

Haringey's Community Engagement Framework:

*Working together transparently so
communities can influence and
improve public services*

2009



Haringey Council

www.haringey.gov.uk



haringey strategic partnership

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Foreword by the Chair of the Haringey Strategic Partnership

We are not starting from scratch. We recognise that good community engagement activity has and is happening in the borough. However, this is the first time that the HSP has taken a common approach to community engagement. Through the development and implementation of this Framework we hope to raise the profile, improve the quality and achieve better co-ordination of community engagement locally. Our purpose is to improve people's lives and the quality of public services, and make better use of resources.

To help us develop the Framework, we listened to what people have told us, reflected on previous and current community engagement in the borough and looked at research that has already been done here¹ and elsewhere in the country. This includes consideration of recent developments in national government policy and legislation, particularly the Government's white paper 'Communities in Control' and the new 'duty to involve' in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Framework has been signed up to by all members of the HSP and therefore applies to all the organisations on and sub groups under it.

Signatories to the framework:

- Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust
- College of North East London (CoNEL)
- Greater London Authority
- Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations (HAVCO)
- Haringey Children's Trust
- Haringey Community Link Forum
- Haringey Council
- Haringey Members of Parliament
- Haringey Registered Social Landlords
- Haringey Youth Council
- Homes for Haringey
- Job Centre Plus
- Learning and Skills Council
- London Fire Brigade
- Metropolitan Police
- Middlesex University
- NHS Haringey
- The Bridge New Deal for Communities

Executive Summary

¹ *Public officials and community involvement in local services*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, November 2008

Haringey's first Community Engagement Framework (CEF) reaffirms the Haringey Strategic Partnership's understanding of and commitment to community engagement.

Our **definition** of community engagement includes the following activities:

- Informing
- Listening
- Consulting
- Involving
- Collaborating
- Empowering

The **aim** of the Framework is to enable the Haringey Strategic Partnership (HSP):

'To engage with local communities and empower them to shape policies, strategies and services that affect their lives.'

The Framework will develop and extend good practice across organisations in the partnership. It does not prescribe community engagement activity, but acts as a guide to inform community engagement work.

The Framework includes clear **principles** to be used when carrying out community engagement activities in Haringey. The HSP partners will:

- Work in partnership to join up our engagement activities
- Engage when it will make a difference
- Be clear about what we are asking
- Be inclusive and aim to engage with all communities
- Communicate the results of engagement activities
- Build capacity of communities to take part in engagement activities

A Delivery Plan to accompany the Framework will be developed to identify the outcomes and related priorities for improving community engagement in the borough.

1. Introduction

Community engagement goes far beyond just consulting local people and communities. It lies at the heart of the services provided by the organisations that make up the Haringey Strategic Partnership.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has stated that community engagement is central to local service delivery:

"Bringing government closer to people, passing power from Whitehall to the town hall and direct to local communities, isn't just the right thing to do. It's the best way to revitalise the local roots of our democracy... the surest way of making local services reflect people's needs [and] the only way we can get to grips with some of the biggest challenges we face – from climate change to childhood obesity."

(Development Trusts Association Annual Conference, 17 September 2007)

Appendix A describes the national context for this work.

2. Why a Community Engagement Framework?

There are a number of compelling reasons why community engagement is central to the work of the HSP. Engaging with our local communities will help us to meet our Sustainable Community Strategy vision of:

‘A place for diverse communities that people are proud to belong to.’

The **benefits** of achieving our vision are described below:

- 1. Empowering people to define and shape their own community:**
People have a right to shape and influence their own community. Getting people involved in shaping their own communities can help to create a greater sense of belonging.
- 2. Responsive services tailored to meet people's needs:**
Community engagement is central to evidence based policy and practice. Engagement with local people will help to plan and develop services that are more appropriate and responsive to their needs.
- 3. Better informed citizens:**
Engaging with local communities can bring greater understanding of the HSP policies and priorities. Community engagement can help to explain to local people the competing demands on local resources and help to manage expectations.
- 4. Encouraging democratic involvement:**
Community engagement is an exercise in participatory democracy which many people enjoy. The expansion and development of community engagement can reinvigorate the democratic process.
- 5. Building responsible citizenship:**

If communities are able to play a significant role in improving the area they live in they are more likely to develop a greater sense of responsibility or ownership. This strengthens the role of communities in the management of their neighbourhoods.

