

**To review how the Council consults and involves residents and residents satisfaction with their levels of involvement**



**NORTHAMPTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Report of the Overview and Scrutiny  
Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish Group**

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## FOREWORD

Following a referral from Northampton Borough Council's Improvement Board, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was asked to review the way that the Council consulted with and engaged its citizens.

It set up a Task & Finish Group consisting of Councillor Christopher Malpas (Chair), Councillor Brandon Eldred, Councillor Michael Hill, Councillor Anjona Roy and Councillor Andrew Simpson to carry out the work.

The purpose of the Task and Finish Group's review was to be able to demonstrate the extent to which that the Council consults and involves a satisfactory cross section of residents and that the residents are satisfied with their levels of involvement. It was decided to adopt the specific criteria which had been set within in Northampton Borough Council's Strategy for Communications and Consultation:-

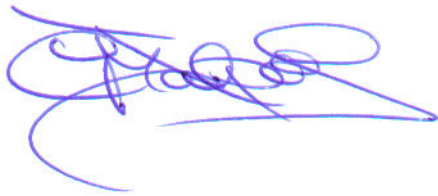
***' To have by July 2006 more than 50% of residents feeling we consult and involve them and to increase to 55% residents who are satisfied/very satisfied with us by April 2006'***

Although the review was thoroughly scoped at the onset, the subject area expanded as evidence was taken. Mid-review, the Task and Finish Group realised that the work needed to be refined and refocused.

The review was designed to examine a diverse range of information. Interviews were arranged with key front line employees and senior staff from NBC. Information was taken from Councils who gained beacon status for their achievements in the 'Getting Closer to Communities' category. There was a visit to the London Borough of Haringey. Baseline information was received and desktop research was carried out using the Internet. Focus Groups were conducted with current consultees, and a consultation visit to the Council's Youth Forum took place.

The Task and Finish Group commenced in late November 2005 and concluded in May 2006.

The review proved to be interesting and informative giving clear evidence of ways that the Council can progress.



**Councillor Christopher Malpas**

Chair of the Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish Group

**Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review:-**

- Councillors Michael Hill, Anjona Roy and Andrew Simpson
- Councillor Brendan Glynane (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee),
- Thomas Hall (Corporate Manager)
- Kay Atkinson (Corporate Manager) and Lindsey Ambrose (Area Partnerships and Forums Co-Ordinator) for assisting at the Focus Groups
- Councillor Tony Woods for facilitating a session at the Focus Group.
- Zena Brabazon, Head of Neighbourhood Management, and her team at the London Borough of Haringey, for arranging the visit to Neighbourhood Management Services and making the Group feel so welcome.
- Tracy Tiff for all her work during this project.
- Margaret Martin of the Consortium

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Following a referral from Northampton Borough Council's Improvement Board, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was asked to review public engagement and communications within the Council. A Task and Finish Group was therefore set up to investigate how the Council consults and engages with its citizens.

Communications and Public Engagement is a key priority in Northampton Borough Council's Recovery Plan and there is a need to ensure that consultation and community engagement are used effectively by the Council.

The Task and Finish Group established that there is a need for: -

- Clear details of the integrity of customer satisfaction measurement
- Effective consultation
- Consultation mechanisms that ensures residents feel they are consulted and involved across all services to affect service improvement.
- A comprehensive consultation process/strategy that is fit for purpose for the Council.

The Task and Finish Group determined that there were already a number of examples of consultation within the Council but there was a need for them to be co-ordinated and brought up to a consistent standard. This Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group has made a number of recommendations around consultation methods, citizen engagement and internal processes and procedures. The recommendations that the Task and Finish Group is proposing are aiming at increasing public engagement within the Council and the introduction of improved, standardised consultation methods.

A significant amount of evidence was heard and these are included as appendices to the report.

# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

### Report of the Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish Group

#### 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Task and Finish Group was to review the way the Council consults and involves its citizens, to evaluate how robust mechanisms are and to suggest areas for improvement.

#### 2. Context

Communications and Public Engagement is a key priority in Northampton Borough Council's Recovery Plan because it was highlighted in the Audit Commission's CPA progress Report, June 2005 that: -

*"Consultation and community engagement are not used effectively by the Council. The Council does not yet have strategies in place to develop these tools."*

The Task and Finish Group needed to be selective in its approach, as consultation and engagement is a very wide area. It chose therefore to focus on two key outcomes from Northampton Borough Council's Strategy for Communications and Consultation: -

*"To have by July 2006 more than 50% of residents feeling we consult and involve them and to increase to 55% residents who are satisfied/very satisfied with us by April 2006."*

The Group established that there is a need for: -

- Councillors to have a true picture of the integrity of customer satisfaction measurement (that they are for example, truthful, honest, and decent) and to understand that it is measured in the right way.
- Clear recommendations about how effective consultation should happen.
- Scrutiny of consultation mechanisms to ensure as many residents as possible feel they are consulted and involved across all services to affect service improvement.
- The identification of the risks that could prevent the overall targets being achieved.
- A comprehensive consultation strategy and process that is fit for purpose for the Council.
- Evaluation of the Communication and Consultation Strategy.

The Council's Recovery Plan (March 2006 to September 2006) states that good quality citizen engagement is required for:

- *“Services that are directly shaped by our customers and convenient to them*
- *Clear, timely, effective and accurate two way communication with residents, stakeholders and employees*
- *Continually improving local and national reputation and profile*
- *Celebrate successes on the journey to Excellence”*

Mid-review, the Group realised that it had taken on a very large remit and the original scope was therefore not likely to be completed within the allotted time frame. After looking at the evidence and information gathered, Councillors agreed that further work was required to complete the review and therefore extended the completion date from March to May 2006.

### **3. Evidence**

In scoping the review it was decided that evidence would be taken from a variety of sources:

#### **3.1 Corporate Manager (Citizen Engagement)**

Thomas Hall, Corporate Manager, NBC, who provided Public Engagement and Communication baseline information, which detailed a sample of the types of consultation that was taking place. It was apparent that consultation had been uncoordinated in the past with services undertaking their own consultation as the need arose. In certain service areas considerable sums were spent on consultation but Area Partnerships often felt that they were not aware of the consultation, not invited to partake and there was no feedback. (Appendix B refers - minutes of 14 December 2005 meeting)

#### **3.2 Front Line Employees**

Key front line employees were interviewed regarding consultation in respect of:

- The Budget – Alison Betts, Finance Manager
- Planning (Development Control) – Derrick Simpson, Project Manager
- Area Partnerships and Forums – Sean Silver, Community Development Manager, Lindsey Cameron, Participation Team Leader, Lindsey Ambrose, Area Partnerships and Forums Co-Ordinator

The key points from the interviews were: -

- Timing for the budget consultation was significant if people are to believe their views will be acted upon
- Development Control is an example where a high number of people are consulted. It demonstrates where there needs to be a compromise

between the cost, numbers consulted and the quality of the consultation which the Council would need to address.

- The Council could make more use of Area Partnerships as forums for consultation.

(Appendix C refers minutes of 2 March 2006 meeting)

### **3.3 Best Practice Visit**

Councillors Christopher Malpas, Michael Hill, Andrew Simpson and Brendan Glynane (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) visited the London Borough of Haringey, a Beacon Council for Getting Closer to its Communities. A presentation from the Head of Neighbourhood Management was given, followed by a question and answer session. The Group had a tour of the work of Neighbourhood Management and met with a Cabinet Councillor, the Beacon Co-Coordinator, the Communications Manager and community workers. The Group felt that a lot of the procedures and policies used by the London Borough of Haringey could be adopted by Northampton Borough Council. (Appendix D refers – notes of the visit to the London Borough of Haringey)

The key points from the visit were: -

- Difference between informing and consulting
- Neighbourhood Management
- Having a learning mindset
- Citizens with rights and responsibilities not just residents
- Developing civic pride
- Giving citizens a genuine say in what happens in local decision making

### **3.4 Beacon Councils**

Examples of best practice were required from Local Authorities who had achieved Beacon status for Getting Closer to Communities, including:

- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- London Borough of Croydon
- Wiltshire County Council
- London Borough of Haringey

(Appendix E gives examples of the above)

Examples of best practice included:

- The use of corporate branding to promote the Council
- Consulting within neighbourhood working to engage with citizens



### **3.5 Desktop Research – Council website**

Councillor Andrew Simpson carried out desktop research (web based) and as a result concentrated on the City of Westminster Council. He perceived Northampton Borough Council's website to be very good but he felt that Westminster's navigation was better structured. Northampton Borough Council's website was still very departmentalised and used a lot of jargon. Westminster published a questionnaire on its website '*what do you think of the Council and its website.*' At the top of the homepage, different languages were detailed and the user could click on the link to be directed to the relevant language. Westminster had a one-city vision for the Council – branding Westminster as one city. The London Borough of Haringey also used corporate branding (Better Haringey), although it concentrated on identifying more localised areas to give a feeling of 'neighbourhood communities.' As a result of the information provided, the Task and Finish Group supported the effective use of branding in encouraging citizen engagement.

The key findings were: -

- Feedback form on the website
- Different languages supported clearly
- The website was constructed around service areas rather than departments, based on what the citizens wanted to do
- The website included a vision for the city

### **3.6 Focus Groups – Community**

Focus Group sessions entitled *Because your Opinion Matters* were held on different days and times in April 2006 to ensure the widest possible attendance. They were called to ascertain the public's perception of how well Northampton Borough Council consults. Feedback from the Focus Group sessions was varied and the results are annexed to Appendix F. Proformas were available at the Focus Group sessions for individuals wishing to discuss issues that were outside the remit of the purpose of the Focus Group. (Copy attached– Appendix G). The Group felt it would be useful for the proforma to be adapted so that it could be used generically within the Council.

The main comments from the six groups sessions were: -

#### **Good Consultation that has been carried out by Northampton Borough Council**

- Area Partnerships and Forums

#### **Features of Poor Consultation that has been carried out by Northampton Borough Council**

- Consultation feedback, including that from Area Partnerships
- Councillors' responses to citizens telephone calls
- The use of over-complex language

- The lack of consistent, professional approach to consultation
- Response from the Council (including letters, telephone, email etc)

### **Features of Consultation that could improve**

- Residents' ability to challenge/review decisions
- Engagement at local level in service improvement and consultation
- Use of Community Centres for meetings and consultation events
- Timing and location of meetings
- Provide information about the role of Councillors
- Clarify the roles of Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council, but provide a seamless service
- Communicate results of consultation and actions from it – follow it through

Over the course of this review, issues that would improve communication were: -

- Alternative means of communicating, for example, access to electronic communication, such as PC's located in the one stop shop.
- Better identification of Ward Councillors

### **3.7 Questionnaires**

Consultation Questionnaires were issued to attendees at the Focus Group sessions, individuals who requested a copy and a wide distribution list. All completed questionnaires were analysed. It was apparent from the completed questionnaires that the majority of individuals understood why the Council wished to consult with them. The majority had taken part in Council consultations and about half thought that their views were not taken into account. Individuals completing the questionnaires comprised mainly adults and many of them had a background of being engaged with the Council's processes. It is recognised that this is not a representative sample and the Group acknowledges there is future work to be done identifying the views of citizens it has not managed to engage with.

The issues identified from the questionnaires that citizens voted to be their top three priority issues for the future -

- Transportation	13 votes
- Revive Town Centre	11 votes
- Security/Policing	10 votes

Some of the questionnaires did not have all sections or boxes completed. The comprehensive results of the consultation questionnaires are attached at Appendix H.

### **3.8 Youth Forum**

Councillor Malpas attended a meeting of the Youth Forum on 18 April 2006 and informed the young people of the Focus Group Sessions. It was apparent from the questionnaires completed by the Youth Forum that only half of the attendees understood why the Council wishes to consult with its citizens. The majority had taken part in Council consultation and most considered that their views were not taken into account.

The issues that the Youth Forum voted to be its top three priority issues for consultation were: -

- |                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| • Budget                      | 13 votes |
| • Employment for young people | 7 votes  |
| • Youth Clubs/things to do    | 6 votes  |

The comprehensive results of the Youth Forum completed questionnaires are attached at Appendix I.

### **3.9 Northampton Borough Council's existing Consultation Protocol**

The Task and Finish Group received a copy of Northampton Borough Council's Consultation Protocol that was currently in existence. It was felt that this needed to be expanded upon and suggested amendments were made (Appendix J refers)

## **4 Conclusions**

4.1 The Group determined that there were already a number of examples of consultation within the Council but that they were not necessarily co-ordinated or of equal quality, and the cost and effectiveness of consultation exercises was not uniformly collected or available.

- Every public facing service should be in a position to know how its customers regard it.
- A plan should be developed showing how services will get to that position.
- There is the need for a more coherent approach. The Council wants to be a customer focussed organisation but cannot judge its success in this, as it does not measure it.
- There is a need for a clear mechanism for consultation supported by a consistent style. Consultation guidance should be produced and issued to all Council service areas. All consultation data should go to one central unit, which should be centrally collated (Community intelligence – access of information).

4.2 The Group felt that the target below was a good target but the timescales to achieve such a stretching target were unrealistic:

*“To have by July 2006 more than 50% of residents feeling we consult and involve them and to increase to 55% residents who are satisfied/very satisfied with us by April 2006.”*

In the course of preparing the Communications Strategy, figures had been proposed by consultants as no measurements were in place; these had been accepted by Cabinet. There was a need to look at the figures as a longer-term aspiration. Measurement had not as yet been looked at in detail. A standard satisfaction survey was due in the autumn. (Appendix C refers minutes of 2 March 2006 meeting.)

- 4.3 Evidence was taken from the service areas, budget, planning, area partnerships. Forums were chosen because they were of broad and significant impact on the citizens and Council involving large numbers of individuals. It became evident that:

#### **Good Practice**

- (a) Rapid improvement in consultation is possible with much more engagement than in previous years, by learning from good practice.

#### **Consultation and Change**

- (b) There needs to be a clear link from consultation to change, and this needs to be communicated back to the people who the Council consults. For example, if views emerge through consultation, they must be able to affect decisions, and the people consulted need to know that they have affected decision-making. Greater use of the media to explain changes would be helpful. This applies to all the examples looked at.

#### **Timing**

- (c) Timing is significant, if people are to believe their views will be acted on.

#### **Types of Information**

- (d) It is necessary to review the kind of information presented to support consultation, to ensure that it can be understood and addresses the issues people need to know about in order to make informed comments.

#### **Development Control**

- (e) Development Control is an example of very high volume consultation. There is a compromise between cost, numbers consulted and quality of consultation, which the Council would

need to address. This is an opportunity to reach a large volume of citizens.

There are challenges in assessing satisfaction with consultation or process, independently from satisfaction with the result (e.g. if the planning application is approved when you did not want it to be, would you be pleased with the process?) More imaginative ways of assessing views and the effectiveness on the process may be needed.

Development Control consultation also provides an example of the difficulty of consulting all the interested people effectively, which may suggest a continuing need to open up greater and more accessible information channels for all sectors of the community (e.g. website).

As with other forms of consultation, it was not clear why some people did not respond and whether there are any patterns which would help us to reach out to these people.

### **Area Partnerships and Forums**

- (f) The Council could make more use of Area Partnerships and Forums as opportunities for consultation. But there is a tension between the Council setting the agenda in deciding what is to be consulted about, and local people raising issues of their own concern. Consultation is only one form of citizen engagement and it should be supplemented with mechanisms which allow citizens to initiate or add to the debate.

Area Partnerships are not always truly representative in nature and there is no clear analysis or knowledge who attends and who stays away.

There is no clear route for the issues raised at Area Partnerships to influence the Council's decision-making.

Area Partnerships provide, potentially, a locality perspective and an opportunity for consultation. This opportunity is not therefore exploited to its potential.

- 4.4 It would be advantageous to re-convene the Focus Group in 12 months time using the same questions to ascertain whether the views or participants have changed. This could constitute part of the monitoring process for the outcomes of this review.
- 4.5 The Council does not know enough about which groups are reached by its consultation and engagement mechanisms, and which are left out. This creates a risk of false confidence in the results. (Appendix C refers). The consultation agenda needs to be balanced by the provision

of regular and systematic opportunities for diverse groups of citizens to raise issues of concern and see something done about them. Different people have different requirements and there is a need have different forms of consultation for widespread accessibility to the process.

- 4.6 Using the results of consultations is variable. There needs to be a method by which outcomes of consultation can be seen to be built in to decision-making, service planning and priority setting processes and the demonstrable evidence for these excluded. A section on the bottom of reports asking who was consulted is not enough especially, if nothing is done with the outcomes. A summary of the consultation should also be attached.
- 4.7 Consultees were often frustrated that, when they did take part, they did not see or hear the results. Any consultation exercise should be planned to include this feedback.
- 4.8 The costs and benefits of these exercises do not appear to be calculated and accounted for. There appears to be no dedicated budget for consultation which makes for difficulty in producing a co-ordinated Council consultation mechanism.
- 4.9 It appears that the Council tends to set an agenda for consultation, determining what questions are to be asked. There needs to be an opportunity for citizens to be part of the agenda setting rather than just the Council.
- 4.10 "Northampton Now" is a Council produced document and is clearly not reaching out to citizens effectively as it was not mentioned as a means of consultation from the Focus Group sessions or in any of the other consultation undertaken by this Task and Finish Group.
- 4.11 On the basis of good practice Councils that the Task and Finish Group examined, it was felt that the Council would engage more citizens effectively if it developed neighbourhood working and consulted within these structures.
- 4.12 Currently there is no way of measuring how Councillors, in their role as Community Leaders, help to achieve the consultation and engagement targets in the Council. Councillors are part of the public face of the Council and need to be supported and engaged in the process.
- 4.13 The Council needs to embrace the national developments in a more strategic sense. Text (SMS) messaging has been piloted at Liverpool City Council and Renfrewshire Council as a means of consulting effectively with harder to reach groups.
- 4.14 Clear signposting and branding helps citizens to understand who is asking what of them and who is providing certain services. This was

demonstrated well by the London Borough of Haringey, Thameside Metropolitan Borough Council and the City of Westminster. This could be particularly valuable where there is confusion as to the role of Borough and County Councils.

- 4.15 It was significant that where more effective consultation existed in the Council there were specific employees who had responsibility for this area of work.

## **5. Recommendations**

For ease of delivery, the following series of recommendations are grouped in specific areas: -

### **1 Management and Resources**

1.1 Northampton Borough Council identifies a member of staff, from the Communication or Community Development Service Area, with specific responsibility for consultation for the Council.

1.2 There is a need for a budget for providing advice on consultation. Each service area must provide for consultation in its own budgets. The relevant budgetary measures should be allocated in the next budget process.

1.3 All consultation exercises should be planned to include feedback to the participants.

1.4 The costs and benefits of these exercises should be calculated in full before the process starts.

### **2 Information and Co-Ordination**

2.1 All consultation data and the results of analysis should be accessible from a central source.

2.2 The outcomes of all consultations should be made available to all services.

### **3 Systems and Protocols**

3.1 Appropriate corporate consultation mechanisms should be in place by the autumn to give the Council meaningful results. A baseline should be established in order that progress can be monitored.

3.2 Northampton Borough Council should adopt an effective consultation protocol to circulate internally and externally within the Council. A starting draft has been produced by this Task and Finish Group. (Appendix J refers)

3.3 A Corporate Policy and implementation process on consultation and engagement should be produced.

3.4 The proforma used at the Focus Group sessions should be adapted so that it can be used generically within the Council.



3.5 The results of consultations need to be built in to decision-making, service planning and priority setting processes in the Council.

3.6 Northampton Borough Council should make use of neighbourhood working for consultation processes and wider working potential.

3.7 Plain language should be used in all Council documents in order that any member of the public is able to access Council material.

3.8 It would be helpful for a guidance to be produced on Council and Local Authority terminology.

3.9 Councillors should be supported in their role liaising between the Council and the community and be provided with appropriate means and methods for feeding back the outcomes of consultations in their communities.

#### **4 Engagement with Diverse Communities**

4.1 Current methods of consultation should be supplemented with other mechanisms to reach a larger and more diverse population allowing citizens to initiate or add to the debate. For example – Community Groups could be encouraged and supported to bring issues, concerns and ideas directly to the Council.

4.2 A corporate brand that helps Northampton Borough Council to bring consistency and inspire confidence should be developed.

#### **5 Future Work and Review**

5.1 The consultation exercise undertaken as part of the review by this Task and Finish Group be used as the benchmark in 12 months time to see what improvements the Council has made in that period of time.

5.2. Another piece of focussed work should be undertaken to ensure that the Council is accessing all groups in the community in a systematic and regular way.

5.3 It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group reviews progress of this review in six months (December 2006/January 2007).

### Public consultations work plan 2006

External Consultation	Geoff Wilkins / Kath Suer		Plan & review ongoing (Commenced) Seconded agreement made Geoff Wilkins & Mairi McLean - Done
Kath Suer to devote 50% of time as a secondee	Geoff Wilkins	05/05/06	Agreed by Ella Yeshin/Kath Suer Agreed with Mario Abela/Thomas Hall - Done
Consolidate plan for existing consultations to produce calendar	Kath Suer	31/05/06	Only statutory consultations planned – consolidated to work plan
Develop consultation framework based on Beacon Councils who have won awards	Geoff Wilkins Kath Suer	31/05/06	GW contacted 7 Beacon Councils for “Getting Closer to the Communities”  Process documentation obtained
Develop “Near-term” Consultation Plan	Geoff Wilkins Kath Suer	16/06/06	Completed – see attached
Gain indications of magnitude of cost and approach, views and inputs from prospective suppliers (MORI, RBA, BMG, Research for today etc.)	Geoff Wilkins Kath Suer	15/07/06	In process
Initiate procurement / tendering process	Geoff Wilkins Mario Abela Alison Betts	17/07/06	
Manage delegation of consultations to corporate managers Sweep departmental consultations into corporate programme	Kath Suer Geoff Wilkins	1/08/06	

Assess costs, budget Review and agree	Geoff Wilkins Kath Suer Mario Abela Alison Betts	11/08/06	
Identify Funding & commit	Mario Abela	18/08/06	
Complete instructing supplier(s) for September 1 commencement	Geoff Wilkins Kath Suer	24/08/06	
Initiate consultation programme for 2006 (Completion 15-12-06)	Corporate managers	24/08/06	
Set up review, quality assurance, audit guidelines	Geoff Wilkins Kath Suer	24/08/06	
Resolve permanent staff appointment (recruitment)	Mario Abela Kath Suer	24/08/06	
Ongoing review, quality assurance, audit	Consultation Manager Communications Manager	Commence 1/09/06 ongoing	
Develop guidelines and protocols for External Consultations	Consultation Manager Communications Manager	29/09/06	
Progress and project management reviews	Consultation Manager	Commencing 15/09/06 fortnightly	
Agree future performance measures and objectives	Performance Manager Communications	31/10/06	

	Manager		
Feasibility Review of Information Management Systems requirements (Consultation, analysis and database management)	Consultation Manager Communications Manager	31/10/06	
Plan next phase	Consultation manager Communications manager	01/11/06	

## Draft corporate public consultation plan 2006

Public consultation	Status	CM / Mgr	Supplier
Budget	Planned for September	Alison Betts	None identified
Corporate plan	Planned for September	Ella Yeshin / Simone Wade	None identified
Customer service	In process	Kay Atkinson	MORI (Collaboration with NCC & others)
Customer contact centre	Ongoing customer telephone survey	Kay Atkinson	None required
Tenants	Early stage planning	Fran Rodgers	None identified
Benefits	Early stage planning	Fran Rodgers	None identified
Planning	Early stage planning	Christine Stevenson	None identified
Waste, recycling, streetscene	Government survey in place	Carl Grimmer	MORI (Govt. sponsored)
Waste, recycling, streetscene		Carl Grimmer	Not known
Environmental health		Christine Stevenson	None identified
Community safety		Thomas Hall / Deborah Ferguson	None identified
Communities / equality / diversity		Thomas Hall / Sean Silver	None identified
Sports & Leisure		Christine Stevenson	None identified
Promoting the local economy (The town centre)		David Taylor (Director) / Chris Cavanagh	None identified
Staff survey	Planned for September	Howard Crabtree	None identified

Geoffrey Wilkins June 2006

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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- Northampton Borough Council's Recovery Plan, March 2006 to September 2006
- Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Governance Inspection (2005 version)
- Northampton Borough Council's Communication Plan
- Communications, Consultation and Engagement – Report for Northampton Borough Council
- Engagement – Northampton Borough Council's Strategy for Communications and Consultation
- Northampton Borough Council Corporate Identity Handbook
- Area Partnership Attendance – November 2004 - January 2006
- The Beacon Council Scheme 2004 – Application Form \_ Wiltshire County Council
- West Wiltshire Community Strategy 2004-2005
- Tottenham and Seven Sisters Area Assembly News – October 2005
- Haringey Residents Survey 2005/06:digest
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council – Consultation Strategy 2003/04
- Croydon City Council – Neighbourhood Partnership and Community Involvement
- Policing: Engaging Local People (September 2003) – National Extension College

## Appendices

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS  
TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

**REVIEW SCOPE**

**To have by July 2006 more than 50% of residents feeling we consult and involve them and to increase to 55% residents who are satisfied/very satisfied with us by April 2006**

**1 PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW**

To be able to demonstrate that the Council consult and involve more residents and that the residents are satisfied with their levels of involvement.

**2 POTENTIAL OUTCOMES**

- Councillors have a true picture of the integrity customer satisfaction measurement (for example, true, honest, decent) and understand that it is measured in the right way.
- Clear recommendations about how effective consultation should happen.
- Scrutiny of consultation mechanisms to ensure all residents feel they are consulted and involved across all services to affect service improvement.
- The identification of the risks that may occur that would prevent the overall targets being achieved.
- A comprehensive consultation process/strategy that is fit for purpose for the Council.
- Evaluation of the Engagement Strategy.

**3 INFORMATION REQUIRED**

- How each service area is approaching the targets
- Who is taking responsibility for these targets across the Council
- What is the current percentage of residents who feel consulted and involved – and why do they feel consulted and involved
- Best practice within Northampton (other public bodies) and best practice external to Northampton
- What budget is allocated to achieve the targets
- How do Councillors in their role as Community Leaders help to achieve the targets



- What feedback mechanisms are in place when a resident contacts the Council or takes part in consultations
- How the Council measures the satisfaction of residents
- The current IT system's effectiveness to meet the Council's requirements.
- The use of text messaging as a means of engaging particularly young people, in the consultation mechanisms
- The methods used to conduct previous survey(s)/consultation.
- 

#### **4 FORMAT OF INFORMATION**

##### Baseline Data

- Existing surveys
- Officer briefings/reports/presentations
- Residents 'Mystery Shopping' exercises
- Past examples of public engagement (good and bad)
- Interviews
- Marketing/public relations expert
- Specialists in public opinion surveying  
Newspaper reporter/editor

#### **5 METHODS USED**

- Interviews of key front line staff
- Focus Groups
- Random sample of residents
- Visit/talks from other organisations
- Desk top research/ web based
- Questionnaires
- Examples of best practice

#### **6 CO-OPTION TO THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

##### **Suggestions:**

- Residents
- Other Councillors

#### **7 TIMETABLE**

November to March 2006

#### **8 RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS**

Lead Officer	Thomas Hall
Co-Ordinator	Tracy Tiff

#### **9 RESOURCES AND BUDGET**

Communications Officer, one day a week, until the end of the Review

## **10 FINAL REPORT**

Completed by March 2006. Presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

On the basis of the recommendations being accepted, we will baseline the data previous to the findings compared to the data after the implementation of the recommendations.

## **11 MONITORING PROCESS**

Key milestones identified under review

Review dates established and evidence required

Review the impact of the report after six months (September 2006)

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish  
Group**

**Wednesday, 14 December 2005**

**Present:**

Councillor Brendan Glynane  
Councillor Andrew Simpson  
Councillor Anjona Roy  
Thomas Hall  
Margaret Martin

**Apologies:**

Councillor B Eldred  
Councillor C Malpas  
Councillor M Hill

**1 Minutes of last Meeting**

The minutes were accepted and no further discussion was required.

**2 Baseline Data**

Thomas Hall issued a copy of the baseline data for discussion. This is work in progress and is a sample of the types of consultation that are taking place. There are gaps eg planning, streetscene and it is anticipated that more information on consultation conducted by NBC will be available by the end of the year.

It is apparent that consultation has been unco-ordinated in the past with services undertaking their own as the need arose. There are no corporate standards for consultation.

Discussion followed on what constitutes the "general public", who was the consultation particularly aimed at, more detail required on the frequency of consultation and the numbers of people consulted and responding. To ensure 50% of residents feel we have consulted with them we need to establish types and numbers of those we do consult with and get a sense of scale.

In certain service areas considerable sums are spent on consultation but Area Partnerships often feel that they are not aware of the consultation, not invited and there is no feedback.

The outcomes from consultation should be fed back and explanations provided as to why we sometimes are not able to deliver what we are asked for.

Suggested questions to gather more information:

- Is any feedback given post consultation
- Costs
- Are others consulting on the same topic or related matters]
- How do we ensure it is representative
- Value for money
- Evaluation

Need to look at other authorities who have good communication and consultation arrangements – a starting point for this would be those councils who have been recommended or have won awards in this field with Local Government Chronicle or APSE.

UCN may be able to assist in involving young people.

Agreed in the future to look at external bodies; companies/ charities to look at the methodology used to engage people - how do they obtain public opinion which feeds into providing better products / services also what budget they allocate to such projects.

Public Relations Plan is part of the strategy as well as the development of a proactive approach to promoting our message.

### **Summary:**

T Hall to continue to populate the data adding size of consultation and the perception rating (internal view) of its effectiveness

Key Lines of Enquiry especially Theme 1 are very relevant to the work of this group and could be incorporated.

This meeting has identified the gaps

Next meeting will look at the data.

Thomas please note:

*Future meeting dates to be arranged with Tracy Feltham on her return  
Root and Branch structure available on the intranet but can be copied to all  
councillors.*



Tameside MBC disseminated its good practice and its key messages are:

- Involving Citizens
- Strong Partnership
- Innovative Consultation Mechanisms
- Engaging Young People

Sharing Practice through practical help

- Practice based website
- How to Guides
- Themed Open days
- One to One visits

Resourcing the Dissemination Plan

- Partnership Approach
- Training and Event Organisation
- Practical Advice
- Use of Mainstream Resources

Tameside MBC has eight District Assemblies for a population of 225,000 based on recognisable local townships. They were introduced in 1998. The District Assemblies have decision-making powers. Their remit is mainly street scene, but there is some variance between the District Assemblies, each having their own budgets.

L Ambrose was not aware of published terms of reference for the District Assemblies. M Martin confirmed that Nottingham City Council's Area Partnerships had published terms of reference. The terms of reference was the same for each Area: Partnership and linked in to the Local Plan.

Tameside MBC's District Assemblies involved young people. Breakfast meetings were held to involve the business community.

The Task and Finish Group was informed of the District Assembly Framework:

- 6 to 12 Councillors in each Assembly
- Some Councillors sat on two Assemblies because of Ward/Township boundary differences
- 2-3 business representatives
- 2-3 voluntary/community group representatives
- 1-2 residents/tenant representatives
- 2-3 elected high school representatives (14-16 year old students)
- Local Police, fire service and the public.

An issue that Tameside had was how to make the District Assembly representative, **the Task and Finish Group felt that this was a question that could be asked when it visited a Council of best practice.**

Attendance at the District Assemblies was around 1,800 per year out of a population of 45,000 per District Assembly. The Task and Finish Group felt this to be an example of good engagement and also commented that on a scale basis, attendance at NBC's Area Partnerships was comparable. NBC's Area Partnerships also had regular attendees and for contentious issues, in particular planning, a lot of people would attend the meeting.

Part of the meeting of the District Assembly became *Open Forum – Have your Say (question time)*, approximately 12 questions per meeting were asked by the public.

The minutes of the meetings of the District Assemblies were referred to Tameside's Full Council.

The Chair perceived the District Assemblies to be of a similar format to Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)'s old Area Committee System.

T Hall advised that there was a need to ensure that NBC's Area Partnerships networked with neighbourhood management. There were a number of directions that could be followed but there was a need to ensure that they linked up properly.

**M Martin suggested that a copy of Tameside MBC's consultation/Engagement Strategy be obtained for the Task and Finish Group's information. It would also be advantageous to have details of its satisfaction feedback and also details of how the Council consults with individuals who did not attend District Assemblies.**

T Hall advised that strengthening NBC's Area Partnerships could only be part of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations.

Tameside MBC had also introduced *Tameside Voice – Tameside-Wider Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Forum* – an effective, accountable and representative structure. It embraced diversity of Tameside's communities through a wide range of member networks and forums. It enabled everyone who wanted to get involved and have a say and promoted the interests of Tameside communities, organisations and residents at all levels of strategic partnership working. **Councillor Glynane supported Tameside Voice, commenting that NBC had a perfect venue to hold such an event – the Great Hall.**

The Task and Finish Group was then referred to the London Borough of Croydon. It had ten Neighbourhood Partnerships, which were first set up in 2000. The purpose of the Partnerships was to consult, encourage comment on the provision of service locally and influence policies of the Council and its partnership agencies as they affected particular geographical areas. Croydon

had similar problems to NBC with its Area Partnerships. Often people would come to an Area Partnership meeting to voice concern; therefore the Partnerships lacked meaningful consultation. It held a review of its Partnerships and found that different Council departments were using the Partnerships differently and inconsistently, but these Partnerships were part of what made the London Borough of Croydon a Beacon Council. **It was suggested that it would be beneficial to ascertain what Croydon had done since its review.**

The Task and Finish Group commented: -

- Beneficial to hold an event similar to Tameside Voice, possibly the week before Full Council
- Advantageous for Area Partnerships to have decision-making powers.
- Planning issues achieved high attendance at Area Partnership meetings.

L Ambrose confirmed that she would attend the Group's next two meetings.

The Task and Finish Group was reminded that T Hall had carried out research into other Local Authorities of good practice and had forwarded details to the Group for information, which contained details for the Local Government Chronicle's annual awards, which included 'Community Involvement'. Councils that were short-listed included Brighton and Hove, Bristol City and Cambridgeshire CC. Tameside MBC was a 'Beacon' Council for Getting Closer to Communities and the Institute of Public Relations has a good Local Government section, which makes a series of awards in relevant categories, which includes awards for Internal Communications (Liverpool City Council) and Civic Newspaper (Colchester Borough Council). **T Hall suggested that from the work carried out, the Task and Finish Group had identified areas that it required more information on, what the key issues were and that key learning issues that should be brought back from other Local Authorities. He undertook to provide this information.**

As the Group had received information from Tameside it was suggested to visit another Local Authority of best practice. T Hall confirmed that he would devise a list of questions that could be asked on the visit.

**A visit to a best practice Local Authority would be arranged possibly to a London Borough on 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> March. Councillors Malpas, Hill and Simpson expressed an interest on attending. As soon as a visit had been arranged, Councillors would be issued with the details.**

## **6 REVIEW OF ORIGINAL SCOPING DOCUMENT**

The Task and Finish Group reviewed its original scoping document, identifying whether there were any issues that required further information or analysis.



The purpose of the review was to be able to demonstrate that the Council consults and involves more residents and that the residents are satisfied with their levels of involvement.

The Task and Finish Group discussed potential outcomes: It was emphasised that they were potential outcomes and the Group had taken a too big remit initially.

1 *Councillors have a true picture of the integrity customer satisfaction measurement (for example, true, honest, decent) and understand that it is measured in the right way.* The Group commented that the Council had various pieces of consultation being undertaken but there was not a central unit to 'pull it all together'. There has not been a robust analysis of the measurement of customer satisfaction. There are however specific indicators, for example tenant satisfaction, but there are plenty of areas with no such indicators. **A potential conclusion could be that there were no standards; every public facing service should be in a position to know how its customers regarded it. A plan should be developed showing how services get to that position. There was the need for a more coherent approach. The Task and Finish Group recognised that the Council wants to be a customer focussed organisation but cannot judge its success, as it does not measure it.**

2 *Clear recommendations about how effective consultation should happen.* At an early meeting the Task and Finish Group had made suggestions regarding consultation. **There was a need for a clear mechanism, with some central theme. Consultation guidance should be produced and issued. All consultation data should go to one central unit, which should be centrally collated. (Community intelligence – access of information).**

3 *Scrutiny of consultation mechanisms to ensure all residents feels they are consulted and involved across all services to affect service improvement.* Councillors commented that this potential outcome related to 2 above.

4 *The identification of the risks that may occur that would prevent the overall targets being achieved.* **The Group had ascertained that no measurement was in place. Targets had been set as part of the Recovery Plan, for example: To have by July 2006 more than 50% of residents feeling we consult and involve them and to increase to 55% residents who are satisfied/very satisfied with us by April 2006. T Hall confirmed that in the course of preparing the Communications Strategy, figures had been proposed by consultants, which had been accepted by the Cabinet. He felt there was a need to look at the figures as a longer-term aspiration, especially as we were already in March. Regarding measurement, T Hall advised that this had not as yet been looked at in detail. A standard satisfaction survey was due in the autumn. He added that there were some Local Authorities that set similar target but they were usually good or excellent**

**Councils. The Group suggested that its recommendations could include that this was not a realistic target and there was a need for appropriate methods to be in place by the autumn to give the Council meaningful results.**

5 *A comprehensive consultation process/strategy that is fit for purpose for the Council.* **A Communications Strategy had been produced and approved. A Consultation Protocol was also in existence but was rarely used. The Protocol had not been approved and at this stage was guidance only. Councillors suggested that it could be recommended that the Consultation Protocol be adopted. The Group requested that a copy of the Consultation Protocol be presented to the next meeting.**

6 Evaluation of the Engagement Strategy. This potential outcome relates to 5 above.

The Task and Finish Group then discussed the information required section of its Initial Scoping Document:

- 1 *How each service area is approaching the targets.*
- 2 *Who is taking responsibility for these targets across the Council?*
- 3 *What is the current percentage of residents who feel consulted and involved – and why do they feel consulted and involved*

1 –3 above had been dealt with whilst discussing potential outcomes.

4 *Best practice within Northampton (other public bodies)( and best practice external to Northampton and 5 What budget is allocated to achieve the targets* **Northampton Today was a Council produced document. Departments should be able to measure success; therefore there was a need for a budget. There should also be a central pot for consultation. A recommendation could be that the Council lacks specialist knowledge in consultation and there is a need for a consultation budget, whether or not the Council is successful in its bid to for funding from the Capacity Building Fund. Budget Heads would be reviewed in May and within these budgets there is a need for allocation to continuous consultation. It was also important that there was one common budget for consultation.**

6 *How do Councillors in their role as Community Leaders help to achieve the targets* **In respect of what Councillors expectations were via public meetings, surgeries etc. how did Councillors know that the public was satisfied with them? The Group felt that there was no way of measuring this. One of the political groups had; produced a feedback form measuring caseload work. Political Groups did things differently, based on political parties and the wards. The Task and Finish Group commented that Councillors were the public face of the Council. The recommendation could state that Councillors needed to be supported in**

**their role, being provided with the correct information and models of feedback.**

7 *What feedback mechanisms are in place when a resident contacts the Council or takes part in consultations.* Covered during discussion of the potential outcomes.

8 *How the Council measures the satisfaction of resident* Covered during discussion of the potential outcomes.

9 *The current IT systems effectiveness to meet the Council's requirements.* **A Central Unit does not exist. The recommendation could state that there was a need for a Central Unit to bring all information together on a central database system.**

10 *The use of text messaging as a means of engaging particularly young people in the consultation mechanisms* **As a Council the use of text messaging is not used. Text messaging could be used to consult with harder to reach groups. The recommendation could state that all mechanisms to consult be investigated, such as website feedback forms and SMS (text) messaging as a means of communication.**

11 *The methods used to conduct previous survey(s)/consultation.* This information had been acquired at the Group's January meeting, when employees from: Planning, Finance and Area Partnerships and Forums had been interviewed.

## **7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 16 March commencing at 6.15pm and the agenda would include: -

- Desktop Research
- Consultation Protocol
- Visit to Best Practice Local Authority
  - (a) Authority to visit
  - (b) Set of questions to put to employees on their consultation methods

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm



- Building community involvement in the east before introducing across the Borough
- Comprehensive research into problems in the east

## **Key Principles**

- Be proactive
- Re-shape SRBs to have Neighbourhood Partnership Boards
- ‘Get out and onto the ground’ – tackling issues such as dumped furniture where people can see the difference
- Council Officers/staff placed in Neighbourhood Centres
- Neighbourhood Partnership Boards are officially within the structure of the Council
- Grasping ethnic mix helps understand community engagement
  - affluent white west
  - racially mixed east
  - large transient population/asylum seekers (concentration in Tottenham part of Borough)

Key point – Leaflet language translation – tells people what the leaflet is about rather than all points (4 languages French, Somali, Kurdish & Turkish)

## **Baseline studies were conducted in 3 Neighbourhoods**

The results all came out with the same issue:

- Crime & Environment was the number 1 priority

## **Key Point – Haringey view we have” Citizens not just Residents”**

There is 5,000 homeless in the Borough - How do you get new people to feel are citizens of Borough ?

## **Key Point – Developing Civic Pride is key to getting closer to community**

Do this by giving citizens a genuine say is what happens through:

- Local issues/decision making (within Neighbourhoods/streets)
- Providing money for “street audits” so citizens can say what changes they would like e.g. lighting improvements, litter bins
- Council ‘putting money where its mouth is” – but also explaining to citizens if something can’t be done and getting them to make the choice

**‘Better Haringey’** – ‘branding that pulled the whole activity together’ – developed organically

- Green-it, clean-it, light up
- Local people/including police – building relationships
- Feedback, continuous learning & respect
- Partnership Police Team engaged

- Always bring residents in
- Using services
- £5m from Haringey into “Better Haringey” campaigns
- Strong brand with “Better Haringey”
  - 94% recognition by citizens
- Continually thinking about communication

**Consultation** – Talk about what residents/citizens want  
 – 1100 households  
 – Consultation with special groups  
 – Community consultation

**Key Points:**

- Always ask
- Devolve money & decision to residents
- Community takes responsibility for consultation itself – get them to run the surveys and do consultation
- Deliver and remind people you have delivered

Haringey has:

Community Workers = 7  
 Youth Team = 2  
 Consultation & Communications Unit = 3

Area based planning of council services and citizen priorities with staff all working in Neighbourhood Management (these relate to:



Janette Gedge presentation:

- Consultation who does it ? – each business & service areas do their own
- But 3 posts in C&C Unit which undertakes:
  - the Annual Residents Survey
  - Provides coaching/mentoring/support to other service areas (internal consultancy)
  -

**Key point – there is a big difference between informing and consulting**

People need engagement in development of their area this is helped by :

- Having a Community Development Worker on the ground
- Thinking laterally – e.g. using library services for other services
- Hard to reach groups/do something for them – “Mountain went to Mohamed”
- Give money for small projects e.g. clearing litter

**Key resource for information:**

[www.partnerships.org.uk](http://www.partnerships.org.uk) Also a good article by David Wilcox called ‘the framework of participation’

## **Key point – Haringey had no plan for Beacon Council bid**

**Zena Brabazon – ‘it’s not about ticking boxes it’s about having a good story to tell’**

- Council structure - Area Champions – Directors/Corporate Managers – each has a responsibility for an area
- Key is to engage with Voluntary Groups
- Communications important - Communications Post within Neighbourhood Management Team:
  - Branding helps
  - Regular Press Releases
  - Neighbourhood newsletters
  - Leaders Brief – every week
  - “Make the Difference”

## **What has not worked ?**

There are risks from effective engagement as follows:

- Council, staff and councillors are highly accountable to residents
- How sustainable is it ?
- Managing community engagement through the Government’s
- NDC (New Deal for Communities)
- Need for collective responsibility
- Can be a minefield

Making  
The  
Difference



October  
2005

# Tottenham and Area Assembly NEWS

Covering Areas: Tottenham Hale,  
Tottenham Green and Seven Sisters

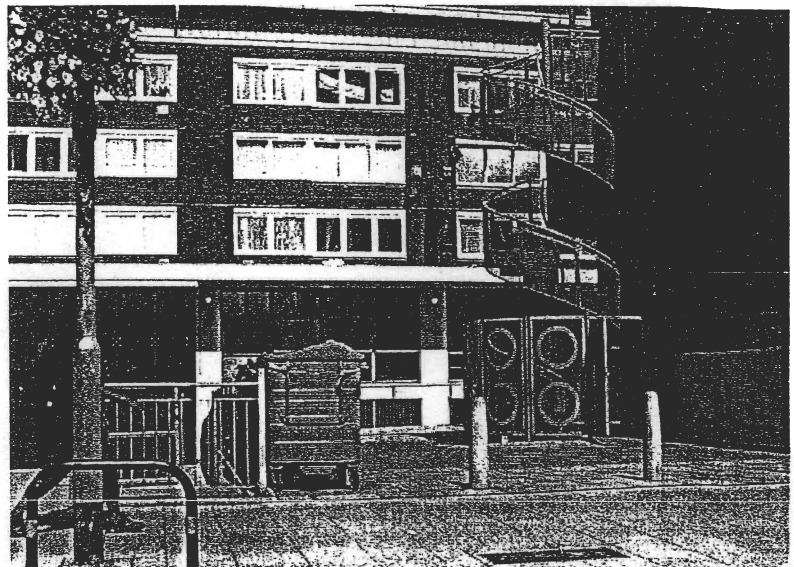
## Life through the Lens

SNAPSHOTS of Tottenham's best-loved and most hated buildings were on show at the last Tottenham and Seven Sisters Area Assembly.

The Assembly asked some local residents to take digital cameras and capture what they did and didn't like, especially the kind of housing they would they like to live in and the style of buildings they do not want to see in Tottenham.

The aim was to encourage a discussion about housing design and local development from residents' points of view. Resident photographers Maureen Wright, Patricia Sawyer and Steve Isaacs gave presentations showing photographs of their 'housing loves and hates'.

Among the favourites were the almshouses in Beaufoy Road, which were built in the 1900s



Love: Innovative Design in Northumberland Park

but still look good today, the new build in Hornsey Park Road, the mosque in Wightman Road, Jarrow Road on the Ferry Lane Estate and the houses on Northumberland Park, modern buildings and seating in communal areas. Patricia, a 14-year-old from the Bridge NDC area, said she did not like 'No Ball Games' signs and felt that young people should be given somewhere else to play ball.

She added that there are too many football and basketball facilities, which are too male dominated, but nowhere to play netball. Other dislikes included developments that have not been landscaped, tatty play areas, too much rubbish, boarded up shops, too much grey and broken street furniture. Overall, well-kept buildings and clean surroundings

Continued on page 2



**BETTER  
HARINGEY**

## Life through the Lens

Continued from page 1

were deemed to be important by all three participants, although there was some disagreement about the use of

bright turquoise on new builds across the borough. The New River Village development was loved by some, while graffiti was seen as "ugly" by one photographer and "art" by another.

**Hate: No one likes rubbish**



## Coming Soon

THE bids have been submitted, counted, assessed and consulted on - soon this year's successful Making the Difference projects will be revealed. More than 200 ideas to improve local neighbourhoods were submitted by residents from the seven Area Assembly Areas. Of these, up to 70 will be taken forward by the Council. We will be announcing the winning projects later this Autumn through the Area Assemblies.

## Tackling Homelessness in Tottenham

HARINGEY has one of the worst homeless problems in the country, with more than 5,000 people in temporary accommodation.

The Council's Housing Partnerships Manager Geoff Turner said there is not enough housing in the borough to meet current need.

Almost 4,000 households are overcrowded and require an extra bedroom, while more than 1,000 need two more bedrooms. House prices in Tottenham are too high for average wage earners with the average income at £28,000 and the minimum house price at about £123,000. In order to tackle homelessness, development is taking place - and

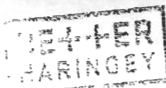
will continue to take place - across the borough.

Mr Turner said Haringey is working to ensure new developments are sustainable, linked to local infrastructure and that heritage is preserved. Consultation is important and benefits such as local labour schemes and local lettings can be achieved with new developments, he added.

Also in place is a homelessness strategy, including earlier intervention for people about to be made homeless, mediation services, debt and welfare counselling, more options other than Council housing, landlord accreditation, rent deposit schemes and keyworker

schemes. In addition, Haringey is putting empty private houses back into use, using derelict sites for development and implementing shared ownership schemes.

Interim Housing Strategy and Development Manager Denise Gandy explained that although asylum seekers are dealt with by an outside agency, the Council has a legal duty to provide them with housing, usually privately rented accommodation until their status is confirmed. Councillor Isidoros Diakides agreed to meet with residents from the Tiverton Estate in Seven Sisters after the meeting about a development in their area.



## Haringey Peace Week

Haringey has enjoyed its biggest annual celebration of peace. Haringey Week of Peace was held from September 11 to 18, with events across the borough.

The Peace Alliance was started in Haringey in 2000 and the first peace week in the country was held here. The event is now held in 15 boroughs. The aim of the week is to bring communities together to raise awareness of community safety and engage residents in peace initiatives.

The theme for this year's celebration was community relationships, with a particular focus on families and friendships among diverse groups.

Activities included sports

events, a superfit challenge for young people and parents, family seminars, the domestic violence bus tour, faith events and an open air gospel concert. The week culminated in the Haringey Peace Festival on Sunday 18 September, an all day event with music, family fun, information, talent competitions, freestyle dancing, clowns and more.

A Peace Walk went from Wood Green High Road to Finsbury Park, where a pan London Peace Concert concluded the day, with local artists performing alongside Terri

Walker and other guest artists. The Week of Peace is organised by a steering group chaired by the Haringey Peace Alliance, which included members from all of Haringey's community groups.

Mr Ogbo added that the Peace Alliance is keen to work with residents and that suggestions on what people would like to see happening in their area are always welcome.

**Contact the Peace Alliance at 117 Bruce Grove, Tottenham, N17 6UR. Tel: 020 8808 9439.**

## Have your Say

**Residents have told us environmental issues are one of their top priorities.**

This is why we are now holding Streetscene and Enforcement Surgeries before every Area Assembly where you can raise any concerns about the street environment or enforcement issues like rubbish, noise, overgrown hedges or trading matters. You can speak directly and in confidence to Streetscene and Enforcement Officers who will take the issues forward on your behalf.

**Streetscene and Enforcement Surgeries are held from 7pm before every Area Assembly. If you are unable to come to the meeting you can phone the Council on 020 8489 0000 to be put through to the right team.**

**BETTER  
HARINGEY**

## Transforming Tottenham

A PREVIOUSLY troubled Tottenham street was just one of the sites given a makeover over the past year with Making the Difference funding.

Improvement work in Houghton Road took place in March, which included narrowing, new bollards and landscaping in response to residents' concerns that the road was being used as a short term car park and dumping ground which invited anti-social behaviour.

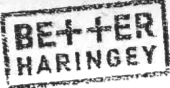
Other projects in the area made possible through Making the Difference funding, included clearing the huge flower troughs around the corner in Pelham Road and planting mature trees and flower beds.

Neighbourhood Management would like to thank all the residents who took the time to submit their ideas to improve their area.



**Anara Javadova,  
Neighbourhood Management,  
Tottenham Town Hall,  
Approach Road,  
Tottenham  
N15 4RY**

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## Are You Making the Difference?

**This is your chance to participate in what's going on in your area.**

Area Assemblies are the place for residents to contribute ideas on how Haringey can improve the areas where they live and talk directly with councillors. Discussions take place on the issues residents think are important. Regular topics at Area Assemblies include, refuse collection, traffic, public transport, green spaces, schools, regeneration and parking – all the topics that affect residents' lives

directly. Discussion groups are often set up so everyone gets the chance to talk and there is also a 'soapbox' at the end of each meeting for residents to raise issues of burning importance in their area.

After each meeting we publish an Assembly newsletter telling you how the Council is responding to each of the issues raised.

Over the past year the Tottenham and Seven Sisters Area Assembly has:

- Reached agreement with Transport for London about new environmental improvements on Tottenham High Road - including realignment of bus stops, changes to pedestrian crossing

times and changes to traffic railings

- Initiated systems for better future planning of school places and health provision to support new local housing development, and more opportunity for local residents to influence planning decisions
- Provided opportunities for residents to talk with London Buses about practical improvements to local bus routes
- Introduced the new Bernie Grant Arts Centre to local residents, with discussions about how the wider local community can benefit from its facilities.



## Want to receive regular mailings about the Area Assembly?

If you wish to be included in the Council's database please complete the form below.

Please print clearly

Name

Address

Post code

Telephone

Email

The quickest and easiest way to keep up-to-date is by email. The Neighbourhood Management Service is developing a new email database and residents will soon be able to request to receive all of the Area Assembly publicity electronically. To take part please provide your email address in clear, large print.

Email



## Improving Tottenham Leisure Centre

**RESIDENTS** are set to get a healthy boost through plans to improve Tottenham Green Leisure Centre.

Andy Briggs, Interim Head of Leisure Centres, updated the last Assembly on the plans. The proposals are for a new health and fitness suite, dance studio and young persons' gym, improved library shop frontage and a new reception IT system desk. They also involve the completion of all urgent maintenance works and dividing the pool hall reception lobby. The centre's outside green area

will also be made more welcoming and the play equipment improved. Mr Briggs agreed to investigate the condition of the ground floor toilets next to the changing rooms and to look at enhancing the range of programmes on offer, which could include the introduction of classes for specific groups, such as older women.

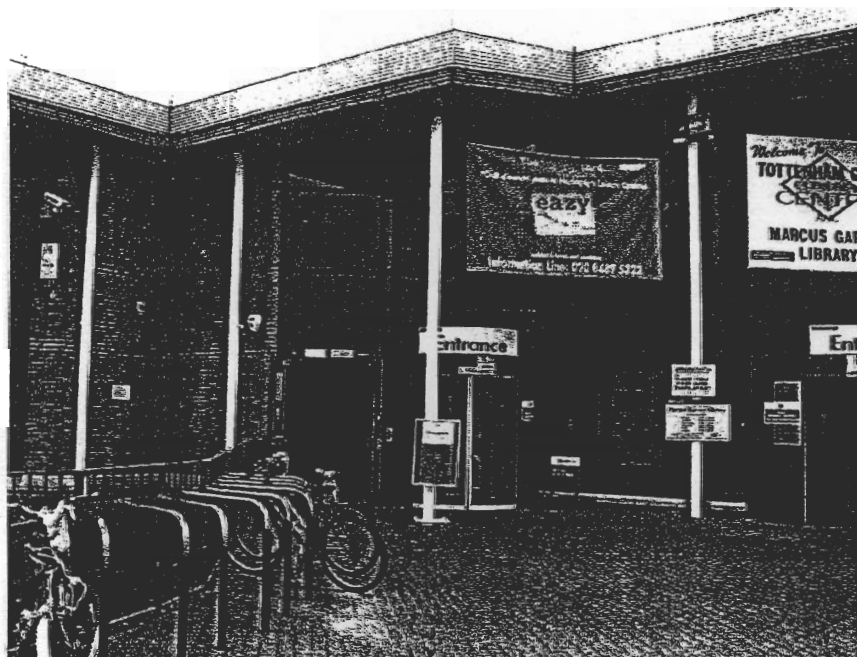
The improvements are part of a four-year drive to improve leisure services across the borough, to ensure centres are safe to enter and use and are clean and well presented. The new facilities are due to be ready by January. Mr Briggs told the group that investment had also been secured to improve facilities at White Hart Lane and Park Road Pools.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Tottenham and Seven Sisters Area Assembly will be held on

**Monday  
October 31 at 7.30  
at the Marcus  
Garvey Library,  
Tottenham Leisure  
Centre, N15**

Streetscene and Enforcement surgeries start at 7pm.



## Want to know more?

For more information about the Tottenham and Seven Sisters Area Assembly and Neighbourhood Management in the area, please contact Bob Goldsmith on 020 8489 4531 or email [bob.goldsmith@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:bob.goldsmith@haringey.gov.uk)



## Area Assembly Meetings and Listening Events - You Talk, We Listen

Where are Assemblies held?

How do Assemblies work?

When are Area Assembly Meetings Held?

How do I know what's happened after the Assembly meeting?

Who can come to Assemblies?

Contact us

Haringey's Assemblies **are the place for you** and other local residents to **contribute ideas** on how we can **improve the area where you live, meetings** where you can **talk directly with councillors**.

### Where are Assemblies held?

**Assemblies** are held in local community buildings - such as **schools**, libraries and church halls. They are informal, so you do not need to read lengthy reports **before coming along** or know how local government works.

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### How do Assemblies work?

Discussions take place on the issues you think are important, led either by council **officers** or community groups. **Regular topics include refuse collection, traffic, public transport, green spaces, schools, regeneration, parking - all the topics that interest local people. We often set up discussion groups within meetings so that everyone gets an opportunity to talk.**

There is also a 'soapbox' **at the end of each** meeting for you and other residents to raise issues that are of burning importance **in your area**.

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### When are Area Assembly Meetings Held?

Assembly dates for 2005/2006 **Municipal Year** are listed below

#### Cycle Two

All Assemblies will be considering **the following** topics:

- 'The Managing the Difference Programme' : **establishing residents' priorities**
- Residents' Chance to Quiz the 'Top Bosses' - **Executive Member Accountability**
- **Area Assemblies and Scrutiny - (with the exception of the Tottenham & Seven Sisters Assembly and the St Ann's & Haringay Assembly who will discuss the topic in the following cycle).**

## Cycle Four 2006

Assembly	Date	Venue
Wood Green	Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm	Bounds Green School Bounds Green Road London, N22
Tottenham & Seven Sisters	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 7.30pm	High Cross Church Colsterworth Road N15
Muswell Hill	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm	Alexandra Park School Rhodes Avenue London N22
Northumberland Park & White Hart Lane	Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 12.30pm	Bruce Castle Museum Lordship Lane Bruce Castle Tottenham, N17 8NU
St Ann's & Harringay	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm	St John's The Baptist Church Hall Wightman Road London, N8 0LY
West Green	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm	Phoenix Millennium Centre 386 West Green Road Tottenham, N15
Crouch End	Thursday 16 March 7.30pm	St Mary's School (Music Hall) Rectory Gardens N8 7QN
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## How do I know what's happened after the Assembly meeting?

After each meeting we publish an assembly newsletter telling you how the council is responding to each of the issues that were raised. For copies of newsletters, visit the Area Assembly Newsletters page.

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## Who can come to Assemblies?

**Anyone can attend Assemblies.** If we can help you to attend meetings or you require further information, please contact us.

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## Contact us

For further information, please contact:

**Marcia Connell**

**Tel 020 8489 4543**

**Email [marcia.connell@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:marcia.connell@haringey.gov.uk).**

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To increase the involvement of people in the life of their communities and in the decision making processes that affect their quality of life and the services they receive

#### WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY:

- Healthy communities have a high degree of involvement from members of the community playing roles in making decisions about the services provided to the public, and also giving of their time to support and help others through voluntary organisations and community groups.
- There is a concern that there is a danger of the public playing less active roles in their community. The process of 'civil renewal' aims to support active citizens and encourage them to take formal roles in contributing to local decision making, or informal roles within community or voluntary groups, or helping improve the quality of life in their neighbourhood by working with the public sector agencies to be honest and model citizens.

#### OUR AIM IS TO:

- Foster more effective communication between stakeholders about local concerns
- Involve local people, including young people, in decision-making about their community
- Encourage active citizens to be involved in local activities
- Build community capacity by supporting individuals, and organisations in respect of finance, and other resources such as premises and equipment
- Develop community cohesion where by people further not only their own interests but also those of other people in their community

#### OUR KEY TARGETS ARE TO:

- Increase the number of people involved with voluntary or community organisations
- Continue to attract at least 5% of 'new' people to each Neighbourhood Partnership on average over the year
- Ensure that at least 65% of those attending Neighbourhood Partnership meetings are local people
- Increase the percentage turnout for local elections



# Improving community involvement

## DURING 2004/05, WE WILL:

- Further develop the capacity of Neighbourhood Partnerships through supporting the steering groups and ensuring they are supported by all public sector agencies
- Develop further local improvement plans in some Neighbourhood Partnership areas
- Co-ordinate support to enable Croydon to bid more effectively for external funding to support community activity
- Undertake a programme of capacity checking for voluntary organisations
- Improve opportunities for voluntary organisations to access suitable accommodation for their activities
- Develop the support available to enable people to undertake volunteering opportunities, particularly through Investing In Volunteering
- Accredite the Community Champions course to ensure it provides a recognised qualification
- Develop a process to ensure that community consultation is co-ordinated between public sector agencies
- Continue to develop methods to enable young peoples views to be heard and taken into account
- Implement the Compact Action Plans and include other public sector agencies such as the Police, Croydon College, and the Learning and Skills Council
- Develop a framework to improve the co-ordination of the number of Community Development initiatives operating in Croydon
- Further develop a corporate social responsibility programme to maximise business support for voluntary and community organisations
- Involve local people in the delivery of Neighbourhood Action Plans for North West Croydon and Fieldway/New Addington
- Provide a training and development package for Neighbourhood Partnership Chairs and Vice-Chairs
- Complete arrangements for new Community Housing Panels to link up with Neighbourhood Partnerships
- Arrange programme for Senior Police Officers to take part in each Neighbourhood Partnerships

## DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS, WE WILL:

- Review the lessons learnt in developing action plans and apply it to all neighbourhoods
- Implement Neighbourhood Action Plans in conjunction with local people
- Develop methods to improve local election turnout in 2006
- Explore the scope for greater involvement of local people in the direct management of aspects of public services

More information can be obtained from:

David Freeman, Policy Manager (Voluntary Organisations), Croydon Council

☎ 020 8604 7042

email: david.freeman@croydon.gov.uk

John Sheridan, Business Manager, Neighbourhood Partnerships, Croydon Council

☎ 020 8626 4433

email: john.sheridan@croydon.gov.uk

## Who will make sure it happens?



Steve Phaure,  
Chief Executive,  
Croydon Voluntary  
Action



Will Tuckley,  
Head of Policy and  
Executive Office, Croydon  
Council

# Community planning in Wiltshire an overview

There are 20 Community Areas within Wiltshire each of which has a Community Plan. The plans are laid out in chapters dealing with the eight themes identified in the overall strategic plan for the County which is called "A County fit for our children". This overall plan was adopted by the Wiltshire Board in 2004 and helps inform and is informed by the twenty separate plans at a Community level. Some towns have been formally included in Regional Development Agency's Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI). In most cases Town and Parish council's are actively involved in the community planning partnerships across the County.

## 1. Malmesbury - population 17,410

There is a recently established community planning partnership. The area's first community plan was published in 2001. This plan has now been updated and a new plan covering 2005-15 published. There is no formal Development Trust established for this area. There is an Area Committee which is organised by NWDC.

## 2. Wootton Bassett - population 30,660

A draft community plan is in the process of consultation. An area committee organised by NWDC covers the area. A community planning partnership has recently been formed.

## 11. Devizes - population 30,020

Published its first community plan in 2001. A strategic action plan is currently underway. The area has MCTI status. The area has its own Devizes Development Partnership made up mainly of local businesses and members in the community. There is also a 3 tier Members forum.

## 5. Calne - population 20,680

There is an active community planning partnership established for the area which began in 1998 following a Visioning event that was held for local residents and organisations. There has been a community survey of residents undertaken in 2003 which has helped draft the areas community plan which covers 2004-14. The area was granted MCTI status in 2004.

## 6. Marlborough - population 21,960

There is an active community planning partnership established for the area and a local Development Trust (MADT). The area had a resident survey in 2003 the results of which have informed the areas first community plan published in 2004. There is a 3 tier member's forum active across the area.

## 3. Chippenham - population 40,580

There has been a Chippenham Community Forum since 1999. A draft community plan is in the process of consultation. An area committee organised by NWDC covers the area. A community planning partnership will be established summer 2005.

## 12. Pewsey - population 10,400

Has an active community planning partnership specially formed local Development Trust "Pewsey Area Community Trust" (PACT) the doing arm of the partnership. The community plan was published in 2002. A plan is due to be published late in 2005. The area had a residents survey in 2001 and a regatta fayre is held annually. The area has recent MCTI status.

## 4. Corsham - population 18,740

There is an active community planning Partnership established for the area. Community planning in some form has been around since 1999. A household survey of residents was undertaken in early 2005 and the results have been feed into the areas draft community plan which is due to be published summer 2005. There is an area committee organised by NWDC which covers the area. The area has also been granted MCTI status.

## 8. Melksham - population 23,300

Melksham 1st is the community planning partnership set up for the area. The areas first community plan was published in 2003 which has now been replaced by a second plan published in 2004, and an action plan for community projects. An event was held in early 2005 to agree a joint plan which would be jointly funded. There are plans to establish a community planning partnership a Devizes Development Trust. The area has been granted MCTI status.

## 7. Bradford on Avon - population 15,780

There is an active community planning partnership made up of a co-ordinating group and various sub-groups. The area benefited from a residents survey in 2002 and a community open day in 2003. There is a local Development Trust which is being encouraged to play a wider community role. The areas first community plan is due to be published summer 2005.

## 13. Tidworth - population 14,000

The community planning partnership is a redevelopment of the area alongside the Tidworth Development Trust. The areas first community plan was published in 2003 and a brokering table for 2005. The area has MCTI status.

## 9. Trowbridge - population 42,540

There has been an active community planning partnership based in the town since 1999. The area had the first residents survey in 2001 and a number of key partnership groups have been formed particularly around the redevelopment of the town centre. The area's community plan was published in 2004. The new community area planning partnership is called Trowbridge Futures. The area has MCTI status.

## 14. Warminster - population 14,000

Active community planning partnership first plan in summer 2005. There is no formal Development Trust for the area although the possibility of one is being explored. A residents survey in 2003 which has helped shape the areas first community plan. The area has MCTI status. The Army is based in the town as a garrison town.

## 10. Westbury - population 17,700

There is an active community planning partnership called the Westbury Area Action Group (WAG) and the area's first residents survey was undertaken in 2004. The first community plan was published in May 2005. The area has a Development Trust and has been granted MCTI status.

## 15. Amesbury - population 14,000

Published its second "Stonehenge" community plan in 2004 following an earlier plan established in 2001. The area has been given MCTI status. There is no formal Development Trust or active community planning partnership established. There is a Northern Area committee of the Salisbury District Council that covers the area. There has been a survey.

## 20. Mere - population 5,740

Smallest of the community areas in terms of population the area published its first community plan in 1999. A revised "Mere and district" plan has recently been issued in early 2005. There is no formal community planning partnership and the area is covered by the Western area committee of Salisbury District Council which it shares with Wilton and Tisbury.

## 19. Downton - population 16,890

Published its first community plan in 1999. This plan has recently been revised and a second one "South Area" plan published in 2005. The area is covered by the Southern area committee as part of Salisbury District Council, a working group of which lead on producing the revised plan.

## 16. Tisbury - population 7,390

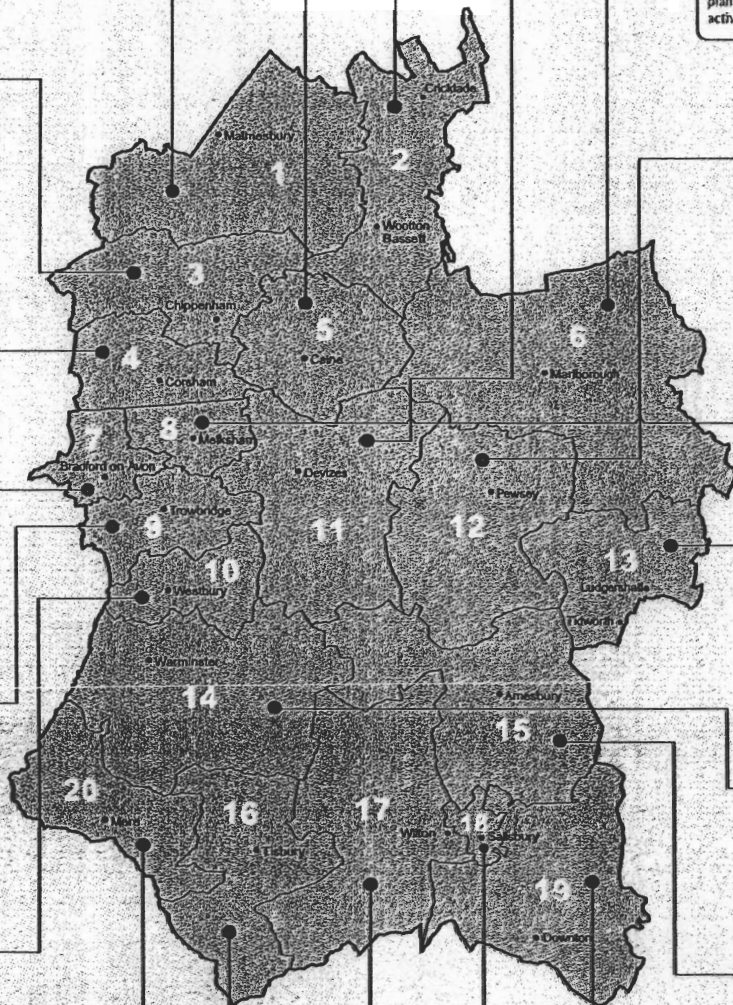
A revised "Nadder Valley" community plan was published in 2004 following an earlier plan published in 1999. There is no local Development Trust, or community planning partnership established. A Western area committee of Salisbury District Council covers the area alongside Mere and Wilton.

## 17. Wilton - population 10,870

Has an active Weaving Wilton's Future group connected with its MCTI status. The area is covered by the Western area committee of Salisbury District Council which it shares with Mere and Tisbury. There is no local Development Trust. The area has benefited from a residents survey in 2003 by the Town Council. Recently a second "Four Rivers" community plan has been published following one developed back in 1999.

## 18. Salisbury - population 44,450

Had its first community plan in 1999 which has been updated and a second plan published in 2004. There is a specific Salisbury City area committee of the Salisbury District Council established. Salisbury City is too big to receive MCTI status. There is no local Development Trust or community planning partnership established.



## Because Your Opinion Matters .....

### Consultation



#### **Evaluation of the Focus Group Sessions Held on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006**

The Overview and Scrutiny Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish Group held Focus Group Sessions on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006 so that it could hear the public's views and opinions on how well it thought the Council consulted. The results of the Focus Group sessions helped to inform the Task and Finish Group's review.

18 individuals attended the session on 20<sup>th</sup> April. After a brief introduction by Councillor Malpas, Chair of the Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish Group, the Group completed questionnaires on how well the public thought the Council consulted. After a short break the meeting split into three Groups facilitated by Councillors Malpas, Hill and Simpson. The Groups discussed what they felt the Council had consulted on well, poorly and what they thought could be improved (results attached at annex 1). During the group sessions, the completed questionnaires were analysed. The Chair summed up the session by inviting the Councillor facilitators to report back the findings from their individual groups. T Hall, Corporate Manager (Public Engagement) then gave a précis of the results of the completed questionnaires. An attendance booklet was circulated for all those to sign who wished to receive a copy of the Task and Finish Group's final report.

The Focus Group session held on 21 April followed the same format as above. 29 individuals attended and split into three Groups facilitated by Councillors Malpas, Roy and Councillor Woods, a non-Scrutiny Councillor, who had offered to assist. (Results attached at annex 2)

Councillor Hadland, Leader of the Council, was present at the session held on 21 April.

The main comments from the six groups at the Focus Group Sessions were: -

### **Good**

- Area Partnerships and Forums

### **Poor**

- Consultation feedback, including that from Area Partnerships
- Councillors' responses to citizens telephone calls
- Knowledge of Ward Councillors
- The use of over complex language
- The lack of consistent, professional approach to consultation
- Response from the Council (including letters, telephone, email etc)

### **Improvements**

- Residents' ability to challenge/review decisions
- Engagement at local level in service improvement and consultation
- Use of Community Centres for meetings and consultation events
- Timing and location of meetings
- Provide information about the role of Councillors
- Clarify the roles of Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council, but provide a seamless service
- Communicate results of consultation and actions from it – follow it through
- Alternative means of communicating, for example, PC's located in the one stop shop.

## Because Your Opinion Matters .....

### Consultation



#### Focus Group Sessions – 20 April 2006

**Facilitator: Councillor Simpson**

**Comments from the Group:-**

#### **Good**

- Councillors' representative role good/professional (housing option)
- 2005 Budget Consultation (public meetings made this good)
- Feedback Police (Varies)
- Leisure Centres consultation
- Ward leaflet (Eastfield 2004 example)

#### **Bad**

Stock Transfer (housing): – Not enough

- Not balanced/decision confirmation not consultation
- Central Government agenda

Restructure of the Council

Why didn't Northamptonshire County Council consult on leaving Area Partnerships?

Need for Northamptonshire County Council to consult on public transport issues – change on disabled bus passes etc.

- Feedback is poor
- Result and decision explanation
- Bus pass changes from 1 April 2006 – not informed
- Public relations (some not using media effectively)
- New political structures means less democracy  
Cut out a considerable amount of red tape at all levels of Northampton Borough Council  
Less politics, more actions based locally
- Councillor communication
- Know who your local Councillor is
- Listened to but nothing happens  
Tenants' views are quite often ignored by politicians who have own "agendas/policies"

## **Ideas to Improve**

- Neighbourhood management/representations
- Ward Committees
- Newsletters to all areas/wards
- Dedicated Ward Officer
- Time management of committees
- Councillor surgeries with Officer support based in each area/office
  
- Use Community Centres more
- More access to public buildings for community (e.g. schools)
- Allowing management funds for later years and maintenance community centres
- Joined up count for more effective use of resources
- More flexibility in providing services
- Promoting active citizenship (decision making by citizens)
- Neighbourhood working
- Tenancy rules should be applied
- Give Council more power
- Housing (Local Lettings Policy)
- One Stop Shop for all public services on area or neighbourhood basis



## Because Your Opinion Matters .....

### Consultation



#### Focus Group Sessions – 20 April 2006

**Facilitator: Councillor Hill**

**Comments from the Group:-**

#### **Positive**

Area Partnerships

The Council makes the effort – fairly well advertised

#### **Negative**

Area Partnership Issues: Poor feedback and knowledge of how resolved:-

- Size of areas
- Location of meetings – Is the Guildhall the best venue?
- Should meetings be held on Saturdays?
- Advertising should include subjects to be discussed
- Poor Councillor attendance – attendance records
- County Councillors need to attend

Poor consultation and priority assessment while in progress on neighbourhood renewal

Why didn't Northamptonshire County Council consult on leaving Area Partnerships?

There is a need for Northamptonshire County Council to consult on public transport issues – change on disabled etc, passes

### **Improvements**

More complex information needed – published on the web?

How do issues fit into the big picture?

Local notice-boards to give information

Clearer/simpler information/terminology in posters etc

## Because Your Opinion Matters .....

### Consultation



### Focus Group Sessions – 20 April 2006

**Facilitator: Councillor Malpas**

**Comments from the Group:-**

#### **Good**

Community Forums

Area Partnerships

Town Centre Commission meaningful (walk about consultations)

Door-to-door canvassing on introduction of wheelie bins

#### **Poor**

Political system, Cabinet and Portfolio Holder system restricts information

Lack staff continuity

Poor staff morale

Telephone and e-mail interface –

Councillors do not always answer phone messages, emails or letters

Recycling consultation - waste of time – Officer talks to public and self-praised themselves

`Joe Public' never one of 5,000 households

Budget Consultation is always bad

### **Improvements**

Better communication with BEM Groups

Better perceptions

Better communication with Northamptonshire County Council and the Police

Engagement with youngsters

Better media relations

Borough and Town being `rubbished' by the Press

Borough locked in a time warp

Talk up the Town

Get more local issues and stop concentrating on the Town Centre

## Because Your Opinion Matters .....

### Consultation



#### Focus Group Sessions – 21 April 2006

**Facilitator: Councillor Roy**

**Comments from the Group:-**

#### **What We Do Well**

- Identify the need for daytime **AND** evening meetings
- Refreshments
- **BLOCK ENQUIRIES**
- Respond to threats from the Ombudsman

#### **What We Do not Do Well**

- Get Heads of Service/managers to respond to letters/calls from members of the public
- Poor/unclear complaints procedure
- Don't listen, don't hear, don't act as a result of consultation
- Taking public wishes and imposing a Council agenda on any actions
- Not good at equality and diversity inclusion. Do not do well at social inclusion
- Telling us of important decisions
- Delays
- Consultation time limits **too** short

- Poor continuity. Always stop and start
- Not telling us about consultation events
- Not telling us what difference my/our input has had (feedback)
- Notices in too small a print
- Selective processes for getting people involved.
- Not involving tenants in decisions about their housing
- Poor at making positive things continue
- Poor telephone call handling
- Poor customer service
- Managers DON'T know the Town. How can they make decisions for us?
- Decisions take too long
- "0845" is not charged at local rate for all telephone users
- Call people back

### **Areas for Improvements**

- Be clear in communicating what is and what isn't an NBC responsibility
- Better customer service training
- Better record keeping on the website – transparency in minutes e.g. Audit Committee
- Use plain English in reports and minutes
- Consultation events on source of the audit report
- The organisation to listen (if possible one individual please) and to take action on that which we see as important
- Support for not only individuals but also local business
- Consultation with Residents' Associations should be broadened out to other groups with a local focus
- We want Councillors to knock on our doors
- We want Councillors to be more proactive

- Councillors need to be more open/approachable – it is not just about funding, it is about every day problems
- The Council has to get relationships right
  - **KEEP PROMISES**
- Good practice makes sense
- Better understanding and transparency about how money is invested so we can see that it is done fairly
- Give a fair picture on who gets what

**WE NEED TO SEE THE OUTCOME OF THIS!**

We want to know when the report goes to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to be able to speak to the report if we disagree with it

## Because Your Opinion Matters .....

### Consultation



#### Focus Group Sessions – 21 April 2006

**Facilitator: Councillor Woods**

**Comments from the Group:-**

#### **Good**

Good Tenant Group – highest rated in the East Midlands

Forums & Area Partnerships (comment from Fire Service representative)

Disabled Forum

Slim Your Bin information

#### **Poor**

No ring-back from voicemail

Time taken to answer 'phones

Not ringing back when promised

Help for tenants/residents in fear of crime (being terrorised)

Budget Consultation (e.g. HRA ring fenced)

Over/under representation of Council/Housing Association tenants

Briar Hill not consulted on forum/Area Partnership



Residents are not consulted on Area Partnership

The Council does not communicate well with the public/residents.

