

casestudy : multi-disciplinary teams

04

resources and links :

Community Engagement Action Plan
template: contact Regenerate Pennine
Lancashire – 01254 304550

Terms of Reference: contact Regenerate
Pennine Lancashire – 01254 304550

www.regeneratepl.co.uk

“Action Planning allowed us to take lessons learned into account when planning future community engagement – It allowed us to plan our activity, along with what we hoped to achieve, and helped us to evaluate the final outcome.”

Mohamed Sidat, Blackburn with Darwen Borough

recommendations and lessons :

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

- Planning and documentation of community engagement must be a requirement of funding. Co-ordination and quality assurance responsibilities must be allocated as a role within a central body or within local authorities and supported by widely understood policies and procedures.

SET-UP AND CONSENSUS BUILDING:

- Take time, early in the process to build consensus at the top of the organisation/ local authority about how co-ordination and quality assurance of community engagement will be managed. This might mean moving more slowly, but it will pay off with senior support when it counts. Continuous Process Improvement can be used as a way of identifying ways to work across teams and organisations.
- Someone has to lead – facilitation is not always enough - with so many departments there's a danger nothing will happen. Clarity of purpose, objectives, actions and deadlines are needed.
- Be flexible. Focus resources on organisations that want to pursue a policy of joint working and co-ordination, but do not discount organisations which wish to engage in a different format. Change in working practices can take a lot of time.
- The resulting multi-disciplinary meetings must aim to facilitate open honest dialogue with everyone sharing expertise. Consider involving residents in meetings.

TIMING:

Creative community engagement support needs to be in place at the start of a regeneration/HMR programme to ensure that:

- a policy and procedural framework are in place
- funding bids including high quality engagement are being developed
- community engagement pitfalls/mistakes are being avoided.

Whilst a multi-disciplinary approach is being set up, the policy and procedural framework must ensure that funding is being allocated to projects with high quality creative engagement.

Community engagement planning must start early, at the same time as the planning for the projects that the engagement relates to. In this way adequate funding can be bid for/put in place.

DELIVERY AND EVALUATION:

- Choose some interventions where Creative Community Engagement can be seen to influence something tangible in the community
- Ensure artists really understand the needs of the local authority – the need for visible improvement in the community
- Ensure that monitoring of any community engagement is undertaken against an agreed plan
- Ensure that reasons for collecting monitoring information are clear. Who is using the information? Ensure that analysis of collected information is undertaken and shared with participants and management.

summary :

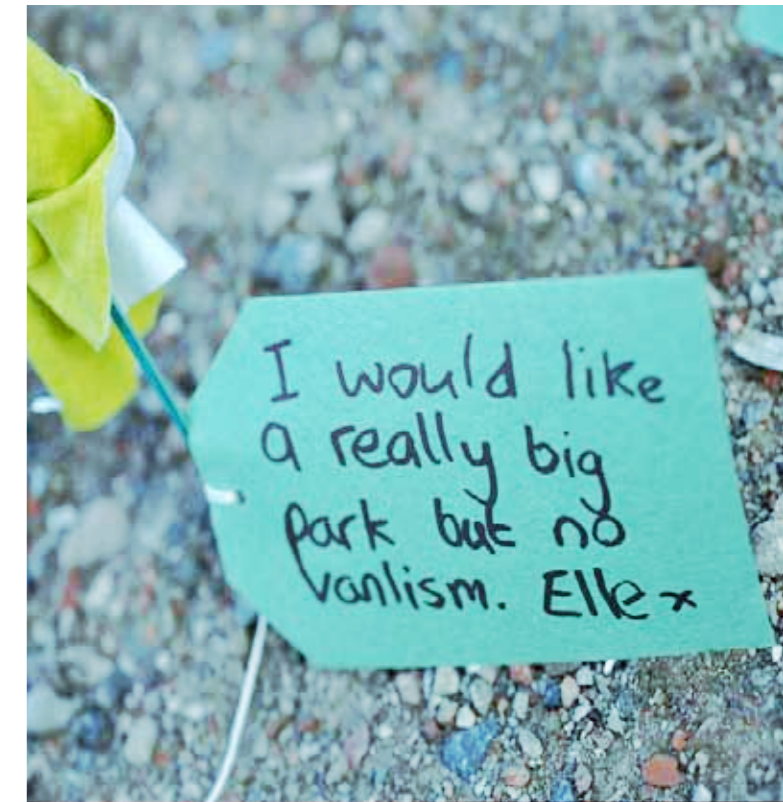
The aim was to increase the amount and quality of creative community engagement by:

- co-ordinating all community engagement on current and future projects across teams within a given local authority.
- sharing creative community engagement knowledge and expertise

The Creative Community Engagement Manager invited officers with a shared interest in community engagement to a multi-disciplinary meeting where the key activities focused around:

- sharing timetables of community engagement to identify the number of clashes and the number of occasions one community could be ‘engaged’ by the local authority and its partners
- pooling resources and expertise - budgets, knowledge of partners, inspiration and ideas
- improving communication between departments
- planning joint community engagement across departments
- forward planning engagement activities
- sharing HMR and non-HMR project planning

The more successful multi-disciplinary meetings really brought together people with different expertise - saving time and resources, co-ordinating activity within the local authority and on the ground. Initially, multi-disciplinary meetings did not succeed in some local authorities. Reasons ranged from local authorities already having successful formats internally or having insufficient resources to enable staff to attend the meetings.



