

# North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 14 October 2013

## ITEM 5

Title: Community  
Engagement

Portfolio(s): Community Engagement

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Carole Burdis

Report from: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wards affected: All

### PART 1

#### 1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to its study into Community Engagement.

In accordance with Section 122 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Cabinet are required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within two months. In providing this response Cabinet are asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendations and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

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#### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that:

- 1) Cabinet consider and formulate a response within 2 months to the recommendations presented as a result of the overview and scrutiny study into Community Engagement; and
- 2) As part of this response, Cabinet accept the 11 recommendations (see part 1.5.5) submitted by overview and scrutiny in relation to Community Engagement.

#### 1.3 Forward plan:

The report was included in the forward plan for the period 25 September – 31 December 2013 under the matters arising from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub committees heading.

#### 1.4 Council plan and policy framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2014-18 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People will:

A – Be listened to by services that respond better and faster to their needs.

B – Be supported to achieve their potential, especially our children and young people.

## 1.5 Information:

### Background information

- 1.5.1 The Community Engagement sub-group was established by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2013. The remit of the group was to contribute to the development of a new community engagement strategy that would replace area forums with a more ward-based approach to engagement.
- 1.5.2 As part of the review the sub-group consulted with a wide range of council officers and looked widely at examples of engagement strategies from other local authorities.
- 1.5.3 Throughout the review a key principle emerged that Ward Councillors need to take a clear lead in ward level engagement and that officers should be there to support them in this community leadership role. The need to always provide residents with feedback following any consultation or engagement was strongly emphasised, as the group felt this was key to keeping people engaged and positive about the impact they can have.
- 1.5.4 The sub-group identified a total of 11 recommendations throughout the review which are aimed at helping to develop and establish successful ward based engagement and provide support to Ward Councillors.
- 1.5.5 The recommendations are as follows:

**Recommendation 1:** Officers work with Ward Councillors to ensure there is a clear feedback mechanism in place for all forms of ward level engagement.

**Recommendation 2:** Officers in North Tyneside Homes review Area Housing Forums where positive outcomes are not being met and work with Ward Councillors and tenants to identify a replacement that contributes to the ward engagement model, focusing on wards and issues local to residents.

**Recommendation 3:** As part of the estate based working review, estate walkabouts are refreshed or replaced. This will produce a greater involvement from Ward Councillors and a focus on improving neighbourhood standards for all residents.

**Recommendation 4:** Officers ensure that appropriate mechanisms and support be put in place to ensure that Ward Councillors are able to build closer links with young people through attendance at school council meetings.

**Recommendation 5:** The Participation and Engagement Team liaise with the Policy, Performance and Research Team to ensure that information is included in Members Briefings in relation to youth engagement and participation.

**Recommendation 6:** All Ward Councillors, in conjunction with local residents and officers, set the agendas for ward level meetings within their area.

**Recommendation 7:** As a minimum guideline, each ward holds a meeting on a quarterly basis and arranges additional events as required to meet demand.

**Recommendation 8:** Where agreeable amongst Ward Councillors, the ward level meetings operate on a 'revolving chair' basis to allow all Ward Councillors to fulfil their role as a community leader and develop the necessary skills required.

**Recommendation 9:** Action plans be developed for each ward forum which highlight 3 priorities for that area and allow the activities of each forum to be coordinated appropriately.

**Recommendation 10:** The task and finish group established to develop the website give priority to the inclusion of tools that will allow greater interaction and engagement with residents.

**Recommendation 11:** That the work currently being undertaken in relation to Ward Councillor communications recognise the new role for Ward Councillors in delivering ward level meetings and prioritise ways to improve access to clear, concise and up-to-date information.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

### Option 1

Cabinet may accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

### Option 2

Cabinet may not accept the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

### Option 3

Cabinet may accept part of the recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2 above and reject the rest.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This option will meet the statutory duty of Cabinet to respond to overview and scrutiny recommendations within 2 months of receiving them.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree that the implementation of the recommendations put forward will have a positive contribution to the new approach that is being developed to Community Engagement.

Cabinet is asked to provide reasons for any recommendations which are not approved.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Overview and Scrutiny Report: Community Engagement

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Emma Fagan, Scrutiny Advisor 643 5315  
Felicity Shoesmith, Manager, Partnerships and Involvement Team, 643 7071

## **1.10 Background information:**

- 1) Overview and Scrutiny Report: Community Engagement

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

It is anticipated that cost of delivering the new ways of engaging with residents will be managed within existing budgets.

### **2.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications at this stage.

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

Officers from Community Engagement, North Tyneside Homes, Participation and Engagement (Children Young People and Learning), Marketing and Communications and Policy, Performance and Research were consulted as part of the review.

Due to the timescales for the review it was not possible for the group to consult with any residents. The group do however acknowledge that at the first ward level meetings, residents will have the opportunity to discuss and shape the ward level approach to engagement with Ward Councillors.

### **2.4 Human rights**

There are no direct issues relating to human rights arising from this report.

### **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

There are no direct issues relating to equalities and diversity arising from this report.

### **2.6 Risk management**

There are no direct issues relating to risk arising from this report.

### **2.7 Crime and disorder**

There are no direct issues relating to crime and disorder arising from this report.

## **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

There are no direct issues relating to environment and sustainability arising from this report.

### **PART 3**

The following officers and Members have been sent a copy of the report for their information:

- Mayor/Cabinet Member
- Chief Executive
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager, Policy, Partnerships, Performance and Communications