community engagement toolkit

SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP
2015 - 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public sector organisations are required, by law, to engage with community bodies as part of the community planning process. The main aim of community engagement should be to improve the planning and delivery of services by making them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities.

Scottish Borders Community Planning Partners are committed to improving the way in which we work together to ensure that we deliver the best services we can in the most effective ways to suit the needs of the community we serve.

To help us deliver on this aim we have developed this community engagement toolkit. The toolkit is part of a library of guides to support the Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement Framework and is designed to help us deliver our engagement activities in a consistent, cost effective and transparent manner.

The toolkit has also been developed so that all the good practice can be shared with our local stakeholders, for example community groups, to support them to deliver community engagement on subjects / projects which they are driving forward and would like local community participation in.

We hope that you will benefit from this toolkit as much as we will and wish you every success in your community engagement activities.

Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board

THE SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

The members of Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership are:

- Berwickshire Housing Association
- Borders College
- Eildon Housing Association
- NHS Borders
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Borders Council
- Scottish Borders Housing Association
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- SESTRAN
- Skills Development Scotland
- South of Scotland Scottish Enterprise
- Third Sector, represented by the Third Sector Interface
- Waverley Housing

WHAT IS COMMUNITY PLANNING?
Community Planning is a process by which public agencies work in partnership with communities, the private and third sector to plan and deliver better services.

Scottish Government

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

The National Standards for Community Engagement define community engagement as developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences. This also applies equally to public, private and third sector organisations.

There are many terms that can be used when describing the levels of community engagement, including:

- **Informing** - telling individuals and communities what we are going to do and why
- **Consulting** - presenting information for comment
- **Involving** - working with individuals and communities to develop options and make the decisions

It is important that in all communication we should make it clear what the level of engagement is and what this means for the community.

INFORMING

For 2013/2014 Berwickshire Housing Association decided to move away from the usual paper based way of producing their annual review and made a film instead.
The film features staff, tenants and Board Members explaining what the organisation has achieved over the previous year as well as how they have benefited from being part of the organisation.

http://www.bhagroup.org.uk/thevoice/

INVOLVING

During 2012/2013 the Border General Hosptial Participation Group, consisting of members of the public and service users, worked with NHS Borders staff to explore and introduce a 'sensorium' buzzer system to replace the call bell system used in wards. This was implemented in 2013/2014 and has reduced noise and disturbance to patients.

CONSULTING

Over the winter of 2013 the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) undertook a consultation on the service priorities for the local areas they serve. Paper and online consultation documents were supported by a number of presentations to local organisations; however the canvassing of customers in local supermarkets by SFRS officers in the Borders proved to be the most successful method of consultation used, producing 187 responses and encouraging dialogue between the organisation and the community.

WHY SHOULD WE ENGAGE?

We believe that through working with our communities we can deliver the services that meet local needs.

Effective community engagement provides a range of benefits to your organisation and the community.

It can:

- Empower people to plan and influence the future of their own community producing a greater sense of community spirit and pride
- Help keep the community informed
- Provide ways of measuring how satisfied the community is with your organisation and the services you deliver
- Encourage people to get involved; if people can see that their views do make a difference they are more likely to become involved
- Build a better relationship between the community and your organisation
- Assist your organisation to identify what needs to be improved.

WHO WILL WE ENGAGE WITH?

We will seek to engage with everyone who lives and/or works in the Scottish Borders. However, we accept that not everyone will want to be involved and we respect that decision.

It is important to identify and employ engagement methods that are best suited to the groups we wish to engage with to ensure that all members of the community are included in our work.

For example a conscious effort should be made to engage and consult with hard to reach groups to ensure that we are able to gain and understand their views; and due to the rural nature of the Scottish Borders thought should always be given as to how people facing rural barriers will be engaged with, these barriers may be physical isolation, lack of transport etc.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership has developed 11 key principles to ensure a consistent standard for community engagement activity, these can be found in the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement Framework. These principles are reflected in this document.

HOW WILL WE ENGAGE?
THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In May 2005 the National Standards for Community Engagement were launched. They set out best practice principles for the way that government agencies, councils, health boards, police and other public bodies engage with communities.

