

REPORT OF ACTING DIRECTOR OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

LOCAL COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PLAN 2008 - 2011

1. SUMMARY

This report informs the Area Committee about local plans by the Neighbourhood Management Team to bring about empowerment opportunities amongst local communities in the area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Area Committee note the plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In the recent White Paper 'Communities in Control: Real Power, Real People', the government has set local authorities a series of challenges to give local people and communities more influence and power to improve their lives.
- 3.2 The One Nottingham Strategic Partnership has published its Community Empowerment Strategy which aims to encourage people to take an active part in making decisions and influencing service delivery across the City.
- 3.3 Nottingham is one of 18 National Empowerment Champions and has adopted national indicator 4, which is the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality, as a designated indicator for Nottingham's Local Area Agreement.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is in this national and local context that all nine Neighbourhood Management Teams have produced a Local Community Empowerment Plan that is tailored to the circumstances and needs of local residents. The plan for the West Area is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 This plan is based on much good practice developed in the City and amongst our partners in the wider Neighbourhood Teams. The actions will allow flexibility of approach so that communities are recognised and treated according to their diverse needs and nature.
- 4.3 For the plan to be truly effective, it must be delivered in a spirit of partnership working including elected members, service delivery partners and residents, with the Neighbourhood Management Team

acting as a catalyst for change and a broker to negotiations and agreements. It will be performance managed by the Neighbourhood Management Team via the local governance structure.

5. TIMESCALE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSALS

The plan will be delivered over at least the next three years, with a bi-annual review and report to Area Committees to ensure that actions are being completed.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Actions will be delivered within current budgets.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The views of Legal Services will be sought where legislative matters are involved.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Equality impact assessments are being undertaken which will inform the Neighbourhood Management Teams of matters that require attention to ensure the diverse needs of local communities and the people within them are recognised and taken into account.

9. CONSULTATIONS

Consultation has taken place on the plan with members, residents and partner services. Their views and comments are reflected within the document.

10. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The issues raised by local people in the area contribute toward delivering the Strategic Priorities of the Council Plan theme 'Transforming Nottingham's Neighbourhoods' through opportunities to engage with local people and assist in delivery of local services.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS

Actions contained within the plan will contribute to the Police's work in reducing crime and the fear of crime in the local community.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY

Actions will be delivered within current budgets.

13. List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information

None.

14. Published documents referred to in compiling this report

Government White Paper 'Safer, Stronger Communities'

Government White Paper 'Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power'

One Nottingham Community Empowerment Strategy

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West Area Community Engagement Strategy 2008-2011

Introduction

The West Area Committee is committed to improving the quality of life of all its residents by working with people and partners and empowering individuals and communities to contribute and influence services. We believe that citizens should be at the heart of its decision making processes and will strive to ensure that all sections of the community have an opportunity to get involved at a level and in a way that suits them.

The purpose of this Plan

This Plan sits alongside wider One Nottingham Empowerment Strategy 'Strong, Active and Inclusive Communities'. That strategy 'aims to support strong, active and inclusive communities, who are informed and involved in decision-making and enable us to improve public services to enhance quality of life across'. In each of the City's nine Area Committee areas, delivery plans such as this set out the actions to be taken by partners to implement this.

We are committed to:

- ensuring that community needs and priorities are driving programmes to make neighbourhoods better;
- ensuring that residents of neighbourhoods are empowered through community engagement;
- encouraging more voluntary and community groups to become involved in planning and delivering local services;
- ensuring that feedback is given to participants about the outcomes of community engagement;
- learning from the our own and others' experience and sharing community engagement skills and knowledge of putting the citizens at the heart of decision making;
- involve hard reaching communities such as young people, disability and BME groups.

By adopting and implementing this strategy the Council demonstrates its continuing commitment to making community engagement part of its organisational culture.

Having made these strong commitments it is essential that engagement works and is sustained. Sustaining participation and developing engagement across the West Area brings the benefits of:

- clarity in understanding community issues;
- value for money;
- effective service development and delivery;
- improved quality of life; and
- a stronger community sector..

Policy context

The Community Empowerment Action Plan, drawn up by the Department for Communities and Local Government and Local Government Association, defines community engagement as the process whereby public bodies reach out to communities. Community empowerment is described as giving communities the confidence, skills, and power to shape and influence what public bodies do for them. For the City Council and its partners, this means people being involved in and being given the opportunity to influence decisions about their community.

