



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 16.10.2018

To the Mayor and Members of Cabinet

COMMUNITY ENAGEMENT FRAMEWORK: STRATEGY 2018 - 2021

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr McGuinness: Portfolio Holder for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Doncaster Council is committed to ensuring high-quality, citizen focused services for the increasingly rich and diverse communities that make up our borough. Our aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, visits or works in Doncaster. To achieve this we are aware of the importance to base our services around the needs of our communities. Engaging with communities and local businesses is a key enabler for Doncaster Growing Together (DGT) and sits at the heart of everything we do, and is therefore vital to help to improve our services and realise our strategic ambitions as a partnership.
2. The Community Engagement framework (made up of our policy, our strategy and our toolkit) will ensure we bring consistency to our engagement activity cross the Council, and where appropriate our partners. The strategy sets out how we will deliver our commitments we set out in our Community Engagement Policy through actions clustered around six areas of focus;
 - a. Active **Citizen Voice**
 - b. Supporting **Volunteering**
 - c. Supporting the **Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF)** Sector
 - d. Opportunities for **Training & Development**
 - e. Embedding **Social Value** in what we do
 - f. Bringing people together through the use our **Community Assets**

EXEMPT REPORT

3. NA

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The recommendation arising from this report are;
 - a) Cabinet approve the Community Engagement Strategy and associated appendices for implementation.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. Good quality community engagement is key element of improving the services we provide as an organisation but also as a way to support wider outcomes for individuals, communities and local businesses. The actions contained within the community engagement strategy details how we will involve and empower local people to make a difference in their communities and in the areas that matter most to them.

BACKGROUND

6. To deliver Doncaster Growing Together (DGT), our borough plan, we need local people, communities and businesses to be at the heart of making improvements in their areas as well as informing the direction we need to take as an organisation, partnership and borough. As a key DGT enabler, there is a strong desire from across team Doncaster partners to co-ordinate ourselves both internally and across team Doncaster to start delivering a collective team Doncaster plan for transforming community engagement – This strategy starts the process towards a genuine partnership approach to community engagement across the borough.
7. The Community engagement framework compliments our development of several other strategy developments which include our communications and engagement strategy, social value policy and our inclusive growth plan. We have made connections with the development of these to ensure alignment and a joined up approach to our work. We have also aligned this strategy closely with our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion framework to ensure that the actions put forward in the strategy work for all people regardless of their background.
8. The Community engagement strategy forms part of the wider Community Engagement Framework, agreed at Cabinet in 2017. The Community Engagement policy sets out or policy commitments;
 - We will listen and Understand
 - Doncaster people will inform our policy and we will keep people informed
 - We will be inclusive and act with purpose
 - We will make the most of what already exists in communities and where possible increase community capacity.
9. Using these four policy commitments as our framework we have consulted and discussed the key objectives and actions we believe support these commitments. The development of the strategy was built from the bottom

up, taking each policy statement and asking questions such as ‘what does it really mean to be listened to’, ‘what does a successful dialogue with communities look like?’ working with frontline staff, internal officers, team Doncaster partners, parish council representatives, representatives from the VCF sector and members of the public (outlined further in Appendix B).

10. The result of this work has shown there is whole raft of good quality engagement that occurs across the organisation (some of which is set out in Appendix D) and this should be recognised but this is not always consistent. There are some key actions that set out what we need to do over the next three years which are clustered around six areas of focus, which include:
 - **Active Citizen Voice** – we will develop one consistent approach to enable consultation with our communities that is easy to access, where gaps exist, we will identify opportunities for communities to engage with us through a variety of forums and we will improve our internal processes to ensure our community information is readily available and up to date.
 - **Supporting Volunteering** – we will support the potential that volunteering offers by promoting and supporting the vast number of people and local businesses that give up their time to make a difference in the community.
 - **Supporting the Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCF) sector** - we will create a clear partnership position on support for the sector including funding advice, training opportunities, and infrastructure support, making it clear how this will take place and how other VCF organisations can access it.
 - **Opportunities for Training and development** - we will develop a training plan that will support Elected Members and staff to better understand their role in community engagement, particularly when undertaking consultation. The aim is to support the effective use of tools and techniques, consistently.
 - **Embedding Social Value in what we do** - we will ensure that we consider economic, social and environmental factors when we make decisions about the use of public money.
 - **Bringing people together through the use of our Community Assets** – we will use our assets creatively to support local communities to improve their areas and bring people together.
11. Our next steps will be to set up governance arrangements to oversee the implementation of actions within the strategy. These arrangements will ensure the business case and progress we make are appropriate and timely. We have also set out (Appendix C) how we believe we can deliver the actions set out in the strategy making sure there is buy in across the organisation and specific projects have ownership and robust business cases to take them forward.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Option 1: Do nothing

12. This option is not recommended as it will not allow the co-ordination and improvement of engagement activity consistently across the council, potentially minimising what we can achieve in the long term.