The 10 National Standards for Community Engagement are:

- **Involvement**: we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement
- **Support**: we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement
- **Planning**: we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken
- **Methods**: we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
- **Working together**: we will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently
- **Sharing information**: we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants
- **Working with others**: we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement

- **Improvement**: we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants
- **Feedback**: we will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected
- **Monitoring and evaluation**: we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement.

scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards

VOiCE

To help everyone involved in community engagement to achieve the standards, the Scottish Government commissioned the development of a database tool for planning, monitoring and evaluating community engagement called VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement).

VOiCE is underpinned by the 10 National Standards and can support organisations to:

- Plan community engagement and service user participation
- Conduct it effectively
- Monitor and record the process
- Evaluate the outcomes

www.voicescotland.org.uk

The toolkit now looks at each of the four stages of the community engagement process in turn, refering to the relevant key principles that should be considered at each stage.

2. ANALYSE

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP1. Clear purpose
KP2. Level of influence
KP4. Communicate
KP5. Co-ordinate
KP6. Be equitable
KP10. Allow time

WHY DO YOU WANT TO ENGAGE?

Think about your reason(s) for engaging with the community to complete the following two statements:

OUR PURPOSE FOR ENGAGING IS …

- Gain new understanding?
- Improve policy, practice or services?
- Plan or redesign services?
- Involve the community in meeting need?

WE ARE SEEKING TO …

- How will you explain your purpose?
- Why might the community want to engage with you?
- Are their interests the same as or different from yours?
- How might the community react to your motives?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

BEFORE YOU PLAN THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT WHAT DO YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT?

- What we know
- What do we need to know

Clarify exactly what the issue is that you think community engagement could help you to address. Check that this is an issue that is recognised by the community.

Answer these questions:

- Do you already have any information that is relevant to the focus of the engagement?
- How useful, reliable and up to date is this information?
- Can you use any of this information?
- What do you need to know more about?

SUMMARY INFORMATION
- What area/location are we engaging with?
- Who are you engaging with, are they a group?
- What is the overall purpose of the engagement?

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

WHO HAS AN INTEREST IN THE FOCUS OF ENGAGEMENT?

- Community stakeholders
- Agency stakeholders
- Who needs encouragement?
- Are there any conflicts of interest that might emerge?

Think about differences of view that stakeholders might have:

- Are some voices louder and better organised and could this disadvantage others?
- What can you do to enable all voices to be heard?

CHECKLIST
- Is there a good reason for conducting this engagement?
- Are you approaching it at the right level?
- Is it likely to be successful?
- Should you proceed?

3. PLAN

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP3.   Level of resource
KP4.   Communicate
KP5.   Co-ordinate
KP6.   Be equitable
KP7.   Make it accessible
KP8.   Deliver appropriate training
KP10. Allow time

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE YOU SEEKING?

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE STAKEHOLDERS LOOKING FOR, AND WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Outcomes are the differences that result from an action. At the start, the lead person(s) should seek to establish what difference or differences key stakeholders want the engagement to make.

- Clarify what each stakeholder is looking for from the engagement;
- What is each stakeholder group looking for?
- Are they looking for the same things?
- If not, can all their interests be accommodated?

YOU SHOULD NOW KNOW WHAT OUTCOMES YOU ARE LOOKING FOR BUT HOW WILL YOU KNOW THEY HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

Identify indicators of success for each outcome that reflects the interests of the stakeholders.

- What types of evidence would be convincing to you and other stakeholders?
- How would you be able to collect evidence as the engagement develops?
- With the other stakeholders, identify measures or indicators of performance for each outcome.

WHAT BARRIERS?

- What barriers might affect anyone who should be involved?
- What resources might be needed to overcome these barriers?
- Is there a need for independent advocacy, community development support, or specialise advice and, if so, where would it come from?

Though you have identified who has an interest they can only exercise their interests if they can participate.

SO WHAT BARRIERS MIGHT AFFECT ANYONE WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE INVOLVED?

e.g. physical, financial, cultural, language etc.

- How can you develop your plans for engagement to minimise these barriers?
- What resources might be needed to overcome barriers?
- Who will provide independent community development support?

WHAT RESOURCES?

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

Identifying the resources available to you is a key part of developing an action plan for engagement. The resources available to you will influence your choice of methods.

Think about the following:

- What skills are available to you?
- What experience can you draw on?
- What facilities can you access (e.g buildings, equipment, transport)
- What time is available?
- What is the budget?
- Who holds these skills and experience?

WHAT METHODS?

WHAT METHODS WILL YOU USE AND WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO MEET YOUR OUTCOMES?

