

Working together to improve services in Manchester

Summary of feedback and way forward

At the 'Your Manchester' event on 23rd March, three workshops took place based on 'Appreciative Inquiry'. Each workshop divided its participants into four groups. Each group had twelve minutes to discuss the following questions below.

- What engagement activity have you been involved in that has made a real impact and why?
- What do we need to do in the future to ensure effective community engagement?
- What skills and resources do we need to improve engagement?
- What can you or your organisation do to improve engagement practices?

Participants were asked to have a conversation about each of the questions and record their answers on the paper table cloths provided. Below is a summary of the results:

1. There was lots of positive feedback on activities that have had a really positive impact including:

- VOP board / VOP networks
- Mentor / mentee programme
- Partnership approach to writing climate change action plan,
- Whalley Range Forum
- Young people evaluation of housing and homeless provision and contribution to supporting people strategy
- Consultation with the third sector on the need for support influenced the specification for the design of a support service for the third sector
- intergenerational projects, diary of when we were; media training and interviewing; helped to bridge gap
- Young voices – volunteers group, intergeneration perspective, learning from each other
- Exodus festival

2. For the future we need to:

- Use different approaches for different communities
- Meet people where they are at – go to them
- Continue conversation – gather evidence / case studies, share evidence
- Feedback the impact of engagement to communities
- Evaluate findings and actions
- Make sure things happen as a result
- Monitor and evaluate previous events, acknowledge what goes wrong and what can we do better

Your Manchester

- Create a level playing field
- Working together – multi agency approach to engagement and delivering services
- Find a way to deal with conflicting interests.
- Make best use of limited resources and be flexible in future engagement approaches
- build strong communities
- engage with business communities
- Clean slate
- Use the appropriate method of engagement
- Freebies / incentives for people to attend
- Be honest, transparent and realistic on what can be achieved

3. We need the following skills and resources:

- Outreach support – people on the ground
- Skills to empower community groups to run engagement activity and manage services
- Training for workers and volunteers and use community expertise
- Creativity, the ability to innovative, make engagement eye catching and fun
- Ability to engage diverse communities
- Research skills to map existing groups
- Models of sustainability, sustainable exit strategies. Use structures that are not so affected by withdrawal of funding.
- Funding
- Facilitation skills and ability to manage expectation
- Partnership skills and the ability to build trust
- Listening, patience, time
- Conflict resolution

4. Organisations can do the following:

- Develop the evidence base in order to know your community
- Simplify and make engagement opportunities more attractive.
- Start local, on the ground, building interest and enthusiasm. Make it more fun, more related to communities and embed in every day life
- Ensure engagement is accessible venues / times
- Involvement training – how residents can engage
- Including people – having ownership
- Build trust
- Share best practice and things that have worked
- Reinvigorate the process as to how we engage with the community to feed back into task meetings
- Remember people want to engage about stuff they care about and are interested in
- Feed back following engagement
- Arrange meetings in non traditional places

What we are currently taking forward and how

We have scrutinised the feedback from the workshop and have identified activity that is already underway which will help us to take forward a number of priorities identified

Method	What	How
Manchester Partnership Community Engagement Strategy Commitments	The commitments include a promise to work together, be honest and open, working creatively, being clear on methods, using different ways of communicating, giving feedback, learning from engagement practices, enabling more communities and individuals to engage	Implementation to be taken forward into the next 12 months delivery plan
Manchester Partnership toolkit	Will be a resource for staff in carrying out effective engagement and engaging with different communities of identity	As above
Manchester Partnership website	Will enable us to share good practice, feedback to communities and evaluate and learn from engagement practices	As above
Third Sector Infrastructure Support Model	Will provide a central service which will encompass capacity building support, support for groups that are commissioning ready or moving in this direction, a volunteer centre and a community engagement function.	We are in the process of working with existing infrastructure support providers to revise the current infrastructure support specification.

Proposed activity to take forward through the Manchester Partnership Community Engagement Strategy delivery plan for 2011-12.

The Community Engagement Task group as lead on the development of the strategy, guide and website and will now be responsible for developing a Manchester Partnership Community Engagement Delivery Plan which will consider how we can take forward information from the workshop including the following:

- Implementation of strategy, guide and website
- Training program for staff and communities. Programme to include carrying out effective engagement, strategy and commitments, guide for staff, website, conflict management, working with diverse communities, empowering communities

Your Manchester

- Working with private sector business
- Joined up activities across the partnership e.g. ward coordination and neighbourhood partnership forums
- Commission community engagement service to support effective community engagement structures, and enable communities to influence decision making and support local community action
- Opportunities for communities to deliver or co-deliver services
- Think about 'resources' as being more than funding and how we can share time, buildings, etc to engage
- Annual review of engagement activities through the community engagement website