

Working together to improve services in Manchester

Raw Data from Workshops 23 March 11

At the 'Your Manchester' event on 23rd March, three workshops took place based on 'Appreciative Inquiry'. Each workshop divided its participants into four groups. Each group had twelve minutes to discuss the following questions:

What engagement activity have you been involved in that has made a real impact and why?

What do we need to do in the future to ensure effective community engagement?

What skills and resources do we need to improve engagement?

What can you or your organisation do to improve engagement practices?

Participants were asked to have a conversation about each of the questions and record their answers on the paper table cloths provided. Toward the end of the session each participant was given 3 stickers and asked to prioritise the most important issues discussed. Below is a the raw data from the exercise; the * indicates where priority was given:

1. What engagement activity have you been involved in that has made a real impact and why?

- VOP board / VOP networks (***)
- Mentor / mentee programme – need to support (***)
- Writing climate change action plan, collaboratively, pushing it further, shared ownership, challenging the council in a positive and constructive way. A bold statement from community groups acted as a catalyst – that was writing their own city action plan. The role of critical friend; the challenge now is to keep momentum going continue the trust respect and collaboration (***)
- Whalley Range Forum – sharing information about activities, resident involvement ideas and discussions, representing groups and target individuals, direct link to MCC decision makers and reciprocal, voice of the area groups, focal point joint decision making (**)

Your Manchester

- Young people evaluation of housing and homeless provision and contribution to supporting people strategy (**)
- Engagement with businesses (**)
- Develop an information centre to bring everyone from the community together to share ideas/concerns/ issues – sorts out problems and creates a discussion (**)
- Consultation with the third sector on the need for support influenced the specification for the design of a support service for the third sector (*)
- intergenerational projects, diary of when we were; media training and interviewing; helped to bridge gap between younger and older (*)
- Young voices – volunteers group, intergeneration perspective, learning from each other
- Exodus festival (*)
- Nell Lane Estate – leaflet drops, “What are the issues”, issues identified, full questionnaire developed by partners, action plan developed, CCTV environmental improvements, street lighting, fly tipping, increased confidence in reporting problems to agencies including police, MCC, housing providers (*)
- On street clean up festivals – brings students together with residents and has achieved a general change in attitude towards students living in wider communities – a significant mind shift.
- Target hardening of vulnerable properties and working with students – reduced crime, reduced burglary, reduced mugging (theft from person)
- Old Moat Summer time 2009, Withington Summer 2010 brought thousands of local residents together to see the local people showcase skills and activities
- Local Involvement Network – consultation on homeless, mental health – engaged with statutory and third sector agencies
- International women’s week grant funding broadened out across the demographic of the city – introduced award scheme to recognise the work of groups in the city
- Voluntary sector infrastructure is available to engage organisations in the sector to deliver engagement activity jointly across the partnership with the community
- Human Library – come and speak to human book, you probably wouldn’t speak to e.g. a lady in a hijab, blind person, ex drug offender – increase understanding, break down barriers and encourage communication
- Wythenshawe Woodland Scheme – there are 24 woodland schemes in Wythenshawe and now have 8 ‘Friends Of’ groups looking after 8 woods
- In Bloom campaign – 107 groups in Manchester, volunteer hours equated to savings of £1.7 million last year
- Community Guardian scheme – we now have a database of 374 guardians who are keen to improve their environment. The majority of guardians are very active with their community

Your Manchester

- Events at ward level where over 50 residents participate – impact can be measured when clear priorities and needs are relayed / identified so action can be taken and progress monitored.
- LGBT Diversity Day – An event celebrating sexual orientation and gender identity from different communities and cultures at the lesbian and gay foundation and bringing people together
- Sugar and spice – an event targeted at lesbian and bisexual women at Lesbian and Gay Foundation on 5th March. Bringing women together, sharing issues, educational workshops, only event of its kind now in its 5th year
- “A fine day out” – day trip to Rhyl
- Ongoing arms length support
- A leader is identified and accepted to take over after professional involvement
- Personal approach – talking to people, knocking on doors
- Fun community day in Wythenshawe – was very successful because it was owned and advertised by the community centre not MCC. Residents are sometimes wary of official activities
- Exceeding expectations project – school children visit Lesbian and Gay Foundation and go on a heritage trail – talk about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and new horizons
- Launch day – new library academy – family day, access to everyone. Adactus, youth service, ZEST, Valuing Older People, regeneration team, everyone involved. Free services offered, books, football, workshops, unity radio, graffiti workshops, Academy – pupils designed wall ward about the area
- Manchester libraries speed dating event in conjunction with Manchester University – to recruit new volunteers and partnership working
- West Point Residents Association set up –it worked because of skills and commitment of residents
- Project where young people work with local businesses and career advisors – try out the job for the day
- Resident engagement MCC – research re aspiration/ development leading to apprenticeships programme for local residents – impact on individuals and new families ambassadors
- Job city events – key – listen, be understanding, implement and develop. 400 people getting jobs from 2010 event
- Co-ops North West – Co-op fortnight event to introduce co-ops. Co-ops about employment, identifying solutions, i.e. FC Untd at Newton Heath. 1000 attendees for fun day to introduce FC united to residents – fall in youth crime 67% in 24 months in local area
- Adactus – Neighbourhood Fund has improved community engagement, improved security in the area to create sustainable communities
- Surveys of community priorities then actioning those issues e.g. community conversations
- U Decide projects
- Organise annual community festival