Be imaginative - think about having more than just meetings.

Ask yourself:

- Who are we trying to involve?
- Where and when would they feel most comfortable?
- What styles/types of communication would most suit them?
- Can we use more than one method?
- There are lots of options e.g. World Café, citizens' juries, citizens' panels, community forums, Planning for Real, Story Dialogue, interactive displays, participatory drama etc.

To conduct your community engagement methods effectively you need to be clear who will do what, when and how they will do it, and who will co-ordinate and monitor. To do this most efficiently you need to use those best equipped for the tasks.

METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT
- For more information on Methods of Engagement see page 19.

So, think about the methods you plan to use and the resources available to you and ask:

- What are the key tasks?
- Who is best equipped to do them?
- When do they need to be done?

CHECKLIST

Are you clear:

- What the outcomes should be?
- How you will judge success?
- That you can tackle barriers to involving the stakeholders?
- That you have the resources we need?
- That you have selected appropriate and imaginative methods to meet our outcomes?
- That the actions to be taken are clear and responsibilities allocated?

Is the plan likely to be successful? Should you proceed?

Remember that all stakeholders have to be involved at every stage of the process.

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4. DO

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP4. Communicate
KP5. Co-ordinate
KP7. Make it accessible
KP8. Deliver appropriate training
KP9. Review
KP11. Protect

ARE YOU DOING IT?

Gathering evidence on the process and assessing progress.

ARE YOU DOING WHAT YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO WHEN YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO IT?

You need to be sure that the plan you established and agreed with stakeholders is actually implemented. Problems can arise for many, often unforeseen reasons including lack of access to resources, poor communications, poor working relationships and so on.

So refer back to the plan and check:

- Who was committed to doing what?
- When were they required to do it by?
- Are they meeting their commitments?
- If not, what are the reasons for this?
- What actions need to be taken to ensure that the plan is properly implemented?

ARE YOU GETTING THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED AND CONTRIBUTING APPROPRIATELY?

Active and effective stakeholder involvement will potentially be influenced by many factors. It is for this reason that half of all the standards have been identified as relevant.

Ask yourself:

- Who do we expect to be involved?
- Are they involved?
- If not, are there any identifiable barriers that are preventing them?
- If so, what actions can be taken to remove the barriers?
- Are the involved stakeholders able to contribute appropriately to implementation of the action plan?

IF NOT, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO ENABLE EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE APPROPRIATELY?

For example do you need to:

- Review your methods?
- Deal with issues arising in working relationships?
- Improve communications?
- Support development of skills, knowledge or confidence?

ARE YOU ALL WORKING WELL TOGETHER?

The quality of the working relationships between all the participants in community engagement is likely to be a key factor in whether it is effective.

Ask yourself, are all the participants:

- Equally able to participate?
- Being open, honest and respectful of one another?
- Respecting necessary confidentiality?
- Making best use of the time participants have available?
- Encouraging and supporting one another to work effectively?
- Using plain language?
- Seeking, listening to and reflecting on the views of others?
- Taking decisions on the basis of agreed procedures and shared knowledge
- Clear about purposes, respective roles and responsibilities?
- Addressing and resolving any conflicts that arise?
- Contributing and using available resources effectively?

If any difficulties are identified in these areas consider what can be done to bring about improvement in necessary skills and competences.

ARE YOU KEEPING EVERYONE INFORMED?

Community engagement and service user participation depend on all the participants having access to necessary information to fully understand the issues that the engagement is seeking to address.

Ask yourself:

- Within the limits of necessary confidentiality, is all relevant information being shared between all participants?
- Is the information accessible, clear and understandable?
- Is it made available in appropriate formats for participants and in time to enable them to fully take part and consult others?
- Are any issues relating to necessary restricted access to information fully explained?

WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING?

The key to effective implementation is to monitor progress and act on lessons that are emerging from the process of the action. You should be returning to this section of the toolkit throughout the implementation of your plan.

Each time you do so you should be asking yourself:

- What is going well and do we need to consolidate it?
- What is going wrong and how do we change it?
- If change is needed, who needs to take action about what and when?

DO YOU NEED TO REVISE YOUR ANALYSIS, METHODS OR ACTION PLAN?

Monitoring of progress should lead to adjustment of practice. Waiting to the end to identify lessons may be too late. So share monitoring information and discuss progress with the participants. Don't be afraid to revisit and revise your plan if evidence tells you it is not working as you hoped. If anything is not working do something about it!

