



North

Yorkshire County Council

Community Engagement Strategy

April 2008



Adult and Community Services

A responsive County Council providing excellent and efficient local services

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Vision for community engagement

Our Directorate vision

“To promote the well-being of people and communities by the provision of appropriate support and information.”

Our vision for community engagement

Community engagement is a high priority for the Directorate, because we want to deliver – whether directly or commissioned – excellent services that meet the needs of individuals and communities, and we believe that working **with** people is essential to understanding what those needs are and how services should be shaped.



Aim and objectives of the Community Engagement Strategy

Our aim:

The Directorate aims to **actively involve** communities in the decision-making process about what services are provided, how those services are developed, and how they are delivered – in other words, in the design, commissioning and provision of services.

Our objectives:

We want to build on existing good practice to:

- **make sure that our current engagement activities are used effectively:**
As just one example, we will continue to develop and publicise the role of the Learning Disability Partnership Boards as an involvement mechanism for people with learning disabilities, to other Directorates and agencies.
- **develop more opportunities for involving and engaging people so that they can actively contribute to service improvement and delivery:**
There are lots of ways in which we will do this. For example, it might include activities such as increasing opportunities for service-users to be included as equal members of policy development or project teams so that decision-making is shared from the earliest stages; or further involvement of service-users in service reviews.

- **work with partners to make the most of engagement opportunities and share activities and outputs whenever we can:**
For example, a major activity for the next year will be to work with the new Local Involvement Network (LINk¹) so that it builds on our approach to service user consultation and engagement.
- **make good use of the findings of consultation and engagement to inform the way we develop, commission and deliver our services:**
We will share findings with our Performance Boards and translate findings into actions and targets for improvement, linked to our service performance planning processes.
- **monitor progress against our targets and evaluate effectiveness of our engagement activities, to make sure that we are achieving our objectives:**
For example, as one form of evaluation we will check to make sure that people involved in engagement activities feel that the activity was useful and that they had the opportunity to contribute.

¹ To be implemented beginning April 2008

What is community engagement?

There is no one definition of community engagement, but, broadly, it is when members of the public, either as individuals or as a 'community', are involved in decisions about service development, commissioning and delivery. It takes place in a variety of ways: information, where community engagement is minimal; communication; consultation; involvement / participation; and, ultimately, empowerment where community engagement is maximised.

For example, under 'information', it might be about producing leaflets; under 'involvement', it might be about having service-user representatives on Management Boards to share decision-making, or on policy development groups; and under 'empowerment' it might be about transferring service delivery to a community group. Effective community engagement will make use of a variety of techniques.



What do we mean by 'community'?

The Directorate works with a wide range of people – people who use services, carers, people who may in the future use services, other agencies and providers. We also have a role to promote wider 'wellbeing' in our communities. 'Communities' with whom we want to engage might therefore be derived from one or a combination of the following broad groups:

- a) Social care service users
- b) People who are eligible to use our social care services, but don't
- c) Housing Related Support service users
- d) Carers
- e) Those that might, in the future, require services
- f) Users of Libraries, Archives, Registration and Coroner's Services (all ages)
- g) People who choose not to use our Libraries, Archives and Registration Services
- h) 'Communities of interest' (e.g. faith) or other 'minority' groups
- i) Geographical groupings – this is particularly important in North Yorkshire
- j) Demographic groupings (e.g. based on age, gender, life stage)
- k) Other agencies (e.g. Health)
- l) Voluntary and community sector
- m) Social Care Service Providers
- n) Internal partners

We recognise that people are members of several different ‘communities’, and that for some people it is harder to make themselves heard than for others, perhaps because they are from marginalised groups or because consultation activities have not been sufficiently inclusive. We want to ensure that we hear from all of our communities.

We also communicate, consult and engage with staff. This is covered in a separate strategy: the ACS Communications Strategy (currently under review).

What do we do now?