Engagement in the decision-making process can include customer satisfaction surveys, consultation, devolving decisions and supporting community action. Successful engagement will result in our customers and wider stakeholders being able to influence decisions which affect them. Engagement activities can best be viewed as a hierarchy ranging from less involved to more involved methods.

Community engagement provides the following benefits to service providers:

- enables service improvement to be driven by an understanding of public needs;
- enables any gaps in service provision to be identified;
- uses information to benchmark and monitor delivery helping to identify problems and drive improvement;
- strengthens decision making and local democracy..

West Area's Vision / Objectives

To make the West Area an attractive, vibrant, safe and healthy place for all and ensure all communities are valued. To create prosperous neighbourhoods that are rich in culture and strong in the spirit of equality and celebration of diversity.

To achieve this we will:

- consult, support and involve local communities;
- create positive opportunities for children and young people;
- seamlessly join all services together;
- create and maintain long term partnerships;
- innovate and share best practice;
- challenge partners to raise their game;
- maximise opportunities from new developments and investment.

Council objectives and priorities

- **Better Prospects** - Increase the number of people of working age in education and training, in order to increase the local employment rate.
- **Safer, Stronger Neighbourhoods** - To reduce anti-social behaviour, youth offending, and the fear of crime, involving and reassuring residents.
- **Cleaner and Greener Public Spaces** - To create clean and green open spaces which are attractive, enjoyable, functional, well used and feel safe.

- **Brighter Future** - To ensure children and young people are fully engaged in education and learning, to increase the number of 16- 19 year olds in education, employment and training.
- **Healthier Communities** - To improve how and where you live, what you eat, to be physically and mentally well, more able to create an environment of mutual support.
- § **Promoting Active Citizenship** - To create involved and well motivated communities, which feel welcome to contribute and rewarded by outcomes. Our citizens will increasingly be involved in local democracy.

Levels of community engagement

This strategy will help ensure that we can provide the most appropriate ways for communities and customers to be involved and give feedback. The various levels of community engagement are:

- Level 1 Informing – making the community aware of local issues and initiatives.**
Information supports all types of community engagement and keeps people informed about decisions, services and local events.
- Level 2 Consulting – seeking the views of the community.**
Consultation can be used when there is a decision to make about something or when there are a number of choices about the details. The West Area team seeks to obtain public feedback to inform decision making.
- Level 3 Actively involve the community in decision making.**
This is when local people are involved in deciding which option to choose. The Council works directly with the local community to ensure issues and concerns are addressed. The Council will ensure that these concerns are directly reflected in options and provide feedback on how input from customers has influenced decisions.
- Level 4 Acting together.**
This is when decisions are made by partnerships between local people or agencies and the Council. The people involved in making the decisions also take part in carrying them out. The Council will look to citizens for advice and innovation in finding solutions and incorporate that advice to the maximum extent.
- Level 5 Empowering - Supporting independent community initiatives**
This is when independent groups get help to develop and carry out their own plans or projects. It involves devolving budgets and decision-making to the local area. It places final decision-making in the hands of the local community. It is important that all levels of community engagement are carried out in the most appropriate way. Different methods of engagement will be used relevant to the activity and circumstances.

Scope of the Strategy

This is the overarching strategy for all the West Area community engagement activities and is designed to ensure better co-ordination of engagement with customers, citizens and communities. It is based on the beliefs that:

- all communities should be involved in decisions that affect them;
- all communities deserve high quality public services, shaped around their needs;
- policies and strategies should reflect local priorities, requirements and aspirations.

We recognise and embrace the diverse nature of our communities and the importance of community capacity building. We will develop capacity within our communities to enable greater understanding and ability to influence service delivery, decision making and policy development. Community engagement and partnership working will take time and commitment to achieve but is seen as an essential requirement and integral to the way Neighbourhood Management works.

Who will use this strategy?

Everyone engaged in community engagement can use this strategy, including:

- our citizens;
- elected members;
- Council staff;
- community and voluntary sector organisations;
- private sector.

We will work with existing community engagement systems when these are 'fit for purpose' and will support organisations to ensure they become 'fit for purpose'. The West Area team understands that sometimes people choose not to get involved but for those who do, it will work with other partners to ensure that any barriers to community engagement are removed and feedback is given.

Aim of the Strategy

The aim of the strategy is to facilitate engagement with the people within West Area. It will give them a voice to inform the way in which services are planned and delivered.