Three key Lessons Learnt were, ensuring:

- creative community engagement support starts early in the life of the regeneration programme, so that strategic frameworks and operational support can be progressed immediately
- the policy and procedural framework are in place to support the working of multi-disciplinary teams
- consensus at the top of the organisation/ local authority is in place regarding how co-ordination and quality assurance of community engagement will be managed

aim and value :

The aim was to increase the amount and quality of creative community engagement by:

- co-ordinating all community engagement on current and future projects across teams within a given local authority.
- sharing creative community engagement knowledge and expertise

Specific objectives were:

- to raise the profile of the value of consultation and engagement and promote Housing Market Renewal (HMR) successes at a local level

- sharing best practice processes and examples
- encouraging and facilitating greater liaison between those involved in HMR engagement processes, including officers, partners and residents



“I whole-heartedly agree with the MDT principle – the drive for efficiency and co-ordination of resources. No one is a single expert on their own. Meetings enable open honest voicing of opinions – as long as everyone engages and shares information. Trust is essential – it makes a team – different expertise and ways of looking at a project – timescales, after care, maintenance, community champions, resources etc...”
Jenny Fern, Burnley Borough Council

activity :

The Creative Community Engagement Manager invited officers with a shared interest in community engagement to a multi-disciplinary meeting:

- policy managers undertaking surveys
- communications officers delivering newsletters
- regeneration and economic development officers
- neighbourhood officers
- community development officers
- arts officers

and led a process of drawing up terms of reference to demonstrate why the meetings were relevant.

Activities at the meetings focussed round:

- sharing timetables of community engagement to identify the number of clashes and the number of occasions one community could be ‘engaged’ by the local authority and its partners
- pooling resources and expertise - budgets, knowledge of partners, inspiration and ideas
- improving communication between departments
- planning joint community engagement across departments
- forward planning engagement activities
- sharing HMR and non-HMR project planning

results and benefits :

Multi-disciplinary meetings were successfully set up in:

- Blackburn with Darwen
- Hyndburn
- Part of Pendle (Bradley)

The more successful multi-disciplinary meetings really brought together people with different expertise - saving time and resources, co-ordinating activity within the local authority and on the ground.

- In Bradley the multi-disciplinary team meetings resulted in the initiation of the Creative Engagement Strategy and the Artist in Residence project.
- In Blackburn with Darwen the meetings led to a meeting with a Registered Social Landlord, (a developer), about incorporating creativity into a major development. Ultimately this did not happen due to a timing mismatch. However it did provide the opening for the meeting.

Initially, multi-disciplinary meetings were not successfully set up in Burnley, Rossendale and the wider Pendle local authorities. Reasons ranged from local authorities already having successful formats internally or having insufficient resources to enable staff to attend the meetings.

The format of the meetings changed over time and evolved into a general HMR community

engagement action planning meeting, taking place twice a year. The aim was to create community engagement action plans against which progress could be monitored. The action plans became an Audit Commission and Regenerate Pennine Lancashire Board requirement.

- Blackburn with Darwen found that using the community engagement action plans helped them plan and even more importantly, monitor progress and learn lessons. The lessons learnt and ideas generated could be used in future planning
- Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale became involved in the action planning meetings and annual Community Engagement Action Plans and a wide range of engagement activities were successfully created for all intervention areas.
- The Creative Community Engagement Manager continued to co-ordinate the meetings and a community engagement consultant supported the documenting of the action plans and collated the general and creative community engagement monitoring data on a quarterly basis.

One lesson learnt was that no overarching analysis of progress on the general community engagement action plans was undertaken. The Creative Community Engagement Manager monitored progress on the creative projects.



“It would have been useful to have access to creative community engagement lessons at the start of the HMR programme. As an example, a consultation event carried out early in the HMR programme, which outlined our clearance and demolition plans, caused some anguish amongst local residents. We had used a public meeting which may have been too formal. With hindsight, if we had got the community involved with creative techniques – it may have inspired a greater acceptance and understanding from residents and avoided any unnecessary anguish for residents.”

Mohamed Sidat, Blackburn with Darwen Council