

CASSI Review of Community Engagement

Service Position Statement

| Service baseline / Initial Challenge | Community Engagement |
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| <p>Description of current service</p> <p>Who provides the service?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Corporate Partnership & Engagement Team - 5 FTEs 2. The Community Development Team in Housing Services - 5 FTEs 3. Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre 4. The Housing Regeneration team Engagement activity forms part of the work of the team on major housing renewal projects. 5. Community Engagement officer within Democratic Services - 1 FTE 6. SBC fund a number of third sector organisations to carry out community engagement work in the borough. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SRCGA - Stockton Int'l Family Centre - U.N.I.T.E - Catalyst - Newtown-Norton Community Resources Centres - Hardwick in Partnership - The Corner House - The Clarences - The 5 Lamps - The Billingham Partnership - Parkfield Neighbourhood Partnership - St Ann's Neighbourhood Partnership |
| <p>History how service was formed and why it exists</p> | <p>The internal teams have been in place since the formation of the unitary authority. A number of the external funding arrangements stem from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund initiatives. Catalyst was formed in 2007.</p> |
| <p>How is the service provided?</p> | <p>The Community Development service within Housing is delivered by 2 teams. Direct activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management of the Voluntary Sector Support Fund (VSSF) providing grant assistance to third sector partners - Provision of the Ragworth neighbourhood centre - Responsibility for 23 community buildings throughout the borough <p>The Community Engagement Officer within Democratic Services works directly to increase community involvement in the democratic process particularly in voting.</p> |

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| | <p>The Corporate Partnership and Engagement service is provided directly by the team and through support to engagement activity across the council. Direct Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secretariat support for Stockton Renaissance , the Local Strategic Partnerships and three of the four geographical area partnerships (Western, Central an Eastern) - Co-ordination role for the 7 thematic partnerships and the Billingham Partnership Board. Secretariat support is provided by the thematic lead areas. - Support to the Community Empowerment Network - Extensive engagement strategy and activity for the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement - Development of Participatory budgeting partnerships - Organisation of financial Inclusion events - Bespoke consultation activities <p>The Housing Regeneration team carry out consultation and engagement activity related to specific housing regeneration projects for a time limited to the development phase.</p> <p>The third sector organisations operate independently. The Council funding of a range of organisations delivers general support to the sector and key specific functions such as the BME network and the CEN through SRCGA.</p> |
| <p>What influences impact on the service(political social economical, technological)?</p> | <p>The service is high on the national political agenda (See below) & as a result of the current economic climate. Strengthening the citizen's voice through a number of new powers and initiatives is an underpinning theme of many government developments.</p> |
| <p>How does the service perform?</p> | <p>The service performs well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge & understanding of the Renaissance structure remains high at 75% - Awareness of Area Partnership boards high at 75% - Awareness of Sustainable Communities Strategy and LAA 66% - Feeling of being able to influence & shape the CEN increased to 75% <p>The inspection and internal audit reviews of the Engagement service are positive.</p> |

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| What does inspection tell us about this service? | The April 2008 Corporate Assessment identified that: "The Council engages well with stakeholders" (para 39) "The Council takes positive steps to involve its communities in the delivery of priorities" (para. 51) "Community engagement in the area of older people is good" (para. 121) |
| What resources are used? | See Appendix 1 |
| What assets are used to deliver the current service? | 23 Community Centres are provided rent free for community use to community associations across the borough. |
| Are there any limitations or barriers affecting the delivery of the service? | The future reduction in funding could affect service delivery. See Appendix 1 |
| If the service is outsourced or provided by a third party, how are service standards monitored? | The performance of the funded third party organisations is monitored on an ongoing basis by the Community Development and Corporate teams. A formal and extensive review of performance has been undertaken recently as part of the VSSF Core Funding review. |
| Could the service be provided through a different mechanism? | The Council could make a decision about the appropriate weighting of funding between internal and external delivery of community engagement activity. The internal engagement activities could be organised differently either combined in one function or devolved to service areas and organised on thematic lines. |
| <u>Customer</u> | |
| Who are the customers what are their needs now? | All residents of the borough. |
| How are service users consulted and how do their views shape delivery? | Extensive consultation has taken place recently with third sector organisations as part of the review of core funding. Consultation with LSP members has taken place and an action plan put in place to deliver improvements. A consultation with individual service users could help inform the |