6. Building capacity of people to take part in engagement activities:

Community engagement can help to build the capacity of participants by developing their knowledge and skills. They will learn about their community, its issues, organisational structures and processes. Community engagement can also help to develop practical skills: for example, communication, surveying and interviewing.

7. Improving relationships between partner agencies and the public: Community engagement makes organisations more accessible and open to the communities they serve which can, in turn, make services they provide more responsive to the needs of communities.

8. Better monitoring and measuring of performance:

Community engagement, as performed through quantitative and qualitative assessments (surveys, focus groups and interviews) will provide the HSP with evaluative feedback essential for establishing baseline data and monitoring performance.

9. Meeting our statutory obligations:

There are a number of statutory obligations on the HSP to engage with communities. Consultation is at the core of the Sustainable Community Strategy and community involvement is important in building local evidence for assessments within the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

3. What do we mean by engagement?

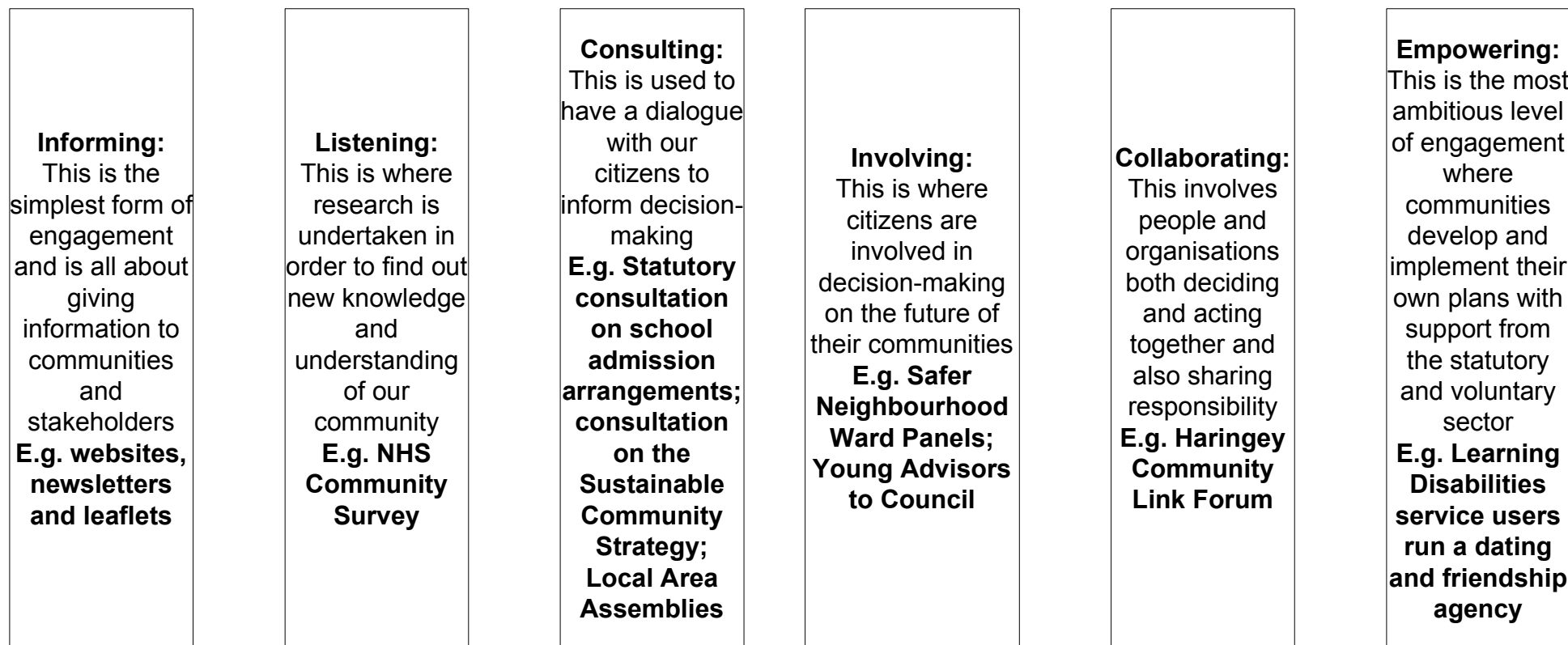
There are many different words used to describe community engagement – ‘empowerment’, ‘involvement’, ‘consultation’ and ‘research’ are just a few. All of these methods are important in engaging communities. All are equal in merit. We are working towards **empowering** local citizens but recognise that different methods of engagement are appropriate for different circumstances.

