

Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Gipton & Harehills, Killingbeck and Seacroft



1. Introduction

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

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 East area, the strategy seeks to build on that. It sets out a formal structure to how engagement will work in neighbourhoods, roles to be shared amongst partners and how the strategy will support development of a “team neighbourhood” approach to working in priority neighbourhoods and vice versa.

The strategy will inform a forward plan for each priority neighbourhood which sets out a programme of partnership engagement for the year. This is not to say that this is everything that will happen, but provides a framework on which further local activities and events can be developed as opportunities and need arise.

2. Background

Area Committees in Leeds have a number of roles that have been delegated 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 mainly based around local forums and the development of resident networks.

The Inner East area has a tradition of holding local forums in its wards. Given the nature of the wards involved, these have in most cases been a couple of forums in each. However, despite more recent attempts to better advertise the meetings and theme them around different subjects, attendance has remained poor. A typical forum meeting will attract somewhere between 10-20 residents, from a constituency of several thousand. The resources involved in organising, attending and following up the meetings could be far more effectively used to reach and engage with a much wider and larger number of residents.

In response to this, the Area Committee agreed to look at piloting new style forums in Gipton during 2008/09. The pilots were 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 of course also meant a better fit with the Area Delivery Plan process. The pilots also built in opportunity for 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 ASB, EASEL and how to better involve residents. A further outcome sought from the new forums was to build better relationships and trust between residents and frontline staff/services.

The Gipton pilot was successful in so far that it increased attendance, increased the proportion of attendees who felt able to participate, attracted a far greater range of residents from different backgrounds/ages, built positive relationships between residents and local staff and promoted the role of local councilors. A weakness of the pilot was that it is resource intensive – in the organisation of the event, cost of materials and attendance from staff. Although this has reduced as the format of the event has established itself and roles are clearer. However, the cost (staff organising costs, materials, publicity, refreshments, venue) per resident attending the new style event led forum is £28, compared to the old style meeting led forum of £47. The new style format has more recently been extended to the Harehills and Seacroft forums and these are included in this calculation.

Feedback from Elected Members and Area Committee co-optees is that they value the facility for local community leaders/activists to be able to meet with them and have opportunity to discuss and track action against local issues. The new style forum events do build in opportunity to debate local issues – but the view is that further opportunity needs to be provided. The strategy incorporates the development of a “community leadership team” for each priority neighbourhood to fulfill that role and take responsibility for ensuring the local engagement plans are delivered successfully in those neighbourhoods.

3. Making More of What is Already Out There

What the existing arrangement and pilots 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
- ⇒ Disabled 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 new event style forums, development of “community leadership teams”, continued development of resident networks and annual neighbourhood surveys the strategy would ensure that:

- (a) all residents have an opportunity to have say if they choose to in an accessible and unintimidating 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) the role of the elected member as a community champion is strengthened
- (e) 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. The draft ward programmes for 2010-11 are shown in appendix B.

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

2 x multi-agency community events (one in autumn, one in late winter/spring)
 Share of 8 x local NPT Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings; with invited guests from partner agencies depending on priority issues raised by residents
 10 x facilitated sessions with local groups (e.g. school councils, older people networks, parent groups) – i.e. 5 sessions in autumn and 5 sessions in late winter/spring.
 3 x meetings of new Community Leadership Teams to oversee engagement, neighbourhood improvement plan progress and report to Area Committee

On top of this would be:

- (a) the commitment to organise public meetings as required to deal with localised hot-topics on a case by case basis. Such meetings would have a clear lead agency and appropriate attendance from relevant staff and be chaired by an agreed local councilor.
- (b) 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.

* the strategy will require development in each priority neighbourhood to take into account existing forums where they are still operating, in particular Burmantofts and Richmond Hill. Discussions will take place with local members and key stakeholders in those forums to look at how the commitment to hold 2 events a year plus 3 business meetings of a new Community Leadership Team can be evolved.

Community Engagement Strategy for Inner East

Appendix A:

Aim	Local Strategy	How This Will Be Done
To improve everyday engagement and relationships between local staff and residents	(i) Development and support to Team Neighbourhood 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 ▪ Neighbourhood induction for staff ▪ Staff training on cross cutting issues ▪ Team extranet ▪ Neighbourhood Managers to lead ▪ Development of Community Champions ▪ Development of a Community Leadership Teams
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"> ▪ Forum led 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. ▪ Summer galas and community events/fairs: Support the variety of community events held throughout summer 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 a Community Leadership Teams ▪ Utilise resident networks to communicate progress ▪ By developing accessible web-based platforms for residents (e.g. Facebook) ▪ Feedback provided on consultation events etc. – inc better use of email

Potential Model for Inner East Priority Neighbourhoods

Appendix B:

