

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a process by which a representative sample of people or an entire community is enabled to take an active and productive part in reviewing, designing, approving, commenting on and influencing the decisions and activities of organisations and agencies.

Community engagement works best where it is an ongoing process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time. Engagement activities will be planned and designed with this in mind and with the purpose of contributing to the overall aims of the engagement process.

The Stakeholders

For the purpose of this engagement strategy, the stakeholders are:

- individual residents and households (adults, young people and children);
- local community, voluntary or faith based groups;
- local traders and businesses either individually or in collectives;
- organisations set up to support individuals that fall within the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Duty 2010 (gender, race, disability, religion / belief; transgender, age, and sexual orientation).
- web based or virtual groups relating to the area.
-

The Council's Youth Support Service will be consulted before undertaking any consultation with children and young people.

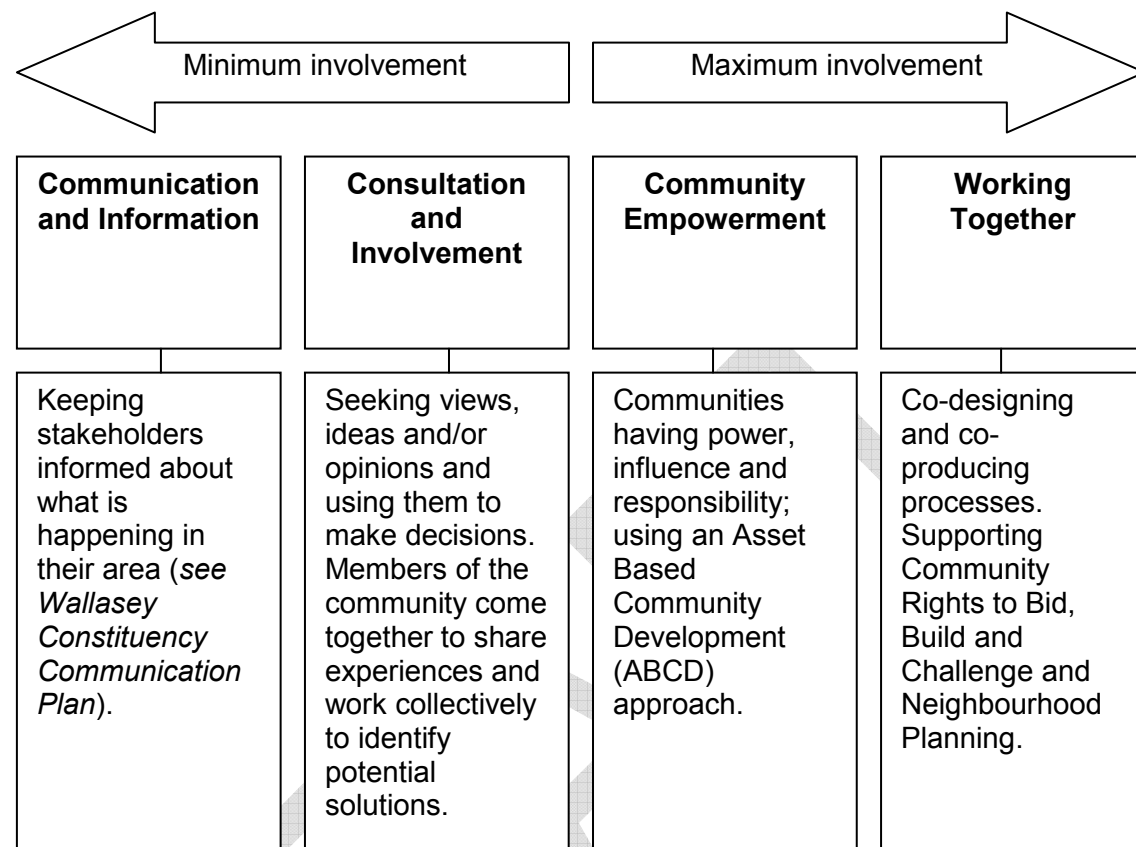
The Aims

The purpose of the engagement process for Wallasey Constituency is to:

- establish who our communities are;
- identify needs across the Constituency area and within individual neighbourhoods;
- establish community priorities for the Constituency area and within individual neighbourhoods;
- seek views on any proposals or plans;
- inform the decision-making of Wallasey Constituency Committee;
- inform the delivery of Council services and/or partner services within the Constituency area;
- develop new and/or collaborative ways of implementing elements of the Constituency Plan;
- review progress on the Constituency Plan.

Community Engagement Framework

There are four stages to the engagement process.



Engagement Tools

A number of services and organisations carry out community consultation and engagement. Through Wallasey Public Service Board existing information will be shared and opportunities identified, where practical and appropriate, to combine activities to prevent consultation and/or engagement 'fatigue'. Opportunities will also continue to be created to enable people to engage with multiple services and agencies at the same venue at the same time.

There are a range of tools and methods that will be considered to engage with stakeholders outlined below. The tool selected will depend upon a number of factors including the purpose of the engagement, the time available in which to conduct the engagement and the cost of the method and whether this is proportionate to the outcomes.

➤ Established research techniques.

- Face-to-face interviews;
- Written and online surveys;
- Meetings with small groups of individuals;
- Focus groups;
- Community conferences and seminars.