Area Partnership/Forums should each decide how best to communicate to their areas  
one size does not fit all

Area Partnerships do not feedback anywhere

Feedback from forums

Minutes of Area Partnerships often circulated late and do not always accurately reflect the meeting

Area Partnership/Forum to produce and sign up to their agreed Communication Strategy

Overlap of responsibility – Northampton Borough Council/Northamptonshire County Council /West Northants Development Corporation

Bureaucracy – too much  
– selective editing

Do we take notice of consultation?

Feedback

Proactive versus reactive

Do we take notice of consultation?

**Questions raised:-**

- ? Do we record incoming calls
- ? Why Ethnic Monitoring on today's forums
- ? Why not English (i.e. ethnicity White English)
- ? Consultation versus Communication

## Improvements

Engaging with more people

- more than 'usual suspects'

Feedback from the Council as a whole (i.e. we should control information flows – not the C&E etc.)

- Chronicle & Echo/BBC Radio Northampton
- Newsletter

Change the attitude of Cabinet towards communication

Meetings of Portfolio Holders being held behind "closed doors"

Employee/Councillor communication needs to improve e.g. NDDS funding

More/better communications – West Northants Development Corporation partic, empty shop (i.e. WNDC needs to communicate better – perhaps it could take an empty shop as a shop window)

- \* Listen to people

### Hear the message

Act upon it

When reports come back they are either too big and detailed or content free:-

- short but full summary
- consistent approach
- Work with the people, not against e.g. TOPPS info

Warning at change not FPN

Each Forum/Area Partnerships have own communication channel – one size does not fit all

- \* Never enough information

Separate breakout rooms for these events (some were somewhat hard of hearing and struggled with the background noise in the Great Hall)

- \* Hearing loops in the venues for such events

Expect to see my Councillor around their wards and to understand the local problems

Bring back St Crispin's Fair

Encourage Residents Associations to form (need for funding)

Service Level Agreements for internal meetings (in particular Area Partnerships) –  
when minutes will be published, frequency of meetings, venues of meetings



**Appendix G**

**Northampton Borough Council**

**Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish Group**

Please complete the boxes below and return to the facilitator. The form will then be forwarded to your Ward Councillor and the relevant Council department for attention.

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	
<b>Telephone Number</b>	
<b>Brief details of Issue</b>	



## Because Your Opinion Matters .....

### Consultation



#### Results of completed questionnaires

1 Do you know why Northampton Borough Council wishes to consult with its citizens?

**YES** 42

**NO** 14

2 If yes is ticked, why?

- The CPA report requires it
- In order that Council knows citizens' priorities - can shape services
- In order that citizens can voice their opinion
- Best practice
- To ensure Strategies and funding meet citizens' requirements
- Improve citizen satisfaction on Northampton Borough Council services
- Feedback
- Improve connection between citizens and the Council
- Essential when delivering public services
- Find out Citizens opinions
- Clearer communication and information sharing
- Tenants' views on the future of Northampton
- In order to provide services to meet the customers' needs
- Keep the public informed
- Gauge public opinion and expectations
- Government requirement
- To get the public's vote in the elections
- To improve performance/services
- To be better informed
- Inform the public of the Council's decisions
- The Council has made too many mistakes and needs to listen to the voters
- The Council wants people to know they are valued

3 Have you taken part in Borough Council consultations? Please tick

**YES** 43

**NO** 13

4 If yes did you think that your views were taken into account?

**STRONGLY AGREE** 2

**AGREE** 14

**DISAGREE** 12

**STRONGLY DISAGREE** 9

5 What consultations do you think the Council has carried out well any why?

- None 9 votes
- Bus Schemes/Services 6 votes
- Budget 2 votes
- Housing 2 votes
- Recycling 2 votes
- Forums and Area Partnerships 3 votes
- Town Show
- Environment
- Trees
- Tenant Consultation
- Town Centre Commission
- New Strategies
- Disabled People's Forums
- CASPAR
- Decent Homes Standard
- Temporary Sites for Travellers
- Town Centre by night
- Don't know 2 votes

6 What consultations do you think the Council has carried out poorly and why?

- Budget 8 votes
- All 6 votes
- Bus Schemes 4 votes
- Housing Stock transfer 3 votes
- Market Square 3 votes
- Road, footpaths, drains 2 votes
- Area Partnerships 2 votes
- Town Centre Commission
- Town Centre Improvements
- Delapre Park
- BME Community
- Corporate Plan
- Licensing

- Review of Voluntary Sector Funding
- This Consultation
- Local meetings
- Private Portfolio Holder meetings
- None 2 votes
- Don't know 2 votes

7 Northampton Borough Council listens to people.

**ALWAYS 1 MOSTLY 5 SOMETIMES 37 NEVER 3**

8 My comments make no difference to the situation.

**STRONGLY AGREE 4 AGREE 20**  
**DISAGREE 18 STRONGLY DISAGREE 1**

9 Do you believe that Northampton Borough Council provides proper feedback as to what happens as a result of consultation?

**YES 13 NO 34**

10 If no, how would you wish Northampton Borough Council to communicate its feedback?

- Newsletter 2 votes
- Email 3 votes
- Area Partnerships 2 votes
- Press Release
- Letter
- Face to face interview
- Council notice board/local press
- All mediums
- Monthly column in local press
- Action points from the minutes of the meetings
- Public meetings
- Communicate with Neighbourhood Wardens
- Consult with relevant Groups
- Information leaflets/letters to tenants
- Website
- Clear reports
- Direct communication from the `top`

11 Which three priority issues do you think the Council should consult upon with citizens?

- Revive Town Centre 11 votes
- Transportation 13 votes
- Security/Policing 10 votes

- Budget 5 votes
- Housing 6 votes
- Repair of roads 6 votes
- Planning 5 votes
- Council Tax Spend 4 votes
- Elderly and disabled people's facility 3 votes
- Environment 3 votes
- Bus Station 2 votes
- Grosvenor/Greyfriars 2 votes
- Recycling 2 votes
- Neighbourhood Management 2 votes
- Rent Increases 2 votes
- Cleansing 2 votes
- Vision for Northampton 2 votes
- Toilets
- Street Scene
- Traveller Sites
- Licensing
- Building
- Local laws
- Priorities and Strategies
- Council Contracts
- Parks and Leisure
- Tenant Management
- Community Engagement
- Customer Satisfaction
- Town Centre Nightlife
- Licensing
- Bus Services
- NBC/NCC services
- Delapre Abbey
- Litter
- Traveller Sites
- MKSM Study
- BME Services
- Voluntary Sector Support
- Room hire for Area Partnerships
- Everything

12 Do you think there is anything the Council could do to be more proactive with consulting diverse communities?

- Hold daytime meetings in the Community
- Hosting different types of consultation
- Advertising Area Partnerships
- Advertising on notice boards at Community Centres and out in the community
- Go out to the Communities
- Send all Communities and Associations notifications of meetings
- Inform people
- Be more honest and confront diplomatic issues



- Come to Residents Associations and the Federation of Residents Association meetings
- Become more involved with NTACT
- Listen and react to electorate's views
- Involve tenants
- Notices in the One Stop Shop
- Agendas, minutes etc to be produced in large print
- Walkabouts with Groups
- Disabled access to meetings
- Translators available at meetings
- Hearing loops in all meeting venues
- More responsive in a business manner
- Make everyone feel part of the wider community

13 I know what happens with the result of Northampton Borough Council's consultations.

**AGREE 7**

**STRONGLY AGREE 2**

**DISAGREE 28**

**STRONGLY DISAGREE 11**

14 Have you taken part in the following?

**AREA PARTNERSHIPS 42**

**FORUMS 36**

**OTHER COUNCIL MEETINGS 34  
10**

**COUNCILLOR SURGERIES 11**

**OTHERS:** Resident Association meetings 3 votes  
 NTACT 3 votes  
 Federation of Residents' Association  
 Bus Services Consultation meeting  
 Town Centre Commission Walkabout  
 Parish Council meetings  
 PCT meetings  
 Community Councils

15 How often do you attend these meetings?

**REGULARLY 37**

**OCCASSIONALLY 11**

**INFREQUENTLY 3**

16 Do you feel that Northampton Borough Council's documents are easy to understand

**AGREE 22**

**STRONGLY AGREE 2**

**DISAGREE 26**

**STRONGLY DISAGREE 3**

17 How would you like to give NBC your views/comments?

<b>PUBLIC MEETING</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>DOOR STEP CANVASSING</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>TELEPHONE</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>PAPER QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>FACE TO FACE</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>TEXT MESSAGING</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<b>18</b>		

**OTHER:** Email 3 votes  
NACT 2 votes  
Community Centre Notice Board  
Road Shows  
Talking Newspaper  
Walkabouts  
Area Committees  
Newspaper

18 Does your Local Councillor consult with you?

**YES 29** **NO 22**

19 Have you ever responded? Please tick

**YES 32** **NO 4**

20 If yes, how?

<b>TELEPHONE</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>EMAIL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>LETTER</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>NEWLETTER</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>TEXT MESSAGE</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR SURGERY</b>			<b>6</b>

**OTHER:** Face to face 5 votes  
Public meeting 3 votes  
Council meeting 2 votes  
Residents' meeting

21 If no, why?

- Ask the Councillors/unaware why 4 votes
- I consult with the Councillor but they do not consult with me 2 votes
- Councillors for my area are not often at Area Partnership meetings 2 votes
- I do not know who my local Councillor is
- Not been asked
- Religious reasons

- Political reasons
- Difficulty in acquiring a direct response

## 22 Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

- Need for better communication - 2 votes
- Essential to keep Residents Associations, Federation of Residents' Associations and Area Partnerships informed first hand
- Consultation is to inform citizens of plans
- More emphasis on 'hands on the ground' consultation
- Consultation needs to be meaningful
- Walkabout consultation is dynamic
- Beneficial to hold more meetings out in the community
- Need for a framework for consultation and reporting the results and outcomes. Information should be easily accessible
- Council Consultation should follow the standards set out in Consultation Compact between public and voluntary organisations
- Imperative that sufficient time is given for full consultation
- Make questionnaires easier to understand
- The Council has a lot of consultants involved in making proposals
- Information given to the public is too simplistic
- More information should be available on the website
- A member of the public co-opted onto the Cabinet/Council
- Often the 'whole picture' is not presented to citizens
- The Council and Councillors are disengaged from the electorate
- Public apathy
- Notices should be in larger print and easier to read
- More focussed Area Partnerships dealing with one or two subjects at any one time
- Concerns over promptness/effectiveness of replies to residents from Council departments
- The Town Centre Commission consultation worked

### **Other Issues**

- Community development is increasingly becoming a hierarchical dictatorship instead of supporting, enabling and empowering the community
- Need to employ a Tenant Participation Manager
- Town centre has not improved over last three years
- Traffic congestion is bad in the town
- Parking areas need to be altered in Rickyard Road
- Excessive parking costs
- Ringroad is incomplete
- Flood plan provision incomplete/non-existent
- In the light of Northamptonshire County Council's decision to drop youth services, NBC should be looking at these services.
- Council makes wrong decision such as the railway at Blisworth, knocking down the theatre
- Confusion as to the responsibilities of the Borough Council/County Council/Health Trusts etc

**NB: Not all of the sections were completed.**

**- Equalities Monitoring Section**

**Gender**

<b>Male</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>NB not all of these sections were completed</b>
<b>Female:</b>	<b>22</b>	

**Age**

<b>13 and under</b>	
<b>13 – 19</b>	
<b>20 – 39</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>40 – 65</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>65+</b>	<b>15</b>

**Ethnicity**

<b>White</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>of whom</b>	<b>British</b>	<b>36</b>
			<b>Irish</b>	<b>1</b>
			<b>Scottish</b>	<b>1</b>
			<b>Other EU</b>	

<b>Mixed</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of whom</b>	<b>White &amp; Black Caribbean</b>	
			<b>White &amp; Asian</b>	
			<b>White &amp; Black African</b>	<b>1</b>
			<b>Other</b>	

<b>Asian Or Asian British</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>of whom</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>1</b>
			<b>Pakistani</b>	
			<b>Bangladeshi</b>	
			<b>Other</b>	

<b>Black Or Black British</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>of whom</b>	<b>Caribbean</b>	<b>1</b>
			<b>African</b>	<b>1</b>
			<b>Other</b>	

<b>Chinese</b>		<b>of whom</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	
			<b>Other Eurasian</b>	

**Disability**

<b>Do you consider yourself disabled</b>	<b>YES:</b>	<b>14</b>
	<b>NO</b>	<b>32</b>

**NB: Not all of the sections were completed.**

**Results of Youth Forum 18 April 2006 Meeting**

NB: this meeting was attended and consultation joined in by both Youth Forum members and young people who were their guests

**Task & Finish Group Consultation Questionnaire Session**

NB: The questions were gone through inter-actively as a group, with people able to vote on different options.

