

**North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership - Executive**

**2 October 2008**

**Update on development of a NYSP community engagement and neighbourhood management framework**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update the NYSP Executive on progress regarding developing a NYSP community engagement and neighbourhood management framework.
- 1.2 To invite comments from the NYSP Executive on the draft principles within a framework and proposed workstreams.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 At the June 2008 meeting of the NYSP Executive it was agreed that a Task and Finish Group be formed to develop a NYSP framework for community engagement and neighbourhood management as a way of aligning strategic partnership agendas in relation to community engagement and neighbourhood management. It was also agreed that progress should be reported to the next NYSP Executive meeting.
- 2.2 The Group has met twice to date. One meeting included a presentation on the potential of developing a Local Information System (commonly known as a data hub) building upon work being undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council, with the support of district councils, to develop neighbourhood profiles. The Group feels strongly that this potential must be seized by the NYSP and have arranged for a presentation on the opportunities offered by Local Information System to be made to this meeting of the NYSP Executive.
- 2.3 The Group is proposing that the NYSP framework should be a short, clear agreement on key principles, backed by a number of workstreams on the detailed methods of implementation.
- 2.4 The Group has developed for discussion a first draft set of community engagement and neighbourhood management principles (see section 4 of this report). The first draft principles are supported by an explanatory diagram that seeks to illustrate the multi-dimensional nature of Neighbourhood Management, with Community Engagement at its heart (section 5) and an outline of the potential workstreams (section 6). Subject to the discussions at this meeting, the Group will undertake further work, including drafting and consulting upon the framework, and report back to the next meeting of the NYSP Executive.

**3 The relationship between community engagement and neighbourhood management**

- 3.1 Whilst not identical, community engagement and neighbourhood management share many common characteristics and a joint NYSP framework is appropriate. Both are processes not projects, both have an increased chance of success if all local agencies work together rather than in isolation, and both need to be mainstreamed.
- 3.2 Community engagement is the process of involving people in decisions that affect them. Community engagement will deliver effective two-way communication with the community and increase community empowerment through active participation in priority identification and, where appropriate, joint problem resolution, building confidence and satisfaction through enhanced service delivery.
- 3.3 Neighbourhood management involves communities working with local agencies to improve services at neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood management will support and enhance the delivery of community engagement with enhanced service delivery being achieved through more effective partnership working and work with communities.
- 3.3 Much partnership activity is already taking place in relation to community engagement and neighbourhood management. Implementation of the NYSP framework will deliver enhanced community engagement, community empowerment and service delivery to the communities of North Yorkshire and the City of York.

**4 Community engagement and neighbourhood management principles**

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group has developed for discussion the following first draft set of community engagement and neighbourhood management principles, which would form the basis of the framework. Initial comments from the NYSP Executive are invited at this stage:

“The NYSP and its partners believe that community engagement and neighbourhood management are vital to how we provide effective and efficient public services. Engaging communities and working at the neighbourhood level can also develop a sense of belonging and community leadership.

As building blocks towards better community engagement and neighbourhood management the members of the NYSP have agreed to develop together:

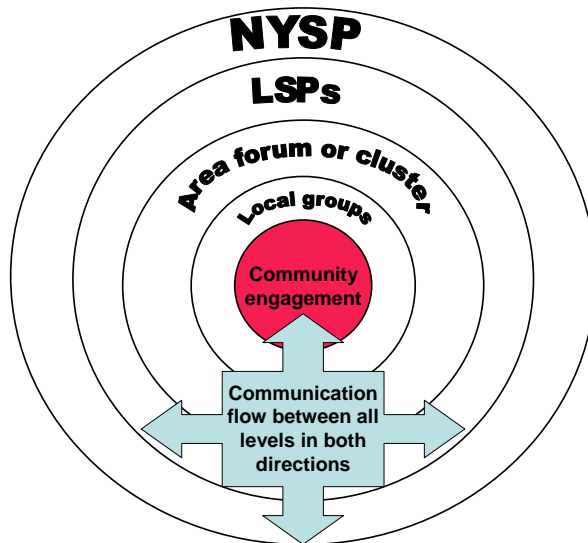
- Clearly defined and agreed neighbourhoods and communities of interest.

- Shared profiling, mapping and prioritisation of neighbourhoods and communities of interest with evidence-based deployment of resources.
- Shared and co-ordinated information, analysis, resource allocation, feedback and communication processes.
- Shared community priorities and problem identification set through effective community engagement, building on existing engagement activity across partners.
- Ensuring that community development and empowerment underpin and strengthen community engagement at all levels.
- Better engagement with voluntary and community organisations that can support and underpin community engagement and neighbourhood management.
- Strong local and thematic leadership at strategic level to drive integration.
- Nominated officers in each agency to act as contact points on joint action and drive integration of engagement and service delivery.
- Dedicated, multi-agency solutions, with a neighbourhood manager or a neighbourhood co-ordinator identified and co-located where appropriate within a multi-agency team.
- Engagement with the community to identify and deliver effective and proportionate solutions, including joint problem solving where appropriate.
- Joint performance measures, monitoring and improvement processes.
- Resources to support shared outcomes.”