Option 2: Adopt the Community Engagement Strategy presented at Appendix A

13. This is the recommended option. It provides the Council and Team Doncaster with a clear way forward to improve, and make consistent, how we engage with people and communities with a clear commitment to deliver the actions identified within the strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

14. There are ambitious plans for the borough and the Council and part of that is having a modern and fit for purpose approach to engaging with local people, communities and businesses. This approach will put people at the centre of the solutions to the challenges that face the borough, and our ambitions for public sector reform.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

- 15.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better access to good fulfilling work• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish• Inward Investment	<p>Our ability to engage with local people, communities and businesses as part of this theme will be crucial to deliver our plans for this theme.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster• More people can live in a good quality, affordable home• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping	<p>Our ability to engage with local people, communities and businesses as part of this theme will be crucial to deliver our plans for this theme.</p>

	<p>Doncaster Clean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>Our ability to engage with local people, communities and businesses as part of this theme will be crucial to deliver our plans for this theme.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>Our ability to engage with local people, communities and businesses as part of this theme will be crucial to deliver our plans for this theme.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	<p>The actions set out in the strategy are key to achieving the aims within this theme, in particular 'Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths'.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

16. If the Council, along with its partners, does not develop its capacity to engage and support local communities it could constrain the effectiveness of our improvements and interventions across the borough. There is also a risk that local passion and community spirit is something is not nurtured consistently to support improvements to people's quality of life and the places they live.

17. The aspirations set out in Doncaster Growing Together and the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-19 all involve engaging with local people, communities and businesses. Our ability to engage and harness the power of local passion, ideas and buy in is dependent upon our ability to engage well and consistently across the borough.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [SRF 11.09.18]

18. There is not a legal requirement to have a Community Engagement Strategy, although it is good practice to have one.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [RI 11.09.18]

19. There are a number of proposed actions that could have potential financial implications, e.g. Council surgeries, training of staff and Elected Members, awareness campaigns, annual VCF celebration, use of community buildings etc. It is anticipated that these actions will be subject to further reports with more detailed financial implications and/or that the cost of these actions will be contained within existing Strategy and Performance Unit budgets or service budgets where relevant.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [BT 12.09.18]

20. HR & OD fully endorses the adoption of this Community Engagement Strategy and will be committed to having a full and timely involvement in any joint interventions necessary to support its implementation under the auspices of the Council's 4 Key Outcomes. This could incorporate Corporate Communications, Training and Development plans to equip our Managers and front line staff to undertake effective Community Engagement or reviewing the adequacy of Service Area Structures to deliver such outcomes through joint consultation with Staff and Trade Unions within the Council's Industrial Relations Framework.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW 12.09.18]

21. There are no specific technology implications at this stage, but Digital & ICT must be consulted in relation to any technology requirements (including the use of digital consultation platforms) to support the delivery of specific actions within the Community Engagement Strategy.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [VPH 12.09.18]

22. The overall health implications of implementing the Community Engagement Strategy are positive owing to its potential impacts on creating community and wider stakeholder cohesion, which in turn can improve population health. It would be beneficial to outline that the proposed strategy could have an impact of a number of social groups, in particular those 'hard to reach' groups that are traditionally difficult to engage for example, inactive residents, older people, disabled residents and those with low incomes. This would ensure that health inequalities are not exacerbated by attracting residents who would normally access these types of services.
23. The community engagement strategy needs to be considered alongside the Health and Wellbeing Board's approach to prevention based on 4 key

domains of activity asset based community development, creating the conditions for health, community approaches (including wellbeing hubs, community navigators and community alliances) and re-orientating statutory services.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [SC 10.09.18]

24. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.
25. A Due Regard Statement has been produced alongside the development of the Community Engagement strategy (Appendix B). The due regard statement will not be completed until the strategy has been approved and adopted; however the current working version is attached Appendix B.

CONSULTATION

26. There has been a wide range of consultation that has supported the development of this strategy which has included, frontline staff, elected members, parish councils, the public and the VCF sector. Specific and further detail considering consultation undertaken and feedback received to support the development of the Community Engagement strategy, can be found within the Due Regard Statement found at Appendix B.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

27. Community Engagement Policy 2017-2021

Appendix A: Community Engagement Strategy
Appendix B: Due Regard Statement
Appendix C: Governance of the Strategy
Appendix D: Examples of how we engage already

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