In Haringey we have defined the following different methods as community engagement:

- Informing
- Listening
- Consulting
- Involving
- Collaborating
- Empowering

All these methods include getting the participants’ views on the engagement approach as well as feeding back the results of it to those who took part. Examples of these different methods of community engagement are outlined on the following page.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHODS



4. What are the HSP's existing commitments to community engagement?

This Framework builds on our responsibilities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), which provides the overarching direction for the borough. The principles of this Framework support **all** of the SCS outcomes, and in particular:

- **People at the heart of change**
- **Be people and customer focused**

Haringey's Local Area Agreement also clearly demonstrates the HSP's commitment to community engagement. It contains the following indicators, which will allow us to measure and monitor this Framework:

- NI1: % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- NI4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- NI6: Participation in regular volunteering
- NI7: Environment for a thriving third sector
- NI21: Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police – proxy % of people who feel well informed about what the council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour
- NI140: Fair treatment by local services - proxy to what extent does your local council treat all types of people fairly

5. Aim of Haringey's Community Engagement Framework

The **aim** of this Community Engagement Framework is to enable the HSP partners:

'To engage with local communities and help empower them to shape policies, strategies and services that affect their lives.'

6. Haringey's Community Engagement Principles

The Framework develops and extends good practice across organisations in the partnership. It does not prescribe community engagement methods, but acts as a guide to inform community engagement work across the HSP. It draws together the actions of partners. We have developed a set of principles to be used in carrying out community engagement activities.

We will:

1. Work in partnership to join up our engagement activities

- Adopt the COMPACT way of working which promotes good practice in partnership working
- Work together to co-ordinate engagement activities and resources where possible, to avoid duplication and over-engagement
- Build trust between our communities and the HSP
- Ensure that the HSP has a clear understanding of Haringey's communities and a commitment to engaging with them
- Work together to make better use of what we already know
- Enhance community leadership by ensuring that voluntary and community organisations are effectively represented across the HSP

2. Engage when it will make a difference

- Engage where there is a real opportunity for people to have an impact and influence decisions on those issues which local people care about
- Engage when an initiative will have direct implications for local people
- Ensure that the outcomes of community engagement are used to plan and deliver services, strategies and policies that reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities
- Engage where there is an identified lack of knowledge among HSP partners
- Promote the principles of community engagement within the work of all agencies of the HSP and ensure that engagement is carried out to a consistently high professional and ethical standard

3. Be clear about what we're asking

- Make the aim of engagement clear
- Provide clarity for local partners and local people about the opportunities there will be to shape services and what the benefits might be
- Be honest about what can and can't be achieved or influenced from the beginning
- Ensure that participants understand what they are taking part in and how their views will be used
- Ensure that there are engagement opportunities from the beginning of any process to develop policies, strategies and services
- Ensure that participants understand when consultation has finished and what will happen next

4. Be inclusive and aim to engage with all communities

- Ensure that individuals have the opportunity to express their views and know that these views will be listened to and respected
- Take into account particular needs of individuals or groups and aim to overcome any difficulties people may have in engaging

- Research ways of increasing involvement with communities who are not in touch with HSP organisations
- Engage with people of all ages and ensure that young people have engagement opportunities
- Ensure that communities who are directly affected by an initiative are aware of engagement opportunities
- Ensure that engagement methods are accessible and appropriate to the communities or individuals who are participating
- Engage communities of interest on specific issues

5. Communicate the results of engagement activities

- Ensure that communities are aware of the impact of their input by making sure participants receive feedback as soon as possible, and that they are told when this will be
- Ensure that communities who are affected by an initiative receive feedback on engagement activities, through a variety of channels where appropriate
- Give participants the opportunity to feed back to partners on the engagement process
- Review and evaluate the engagement process and learn from it

6. Build capacity of communities to take part in engagement activities

- Ensure that the statutory and voluntary sector are supported to develop their skills and capacity in order to facilitate communities to engage effectively
- Establish a coordinated and consistent approach to community engagement including better use of resources and sharing information between partners
- Use engagement to strengthen partnership working to identify and solve community issues
- Recognise and build on the strengths of volunteers to encourage community cohesion, wider participation in local life and the development of new skills.