4.2 It is important to note that the above principles are about good practice and some of this is already happening in some places. The adoption of these principles within a NYSP framework should not be a ‘threat’ to what currently works well.

## **5 Relationship between community engagement / neighbourhood management structures and principles**

5.1 The diagram below shows how community engagement is central to all neighbourhood management and problem solving structures. The diagram is not intended to be hierarchical and each level of problem solving is of equal importance. Issues can, and should be, resolved at any level. In many cases this will be at a very local level, but the capacity needs to exist for issues that are identified at the local level in several geographic areas to be recognised and dealt with on a broader level. The communication flow through the structures must be in both directions.



## 6 Future workstreams

6.1 The Task and Finish Group has identified a number of potential community engagement and neighbourhood workstreams. Some are already work in progress, whereas others are only at the initial stages of discussion. Most will require work to be undertaken by officers outside of, but project managed by, the Group or its successor (see section 7 of this report). The Group needs to do more work on this to specify and prioritise the workstreams, but initial comments from the NYSP Executive are invited at this stage:

### 6.2 **Local Information System / data hub / neighbourhood profiles**

The Group has received a presentation on the potential of developing a local information system (data hub) building upon work being undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council, with the support of district councils, to develop neighbourhood profiles. The Group feels strongly that this potential must be seized by the NYSP. High priority.

### 6.3 **Data Analysts Group**

Existing data analysts working in various partner organisations, including those working on community safety issues, should work more closely together, at as least a virtual team, to identify partnership data that will improve identification and resolution of common issues, provide joint needs and intelligence assessments, increase the provision of analytical capacity for community priorities and problem solving. High priority.

#### 6.4 **Joint locality engagement structures**

It is important to have clearly understood and effective joint locality engagement structures in all Districts. These may look different in different places, but should embody jointly agreed guiding principles and best practice. Progress is being made in all Districts, although some structures are more fully developed than others. Structures include area forums, pilot parish clusters arrangements and virtual networks. These structures need to be firmly linked into District LSPs. High priority.

#### 6.5 **Joint mechanisms for engaging with communities of interest / circumstance and minority groups**

Some service providers already have mechanisms for engaging with customers / communities of interest / circumstance and minority groups, but the information gained is not often shared with other partners. Work in this area is required. High priority.

#### 6.6 **Joint consultations and engagement database**

‘Softer’ data, not expressible in numerical terms, should be shared between organisations where appropriate and that information from other sources such as parish plans should also be available centrally. NYCC has an internal consultation database that could be used as a starting point for development. The Group believes that this workstream should be a priority and sit as part of the Local Information System / Joint data hub / neighbourhood profiles work. High priority.

#### 6.7 **Joint local problem solving**

The Group believes that there should be provision for time limited and subject based problem solving groups to be easily and effectively set up, where necessary, with all partners understanding the aims of such groups and the process by which they come into operation. Development of appropriate protocols should be a high priority.

#### 6.8 **Joint toolkit and training**

There is a need to identify skills gaps and possible training opportunities for officers / staff and elected members / board members of partner organisations. Medium priority.

#### 6.9 **Joint commissioning / coordination of the Place survey**

A consortium is already in place to take forward the work for NYCC and six of the Districts (together with the City of York and the East Riding of Yorkshire). Scarborough is carrying out the survey separately but a protocol for sharing the outcomes has been established. Low priority for further development at this stage.

**6.10 Joint citizens' panels**

The feasibility of a joint citizens' panel (with statistically significant sub-panels for each district) should be explored. In the short term processes should be put into place for partners to submit questions to existing panels and for the systematic sharing of responses. NYCC has a citizens' panel, as do several of the Districts. Older people's partnership boards are also setting up panels. Low priority for further development at this stage.

**7 Next steps**

7.1 As the various workstreams are specified and appropriate officers tasked, there will be a need to review whether the current Task and Finish Group is the best structure to manage this work on behalf of the NYSP Executive on an ongoing basis. The Group will propose future arrangements to the next meeting of the NYSP Executive.

7.2 There is a need for a short consultation with NYSP partners, in particular the LSPs, regarding the draft principles and workstreams (without holding up work on the high priority areas). A number of partners, including some LSPs, have been doing their own work on community engagement and neighbourhood management (for example through action learning sets) and it is important that the NYSP framework is really owned by all NYSP partners, including the LSPs.

**8 Recommendations**

8.1 The NYSP Executive is recommended to:

- Note the progress to date
- Discuss and comment on the first draft set of community engagement and neighbourhood management principles
- Discuss and comment on the proposed workstreams and priorities

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