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| | core funding review. |
| How satisfied are the customers? | The performance of third party organisations is monitored |
| How do you communicate with your users? | Through the LSP, Thematic & Area Partnerships. Via the overarching forums and advisory groups. |
| How are these services promoted / marketed? | Through the web-site, Stockton News, council buildings and via Members, SCRGA, CEN & Catalyst. |
| What do Viewpoint Surveys/ internal audit reports tell us about the service? | The Internal Audit Review of Central Area Partnership (May 09) gave full assurance on the control environment. Internal Audit review of St Ann's Development Board (May 09) gave substantial assurance on the control environment. |
| Are there customers who could use the service but don't? | <p>Yes. By their nature many of the customers of the service are hard to reach. Levels of engagement could be improved.</p> <p>The 2008 Place Survey data indicates that whilst there are high levels of satisfaction with the way the council runs things in Stockton. There are indications that engagement levels could be improved:</p> <p>27.8% of people would like to be more involved in decisions that affect their local area (national average 26%)</p> <p>73% of people agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (national average 77.2%)</p> <p>57.8% of people feel that they belong to their immediate neighbourhood (national average 59.7%)</p> <p>7.9% of people had been involved in decisions affecting their local</p> |

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| | <p>area in the last 12 months (national average 14.1%)</p> <p>28.2% of people felt they could influence decisions in their local area (national average 28.7%)</p> <p>17.1% of people had given unpaid help in the last 12 months (24% national average)</p> |
| Are there customers using the service who shouldn't be? | No |
| Who are the customers of the future and what are their needs? | The customers are constantly changing and will continue to do so during the current economic downturn. The service regularly reviews its work to adapt to changing needs and demands. |
| What is the likely demand for these services in the future? | The demand for services is likely to grow, partly as a result of the economic downturn and partly as a result of the increasing profile achieved by the success of the service and the 3 rd Sector to date. |
| What do complaints/ compliments tell you about these services? | Customer satisfaction levels are regularly monitored at Ragworth Neighbourhood centre and within individual Community Centres. |
| <p><u>Aims & Objectives</u></p> <p>Is the service required by statute?</p> | <p>Section 4 of the LG Act 2007 sets out the requirement to create a Sustainable Community Strategy via an LSP.</p> <p>The Local Authority has a duty to co-operate and for agreeing particular targets in the LAA.</p> <p>The Creating Strong , Safe and Prosperous Communities statutory guidance requires representation from the third sector and the business sector on the LSP.</p> |
| Is there a statutory level of service? | No |

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| <p>Is the service responsive or proactive or a mixture?</p> | <p>A mixture</p> |
| <p>Is the service needed?</p> | <p>Yes. The service fulfils a statutory function and contributes to all themes in the Sustainable Communities Strategy</p> |
| <p>What would happen if the service was not provided either in whole or part? How would the service react to new pressures what capacity would be required to deal with additional / new demands?</p> | <p>There would be a decrease in satisfaction levels with the Borough as a place to live and the possibility of an increase in anti social and criminal behaviour if valuable community involvement activities were withdrawn.</p> |
| <p>Who provides a similar service to this using a different delivery mechanism e.g. external partnerships etc?</p> | <p>All Councils adopt some combination of internal and external (3rd sector) delivery.</p> |
| <p><u>Relevance / Context</u></p> | |
| <p>How does the service fit with the overall aims of the Council?</p> | <p>The service contributes to the Council's Citizen Engagement agenda and is fundamental to creating the conditions for strong and sustainable communities.</p> |
| <p>How does the service contribute to key policy areas?</p> | <p>The Service is critical to helping create the conditions for a vibrant and thriving third sector National Indicator 7</p> <p>The Service supports the "Communities in Control" white paper (July 2008) which concerns delegating power to communities and giving real control and influence to people.</p> <p>The service has strong links to the "Real Help for Communities" agenda (Feb 09) which aims to help volunteers, charities and social enterprises deliver extra real help to those who need it during the economic downturn.</p> |

