

Comprehensive Engagement Strategy – Consultation Process

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of the draft Comprehensive Engagement Strategy (CES). The draft CES represents the development of a strategic partnership approach to engagement, cohesion, and development of the third sector. The council has taken the lead in developing this key document and cabinet is asked to endorse the draft CES attached as Appendix A for the purposes of consultation with partners and the community.

2. Background

- 2.1. While there is currently no statutory duty to prepare a CES community empowerment is clearly high on the current policy agenda. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is leading the drive to “enable more people to play an active role in the decisions that affect their communities”
- 2.2. The Local Government White Paper 2006 gives local authorities and their partners the flexibility to draw up a much more comprehensive engagement strategy to combine activity, improve the coordination of engagement across LSP partners and reduce the risk of ‘consultation overload’.
- 2.3. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 is the new duty to involve communities in decisions and services (effective from 1 April 2009); where they consider it appropriate to do so.
- 2.4. Statutory guidance Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance (November 2007) states that success in meeting the duty to involve will include showing that engagement is embedded as standard practice throughout the Local Authority and is central to service delivery, policy and decision making.
- 2.5. Wirral’s Local Strategic Partnership Assembly agreed at its meeting of 9th December 2008 to take forward the responsibility for ensuring that the CES meets its key objectives for the borough.

3. The Comprehensive Engagement Strategy Structure

- 3.1. The CES definition of ‘community’ is all those that are served by the partners in the LSP, either as residents, citizens, service users or tax payers. Communities are further classified in the CES as:
- **Communities of Place:** resident communities within a specific and clearly defined geography;

- **Communities of Interest:** communities based around shared interests, experiences or issues.

- 3.2. It is also important to remember that people often belong to more than one community and communities are always diverse.
- 3.3. The CES will operate under the existing governance arrangements of Wirral LSP and no additional groups or meetings will be convened unless there is clearly identified gap.
- 3.4. The vision the LSP aims to achieve through the CES is: “To increase the involvement of people in the life of their communities and encourage their greater participation in the decision making processes that affect their quality of life and the service they receive from all partners of the LSP.”
- 3.5. This vision as well as driving the CES framework for engagement will support the achievement of Wirral’s Sustainable Community Strategy, 2008-2025; “..a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential”.
- 3.6. The key values that inform the achievement of the CES vision are:
- Empowering communities and embracing their diverse identities
 - Communicating clearly and openly about our decisions and actions and the reasons for them
 - Using a range of tools – applied in appropriate settings – to allow individuals and organisations to contribute and communicate in their own way
 - Building on and linking together individuals, groups and organisations that already exist, only creating new structures where gaps or needs exist
 - Supporting the voluntary and community sectors and statutory agencies in playing different yet complimentary roles in planning and delivering services to the people of the borough
 - Acting as partners in contributing to and supporting a robust third sector
- 3.8 Four key objectives that inform delivery of the CES:
- Building Cohesive Communities
 - Developing Procurement and Commissioning
 - Sharing Best Practice
 - Building Capacity

Measurement of progress against each of these objectives will be against the National Indicator (NI) set and will report to Cabinet and the LSP on a regular basis.

- 3.9 The consultation process will include the following:
- Key LSP partners
 - Available on Internet, other formats by request
 - LSP Website
 - Available on UKOnline (VCAW)

- Advertised through flyers in one stop shops, libraries, community centres and at area forums (next round commences 8th June)
- Distribution through WVCSN
- Distribution by e-mail to interested parties – list accumulated through area forums, enquiries and known groups

Following the close of public consultation an update report will be submitted to the LSP Assembly (provisional date 22/9/09), Cabinet on the 24th September and the LSP Executive Board on 30th September 2009.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. There are no financial implications.

5. Staffing implications

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications

6. Equal Opportunities implications

- 6.1. The equality impact assessment process will run in conjunction with the public consultation.

7. Community Safety implications

- 7.1. There are no community safety implications.

8. Local Agenda 21

- 8.1. There are no LA21 implications

9. Planning implications

- 9.1. There are no planning implications

10. Anti-poverty implications

- 10.1. There are no anti-poverty implications

11. Social inclusion implications

- 11.1. Are there any implications that will potentially exclude individuals or groups from accessing services?

12. Local Member Support implications

- 12.1. There are no Local Member Support Implications.

13. Background Papers

- 13.1. None

14. Recommendations

- 14.1 Members of cabinet are recommended to endorse the draft strategy at Appendix 1 to be used for the purposes of consultation with key partners and the public

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Appendix A – Draft Comprehensive Engagement Strategy.