We already have a range of engagement and consultation activities, both well-established and in development. The following list is by no means exhaustive, but gives some examples of what we currently carry out:

- Regular user satisfaction surveys to main social care client groups
- Public Library User Survey (PLUS)
- Archives user satisfaction surveys
- Registration Service annual customer satisfaction surveys
- Learning Disability Partnership Boards – one in each locality
- Network of Better Government for Older People groups
- Older people as representatives on POPPs² steering groups
- Service-user involvement on Mental Health policy and reference groups
- MAGIC (Mental Awareness Group Input Committee): service user-led forum

- Residents’ Forums in NYCC Residential Homes and Extra Care facilities
- Physical and Sensory Impairment Reference Groups – one in each locality
- Consultation with community groups as part of library refurbishment programmes
- Supporting People – consultation forums with marginalised groups
- Service users as members of Supporting People working groups for new services
- Corporate activities, e.g. the Citizens’ Panel

We want to make sure we use our current engagement framework effectively, and we want to make sure that we identify where we need to do more – for example, where there are groups that we are not engaging with. We will use our Forward Plan to help us do this.

Local engagement will be strongly supported by the new structure for Adult Social Care: we are implementing 23 teams, based on smaller geographical localities. Each team is led by a Care Services Manager, who will work with local community partners to focus on prevention and wellbeing.

We also have 42 Library and Information Centres, and 11 mobile libraries, well-placed within communities to support the above agenda and to continue to develop their statutory role of providing access to a wide range of information, leisure and cultural activities.

² POPPs: *Partnerships for Older People Projects* (project to reduce number of older people admitted to hospital as emergency, or to long-term institutional care)

Key drivers of the Community Engagement Strategy

Our performance framework:

The Concordat 'Putting People First: A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social Care'³ sets out the shared aims and values which will guide the transformation of adult social care, and recognises that the sector will work across agendas with users and carers to transform people's experience of local support and services. It focuses on the development of a mainstream system focussed on prevention, early intervention, enablement, and high quality personally tailored services, giving people maximum choice, control and power over the support services they receive. A key element of a personalised adult social care system is:

"Local authority leadership accompanied by authentic partnership working with the local NHS, other statutory agencies, third and private sector providers, users and carers and the wider local community to create a new, high quality care system which is fair, accessible and responsive to the individual needs of those who use services and their carers."

In the White Papers 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say', and 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'⁴, community engagement is a strong theme, with a particular focus on outcomes.

The New Outcomes Framework for Adult Social Care⁵ has 'Making a positive contribution' as one of its seven key objectives⁶. An excellent council will be able to evidence the following:

"The council can evidence that people who use services and their carers have been actively involved in development and improvement work. They have taken their ideas forward to the satisfaction of those people resulting in changes to services. The council ensures all groups within the community are involved and that different people are included where possible to reflect the diversity of the community. The work is well developed and embedded in council procedures and practices."

The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) have identified what a high performing public library is expected to be delivering from themes highlighted in *Framework for the Future*. Under the theme of Community and Civic Values, it states that:

*"Libraries deliver on their potential as community catalysts when they actively and imaginatively seek out the views of users and crucially, non-users, and translate those views into new services."*⁷

³ Concordat 'Putting people first: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care' published by Department of Health (December 2007)

⁴ White Paper 'Our Health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services' (January 2006) and Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' (October 2006)

⁵ Commission for Social Care Inspection; http://www.csci.org.uk/pdf/paf_consultation_010806.pdf

⁶ Key objectives as expressed in the Key Lines of Assessment to Standards of Performance (KLASP)

⁷ *Framework for the Future: Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade* (paragraph 6.7, page 41)

The National Council on Archives guidance 'Giving Value: funding priorities for UK Archives 2005-2010' identifies 'Engaging new audiences' as one of its five key priority areas.

The Local Area Agreement for North Yorkshire includes several key indicators for Social Care and Libraries, and indicators around safer and stronger communities, for example: "% of residents who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area".

The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' includes the commitment to: 'Give communities a real voice and councillors new powers to better respond to local concerns'.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 establishes Local Involvement Networks, from April 2008. Local Involvement Networks are aimed at

enabling genuine involvement of a greater number of people, ensuring local communities have a stronger voice in commissioning health and social care and enabling them to influence key decisions about the services they both use and pay for.