Community engagement Principles

Our community engagement principles direct the way we carry out our community engagement activities. Our Action Plan for engagement will support everyone involved in community engagement activities.

In all our community engagement activities the West Area team will:

Co-ordination and Partnership

- co-ordinate community engagement activities to avoid duplication, and 'consultation fatigue', caused by too much consultation and too little action and feedback;
- provide leadership from the top, to ensure that community engagement influences services and plans.

Access and inclusion

- ensure that we take into account particular needs and overcome any difficulties participants may have to enable them to participate;
- involve hard to reach communities;
- ensure that there is equal access to core services;
- ensure services meet the needs of all communities.

Clarity of purpose

- be open and honest about the aims of community engagement activity;
- ensure that community engagement activities are realistic but that expectations are not raised that cannot be met;
- have clear processes to provide feedback on community engagement activity and outcomes and give reasons if we are not unable to meet expectations;
- ensure participants know what they are agreeing to take part in and how the information will be used.

Confidentiality

- ensure awareness of confidentiality issues in community engagement activities.

Integrity

- ensure that community engagement activities are voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time;
- ensure that the rights and dignity of all participants are respected at all times;
- respect the rights of participants to decide how much to reveal about themselves;
- give careful consideration to activities, information and questions to ensure that they do not offend, cause distress or embarrassment.

Visibility

- ensure that those most directly affected by plans and decisions are aware of opportunities for community engagement and consultation;
- engage with key stakeholders and/or representative groups in advance of specific community engagement activities using the most effective means of publicity.

Who is responsible for this strategy?

The West Area team and its partners will have the responsibility to:

- produce an Action Plan to ensure effective implementation of the strategy and to oversee implementation;
- develop a Community Engagement Toolkit to help staff plan and carry out community engagement activities effectively and consistently and to improve;
- co-ordination and governance of engagement activities;
- work with community organisations to oversee the implementation of the strategy, action plan and use of the Toolkit;
- share the strategy and the action plan with partner organisations for their use.

How implementation of the strategy will be achieved

- the West Area team will deliver the action plan accompanying this strategy;
- the West Area Team will work with its partners to organise community empowerment activities to address any gaps;

- the West Area team will use structures established for Neighbourhood Management to promote the use of the strategy.

How will we measure and manage performance?

A useful benchmark to evaluate our progress in engaging the local community is annual General Satisfaction Survey. The performance indicators relevant to the impact of the strategy and the implementation of the action plan will be measured. The new national performance indicators announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR07) include indicators specifically on empowerment, measuring whether people feel they can influence their area, and rates of participation amongst different population groups. These are likely to be measured through a new Places survey from 2009 which will replace the BVPI General Satisfaction Survey and is likely to be conducted biannually. The Department for Communities and Local Government consulted on proposals for a new Places survey over the winter 2007/08. Among other measures the new national performance indicators will contribute to the monitoring of the Council's overall success in community engagement.

Equality and Diversity

Neighbourhood Management is committed to providing and promoting equality for all its employees and the local community it serves and is committed to preventing all forms of discrimination. We oppose all forms of discrimination which may cause a person to be treated unjustly on the grounds of race, ethnic origin or nationality, disability, gender, sexuality, age, income, appearance, faith or religious or non-religious beliefs and responsibility for dependents. In planning community engagement activities, we will integrate the objectives of equality, service accessibility (including hard-to-reach groups) and diversity to deliver truly representative and inclusive consultation processes, outputs and outcomes. We will aim to ensure community engagement exercises are inclusive by:

- making large print, Braille or recorded versions of materials available to survey the visually impaired;
- making sure that public meetings and forums are held in accessible buildings;
- making sure that public meetings are held at appropriate times of the day;
- avoiding clashes with religious festivals/activities and other major events;
- giving consideration to the need for signers, interpreters and translators;
- making sure face to face interviews are carried out in ways that enable people with hearing difficulties to take part;
- using an interviewer for people who might have difficulty reading or writing;
- ensuring questionnaires can be administered in the appropriate language or provide translations;
- including a reply pre-paid envelope for postal surveys.

