

# ANGUS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

## Community Engagement Impact Survey – October 2008

### 1. What types of engagement with communities and/or services have you undertaken?

➤ **Most often used: Surveys/Questionnaires, Focus Groups, Public Meetings, Presentations, Consultations.**

- Extensive consultation regarding the Forfar/Carnoustie schools and Newtyle Primary School, Airlie PS, rural Kirriemuir (Peel Farm) projects
- Parent meeting Seaview Primary school regarding building project plus a specific meeting on heating source.
- Angus Parental Consultative Group
- Establishment and on-going development of Parent Councils
- Angus Child Protection Committee-raise awareness of Angus Council procedures
- Regular network meetings with variety of groups and individuals with regard to pre-school and out of school care clubs
- TOPS sports programme
- Celebration days and fresher fayres
- Childcare information dissemination via national websites
- European and International workers Appraisal
- Adult Literacy Learners Forum
- Angus Youth Charter and Angus wide Pupil Council
- Initiation of Angus Gold Forums
- Support to members of Scottish Youth Parliament, Angus Youth Congress and Angus Youth Council
- Angus Learners Congress, adult learning research
- Local Area and Integrated Community Schools Partnerships
- Outreach work with Migrant Communities to gather views on ESOL provision
- Consultation with Angus Mountain Bike Trailers Association to investigate feasibility of building trails in area
- Departmental wide satisfaction survey of all service users age 16+ based on SWH Customer Charter
- Service specific surveys - Community Alarm; Child Protection; Community Laundry; Youth Justice;

Learning Disabilities as part of the redesign; Community Meals; Community Resource Team for 11-18 years of age; Homecare Services and work centred around the UDSET (User Defined Self Evaluation Tool)

- Publication of Forfar Traffic Management orders – Officer attending Community Council meeting
- Bespoke consultations e.g. Exhibition of Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme, Arbroath public slipway provision.
- Tayside Police engage with the public through a number of ways e.g. rolling programme of surveys on matters of service delivery, public perception, specific initiatives, also attend at community forums, last year in particular groups to inform the Community Safety/Antisocial Behaviour Strategy
- DPH ensures all its programmes are derived from community engagement and in many cases community groups are involved in the implementation of the programmes
- Community Perception Study of Angus College conducted independently across the Angus population as well as regular surveys of employers, students and staff
- Support to client departments who are undertaking a consultation exercise related to adapting or replacing an existing building.
- Participate in public presentations, school board meetings, building user group meetings, etc.
- Consultation with Angus Access Panel in respect of the accessibility features of property construction projects
- Participation in the annual Rod McFarlane Award competition run by Angus Access Panel
- Law and Admin use customer consultation surveys and Licensing Forum
- Use of popular marketing medium, outreach work and engagement of citizens in research, forums and other volunteering issues
- Publicity and public participation/involvement in the development of land use planning policy – structure and local plans
- Consultation on development proposals through public meetings and questionnaires
- Careers engage with parents and businesses to link young people with the world of work
- Consultations on all planning applications (~1700 per annum)
- Community representation on management bodies of the City of Brechin THI

- Biennial architectural and design awards scheme
- Giving lectures on various built heritage issues.

**2. To what extent do Community Engagement activities influence the planning and delivery of your service(s)? (What difference have they made?)**

➤ **Most often used: Views taken into account when planning the project or service development.**

- Community engagement activities play a significant part in planning and development of social work services e.g. feedback in care homes can often result in immediate changes to the delivery of the service
- Meetings useful in informing design of buildings and how schools will be used, once completed
- Most activities are statutory responsibilities although community engagement can influence how the service is delivered following receipt of compliments or complaints
- Feedback from various surveys is raised at the Policy and Performance Committee meetings chaired by the Chief Constable and data is taken into consideration when the annual policing plan is drafted
- Community engagement is a key element in the planning and delivery of the DPH's initiatives and services
- The Community Perception Strategy influenced our strategy for outreach and other short term actions and long term plans
- The Licensing forum is involved in influencing the way in which current licensing legislation is enforced
- Appropriate suggestions by service users and Focus Group acted upon immediately or considered for inclusion in our on-going continuous improvement
- Inform both the strategic plan and development plan with objections leading to local Public Enquiry and the Scottish government who will direct the Council on the Plan to be adopted
- Significant influence in shaping services we provide and final outcome of policy and guidance produced
- As the managing organisation of the 'More Choices More Chances' Partnership capacity building group we listen to partners' needs and upskill practitioners and organise training accordingly