The 'Commissioning Framework for Health and Wellbeing' outlines the expectation to carry out Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Commissioning, and emphasises the importance of community engagement in this:

*"Our health, our care, our say' showed that when people get involved and use their voice, they can shape improvements in provision and contribute to greater fairness in service use. The challenge to commissioners is how to make greater local voice, choice and control a reality."*⁸

⁸ Department of Health: Commissioning Framework for Health and Well-being, 2007.



Our principles for community engagement

Our community engagement plans are underpinned by the following seven key principles:

1. Our community engagement is accessible and inclusive

- Our methods are inclusive of the diverse communities to whom we currently deliver services or to whom we may in the future, including those groups who are seldom heard or marginalised.
- Our engagement activities are accessible – in terms of method, location, timing, information and communication.
- Gaps in our engagement – in terms of groups of people, localities, issues – are identified and plans made to fill those gaps.

2. Our community engagement activities are necessary

- Consultation fatigue is minimised, for example by identifying opportunities for projects that meet a range of information needs.
- We check, before we commission an engagement activity, that we can't get the information we need in another way, for example from an earlier activity.
- We are clear about the purpose of the activity and we communicate this to the people we are engaging with.

3. We support people and communities to engage with us

- We build capacity so that people can effectively represent their communities, including through self-advocacy and advocacy services.

- We develop opportunities for involvement and shared decision-making.
- We are clear about the terms on which people become involved so that everyone is clear about roles and responsibilities.
- We work with partners and stakeholders such as the voluntary and community sector, other local authorities and agencies, other service providers.
- We link into existing local and county-wide user-led structures such as Better Government for Older People and PSI Reference Groups.

4. Our community engagement activities are timely and well-planned

- We plan, consult and involve in good time so that ideas and views are built into developments from the earliest stages.
- For formal consultation activities on large-scale plans, we follow the North Yorkshire COMPACT⁹.
- Resource requirements for consultation and engagement are identified and planned into budget allocations.

5. Our methods are appropriate

- We are able to apply a range of consultation and engagement methods, which are appropriate to the purpose and the audience.
- Good practice is identified, developed and shared.
- We evaluate the effectiveness of our activities and use the learning from this.

⁹ The Compact is an agreed framework that guides the relationship between North Yorkshire County Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector: www.nysp.org.uk

6. The purpose is clear and the results are shared

- We are clear about the scope of our engagement activities: what can be influenced or changed, and what can't – and why.
- We keep people informed by feeding back the findings of our engagement activities, promptly and accessibly.
- We capture, measure and communicate the **outcomes** of our community engagement activities – in other words, we know what has changed as a result, and we tell people about this.

7. Our community engagement activities are professional and ethical

- We make sure people and information are kept safe, by adhering to Data Protection requirements, and by application of the DH Research Governance Framework¹⁰ where appropriate.

Linkages

Our Community Engagement Strategy is influenced by and will work in conjunction with the County Council's corporate strategies, including:

- The corporate consultation strategy, database and toolkit
- Corporate engagement activities, such as the Citizens' Panel, Area Forums, Area Committees
- Partnership activity such as North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership and Local Strategic Partnerships
- The corporate communication strategy
- Corporate Equality Policy Statement

The County Council is currently developing the corporate approach to community engagement. We will align our Community Engagement Strategy with the County Council's community engagement framework, once that framework is in place.

Within Adult and Community Services, a key link is to the Marketing Strategy, which will guide the directorate in developing the information that it provides about its services.

¹⁰ The Research Governance Framework is a Department of Health initiative and applies to research projects. It is a process to ensure that research is robust and participants' safety and confidentiality is maintained.

Implementing our Community Engagement Strategy

As one of the first actions to inform this Strategy, we have carried out a mapping exercise to clarify just what activities are in place or planned, and to identify where the gaps are. To help deliver the Strategy, we have established a steering group: the Community Engagement Strategy Development Group, which is chaired by an Assistant Director and has cross-directorate representation.