Data Protection

The City Council is required by law to collect and use personal information about people with whom it deals in order to perform its statutory functions. Personal information obtained by Council, as part of its community consultation responsibilities will be dealt with properly in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

<p>Ladder of Engagement</p> <p>Level 1 - informing – making the community aware of local issues and initiatives.</p> <p>Level 2 - consulting – seeking the views of the community.</p> <p>Level 3 - actively involve the community in decision making</p> <p>Level 4 - acting together</p> <p>Level 5 - empowering - Supporting independent community initiatives</p>	<p>Targets</p> <p>NI1 - % of people who believe people from difference backgrounds get along well together in the local area</p> <p>NI4 - & of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality</p> <p>NI5 - overall satisfaction with the area</p>
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Acronyms	
<p>NM Neighbourhood Management</p> <p>NCH Nottingham City Homes</p> <p>LAGs Local Action Groups</p> <p>WA West Area</p> <p>YCYV Your Choice Your Voice</p>	<p>SRF Strategic Regeneration Framework</p> <p>NAT Neighbourhood Action Teams</p> <p>CDO Community Development Officer</p> <p>TPO Tenant Participation Officer</p>

Item	NI Targets	Eng. Levels	Activity	Lead Agency	Gaps	Outcome	Output	Target Date
1	NI 1, 4 & 5	2-4	Seek further involvement from all partner organisations in early stages of delivery plan to agree on actions (level 2 - 4)	Area Managers & NM		- An empowerment plan that is realistic and agreed on by all relevant colleagues	-	
2	NI4	-	6 monthly review of delivery actions with partners	NM		- Adjustment as necessary	-	
3	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-3	Enhance and further develop existing LAGs in each police beat.	NM, Police and NCH	Inconsistency. Financial implications Ownership	- Increase attendance. - Increase confidence. - Increased ability to influence decisions.	- 10 LAGs established - 10 LAGs need to have all the set outcomes. - Annually monitor and evaluate LAGs	

Item	NI Targets	Eng. Levels	Activity	Lead Agency	Gaps	Outcome	Output	Target Date
4	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-3	To establish regular ward walks and develop the procedure and process.	NM & Cllrs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents able to raise issues with their local councillors - Confidentiality to residents in their own home - Raising awareness of councillors to residents and democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of streets visited - number of residents engaged - number of councillors involved - actions resolved 	-
5	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-4	Annual YCYV events in each ward	NM	Using translation services to promote events & activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase attendance - Increased ability to influence decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase participation of hard to reach groups 	
6	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-5	Ensuring a range of community events eg. Parklife, Christmas Lights, Summer Fairs, Car Boot etc.	ALL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase attendance - building community cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - numbers of people attended - number of events 	-
7	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-2	Promotion of the work of Neighbourhood Management and Area Committees via area events and communication using a variety of publications and the website (including calendar of events, consultation opportunities)	NM, Cllrs, Community Reps	Live Website Limited finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased awareness of NM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More residents having a good understanding of who their NMT are, what they do and how to contact them - Visible profile of NMT in area wide events - Community reps acting as ambassadors for Area Committee 	

Item	NI Targets	Eng. Levels	Activity	Lead Agency	Gaps	Outcome	Output	Target Date
8	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-3	Production and Distribution of the Community Arrow. Establish an editorial sub-group	NM	Editorial sub-group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improved promotion of community news - residents ownership - a wide range of articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of residents on editorial group - number of articles 	-
9	NI 5	Level 1	Mapping of business activity in the WA and begin to improve partnership working with businesses	NM, Economic Dev & SRF		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detailed map showing local businesses and their activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detailed map and research 	
10	NI 5	Level 1	Improvement of Partnership working	NM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated and accessible services - Improved relationship working with partners - information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no. of networking sessions - no. of agencies that attend 	-
11	NI 5	1-2	Establish and programme regular Neighbourhood Action Team meetings and hence provide links between NATs and local neighbourhoods to hold services to account for performance.	NM and other agencies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improved relationship working with partners - effective problem solving in local areas - raising the profile of neighbourhood working demonstrate transparency of partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased confidence in residents of local services 	
12	NI 4 & 5	1-2	To complete the mapping exercise of community/voluntary and faith organisations within the west area and to put a strategy in place with regards to support for those groups due to the demise of the CDO role and the changes in the NCH/TPO role	NM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detailed map showing community/voluntary and faith organisations and their activity showing level of current support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detailed map and research 	-