- Community input into THI programme influences funding of projects and other similar projects
- We plan and aim to improve our service delivery based on annual evaluations
- There is a high level of negotiation with participants in community learning and development activities about the content of the learning and the practical arrangements for the activities
- Feedback from Angus Access Panel consultations is used to identify opportunities for improving design standards, employee skills and understanding of accessibility matters
- Attendance at the Angus Access Panel annual general meeting ensures a commitment by Angus Council to adopting accessibility best practice in developing and maintaining the council's buildings
- Receipts and monitoring of general meeting minutes provides an overview of the accessibility environment and opportunities to respond where issues arise which affect Angus Council buildings

### **3. What evidence do you have to support the answer to question 2?**

➤ **Most often used: Notes from meetings, Publicity, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, Committee Reports, Amendments to Service Plans, Production of Public Documents**

- The results of consultation exercises undertaken during redesign of Learning Disability Services and the development of the Children Services Redesign provide evidence
- Tayside Police Business Support Department has been consulted and has confirmed procedures in relation to the surveys mentioned
- Evidence of the procedures adopted by the Division and those partner agencies who have responsibility to deliver in terms of community safety
- A range of evaluation reports
- Independent reports to Executive and Board of College – agreed actions homologated into our Strategic and Operational Plans
- Joint meetings of the Licensing forum and the Licensing Board
- On-going continuous Improvement Plan

- We are aware that heritage groups are discussing an umbrella organisation to maximise their effectiveness following growth in membership and creation of new groups
- Feedback from participants in this project confirms that they have a high level of ownership for the project and they feel actively engaged and involved with influencing its direction
- Correspondence with Angus Access Panel. Meetings of the AGM. Successes in the Rod McFarlane Award competition

#### 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your service's Community engagement activity?

- **Most often used: Strengths – service influenced by community input; evidence-led decision making**  
**Weaknesses – time consuming; could be better at engaging those not already involved.**

#### **STRENGTHS**

- Transparency in our ability to evidence service user involvement
- Evidence-led decision making
- Well established and embedded Community Engagement approaches
- Awareness that service needs to continually find new ways to improve its work with communities across virtually all its programmes
- Easily identified audience
- Able to detect changes to service delivery quickly
- Helps to deliver services tailored to public needs
- We are clear about our role in the community and partner agencies are clear where we can support them
- Pushing at an open door syndrome
- The Service clearly recognises the importance of community engagement and seeks to embed this within its core planning and evaluation processes
- The commitment to accessibility is valued by Angus Access Panel and the contributions that they make to ensuring that the Property division is responsive to community needs and adopts best practice is well received by the Property division

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- The need to better co-ordinate the involvement and engagement of our service users to avoid duplication and excessive intrusion

- The views of one or two individuals can be disproportionate to the overall view of a parental (school) community
- We could do more to consult and engage with customers on Revenues and Benefits
- Lack of understanding by community of statutory duties and budget constraints
- Not possible to give individual feedback therefore contributors may feel ignored
- Limited face to face surveys with local public and community groups where specific issues are discussed
- Some difficult to reach groups e.g. unemployed males under 25 and young single mums
- Service users' expectations can be raised beyond what can be provided
- On occasion the organisation products and services can on occasion not fit the local need
- Reconciling professional judgement with the aspirations of lay people
- Difficult to adjust service delivery as there are often competing demands
- Despite significant input, there is still a need to further develop some staff's understanding of community engagement
- Sample can't be representative of service users or providers.

## 5. What arrangements do you have in place to develop this work

### ➤ **Most often used: None at present**

- The creation of a new post in SWH of Communication and Engagement Officer
- The self-evaluation approach will allow us to address co-ordination issues
- Future consultation will be informed by previous experience
- Greater consultation generally on Revenues and Benefits as part of 2009/2010 Service Plan
- Face to face surveys carried out successfully in one burgh will now be extended across Angus on a variety of issues
- Currently undertaking a Best Value Review of Customer Care

- The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 places increased emphasis on community engagement therefore the approaches and timing will require to be set out in advance of plan preparation
- The Service is committed to e-planning and making more information available electronically
- In the process of restructuring the new organisation with clear indications that the operating business model will be more flexible and aligned to the SOA
- Encouraging local people to become more involved in heritage matters
- Annual self-evaluation and feedback from participants and partners used to drive forward improvements priorities contained within operational plans.

