
OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND ENGAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken by the member with the portfolio for Communities and Engagement:

Older Person Talking Together Event

2. An Older Person Talking Together event was held on the 22nd of April 2008. The event was the platform for awareness raising and discussion on concessionary fares and the launch of the older person's strategy 'All our Futures'. Over 144 older people attended the event.

Talking Together

3. The third round of Talking Together has just recently concluded. Residents had an opportunity to identify grot spots in their localities as part of the 'Street Scene Spring Clean' campaign. At the time of writing attendance at Talking Together has fallen and work is underway to re-energise the events in time for the next round.

Community Partnership

4. Community Partnerships working with partners have brought in £415,000 of external funding to fund local projects in the priority areas. A 'Looking to the Future' review of Community Partnerships was launched on the 24th of April 2008 with a celebration of achievement event held at the Arts Centre. Over fifty people involved in Community Partnerships attended the event. The review is due to conclude in August 2008. Councillors can contribute to the review at two sessions on the 5th of June 2008 or can complete a response card.

Third Sector Strategy

5. Resources Scrutiny received a progress report on the Third Sector Strategy and acknowledged that good progress has been made in implementing the action plan.

Equalities Training

6. Work has been undertaken to plan an equalities workshop with key Council managers in mid-May. The event will help departments to develop their own priorities for improvement within a corporate framework.

Customer Charter

7. The Council's Customer Charter has been approved. An article raising awareness of the Charter amongst residents was included in the May edition of the Town Crier. The Charter was launched with staff at a Senior Managers Network meeting on the 14th of May. The Charter sets out the standards people can expect from us and aims to further improve how as an organisation we deal with our customers.

Website

8. Front page Connecting with Communities content has been secured for the Council website. Key Connecting with Communities staff have received further training to ensure that website functionality is fully exploited in the future.

Meetings

9. Since the last progress report the Member with the portfolio for Communities and Engagement has attended the meetings outlined below as well as visiting a number of customer facing services in the Town Hall including the Contact Centre, Customer Services, Dolphin Centre Reception and Public Protection.
 - 28th March Attended and was a speaker at re-launch of CVS as Evolution
 - 31st March Gave a presentation on the Index of Multiple Deprivation to the West End Partnership at Hummersknott School
 - 1st April Helped Melting Pot Arts promote their Easter programme
 - 1st April Attended a meeting of the Community Partnerships Steering Group
 - 2nd April Attended Melting Pot Arts Easter Sharing event at Bondgate Methodist Church
 - 9th April Attended a showcase conducted as part of the Local Area Agreement
 - 15th April Attended a meeting of Cockerton East Community Partnership
 - 21st April Attended a meeting of the Town Centre Forum
 - 22nd April Spent an afternoon in the Contact Centre talking to staff and looking at how the operation works
 - 22nd April Attended the Older People's Talking Together at the Dolphin Centre
 - 23rd April Facilitated the Talk Time session at Talking Together in Heighington
 - 24th April Visited Customer Services talking to staff and residents
 - 24th April Introduced and presented awards at the Community Partnerships Celebration Evening at the Arts Centre. The event launched the ' Looking to the Future' review of Community Partnerships
 - 25th April Visited QE 6th Form College to talk to students about Cabinet meetings
 - 6th May Visited the Dolphin reception to talk to staff and look at customer service
 - 7th May Visited First Stop to meet new Chief Officer
 - 7th May Attended a meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership Board
 - 7th May Attended Talking Together at the Coleridge Centre
 - 9th May Visited Public Protection to talk to staff and discuss customer service

Member with Portfolio for Communities and Engagement Portfolio