Item	NI Targets	Eng. Levels	Activity	Lead Agency	Gaps	Outcome	Output	Target Date
13	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-5	Develop and support community groups across the WA	Community Development Service	Lack of area community dev. workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased community empowerment - Strong and active community groups in the WA focusing on a variety of issues - supporting residents interested in becoming active citizens with information and where to turn to for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of active community groups in the area - no. of new groups/members 	-
14	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-5	Develop and support specific interest groups eg Friends of King George V and Street Reps etc.	NM and other agencies	Community dev.support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased empowerment - Strong and active groups in the WA focusing on a variety of issues - supporting residents interested in becoming active citizens with information and where to turn to for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of active groups in the area - no. of new groups/members 	
15	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-5	Develop and support TRA's across the West Area	NCH	NCH do not cover private and Housing Association tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased community empowerment - Strong and active community groups in the WA focusing on a variety of issues - supporting residents interested in becoming active citizens with information and where to turn to for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of active community groups in the area - no. of new groups/members 	-

Item	NI Targets	Eng. Levels	Activity	Lead Agency	Gaps	Outcome	Output	Target Date
16	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-5	Review and develop Area Committee & sub groups representative structure to ensure it is representative of the wider community and working effectively (level 3-4)	NM and Cllrs	Role of community reps needs developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decision making - An effective and representative body of Area Committee reps - Area Committee being inclusive to new members / visitors - Understanding of the role of area committee - Increased ability to influence decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no. of residents participating - no. of opportunities provided for decision making 	-
17		Level 3	Work with Members to develop their role as champions of place and to establish clear and accountable leadership for the area. Level 3.	NM, Cllrs and Members' Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparent democratic services and decision making. 		
18	NI 4 & 5	Level 3	Support the process of local elections through raising awareness and promotion opportunities – Level 3	NM, Cllrs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number of west area residents/tenants voting and therefore influencing decisions. 		
19			Develop ways to engage with more residents from across the area who are not part of an established group, e.g. Tenants and residents group – level 2	NM Tenant and Resident officer	Community dev. officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased resident involvement in improving neighbourhoods, stronger communities 		

Item	NI Targets	Eng. Levels	Activity	Lead Agency	Gaps	Outcome	Output	Target Date
20			Promote, develop and celebrate volunteer opportunities & achievement	NM, Community Cohesion team, CVS, community sector	Community dev. officer			
21		3 & 4	Develop a clear, accountable method for residents to have a greater say in how budgets are spent (participatory budgeting, Area Committee, Area Capital)	NM	Community dev. officer	- Residents influence spending of public money in their neighbourhoods, resulting in greater satisfaction and better understanding of budgets		
22	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-5	Promoting community associations and centres	Community dev. services		- Increase usage of community centres - promoting community centre facilities	- increased usage of community centres	
23	NI 4	Level 1	Dissemination of info to community, voluntary and faith groups about opportunities to influence decisions.	NM and LAP		- increase awareness of opportunities	- no. of articles/information sent	
24	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-5	Promotion and development of the WA Community Chest Programme.	NM		- opportunity for local groups to apply for funding to create change in their neighbourhood - residents having opportunity to participatory budgeting	- no. of groups/individuals that apply - no. of completed projects - no. of people attending voting sessions - evaluation of process	-

Item	NI Targets	Eng. Levels	Activity	Lead Agency	Gaps	Outcome	Output	Target Date
25	NI 4 & 5	1-3	To carry out themed research in the WA using a variety of research methods eg. Door to door surveys, focus groups, panels and questionnaires etc.	NM and other agencies	Financial costs and insufficient resources to carry said activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engaging with hard to reach groups - Increased ability to influence decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no. of people involved - no. of research methods/techniques carried out 	-
26	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-2	To carry regular monitoring and evaluation of projects and events	NM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assures quality of work - best value - promote that NM making a difference - projects do or don't make a difference - share best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no. of projects/events monitored - no. of projects/events with positive impact 	-
27			West Area Children and Young peoples service forum	Youth Service and partner agencies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engaging with young people - Increased ability to influence decisions - Raising awareness and understanding of democracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no. of young people involved - no. of joint projects and initiatives delivered - no. of meetings held 	
28	NI 1, 4 & 5	1-3	Raising awareness and encouraging community involvement in the SRF	NM & SRF team/consultants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase awareness of SRF - more creative ways to engage a larger audience of WA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no. of people aware of SRF events/meetings etc. 	

Early Intervention, Health and SRF info to follow.