**1. Do you know why Northampton Borough Council wishes to consult with its citizens?**

YES: 6 NO: 7

**2. If yes, why?**

- for the council to get a broad range of views
- to make sure the council is doing the right thing

**3. Have you taken part in any Borough Council consultations?**

YES: 8 NO: 3

NB: some people who were at the meeting for the first time declined to answer

**4. If yes, did you think that your views were taken into account?**

**STRONGLY AGREE**  
**AGREE**  
**DISAGREE 8**  
**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

NB: the other young people did not wish to answer this question

**5. What consultations do you think the Council has carried out well and why?**

- **Open Spaces Survey by NBC Planning Team** at the Youth Forum was good, people got to say their views
- **Town Centre Commission consultation by NBC** at the Youth Forum was OK but had a lot of jargon

**6. What consultations do you think the Council has carried out poorly and why?**

- **Northants County Council Councillors** came to the Youth Forum to consult about the Roadmender but seemed to have made up their minds already
- **Bus Service Company Managers** who came to the Youth Forum seemed not to be giving real answers to questions, but just explaining how things are
- **When there's no feedback** after people have taken part in a consultation

**7. Northampton Borough Council listens to people**

**ALWAYS**  
**MOSTLY**  
**SOMETIMES 13**  
**NEVER**

**8. My comments make no difference to the situation**

**STRONGLY AGREE**  
**AGREE 7**  
**DISAGREE 2**  
**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

**9. Do you believe that NBC provides proper feedback as to what happens as a result of consultation?**

**YES:** **NO: 13**

NB: members of the Youth Forum said that they could not really answer this question because NBC gives feedback sometimes but not always, which meant the answer was not yes, but wasn't really 'no' either.

**10. How would you wish NBC to communicate its feedback?**

- Town Crier
- Feedback in person at meetings/events
- Council newsletter (not party political)
- Letter

**11. Which 3 priority issues do you think the Council should consult upon with citizens?**

Budget	13 votes
Employment for young people	7 votes
Youth Clubs/things to do	6 votes
Recycling	5 votes
Town Centre	4 votes
Appearance of the Town	3 votes
Everything	3 votes
Crime prevention	2 votes
New ideas	2 votes

**12. Do you think there is anything the Council could do to be more proactive with consulting diverse communities?**

- go to where people are rather than always get them to come to the council
- get other people like youth workers to ask the questions
- think about who is sent to do the consulting with people
- consult earlier rather than 'tick box' consulting ie when a decision's already been made so consultation won't really make any difference (e.g. NCC Roadmender consultation at the Youth Forum)
- don't use cheap rooms, hold meetings somewhere nice
- make young people feel involved and that they can make a difference
- provide incentives e.g. financial

**13. I know what happens with the results of NBC's consultations**

**STRONGLY AGREE**

**AGREE**

**DISAGREE** 12

**STRONGLY DISAGREE** 3

**14. Have you taken part in the following?**

<b>Area Partnerships</b>	1
<b>Forums</b>	ALL
<b>Other Council meetings</b>	6
<b>Councillor surgeries</b>	0
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	0

**15. How often do you attend these meetings?**

<b>REGULARLY</b>	- Youth Forum
<b>OCCASIONALLY</b>	
<b>INFREQUENTLY</b>	- other council meetings (e.g. to speak about an issue for Youth Forum)

**16. Do you feel that NBC's documents are easy to understand**

**STRONGLY AGREE**

**AGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

NB: Members of the Youth Forum declined to answer this question, saying that it depended on the documents whether they had lots of jargon for example, and also because how well someone can read or understand a document is something which can be very personal for a young person.





## Equalities Monitoring Section

### Gender

Male: 7  
Female: 8

### Age

13 and under 1  
13 – 19 12  
20 – 39  
40 – 65  
65+

### Ethnicity

White	8	of whom	British 7 Irish Other Canadian
Mixed	3	of whom	White & Black Caribbean White & Asian White & Black African 1 Other Peru, British, Caribbean 1
Asian			
Asian British	1	of whom	Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi Other
Black			
Black British	3	of whom	Caribbean African 1 Other
Chinese	0	of whom	Chinese Other

### Disability

Do you consider yourself disabled

YES:  
NO: 14

## Appendix J

# Northampton Borough Council

## Consultation Principles & Protocol

### Draft

#### 1. General Principles

Northampton Borough Council acknowledges and is fully committed to taking into consideration the views of all stakeholders and in particular citizens of Northampton about the services provided by the Council and its partners. The following overall principles will guide the Council's approach to consultation:

We Will:

1. Respect the views of consultees. Listen to, value and seek to learn from their opinions, comments and suggestions.
2. Seek to make all consultation projects as representative and inclusive as possible. In particular ensure that groups who are traditionally not engaged with the Council or community are given the opportunity to have their voices heard.
3. Use consultation to help identify and respond to the needs of different sectors of the community.
4. Consult in an open and accessible way, ensuring that people are informed about consultation projects, results and ensuing actions. Also ensuring that people are aware about how the consultation process influences decisions made by the Council and its partners.
5. Make careful and effective use of resources by building consultation as part of what the council does in providing services
6. Work with partners to consult on public services across public bodies.
7. Continuously improve our approach to consultation learning from our own experiences and positively seeking to build on experiences of others.
8. Ensure that the results of consultation are used to inform and where possible improve service provision and guide the Council's policy making.

#### 2. Principles & Protocol

The following section provides more specific principles and guidance which should be followed when carrying out any consultation.

<b>A Right to Confidentiality</b>
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As a minimum the Council has a statutory duty to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The Borough Solicitor should be able to advise on this if required.

As a general principle if participants are taking part in a consultation activity and giving their views, any personal information about them or information that could identify them should be treated as confidential. The level will depend on the subject. Permission was always be sought from the participants if personal data is to be passed on or used.

### **Using Existing Data/Avoiding Duplication**

When starting a new consultation project Borough staff should ensure that they have taken all reasonable steps to identify any similar projects that have been done in the past and whether any existing data is available. The Consultation Officer should be asked to confirm whether any similar project done by Northampton Borough or partners has taken place and whether any previous results are relevant. Before commencing a project a consultation brief outline the aims and objectives of the project should be circulated to relevant stakeholders for comment. This brief should be signed off by the Consultation Officer before work proceeds.

### **Findings & Conclusions**

Northampton Borough Council wishes to build a central resource of consultation projects that can be used to help benchmark how well the Council progresses in improving consultation with citizens and partners. It also wants to develop 'best practice' and ensure that all consultation carried out by the Borough is clearly identified as being part of the Borough's strategic objectives. Therefore once a consultation project has been completed the results and a report detailing the actions resulting from the work should be provided to the Consultation manager for central record keeping.

### **Accessibility**

A list of past consultations as well as new projects being undertaken should be available on both the Borough web site and intranet for internal and external access.

### **Approval of a consultation project**

All consultation carried out by Northampton Borough Council must be approved by the Consultation Manager and be seen as 'fit for purpose' in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan.

### **Feedback**

All consultation should include a feedback mechanism to the consultees to inform them of what action was taken as a result of the consultation and what conclusions were drawn from it

### **Fit for purpose/appropriate method**

A well planned consultation brief should be produced covering the issues below to help decide which is the best method to be used to conduct the consultation. The brief should be discussed with the Consultation Manager. The following areas should be included:

- The kind of information required
- The degree of influence that the consultation exercise is likely to have on any decisions
- Timescales
- Budget availability
- Is the consultation part of any regulatory requirement
- Whether any work has been carried out previously in this area which could be utilised.

### **Inclusive**

In order to be inclusive any barriers to participation should be addressed. Every effort to include citizens who traditionally do not engage with the council should be made. In practical terms this may mean providing questionnaires in alternative languages/large print/Braille for example. Generally it means being clear about the 'target' audience for the consultation and making sure it is representative of the town as a whole. The consultation must work to ensure it takes into account the views of black and ethnic minority groups, disabled people and your people.

### **Understanding stakeholders**

Ensure you understand who you want to talk to as different methods can be appropriate for different groups of people. You should also consider how to use the Council's Forums and Area Committees to help in this process

## **Honesty**

For every consultation exercise it should clearly explain to those involved the degree of influence the outcomes will have on Council decisions. This will help avoid raising expectations that cannot be delivered upon.

## **Impartiality**

It is important that those participating in any consultation exercise have the chance to form their own opinion and are not influenced by leading questions. When writing surveys ensure you are objective and don't ask such questions e.g.:

### ***Don't ask***

How satisfied are you with the excellent services provided by the Council?

- Extremely satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Quiet satisfied

### ***Do ask:***

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the services provided by the Council?

- Very satisfied
- Quite satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Quite dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

## **Sharing Data**

As a minimum the Consultation Brief should be completed and returned to the Consultation Manger for every consultation exercise/project undertaken (details of projects being undertaken will be recorded by the Consultation Manger and will be introduced onto the intranet. The results of the consultation should also be sent to the Consultation Manger so they can be held on a database and be available for other Northampton Borough Council Services. This will also help in future tracking of progress where a consultation exercise is repeated.

**Action Plan**

Every completed consultation exercise should include an action plan to detail what action will take place as a result of the consultation. This should not only indicate what changes are being made but should provide a check date when the actions will be reviewed to see if they have been achieved. In some cases it may be necessary to specify further consultation to take place to measure the success of the change.

# Consultation Checklist

Consultation is appropriate when you can offer people some choices on what you are going to do - but not the opportunity to develop their own ideas or participate in putting plans into action.

## Who will conduct the consultation

This person should

- Have suitable authority and be able to communicate effectively
- Be fully briefed
- Be able to respond to issues raised

## Where appropriate

The consultation is likely to be most appropriate when:

- You want to improve a service.
- The options can be set out in terms, which community interests can understand and relate to their own concerns or needs.
- The initiator of the proposals can handle feedback and is prepared to use this to choose between or modify options.

It is inappropriate when the following apply

- You aren't going to take any notice of what people say.
- You are seeking to empower community interests.
- You are not clear what you wish to do and are seeking ideas.
- You don't have the resources or skills to carry out the options presented, or other means of implementing.

## Methods

Consideration should be given to the following methods for consultation

- Surveys and market research.
- Consultative meetings.
- Consultative committees.
- Simulations where the options and constraints are clear.
- Text messaging.
- Webb Site polls.
- Localised door to door surveys

These methods may be used in conjunction with information-giving and presentational techniques, for example:



- Advertisements.
- Media briefing.
- Leaflets and posters.
- Exhibitions.
- Videos.

## **Guidelines**

- Consider what levels of response you want and how you will handle it as well as what you are presenting.
- Make clear how realistic the different options are, and what the pros and cons are as you see them.
- Be open about your own role, who ultimately takes decisions, how and when this will be done.
- If you set up a consultative committee, give it clear terms of reference.

## **Possible problems**

*You have a low budget.*

Use basic information-giving methods plus meetings hosted by local organisations. Run an open meeting at the end of the process.

*You don't have time to do things properly.*

Be honest about the deadlines, and use the time-pressure to advantage.

*You get more - or less - response than expected.*

Was consultation the appropriate stance? Did you think it through from the audience's point of view?

## **Consultation checklist**

Before taking up a consultation stance consider:

- Are you clear which sections of the community you are consulting, and have you the means to contact them?
- Are they likely to be satisfied with consultation?
- Can you present your vision and options for achieving it in a way people will understand and relate to?
- Have you identified appropriate communication methods for the time available and likely participants?
- Can you and your colleagues handle the feedback?
- Have you arranged for a report back to those consulted?
- Are you prepared to change your stance if people want more than consultation?
- Are you just seeking endorsement of your plans?