

Working closer
with communities

Community Engagement Framework



North Tyneside Council



Working Closer With Our Communities



I'd like to begin by thanking you for taking the time to pick up this booklet. I hope you have a few moments to read through these pages to find out exactly how we as a council can work with you as a resident to make North Tyneside an even better place to live.

First of all you may wonder what we mean by a 'Community Engagement Framework'.

Here in North Tyneside Council we use the word engagement to describe how we work in partnership with our communities. We engage with each other by talking with people about what they want and need, or like and dislike about public services. But it's not just about talking. It's about listening and acting on people's suggestions and comments.

As a council we want our engagement activities to help you as residents to shape your communities and in turn help your communities shape our wider borough.

We have a vision that by 2030, people in every neighbourhood in North Tyneside will be actively involved in shaping their community and the services they need. By achieving this, everyone will see the results of their involvement through the quality of those services and the health and well-being of those communities.

These communities we talk about are your communities. As a council we are working hard to identify appropriate ways to talk to people in all our communities. In an ideal world we would be able to talk to everyone living in North Tyneside and find out what your needs are and how we can improve the quality of life for everyone.

Unfortunately we don't have the time or resources to speak with everyone. This is why we need to engage with representatives from each community and different groups within our borough.

We aim to engage with people in a creative way. After all, one way of communicating with a certain group won't always work with another. In addition to traditional methods of consultation, we work with communities in situations and places familiar to them. We have promised to make sure our engagement methods are accessible to everyone. We also regularly publicise details of our engagement activities to ensure equal and fair access for everyone. You may have seen adverts in the local press and in 'Up Close', our residents' magazine.

As your Elected Mayor, I wouldn't be able to do my job without listening and talking to the people of North Tyneside. I hope by reading this booklet you will start to think about what we can do for you and your community, and if you could also help us to make that happen we would start to make real progress across all of the borough.

The future of your local community is in all of our hands. Let's make sure it's a bright and positive one.

Thanks
John Harrison
Elected Mayor

How will we approach the idea of engagement?

We believe that engaging with people is important and we know that involving residents in the decisions that affect them delivers better results.

The Elected Mayor and Councillors have an important role to play in engagement, particularly at ward and neighbourhood level. We will capture the views of communities in an open and honest way. We will communicate how this has informed our planning, decisions and actions in regular feedback. We will use various methods to ensure everyone is updated with our progress.



Our overall approach to engagement is in five parts:

- ▶ **Engagement is a key principle in decision taking** – our communities will inform key decisions.
- ▶ **Nurturing community assets** – we will actively explore opportunities to transfer assets to community-based organisations as part of our commitment to involving local people in the shaping of services.
- ▶ **Embedding integration and cohesion** – our community cohesion plans will be based on four key principles: shared futures, rights and responsibilities, mutual respect and civility, and visible social justice.
- ▶ **Commitment to neighbourhood working** – we will work with every neighbourhood in the borough and secure a neighbourhood agreement with each one by 2010. A Neighbourhood Agreement has two parts:
 1. Neighbourhood Standard
The minimum standard that local residents can expect to receive from the council and its partners in the delivery of a number of services.
 2. Neighbourhood Charter
The standards of service delivery that are tailored to suit the priority issues in a neighbourhood, detailing who is responsible for each element ie the council, its partners or the community.
- ▶ **A structured programme of engagement** on all key issues, led by the Elected Mayor.

How will we know we're doing a good job?

We will measure and evaluate each form of engagement activity as part of our continuous improvement plan. The annual residents survey will be a direct measure of residents' perception of services and customer satisfaction.

The introduction of a new national performance framework will measure how engagement has influenced decision making. This will show how well we are closing the gap, between the most deprived and better off areas of the borough, with meaningful community engagement.

▶ Engagement in Action

▶ Have Your Say

'Have Your Say' is a group of young people aged 14-20 who have experienced care in North Tyneside. The group enables these young people to have their voices heard at all levels, from service delivery for individual young people, to a strategic level through the North Tyneside Corporate Parenting Committee. In this way they influence future policy and practice.



