

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN FOR 2008-13

1. Engaging with harder-to-reach groups

Action	Timeframe					Project Lead	Risk Issues	Resource Issues	Evidence of success
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				
1 Be clear on which are our harder to reach groups	Review our definition of hard to reach groups (following the engagement exercise, Nov 2008).	Work with target communities to draw on their expertise and further refine the definition. Work through the Lincs Community Cohesion Partnership to understand the dynamics of population change and evolve our approach to engaging with new communities.	Review equality and diversity issues after the Place Survey 2010.	Review the demographic profile post Census.					A clear understanding of which are the harder to reach groups in South Holland and what is meant by harder to reach.
2 Improve channels for engaging with our harder to reach population	Evaluate feedback from participants and stakeholder groups. Produce specific guidance on how to tailor engagement to preferences.	Verify progress on existing channels through self-assessment, feedback and scrutiny. Identify a programme to further develop methods for consulting with communities that may not take part in more structured approaches. Make sure that all engagement activity is subject to equality impact assessment.	Review against our own ICT strategy, communications strategy, national guidelines and best practice. Review our guidance on how to tailor engagement to preferences.						Evidence of regular engagement with our harder to reach groups leading to a better understanding of needs and service improvement.

2. Co-coordinating engagement

Activity	Timeframe					Project Lead	Risk Issues	Resource Issues	Evidence of success
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				
1 Coordinate opportunities for involvement across services and organisations	Develop the dialogue with services and organisations about activities that incorporate a community involvement component.	Work with services and partner organisations to plan and coordinate activities that include community involvement. Share key findings and recommendations with Members, staff, the public and other key stakeholders.	Review progress and address areas for further improvement.						An annual consultation calendar including joint community engagement activities; measurable efficiency savings
2 Ensure corporate guidance on consultation and engagement is clear and fit for purpose	Refresh the guidance using feedback from the Nov 2008 engagement process.	Refine the guidance using feedback from the people who have taken part in, and organised, the engagement processes.							Evidence that the guidelines are being used; qualitative feedback from those who are using them that they are clear and fit for purpose.

3	Ensure alignment with the Lincolnshire Pathfinder	Develop proposals for submission to the Lincolnshire Sustainable Communities Strategy Board.	Review and refine proposals following Comprehensive Area Assessment.							Comprehensive Area Assessment
---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-------------------------------

3. Apathy and trust									
Activity	Timeframe					Project Lead	Risk Issues	Resource Issues	Evidence of success
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				
1 Demonstrate that <i>taking part</i> leads to <i>influencing outcomes</i>	Feed back to participants in the November 2008 engagement, and the public in general, to say what has been influenced by this.	Publish feedback to show how engagement is influencing decision-making and/or leading to improved services. Develop a local 'Take Part' campaign.	Regularly inform communities about progress being made to tackle issues of concern.	Continue to speak to community groups and harder to reach groups and adjust our strategy accordingly.					NI 4 - % people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area; NI 5 - Overall satisfaction with the local area
2 Remove or reduce barriers to engagement	Use feedback to review local barriers to engagement and develop plans for dealing with them. Promote the strategy and its aims within the Council and externally.	Identify and change practices that can exclude or discriminate against certain sectors of the community. Develop ways of publicising opportunities for getting involved to encourage participation.	Identify the training and resources needed to develop and build on the local community's strengths and assets (that is, its skills, knowledge, talents and capacity)	Continue to speak to community groups and harder to reach groups and adjust our strategy accordingly.					Qualitative feedback that barriers once identified have been removed or reduced.
3 Encourage ways of working that will enable trust to develop and deepen	Understand barriers to trust and causes of apathy. Learn from and build on previous or existing activities and local people's experiences of engagement. Make changes to the way Cabinet meets and extend its accessibility and accountability.	Identify what more we can do to help members of Parish Councils and community organisations to influence issues that affect their quality of life.	Use Place Survey results to evaluate progress and make changes to the way we work in response.	Continue to speak to community groups and harder to reach groups and adjust our strategy accordingly.	Use Place Survey results to evaluate progress and make changes to the way we work in response.				Satisfaction with the way SHDC runs things (Place Survey); local agreements on levels of influence and control.
4 Provide training and resources	Identify funding sources for community engagement training.	Recruit and train members of the community to mentor others within the community. Provide resources and help to support community participation in their areas, such as community planning activity.	Run community workshops to identify needs and encourage participation. Draw on the skills and experience of individuals and groups to develop the concept of mentoring.	Evaluate progress.					Numbers of local people trained and actively supporting participation as 'community mentors'.

