

Chief Executives' Group – North Yorkshire and York

14 November 2013

Joint working principles for engaging communities

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Chief Executives' Group on responses to the consultation on the statement of joint working principles for engaging communities, to agree amendments and to sign off the final document.

2 Background

- 2.1 At the 20 June 2013 meeting of the Chief Executives' Group a draft statement of joint working principles for engagement with communities was discussed. It was agreed that a light touch consultation would be undertaken with a view to bringing a report and final statement of principles to the November meeting of the Group for sign off.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 The draft statement was subject to consultation for 12 weeks from the beginning of July to the end of September.
- 3.2 It was sent by email to a range of partner organisations for comment and was also available on both the North Yorkshire partnerships website and North Yorkshire County Council's website during that period. It was also included as an item in North Yorkshire County Council's e-newsletter, the North Yorkshire Children's Trust newsletter and North Yorkshire and York Forum's newsletter to voluntary and community sector organisations. Other consultees included North Yorkshire County Council's Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the North Yorkshire scrutiny network.
- 3.3 A list of respondents is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Consultees were asked to comment on the content of the statement of principles and to identify any further signatories they felt to be appropriate.
- 3.5 The overwhelming majority of respondents endorsed the concept of the principles and approved of the simplified format. Several respondents indicated a willingness to refresh their own documentation in line with the principles which is welcomed. Specific comments on the content of the principles were as follows:

Comment	Response
Significant improvement is needed in relation to co-ordination. A nominated officer to hold information on planned consultation activity is suggested.	Co-ordination is a particular problem in a large county and with so many organisations working within it. There is unfortunately no resource to support a central point of reference for consultation and engagement for all

	<p>partners. However, there is already some co-ordinating activity through the North Yorkshire and York community engagement officers' group which meets twice yearly and communicates virtually between meetings, and this can be enhanced. It is proposed that signatories be required to nominate a single point of contact; that these are invited to join the engagement group; and that their contact details are published on the North Yorkshire partnerships website.</p>
Needs more explicit mention of ensuring engagement is physically accessible.	An extra point in relation to accessibility, including physical accessibility, will be added
Add 'knowledge about communities' to the point about staff being skilled and having capacity	This will be added to the principles.
Don't think we make enough of local media to engage with local communities. Also think we should utilise social media more effectively, particularly when engaging with young people.	The principles will be amended to reflect this comment.
Sharing results and avoiding duplication is good but might give rise to concerns about organisations sharing personal information about individuals without those individuals knowing it is happening.	The wording will be amended to reflect this concern.
Concerns about the time and money spent on consultation and engagement	<p>With reducing budgets it is even more important that organisations consult and engage with their communities effectively and efficiently to help them make difficult decisions. The principles aim to encourage sharing and avoid duplication and adhering to them should ensure resources are used in a more targeted way. They are, however, overarching principles and sign up is voluntary. More detailed strategic documents will be available from each organisation.</p>
How will effectiveness be evaluated?	These are overarching principles with voluntary sign up from organisations. The Chief Executives' Group – North Yorkshire and York

	will consider and review the principles on an ongoing basis as is deemed necessary. Detailed evaluation in relation to each organisation's consultation and engagement practices will be a matter for these organisations.
Unlikely to achieve 'Developing joint performance measures, monitoring and improvement processes'	There is currently no resource to achieve this on other than an ad hoc basis so this bullet point will be removed.
Is there any useful evidence of how the previous version has been used effectively?	In several parts of the county, joint engagement meetings have been set up which aim to involve a number of partners and are working more closely with communities, for example, Area Partnerships in Hambleton and Community Involvement Forums in Selby. Several multi-agency projects, with organisations sharing data and bringing services together, are also targeting specific needs in Harrogate, Skipton, Scarborough and Selby.
Other	Other comments were received which were not directly relevant to the consultation and these have been forwarded to the appropriate organisations for action.

3.6 The following organisations were suggested as additional signatories:

- North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum
- North Yorkshire Youth
- Your Consortium
- North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board
- North Yorkshire Children's Trust
- Health providers
- Leeds and York Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust
- North Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership
- Environment Agency
- Water companies
- North Yorkshire Probation service
- Welcome to Yorkshire
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Filey Town Council
- City of York Council
- Ambulance Trusts
- Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs)

3.7 It is proposed that an open invitation be issued to all interested organisations to sign up to the agreed statement should they wish to do so. Signatories will be required to nominate a person as single point of contact in their organisation in relation to

consultation and engagement, and contact details will be included on the North Yorkshire partnerships website (www.nypartnerships.org.uk).