The intention of this Strategy is very much to build on existing good practice. This also means that the Strategy should support local engagement activities, which can be the most successful in identifying and delivering solutions to local issues. Rather than attempt to centralise all consultation and engagement, the Strategy will provide a framework for community engagement.

However, the Directorate needs to ensure consistency and quality, and that findings are reliable, are captured and are used to improve services. To achieve this, we will develop a forward planning and reporting process, protocols and quality standards by which **all** consultation and engagement activities should be carried out¹¹, and quality assurance.

The main mechanisms through which this Strategy will be delivered are:

- The Directorate's Community Engagement Strategy Development Group
- The action plan & Forward Plan that is part of this Strategy
- The Directorate's annual Service Performance Plan
- Service-level Service Performance Plans
- Local community engagement via our local teams (see page 7)
- Building on good practice already in place in the Directorate
- Building on our partnership working (e.g. partnership boards, Adult Strategic Partnership)
- Linkages with the corporate engagement framework

Accountability and responsibility for the Strategy belongs to:

- Executive Members for Adult and Community Services
- Director of Adult and Community Services
- Adult and Community Services Management Board
- Community Engagement Strategy Development Group
- Service heads and senior managers, who will have responsibility for delivering the Strategy in their localities

¹¹ Including the Corporate consultation pro-formas and database.

County Councillors have a key role to play in engaging with communities, as their elected representatives. In implementing this strategy, we will actively seek opportunities to work with County Councillors through contributing to consultative forums such as area committees, by involving County Councillors in our engagement activities, and sharing with them our findings to support informed decision-making.

How our progress to deliver this Strategy will be monitored:

Progress on the Community Engagement action plan will be monitored by the Community Engagement Strategy Development Group, and will be reported to Adult and Community Services Performance Boards bi-annually.

How we will measure success:

This Strategy is an evolving one, and we will build on our learning and achievements from year one to identify our priority actions for year two and so on. We will be evaluating the following, as measures of success:

- Percentage of service-users who say that they are contacted to check that they are satisfied with the services they receive.
- Percentage of service-users who say they are involved in reviewing the services that they receive.
- Percentage of service-users who say they feel services improve as a result.
- Percentage of service-users who say they feel that their opinions and preferences are taken into account when decisions are taken about what services are provided to them.

We recognise that the above measures are not necessarily signs of effective engagement – they are ones that we have now, and they have been included to provide a starting point. We will develop more outcome measures that include a range of stakeholders as we implement this Strategy.

Our Action Plan

In the first year of the Strategy, we will focus on actions to both develop and implement the strategy, including:

- Forward-planning of community engagement via the annual service performance planning process, and regular reporting to Performance Boards (see Appendix 1)
- As an outcome of the above, the production of an annual programme of activities, including piloting of new approaches, linked to the Directorate's major plans and costed
- Contributing to development of a Local Involvement Network (LiNK) for North Yorkshire
- Supporting local community engagement within the new locality model in Adult Social Care Operations, including local libraries
- Inclusive engagement – developing mechanisms to ensure consideration of people's needs related to their gender, race, impairment, age etc
- Developing a clearer process to make use of outcomes of consultation / engagement activities to inform needs assessment, commissioning and service improvements
- Making sure that our processes help us to identify, and communicate, what has changed as a result of our community engagement
- Clarifying issues that underpin community engagement, such as remuneration of expenses for consultees
- Toolkit of good practice to support implementation of strategy (case studies, templates etc), drawing in existing guidance (for example, the Corporate Consultation Toolkit)

Review date for this Strategy

To keep this Strategy live and fit for purpose, it will be reviewed in 12 months (March 2009), and the learning will inform our action plan for year 2 (2009/10).