4. Providing information									
Activity	Timeframe					Project Lead	Risk Issues	Resource Issues	Evidence of success
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				
1 Improve access to information	Audit the content and accessibility of information on the Council's website and develop a programme for making improvements. Adopt the new Access Strategy, ICT Strategy and Web Presence Strategy.	Work with communities to draw on their expertise and make sure that there is clear and open communication of information which citizens require in order to get involved.	Continue to seek feedback and review progress.	Review the contract for webcasting meetings, events and key debates.	Continue to seek feedback and review progress.				% people who feel well informed about public services (Place Survey); perception of value for money SHDC provides (Place Survey);
2 Improve communication, information giving and awareness	Develop a clear programme for communicating with residents and stakeholders. Refresh the communications toolkit to make sure it is fit purpose .	Deploy the communications programme and measure its impact.	Make sure that the communications strategy continues to support the engagement strategy.	Continue to seek feedback and review progress.					NI 5 - Overall satisfaction with the local area; NI 2 - % people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood.
3 Improve information management (*a plan for single point updating is subject to agreement through the new ICT Strategy)	Audit the content and accessibility of information on the Council's website and develop a programme for making improvements.	Develop a plan* with a realistic timescale for introducing single point update of all SHDC systems on householder details. Continue to develop online tools to support empowerment and democracy.	Review progress with the ICT strategy in respect of delivering single point updating of householder details.						Access Strategy, ICT Strategy and Web Presence Strategy outcome measures.
5. Consulting									
Activity	Timeframe					Project Lead	Risk Issues	Resource Issues	Evidence of success
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				
1 Long term investment	Review the mechanisms that are in place for consulting with people and sharing learning on a continuing, systematic basis.	Build on past experiences to mitigate the possibility of communities experiencing 'consultation fatigue'. Develop ways to publicise the annual consultation plan as an information tool to increase awareness and encourage participation in consultation opportunities.	Review the impact of the marketing of consultation opportunities.	Continue to seek feedback and review progress.					% people who know how to get involved in local decision making (Place Survey); numbers responding to consultation and participating in engagement opportunities
2 Develop a flexible approach to consulting with Parish Councils	Adopt a more flexible approach to consultation periods for Parish Councils to take account of their ways of working and schedule of meetings.	Consider amending the Council's Constitution to incorporate greater flexibility (amending the six week rule). Change practices that can exclude Parish Councils from responding to consultation.	Evaluate the impact of a more flexible approach.						Satisfaction with the way SHDC consults Parish Councils (measured by an annual survey of Parish Clerks and Chairmen)

6. Local empowerment									
Activity	Timeframe					Project Lead	Risk Issues	Resource Issues	Evidence of success
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13				
1 Develop proposals for participatory budgeting	Understand the implications of Government guidance on engaging residents and community groups to discuss spending priorities for a defined public budget in their local area.	Develop proposals and evaluate options for devolving budgets to local community level. Consult on options and potential pilot areas. Monitor development of the national agenda.	Develop mechanisms for implementing participatory budgeting. Identify pilot areas.	Run a participatory budget pilot programme. Monitor and evaluate. Prepare a roll-out programme.	Introduce a programme of participatory budgeting.				NI 4 - % people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area.
2 Extend supported Parish Planning across the district	Evaluate the Donington and Holbeach pilots	Develop a programme to extend Parish Planning to other communities. Recruit and train members of the community experienced in Parish Planning to act as mentors.	Review the resources and training required to support the programme.	Review progress and adjust our approach accordingly.				Number of completed Parish Plans; NI 5 - Overall satisfaction with the area; NI 2 - % people who feel they belong to their neighbourhood	
3 Further encourage and develop transfer of assets and functions to Parishes and community organisations	Make sure our asset register is fit for purpose.	Identify potential assets and functions for transfer. Prioritise and develop marketable proposals with realistic timescales to generate interest. Consult with Parishes, the community and voluntary sector and community groups on proposals.	Review progress and adjust our approach accordingly.					Transfer of assets to communities - keep a register of transferred assets and functions	
4 Support and equip elected Councillors to lead on community engagement and empowerment	Adopt the Member Development Charter	Support members in working with our partners to develop neighbourhood panels as a key mechanism for participation. Develop proposals for 'Ward Walks' supporting Parish Councils.	Review progress and levels of participation in neighbourhood panels.					All neighbourhood panels are active and empowered through the participation of the local elected Councillors.	
5 Develop neighbourhood panels to better integrate with democratic processes as a way of canvassing opinion and resolving tough local issues	Engage the Police in discussion about future management of neighbourhood panels.	Consult with Parishes on news ways of working and implement agreed changes.	Review progress and levels of participation in neighbourhood panels.					% people who feel that local public services act on the concerns of local residents (Place Survey)	