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# SCOTTISH BORDERS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

**Report by Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council**

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**CPP Strategic Board**

**11 September 2014**

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## **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This report proposes the Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement Framework and supporting documents for formal adoption by Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership.**
- 1.2 The 2013 Audit of Community Planning in the Scottish Borders identified five distinct areas for improvement. These were:
- Strategic direction and leadership
  - Governance and accountability
  - Performance management
  - Use of resources
  - Community engagement
- Within the community engagement area the need to effectively co-ordinate community consultation was identified as a key area for development.
- 1.3 A Community Engagement Framework, and supporting documents, have been developed to support the Community Planning Partnership in a consistent approach to both general engagement and consultation activity.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the CPP Strategic Board Team agrees the Community Engagement Framework and associated documents for formal adoption.**

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The 2013 Audit of Community Planning in the Scottish Borders identified five distinct areas for improvement including community engagement, where the need to effectively co-ordinate community consultation was identified as a key area for development.
- 3.2 The Executive Sponsors assigned to the Working Group have overseen the development of a Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement Framework, and supporting documents, to guide a consistent approach to engaging communities.
- 3.3 The Executive Sponsors assigned were:
- Morag Walker (Third Sector)
  - John Mallin (Fire & Rescue Service)
  - Andy Clark (Police Scotland)
  - Julia Mulloy (SBHA)
- 3.4 At its meeting on 18 June 2014 the Joint Delivery Team approved the Community Engagement Framework and associated documents for consultation with representative bodies prior to presentation to the Strategic Board for formal adoption.

### **4 DEVELOPMENT OF A JOINT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 In order to develop a partnership approach to community engagement activity the need to establish a clear set of principles to which all partners could agree was identified.
- 4.2 The principles were developed from existing Partner community engagement policies/strategies. Common elements and good practice were drawn out whilst taking cognisance of specific requirements, such as statutory duty, that one or more Partners may have.
- 4.3 Community engagement covers a number of levels of interaction; for the purpose of this work these have been defined as:
- Involvement
  - Participation
  - Consultation
  - Information
- 4.4 To capture the areas specifically identified for improvement by the Audit Commission, and support Partners in the range of engagement work undertaken, the Engagement Framework has been developed to include a section specifically on consultation.

### **5 THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The proposed Framework has been developed as three documents in order to support a wide variety of community engagement activity whilst enabling effective and meaningful engagement, to this end the framework is presented as:
- Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement Framework
  - Preparing to Undertake Community Engagement
  - A Guide to Consultation
- The three can be used independently or together to support all levels of engagement activity.

- 5.2 The documents include:
- Key Principles for Engagement
  - Plans for both general engagement and consultation activity
  - Tools that are available to aid engagement activity
  - A consultation flowchart
  - A selection of community engagement methods
  - Guidance on assessing the possible impact on equalities groups
  - Contacts that support engagement with defined equalities groups
- 5.3 It is recognised that the requirement to carryout Equality Impact Assessments when developing/reviewing policy and/or services, under the Equality Act 2010, lies with the Public Sector rather than all Community Planning Partners. It is, however, good practice for all organisations to consider the needs of specific communities when planning engagement activity. This is reflected in the Framework documents.
- 5.4 The Framework makes specific reference to the Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement (VOiCE) tool. This has been developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre and is designed to assist individuals and organisations to plan and deliver effective community engagement.

The VOiCE system is web based, accessible to all Partners and is free to use.

## **6 IMPLEMENTATION**

- 6.1 There are three main tasks associated with the implementation of the Community Engagement Framework:
1. Develop a shared mechanism for sharing community engagement activity.
  2. Establish a community engagement practitioners group.
  3. Design and develop community engagement training to be delivered in partnership.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Financial**

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report, but it would be expected that savings will be made through joined up working and effective collaboration.

### **7.2 Risk and Mitigations**

- (a) The lack of progress to develop a joined up community planning approach to community engagement in the Scottish Borders would be identified by the Accounts Commission in their follow up review.

### **7.3 Equalities**

- (a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Framework and no negative impacts have been identified. The Framework promotes the inclusion of all members of the community in community engagement activity.

### **7.4 Acting Sustainably**

- (a) The Framework would serve to support local action, participation and involvement in decision making processes.

7.5 **Carbon Management**

- (a) No effects on carbon emissions arising from this report have been identified.

7.6 **Rural Proofing**

- (a) The rurality of the Scottish Borders, and thus someone's opportunity to participate, should be addressed in the planning stage of all community engagement activity.

**Approved by**

**Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council**

**Signature**

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