- 3.8 An amended draft of the joint working principles is attached at Appendix 2.

4 Recommendation
4.1 That the Chief Executives' Group approve the amended draft statement of joint working principles for engaging communities
4.2 That all relevant organisations be invited to sign up to the principles and to nominate a single point of contact.

5 Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1 – list of respondents to the consultation

5.2 Appendix 2 – amended draft of joint working principles for engaging communities

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North Yorkshire County Council
31 October 2013

Respondents to the consultation

- Ryedale District Council
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Carers' Forum
- North Yorkshire Youth
- Helmsley Walled Garden
- Disability Action Yorkshire
- Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Your Consortium
- North Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership
- Richmondshire District Council
- Harrogate Community Safety Partnership
- Yorkshire Dales National Park
- County Councillor Tony Randerson
- County Councillor Sam Cross
- Cllr Carole Gerada
- Mike Holmes
- North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- Hambleton District Council
- Harrogate Borough Council

Joint working principles for engaging communities

We want North Yorkshire to be an even better place for everyone to live, work or visit

This is our shared vision in the North Yorkshire Community Plan and to achieve it, we need to make sure that we engage with the communities within North Yorkshire so that the improvements we make and the services we deliver reflect the needs and desires of North Yorkshire residents.

We are, collectively, committed to improving the quality of our services, making better use of resources and more effectively meeting the needs of our communities. We aim to do this by working more closely together to involve our communities in the decisions and practical actions which affect their lives. This means that we will place engagement of communities at the heart of service development, planning and delivery.

By taking this approach we will be able to ensure that we base our decisions on community needs and provide feedback to people about the way we used their participation to shape our decisions. We will build on good practice and use existing structures where appropriate. We also recognise that the rurality of the County can present challenges to this approach and will ensure that ways of working reflect this.

This document is designed to supplement and support our statutory responsibilities and any strategies adopted by individual organisations.

What do we want to achieve?

- To improve the ways in which people and communities can influence and shape services to better meet their needs
- To recognise the value of providing support to enable people and communities to increase their skills and knowledge and take control over the issues that affect their lives
- To improve joint planning and co-ordination of activity in the County between different agencies and sectors, avoiding duplication of activity
- To demonstrate that there is collective ownership and recognition of the importance of engaging and working with communities
- To build on current good practice and strengthen what works well

We will:

Be inclusive

- Engaging with communities as a mainstream activity and not as an afterthought
- Involving people in a way which meets their needs rather than ours
- Ensuring that engagement and consultation is accessible to everyone who is affected
- Engaging at the most local level that is appropriate for the specific purpose
- Engaging with voluntary and community organisations, in particular those that can facilitate the involvement of groups and individuals who are seldom heard
- Making effective use of community representatives including councillors and community champions
- Supporting communities to become stronger, to get their views heard and to actively contribute to achieving outcomes

Be open

- Being clear about why, what, when, where and how
- Being honest and accountable
- Feeding back to those we have consulted on the results of consultations and what we are going to do as a result - 'You said, we did'
- Not sharing personal information without asking you, unless required by law

Be effective

- Only carrying out engagement activities if the information we need is not already available
- Allowing sufficient time
- Targeting engagement activities and avoiding duplication
- Planning our engagement in the light of available resources and explaining any constraints
- Using a range of appropriate media to reach our target audience
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our engagement and making the necessary changes
- Making sure staff carrying out engagement have the skills, capacity and knowledge about communities to achieve high quality engagement

Be co-ordinated

- Contributing to and making use of shared engagement structures, where these are in place
- Sharing profiling, mapping, information and analysis allowing evidence-based deployment of resources
- Sharing feedback and communicating effectively, both within our organisations and externally with partners
- Using joint problem solving where appropriate.
- Providing nominated officers in each organisation to act as contact points for joint action
- Providing strong local and thematic leadership at strategic level to support this work
- Committing resources contributed by all partners, where possible and appropriate, to support shared outcomes