We recognise that we need both human and financial resources to ensure good quality engagement and that organisations will have different access to these. We hope this framework will help us to make better use of all our existing resources, by changing our ways of working including sharing ideas, facilities, expertise and good practice. We aim to be transparent about the level of resources we have for improving community engagement locally by making sure that the priorities included in the final framework are adequately resourced.

7. How was this Framework developed?

We set up a multi-agency project group to develop this Framework. This group undertook engagement activities with local stakeholders, community groups and individuals to make sure the Framework focuses on those issues which local people care about. Engagement took place in two phases from January to April 2009, and included:

Phase 1:

- **Informing:**
 - We sent a letter to over 700 community and voluntary groups informing people about the planned Framework.
- **Consulting:**
 - We sent a questionnaire to the same groups asking for their views on how HSP partners could engage better.
 - We made the questionnaire available to everybody on the Haringey Council website.
- **Listening:**
 - We attended a meeting of Haringey's Community Link Forum (a forum for Haringey's voluntary and community groups) to listen to people's views on engagement in Haringey.
 - We received 100 responses and used these to develop the draft Framework.

Phase 2:

- **Informing:**
 - We sent a letter to the same 700 community and voluntary groups, and to other groups and individuals who asked to be informed,
- **Consulting:**
 - We sent the draft Framework and a questionnaire to the same groups, asking for people's views.
 - We made the draft Framework and questionnaire available to everybody on the Haringey Council website.
 - We put an article in Haringey People magazine (delivered to every household in the borough), encouraging people to take part in the consultation.
 - We attended the HSP Board and the HSP's six thematic boards to ask for people's views on the Framework.
- **Listening:**
 - We met with community groups to explain the purpose of the Framework
 - We attended another meeting of Haringey's Community Link Forum to listen to people's views on the draft Framework.
 - We used people's views to finalise the Framework.

8. How will we implement the Framework?

During the process of developing the Framework key actions will emerge as being essential to improving community engagement in Haringey and achieving the aim of the Framework.

The partner organisations will work together to deliver the aim of the Framework and the multi-agency group will lead on the development of priorities and an accompanying action plan which will be monitored by the Performance Management Group of the HSP. The multi-agency project group has started this process by mapping existing community engagement work. This will be developed further following consultation on this draft framework.

While it is unlikely that the Framework will change significantly, it will be reviewed after two years to ensure that it is having a positive impact on the way community engagement is undertaken in Haringey. After this, the Framework will be reviewed every three years by a multi-agency group.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

An initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Framework is being carried out on the Framework and will be available at www.haringey.gov.uk/framework. A full EIA will be undertaken when the Delivery Plan is developed.

Further information:

For further information on Haringey's Community Engagement Framework please contact:

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Appendix A

National Policy Context

Over the past few years, central government has placed increasing emphasis on how councils empower and engage people in all aspects of local public services. This is seen as essential to help renew local democracy, improve trust in public institutions, enhance community cohesion and encourage an active citizen culture.

The Government's White Paper on community engagement, 'Communities in control: real people, real power' sets out new duties for local authorities to engage with and empower local people. As of April 2009, local authorities have a duty to inform, consult and involve communities in local decisions, policies and services.

The following national policies demonstrate central government's drive towards involving communities:

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007)
- White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities (2006)
- White Paper: Communities in Control: real people real power (2008)
- Sustainable Communities Act (2008)
- Discussion Paper: National Framework for Greater Citizen Engagement (2008)
- Planning for a sustainable future (2007)
- Draft Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill (2008)
- Draft Policing and Crime Bill (2008)
- NHS Act (2006)

Definitions

Communities and Local Government (CLG) define community engagement as *'the process whereby public bodies reach out to communities to create empowerment opportunities'*.

CLG definition of empowerment is *'the giving of confidence, skills and power to communities to shape and influence what public bodies do for or with them.'*²

The Metropolitan Police define community engagement as *'the proactive harnessing of the energies, knowledge and skills of communities and partners not merely to identify problems but also to negotiate priorities for action and shape and deliver solutions.'*³

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance on community engagement states that it *'refers to the process of getting communities involved in decisions that affect them.'*⁴

² See *An Action Plan for Community Empowerment: Building on Success* (CLG, 2007), p.12 for both definitions

³ See the Metropolitan Police Authority and Metropolitan Police Service, *Community Engagement Strategy 2006-2009*, p.5

⁴ See National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Public health guidance 9, *Community engagement to improve health*, February 2008, p.5