

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