Glossary

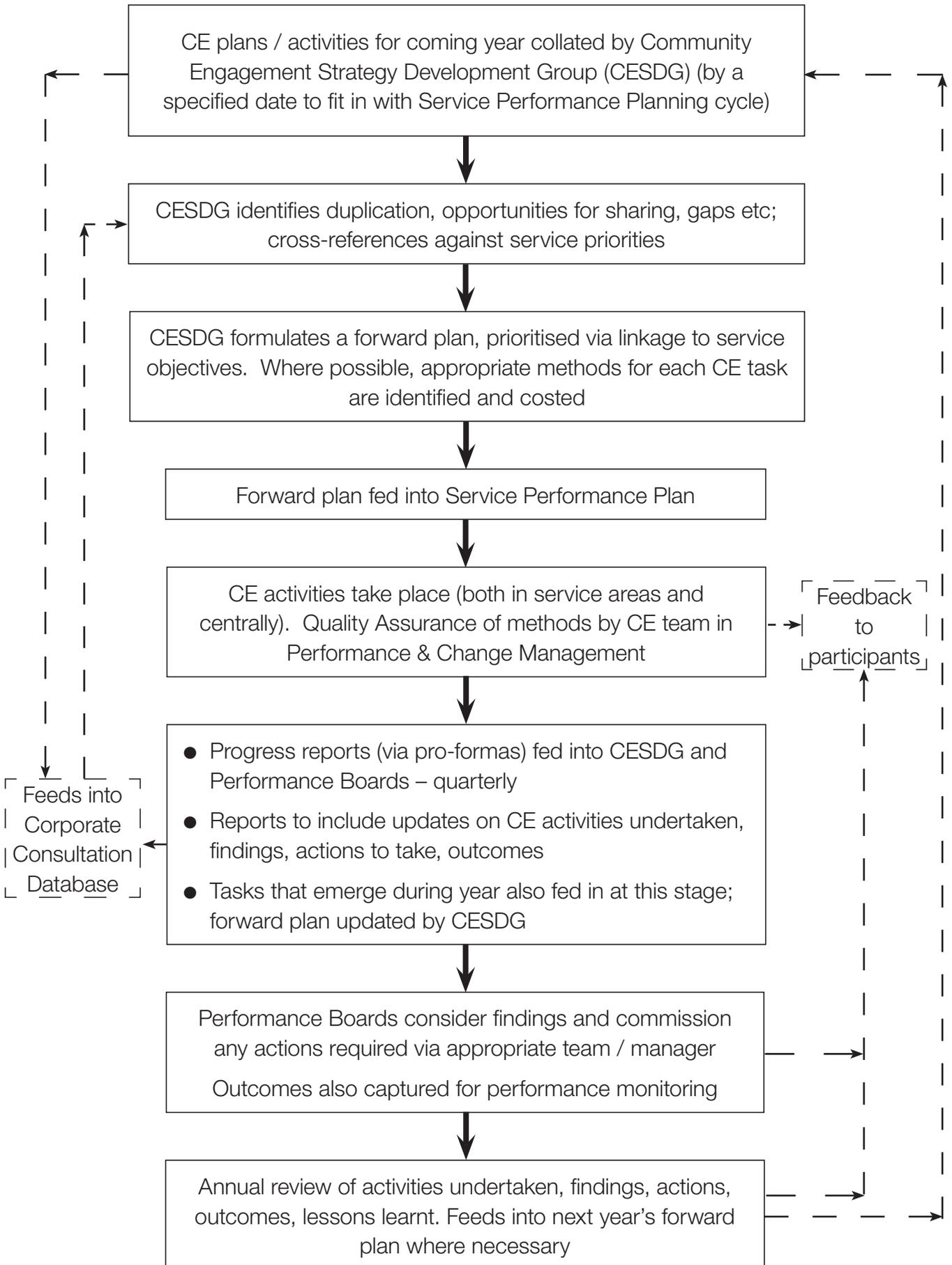
ECEO:	Equality and Community Engagement Officer
POPC:	Principal Officer Performance and Change
CESDG:	Community Engagement Strategy Development Group
ACSMB:	Adult and Community Services Management Board
P & CM SMT:	Performance and Change Management Senior Management Team
LCS:	Library and Community Services
SPP:	Service Performance Planning
SAS:	Self Assessment Statement: part of our performance framework for Adult Social Care