▶ The Modernisation of Adult Social Care

The Adult Social Care service held a series of events, involving over 650 people to inform its modernisation programme. Sessions were held at a variety of locations across the borough. Over 180 community groups were also invited to attend 3 events organised by the North Tyneside Community and Health Care Forum.

▶ Homes for the Future

The Homes for the Future initiative involves the transformation of 32 sheltered housing schemes to ensure the borough can provide the high quality independent living that is needed. Tenant focus groups have played a key role in the development of the proposals and will continue to be involved at every stage of the initiative.

▶ Youth Council and Area Youth Forums

The Youth Council has 50 members – 10 each representing an area of the borough and another 10 representatives for special projects, such as young people with disabilities. The Youth Council ensures the opinions in North Tyneside are heard by local decision makers.

Area Youth Forums are open to any young person aged between 13-19 years living in the borough. The forums operate to give young people an opportunity to have their say on issues which affect them. They give young people a chance to meet others from their area and enjoy a range of fun activities as well helping to make a difference.



▶ Area Futures Events

Area Futures Events are held in each of the borough's four areas throughout the year. These give local people the opportunity to highlight priorities for their area, influence local services and identify potential actions for inclusion in Area Plans.

These events have discussed a whole host of subjects including: creating positive futures for children and young people, improving well-being, strengthening communities and developing frontline joint service centres.

▶ Residents' Panel

We have an established Residents' Panel, which is made up of 1200 people who live in the borough. Our work with the Panel ensures they are listened to and have an opportunity to express their views and influence decision taking.

One of their events, led by the Elected Mayor, focused on anti-social behaviour. Interactive technology was used to 'ask the audience' for views on issues. The results of this exercise have been included in the development of the council's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.



▶ Service User Staff Selection Training & Development

The Service User Staff Selection Training & Development (SUSSTD) Team is part of North Tyneside's learning disability services. The team is made up of service users who have attended accredited training to enable them to actively take part in the recruitment and selection of staff for positions within the council. The team also provides staff training and actively supports Northumbria University in their Social Work programme.

▶ North Tyneside Older People's Forum

The North Tyneside Older People's Forum provides an effective voice for all older people in North Tyneside. This includes all people who are over 50 and retired, and involves them on issues which affect their quality of life, health and well-being.

The Forum gives people the opportunity to speak up for themselves and it is represented on various statutory groups relating to issues affecting the health and well-being of older people.



It's your Council

Get involved in the decisions that affect you

Your views really do matter and they do influence decisions that affect everything from how we provide services to the future of North Tyneside. The Council is working with partners to provide a range of opportunities for local people to get involved in and influence decisions about the borough.

Whether you are interested in a particular issue or service, particular area of the borough or wish to get more involved generally, there is an opportunity for you. You can really make a difference to the decisions that are made.

Vote

Using your vote is the strongest way for you to have your say. Please make sure you're on the electoral register.

Local councillors

The Elected Mayor and councillors have an important part to play in community engagement. You can find information on how to contact councillors by visiting our **website www.northtyneside.gov.uk**

Join the Residents' Panel if invited

Residents of North Tyneside are randomly selected and invited to become panel members. The Residents' Panel helps us to gather the views and opinions of our residents about their community, needs and experiences of council services. Members of the panel help us to learn and understand what residents want.

Take part in engagement activities across the borough

The Council and its partners regularly hold events and workshops so you can have your say. Please stay up to date by reading Up Close, our residents' magazine and the council's website.

Useful contacts

Our A-Z guide to council services provides information on the wide range of services offered by the council and its partners. Some key phone numbers are listed below

North Tyneside Council

Customer services	0845 2000 101
Envirolink	0845 2000 103
Council tax and benefits	0845 2000 104
Housing repairs	0845 2000 102
North Tyneside Homes	0191 219 2318
Youth services	0191 200 5384

North Tyneside Council wants to make it easier for you to get hold of the information you may need about the services it provides. We are able to provide our documents in alternative formats including audio tape, large print and community languages. Please call 0191 643 7072.

North Tyneside Council
Quadrant, The Silverlink North,
Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside
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