- **Action research/Community researchers.** Local people or groups carrying out their own research into their communities. This is useful as local people can achieve higher rates of participation and build successful relationships with people who are marginalised, isolated or disadvantaged. Community researchers will share the experiences and backgrounds of the people that are the focus of a research project.
- **Community auditing and profiling.** This means using a range of different information and techniques to build up a picture. This might be about a particular area or community. This may include mapping the strengths and weaknesses of an area. This could also include the use of maps, 3D buildings, pin boards and flags to show the assets in an area and the relationship between them (and more importantly how they can be improved).
- **Community visioning.** This process can be used to ensure that local people are involved in regeneration planning and can be used on an area-based level or to examine specific services. This approach encourages ownership and is a positive approach to change, allowing the community and service providers to work together on developing agreed, shared priorities and actions for longer term plans. Agreeing the vision and an action plan may take place over a number of months.
- **Interactive displays.** These offer people the chance to make comments and give feedback on information or options presented to them through the display. Displays can be run in different ways such as setting up an internal or external (street) stall, comments cards, 'graffiti' wall, etc. Displays can be a useful way of involving people who may not be used to being consulted or asked for their views and/or who may be less confident of expressing them.
- **Open House events and road shows.** Run at a local venue and enabling local people to gather information and share their views, by choosing which part(s) of the event they want to participate in. This can make involvement more accessible to a wider cross section of the community and is useful when wishing to hear a wide range of views on a certain issue. It is also a practical way of making initial contact with communities and encouraging greater and future involvement.
- **Open Space events.** These can bring together a range of people to discuss issues around a central theme and can help translate detailed discussions into action plans. Participants create and manage workshops themselves using their own knowledge to set the agendas. The discussions are recorded and participants can access them at the end. A condensed plan can then be drawn together and circulated. Open Space events have a flexible framework and can accommodate a large number of people.
- **Participatory budgeting (PB).** This is the direct involvement of local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined

budget. This might be a formal or informal process and may be very practical and interactive, such as an activity allowing individuals to use token coins to indicate a preference regarding priority areas for their neighbourhood.

- **Problem solving meetings.** Issue-based Problem Solving Meetings that are convened with partners to consider a response or strategy to a particular problem or thematic issue will include community representation, unless inappropriate to do so. This may include formal representation through a Community Representative(s) co-opted to the Constituency Committee and/or a representative(s) with an interest in that subject matter (for example a trader or a member of a voluntary group operating in the locality). This is to ensure that those most affected by the issues are fully involved in tackling them.
- **People's (citizens') juries.** A process that gathers a randomly selected and demographically representative panel of citizens to carefully examine a complex issue through gathering evidence, deliberating and reaching a decision. They may also 'cross examine' expert witnesses before reaching a decision. The jury may present their recommendations to the decision maker and the public or to an advisory panel with expertise in the area being considered.
- **Scenario planning.** This is a technique that tests out a number of future scenarios for the development of a community or neighbourhood, helping to explore the impact of decisions. This usually takes place over a series of workshops and participants work in small groups to visualise what things will be like in the future using a range of proposed scenarios. The aim is that this will enable consensus on how best to deal with the issues that either pose a threat or an opportunity.
- **'Vox pops'.** The use of video booths to enable people to record a short message setting out their views.
- **Web-based engagement (including social media).** There are a variety of web based engagement processes including online discussion forums, Facebook, online surveys and social networking (including Twitter). See Wallasey Constituency Communication Plan for further details
- **World café.** A meeting process featuring a series of simultaneous conversations in response to a set of questions. Participants change tables during the process and focus on identifying common ground in response to each question.

Engagement Standards

When undertaking engagement activities, we seek to be clear and co-ordinated; do so in a timely manner; ensure the engagement is accessible and of a high quality; adhere to data protection principles and endeavour to

make the engagement meaningful and efficient. The Engagement Standards are set out in more detail at Appendix 1.

Evaluating success

Quantitative information will be collated including:

- numbers and types of engagement activities undertaken;
- numbers of groups and individuals engaged with (and how);
- pieces of work created as a result (if relevant);
- outcomes.

Qualitative information will be gathered where relevant and practical. This may be in the form of quotes, anecdotes, case studies, changes in attitude, new connections made, new skills discovered and/or added value resulting from the engagement activity.

Appendix 1

Engagement Standards for Wallasey Constituency

Clear	<p>We will outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the purpose, scope, duration and parameters of the activity; the level of engagement; how much influence over decisions is being offered; the decision-making process and how views will inform decisions; how we will feedback.
Coordinated	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek to co-ordinate engagement activities across the Constituency where practical and appropriate using Wallasey Public Service Board as the forum for achieving this; share findings from engagement activities across services and agencies.
Timely	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> involve residents at the earliest opportunity to ensure views can be fed into the decision making process; seek to ensure that participants, groups and individuals are given enough time and information to make informed decisions.
Accessible	<p>We will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> information is provided in a way that is accessible and where necessary tailored to different audiences to support engagement; seek to ensure that engagement opportunities reach relevant parts of the community. In particular, we will be proactive in seeking the views of 'hard to reach' groups and individuals and seek to ensure that no one group dominates; activities are held in venues that are easy to get to and at times appropriate to those we are engaging with; the needs of individuals are met to enable participation (for example, in the provision of translators, signers, crèche, etc., where necessary and proportionate); any buildings we use for engagement are fully accessible (unless options available are restricted); use a variety of engagement tools.
High Quality	<p>We will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> those involved have the skills and experience to engage; the appropriate method of engagement is adopted for the audience that we are trying to reach.
Data protection	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> obtain any necessary consent from participants in engagement prior to activities taking place (for example in relation to the use of photographs that may be taken); respect the rights of people to withdraw from engagement activities; ensure that all information is held in confidence and follows data

	protection requirements where applicable.
Meaningful	<p>We will provide feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the outcomes of the engagement; • how the engagement has contributed to the decision-making process and/or service delivery.
Efficient	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use resources proportionate to the issue subject to engagement; • in doing all of the above, take account of value for money and seek opportunities for realising efficiencies.

DRAFT