Action Plan 2008/09

Actions for Year One of strategy (2008/09)				
Developing the Strategy				
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress and outcomes
1. Develop a stakeholder database	a) Develop database structure b) Populate database with details of user groups, partnerships, other stakeholders c) Contribute to locality mapping / profiles to support local community engagement	ECEO / Commissioning and Change team	June 2008 and ongoing	
2. Clarify policy / procedure for remuneration of expenses	a) Produce report to ACSMB with recommendations	ECEO / CESDG	June 2008	
3. Ensure that all participants in community engagement activities understand their roles and responsibilities	a) Produce 'agreement' outlining issues such as shared responsibility for confidentiality, how the results will be used, etc.	ECEO / CESDG	September 2008	
4. Ensure 'consultees' receive feedback consistently and promptly	a) Develop / implement process to ensure systematic completion of consultation 'loop'	ECEO / POPC	September 2008	
5. Ensure outcomes of consultation / engagement activities are captured and used, so that they result in service improvement	a) Develop and implement a consistent mechanism for reporting consultation findings to managers b) Develop means of sharing findings widely with staff and key stakeholders (e.g. summaries on intranet & internet), linked to corporate consultation database where relevant	ECEO / POPC / CESDG	September 2008 March 2009	1. Reports on consultation activities to go to Performance Boards (PBs); PBs to identify actions and disseminate to managers

6. Support service areas to undertake effective engagement, via provision of advice / expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide quality assurance for all client survey work b) Develop protocol to deliver the above, and ensure service areas are made aware of requirement for QA 	POPC	September 2008	
7. Develop staff knowledge and skills in community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Build toolkit of good practice to support implementation of strategy, drawing in existing toolkits, guidance etc (no reinventing of wheels) b) Further development of expertise within Performance and Change Management to support service areas c) Deliver workshops for staff on effective engagement / consultation d) Investigate new approaches e.g. use of IT and audio-visual technology 	<p>ECEO</p> <p>P & C SMT</p> <p>ECEO / POPC / external 'experts'</p>	<p>September 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>During 2008 March 2009</p>	
Implementing the Strategy				
8. Link community engagement into the service performance planning (SPP) cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Develop annual forward-planning via Community Engagement Strategy Development Group b) Use forward plan to identify any gaps, duplication etc c) Prioritise areas for engagement tasks via linkage to service objectives d) Report progress and outcomes to Performance Boards via quarterly pro-formas (linked to corporate consultation database to avoid duplication) 	<p>ECEO</p> <p>CESDG</p> <p>ACSMB</p> <p>CESDG</p>	Annual work plan in place by April 2008, as part of SPP	
9. Contribute to development of Local Involvement Networks (LINks) for North Yorkshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Contribute to effective communication of progress on LINks b) Contribute knowledge of user groups etc c) Develop protocols etc as required (e.g. for requests for information) d) Work positively with LINK to identify engagement opportunities, as the LINK develops 	<p>ECEO</p> <p>ACSMB / CESDG</p>	April 2008 and ongoing	
10. Identify opportunities for improved partnership working to support joined-up community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with key partners e.g. PCT & Districts to identify opportunities for shared working b) Work with partnership boards etc to develop proposals c) Link to corporate community engagement developments 	CESDG / Strategic Commissioning and Partnerships team	<p>April 2008</p> <p>December 2008</p> <p>To be identified</p>	
<i>Actions for 2009/10 to be identified, based on learning from year 1 including review and feedback with stakeholders</i>				

Appendix 1 to the CE Strategy



North Yorkshire County Council

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Contact us in the following ways...

By telephone: Our Customer Service Centre is open:
Monday - Friday 8.00am - 8.00pm and Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm
Call: 01609 536019

By email: acs.communications@northyorks.gov.uk

or you can access all North Yorkshire County Council
information online at: www.northyorks.gov.uk

If you would like this information in another language or
format such as Braille, large print or audio, please ask us.



اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھیے۔

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

Aby otrzymać te informacje w innym języku lub formacie, np. w alfabecie brajla,
w wersji dużym drukiem lub audió, prosimy się z nami skontaktować.

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