Keep asking yourself:

- What is going well and how do we consolidate it?
- What is going wrong and how do we change it?
- If change is needed who needs to take action about what and when?

CHECKLIST
REFLECTING ON YOUR ACTIONS

Reviewing and learning lessons is the next and final step in the cycle.

If you have addressed all questions you should have the records that are needed to conduct the review.

Important: To successfully conduct the review you will have to gather the opinions of those agency and community stakeholders who were involved in the engagement process. This can be achieved through a variety of means including questionnaires and/or roundtable discussion.

5. REVIEW

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP4. Communicate
KP5. Co-ordinate
KP9. Review
KP11. Protect

HOW WAS THE EVIDENCE COLLECTED?

HOW HAVE STAKEHOLDERS BEEN INVOLVED IN COLLECTING EVIDENCE AND JUDGING PERFORMANCE?

Everyone who committed themselves to being involved will want to know whether the outcomes that were agreed at the start have been achieved. They should all be party to reaching judgements of the qualities of the engagement.

Ask yourself:

Who are the stakeholders who should be involved? (see *Analyse* section)

Have we involved them effectively and to their satisfaction:

- In gathering relevant evidence?
- In judging performance?

Have they been enabled to participate in evaluating both the process and results of the engagement?

WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T?

The focus here is on the way that the engagement was conducted. Things rarely go exactly as planned.

So, before you conduct your review of the engagement look back at the records you have kept and ask yourself:

- Did we implement the plan?
- Were there any aspects that we did differently?
- Were there any things that we did not actually do?

In the light of this real picture of what happened, with the stakeholders, review the evidence and ask yourselves:

- To what degree has each National Standard of Community Engagement been met?
- Is there consensus about these answers or do different stakeholders have different views that need to be recorded?

WHO DID WE ENGAGE?

- **How many of the planned Community Stakeholders did the engagement process reach?**
- **Did all the Agency stakeholders identified in *Analyse* continue to be involved throughout the engagement process?**

DID WE SUCCEED?

REVIEWING THE OUTCOMES FROM YOUR PLAN, HOW SUCCESSFUL HAVE YOU BEEN?

The quality of process of the engagement does not necessarily determine its outcome. It is essential to ask the direct question: to what extent have the purposes set in the plan actually been achieved?

Everyone who committed themselves to being involved will want to know the answer to this question. In relation to each outcome that was set in your action plan, ask yourself:

- To what degree has the engagement addressed the needs we identified?
- To what degree has the engagement achieved the outcome that we sought in relation to these needs?
- Is there consensus about these answers or do different stakeholders have different views that should be recorded?

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- Overall score based on assessment of process and outcomes of the engagement
- Have there been any unanticipated outcomes?
- In the *Analyse* section we said that the right level for the engagement was
- What key lessons have been learned as a result of the engagement?
- What will we do next?

Firstly, only knowing whether you achieved what you set out to do is not enough. What you do will commonly have other results than those that you were looking for. These can be good or bad. If you are going to learn from what you have done you need to know what else happened.

With the stakeholders, review the evidence and ask yourselves:

- Did any outcomes result other than those we planned for?
- Are there any significant implications of these outcomes?

Secondly, there is no point in evaluating your performance if you don't reflect on how it may help you in the future.

So, with the stakeholders, ask yourself:

- What have we learned from the experience of this engagement?

In particular:

- How could the process have been improved?
- What should we be doing now and in the future to address the needs and achieve the outcomes we identified?
- What new issues have we identified and what should we be doing about them?

CHECKLIST
Reflecting on your Review

- Have all review questions been answered?
- Have all stakeholders been involved in answering them?
- Have the necessary actions been taken?

GUIDES, FURTHER TOOLS AND RESOURCES

To support this community engagement process and toolkit a broad set of tools and resources is being developed. This will include a series of guides on key community engagement topics for example consultation, methods of engagement etc. as well as additional tools, resources and useful links.

These will be available from:

SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP
Council Headquarters | Newtown St Boswells | MELROSE | TD6 0SA
tel: 01835 826626 | email: CommunityPlanning@scotborders.gov.uk | www.scotborders.gov.uk

You can get this document on audio CD, in large print, and various other formats by contacting us at the address below. In addition, contact the address below for information on language translations, additional copies, or to arrange for an officer to meet with you to explain any areas of the publication that you would like clarified.

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