

Appendix 5

Citizen Engagement Principles

- **Embracing local identity** – Kirklees is an administrative boundary. As such this presents challenges in the context of engaging with our citizens in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them. Our towns, villages and communities are the core strength of Kirklees – we need to recognise and harness this. They are an individual and collective strength which should be acknowledged and valued in the context of engagement. One size does not, and should not, fit all. Our approach to engagement should build outwards from communities not downwards. Understanding local identity will be key to making this happen;
- **Treating people as citizens not customers** – Our approach to engagement must be based around the narrative of the citizen not the customer or client. The move to Active Citizenship it is dependent on the development of relationships and dialogue rather than transactional services based on traditional delivery models. Engagement in this context will facilitate active citizens and facilitate a shift in their expectations of the Council and partners;
- **Co-producing and changing behaviour** – Our engagement with citizens must be a means by which we develop a wider stake for them in civic society – doing with and not to. Consulting on pre-determined options will not create an environment where citizens change their expectations and behaviours or willingly work with us to collectively problem solve. Genuine engagement that takes citizens on a journey should create an environment where they develop a wider understanding and are better placed to take ownership where that is the best approach;
- **Placing Councillors at the heart** – Our approach must make a virtue of both representative and participatory democracy. Councillors (including those in Parish and Town Councils) should therefore be placed at the heart of engagement with the communities they represent with a view to leading that dialogue over time. Emerging outcomes from recent workshops with councillor and officers show that this is not currently happening. Consultation and engagement is taking place in electoral Wards without the knowledge or input of the local councillors. This must change;
- **Acknowledging our staff as citizens** – A significant number of our staff are residents within the borough. Many are already active citizens who have a stake in the place that they live and work. This should be a strength from which to build our approach to citizen engagement, utilising staff insight as part of how we work on a more routine basis;
- **Deploying our staff as agents for change** – Involving our staff in a different approach to citizen engagement provides an opportunity to expose them to different ways of working and aid the move towards alternative ways to design and deliver across services. Our staff are “the face of the state” and as such are key change agents in a changing relationship, particularly those who work directly in communities, neighbourhoods and Wards. Moving away from traditional models of service delivery will increasingly mean placing the citizen at the heart of

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dialogue and service re-design. This will require an officer and service culture change;

- **Utilising new and existing networks** – The council and its partners already have extensive networks from which to develop a different approach to engagement. This is a strength. Our interaction with groups, service users and a breadth of citizens who are already engaged provides a helpful starting point. Similarly there is a plethora of on-line and off-line networks that thrive and exist independently of the council, doing great things within and across communities. Our approach to engagement must seek to tap into networks that already exist and to develop and nurture them where they do not. There needs to be a stronger focus on genuine digital engagement which seeks to grow the civic conversation;
- **Widening our engagement reach** – The Cross Party Working Group have already been very clear that greater emphasis must be placed on undertaking engagement in a way that extends reach beyond those citizens and organisations who are visible and traditionally engage. This may well mean a move away from traditional approaches and see a greater emphasis on blending on-line and off-line techniques, some of which may be more resource intensive;
- **Using intelligence and citizen insight** – In undertaking citizen engagement moving forward there is an expectation that the intelligence we have and hold is used in a way that informs and facilitates. It should be used as a basis for framing the dialogue not leading it to a pre-determined conclusion. Our engagement should be approached in a way that generates insight with a view to developing a richer understanding of our communities, their motivations and aspirations. This will inform the relationship with the council that they expect and we would seek to develop and the capacity within communities.
- **Working in plain sight and telling stories** – If we are serious about engendering trust with our citizens our engagement with them should be open and transparent. Using the Democracy Commission methodology it is important that we develop our approach and thinking alongside our citizens and learn with them along the journey. This will demonstrate a genuine culture of engagement from the outset and will build confidence in the process as well as the outcomes and outputs. A transparent way of working should incorporate an agile approach to sharing the stories from our citizens and communities that highlights great things that are happening and facilitates behavioural change.