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| What policies, plans and strategies impact on the service e.g. statutory, policy, function , other services? | Communication, Consultation & Engagement – A strategic Framework Dec 2008 |
| Are there any political judgements / decisions involved in determining the level of service? | Due to the local community nature of many of the community groups and voluntary organisations there are many strong Member interests in this area. |
| <p><u>Financial / Resource considerations</u></p> <p>What are the capital and revenue costs of the service? What is the level of external 3rd party expenditure?</p> | See Appendix 1. |
| What contracts or other arrangements are in place (spend analysis)? | See Appendix 1. |
| What is the Council commitment to the contracts/ other arrangements? | <p>The VSSF and CEN contracts are currently under review. New arrangements will need to be put in place by 1 April 2010.</p> <p>There is no formal contract for the Ragworth Community Centre funding.</p> |
| Do you have any charging policies? | N/A |
| How have Gershon efficiency savings impacted on the service and how were the service planning to meet future Gershon efficiency targets? | The 2010/11 budgets already indicate significant reductions in spend in this area. The review will need to consider how to address this issue. |

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| <p>How will the current financial climate affect the service?</p> | <p>The current climate is likely to lead to a need to increase activity in this area as the third sector organisations are likely to experience increased calls on their services.</p> |
| <p>How can you demonstrate that the service is cost effective?</p> | <p>[comparison figures to be obtained for other local authorities]</p> |
| <p>Do external contracts offer value for money?</p> | <p>A review of the core funded organisations indicates an impressive list of achievements.</p> <p>The use of external organisations to bring about community engagement delivers value for money as the core funding provided by the Council to these organisations is used as match funding for a variety of national and European regimes. The Council funding of the current core funded organisations accounts for 10.5% of their combined turnover.</p> |
| <p><u>Service Drivers</u></p> | |
| <p>What do we need to change and why?</p> | <p>The service needs to change to tackle the issues associated with the reduction in funding available from 2010/11.</p> |
| <p>What are the main drivers of change?</p> | <p>The reduction in funding in the service and the consultation associated with the review have led to an expectation that changes will be announced.</p> |

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Appendix 1

| Cost of Community Engagement Activity | 2009/10 Cost £ |
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| Internal Costs | |
| Corporate Engagement team | £305k |
| Community Development team | £248k |
| Democratic Services Engagement Officer | £43k |
| Housing Regeneration team | Not separate from other work |
| Internal Sub-Total | £596k |
| Payments made to third sector organisations | |
| St Ann's Neighbourhood Partnership | £258k (1) |
| Parkfield Neighbourhood Management | £80k |
| Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre | £114k (2) |
| SRCGA | £36k (3) |
| CEN | £130k (1)(3) |
| Stockton International Family Centre | £55k (3) |
| U.N.I.T.E | £17k (3) |
| Catalyst | £36k (3) |
| Newtown-Norton Community Resource Centre | £51k (2) (3) |
| Hardwick in Partnership | £31k (3) |
| The Corner House | £36k (3) |
| The Clarences | £20k (2) (3) |
| The Five Lamps | £76k (2) (3) |
| The Billingham Partnership | £31k (3) |
| External Sub-Total | £971k(4) |
| Total | £1,567k |

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Notes

1. Funding ends 31 March 2010
2. This funding does not include the payments made for delivery of services for The Communities Fund skills programme, Sure Start, Adult Day services etc.
3. Affected by the reduction in the VSSF core funding for 2010/11. The fund drops by £93k for 2010/11 the allocation of this reduction is subject to review.
4. If one assumes that the grant to SDAI remains unchanged for 2010/11 (subject to a separate review) then of the £971k currently spent on 3rd Sector Community Development activity only £488k of identified funding exists after 31 March 2010. (Note that the Stockton District Advice and Information Centre is covered by a separate EIT review of Advice and Information.