**6. What additional support do you need to undertake this work, for example, training and support in relation to the National Standards for Community Engagement, Information Model outputs, or other major developments/initiatives**

➤ **Most often used: Further training opportunities would be welcome**

- Any training in this area would be welcome
- Not aware of Better Community Engagement training or National Standards, therefore support and training in these areas would assist
- Further corporate guidance about what is expected of Services with regard to consultation / engagement is essential
- There needs to be weighting put on public input against greater good of a project and the community it will serve
- Access to Citizens' Panels, which proved valuable in the past, now seems limited
- Any joint training opportunities that arise will be considered and the appropriate member of staff asked to take part if it is thought the training is relevant
- DPH is looking to improve and expand NHS Tayside's community engagement agenda
- May be appropriate for some staff but more recently we have employed staff with specific community engagement backgrounds.
- Additional staff resources may be required to meet new legislative changes

- Community engagement should be fully integrated in working practices and services and not seen as something separate
- Awareness training sessions regarding the national standards for community engagement may be helpful.

## 7. Survey

a) Have you participated in the 'Better Community Engagement training?

**12 Yes    14 No**

b) If Yes, has any new engagement activity been undertaken as a result of that training?

**4 Yes    6 No    2 No response**

### Comments:

**1** Not as a direct result.

**2** Local officers such as Community Liaison Officers attended such training organised by Angus Council. This resulted in these officers undertaking a community engagement project within their local area.

**3** Please note that only two members of staff have attended this training.

**4** Training for Parent Councils in their local areas.

**5** All of the Senior workers within the Community Learning and Development Service participated in the Better Community Engagement Training. Two of the members of the Management Team were involved in the design and delivery of the training.

Comments on the training were varied. Some staff found that the training offered them a useful affirmation for their own understandings of community engagement and the way in which they went about practicing. Some felt that the broad policy framework within which the training was set helped them to clarify some of the issues which they encounter in the practice of community engagement, particularly in relation to work with colleagues in other Services and Departments. One colleague felt that the training had not helped them to achieve the level of clarity on community engagement that would have been helpful and was still unsure about some of the practical issues involved.

The extent to which training had resulted in any changes to practice was varied. Some colleagues felt that the training had made them more aware of the way in which other departments approach the question of community engagement and this had been a positive benefit when it came to engaging with partners within this area of work. Some identified a specific engagement work that was taken as a result of involvement in the training including new approaches in Brechin and a more general approach to appraisal with European and International workers. Others felt that they were already significantly involved in community engagement work and that this was a key element of their day to day business. They did not therefore undertake new work, but did feel that the training had helped them address their existing work with a greater degree of clarity

c) Has the training influenced the way in which your service / agency plans and develops engagement activity?

**7 Yes      4 No      2 No response**

Comment:

**1** Not yet - training only recently delivered.

**2** The training received mix responses from those who attended, some of whom did not believe that it was a worthwhile activity. As such, I do not believe that the training has influenced our engagement activity to any great extent.

**3** Whilst the answer to 7b and 7c is 'yes' we have simply refined our feedback analysis from Doors Open Day this year so maybe it is an overstatement to answer 'yes' at this juncture. However, the nature of planning is community-based and public consultation has been a recurring theme for a considerable number of years. Examples of consultation and involvement include the major exercise of preparing the development and Local Plan and consultation on Conservation Area designation and the seeking of views during the development of major regeneration projects such as THIs. There will be areas where engagement methods can be refined and improved but it is fair to say that the planning process has been geared towards the well being of communities for many years and the processes involved often require us to engage with the community at various levels. The benefit of the NSCE model is that it will allow the existing consultation processes to be looked at more closely to see if there are ways in which the processes we undertake should alter or whether additional work is required.

**4** It has reinforced the need for community involvement and the continuation of this in our service delivery.

**5** It helped me to see that much of the work of the Service and that of schools is community engagement.

**6** The majority of what is covered in the training was already existing practice within my remit and service area, therefore, attendance on the course did not result in changes to good practice or procedures with regards to community engagement but may do so in the future.

**7** The training has not fundamentally shifted the way in which the Community Learning and Development Service approaches Community Engagement Work, but it has helped to clarify the thinking and understandings of some staff and enabled them to take the work forward with a greater degree of clarity. It has also provided them with some insights in the roles and responsibilities of colleagues in other Services and Agencies.