Your Manchester

- Bringing new people into community centre who would not have accessed centre by offering free bacon butty
- Women empowerment – Womens Day events
- Helping/ facilitating / creating empowered communities
- Friends of Route – key bus route, residents engaged re transport issues and wider issues e.g. ASB, environmental problems. Information fed through to key agencies and improved outcomes for service users
- U Decide events – very successful – real community participation
- Gorton pre employment project (MARIM) – long term unemployed, identified training needs / job needs, evaluated response, sorting out benefit right and uptake, base for future work enjoyed through arts and crafts activity. 10 week project.
- Event at MMU for deaf youth community – where to go for advice about going to university, 80% of deaf students who could potentially enrol in University in September. The event allowed these young people to feel like they can go to university and receive a degree.
- Evidence of service needs in the future

2. What do we need to do in the future to ensure effective community engagement?

- Different approaches for different communities – e.g. older people, geographical communities, ethnicity, sexual orientation (****)
- Meet people where they are at – go to them(****)
- Continue conversation – gather evidence / case studies, share evidence (***)
- Make sure things happen as a result and feed back to people – evaluate findings and actions (***)
- Monitor and evaluate previous events and what did not go well, what can we do better then make appropriate links – distribute good practice (**)
- Create a level playing field, enforcement for planning, highways, street environment, create a culture of competence, improvement to place, creation of pride (**)
- More of us across all sector and communities working together on engagement (**)
- Find a way to deal with conflicting interests. Be prepared for this, raise awareness, bring people together, find shared experiences / activities (**)
- Make best use of limited resources, be flexible in future engagement approaches (*)
- We can not have effective community engagement without effective communities – build strong communities (*)
- Clean slate – get rid of the plethora of different things and focus on the best way to do the job – ensure we are engaged with each other (*)

Your Manchester

- What action need to be in the community engagement strategy – use the appropriate method of engagement (*)
- Freebies / incentives for people to attend (*)
- Show results to gain credibility (*)
- Actions speak louder than words – continuous improvement
- Follow consultations with action – commitment
- Be in it for the long haul
- Acknowledge that sometimes it may go wrong and learn from it
- Understanding barriers which prevent effective engagement
- Defining community engagement and responding accordingly
- What are our common goals
- Greater partnership working
- More communication skills
- Information is lacking for deaf community – not much access to this information in their language
- Show the value of engaging – local case studies
- Enabling the community to take the lead “community agents”
- Stick to or begin with practicalities
- Understand diversity of needs and perspectives
- Manage personalities
- Work together - don't isolate
- All work together for a common purpose – communicate
- Attract everyone not just the usual suspects
- Be ready to hand over – the hardest thing – how do we do it?
- Picking your battles – can we deliver on consultation
- Demonstrate to community that their feedback has been acted on so they continue to engage
- Publicise “you said, we did”
- Supporting capacity of voluntary and community sector to get more involved and then pass on information to service users
- Keep existing knowledge, skills and experience
- Managing expectations
- Everyone should have a Wythenshawe forum – integrated services with a one stop shop
- Working with frontline workers on communicating information effectively
- Community outreach to develop areas holistically
- Celebrate community markets and use to promote communities
- Fix the broken but if it's not broken don't assume anything needs fixing
- Multi-agency approach to delivering services e.g. crime and disorder, environmental support, compliance and engagement, health improvements, early interventions, youth activities
- Community reps to attend forums with workers with a view to spreading the word
- Make sure that the council and partners of services shoes fit the community foot snugly, comfortably, is the right style, the right colour, the right material and the right shoe for the right situation

Your Manchester

- Re designing estates – improve engagement opportunities and employability. Improve our tools, aspirations, self esteem, and education (Sure Start)
- Priorities options into things that can happen in the short term, medium, long term, and not likely to happen
- Honesty, realistic, deliverable, market success, show what has made a difference and build on that
- Say we can't do that but maybe we can achieve this – what do you think?
- Encourage groups to seek external funding and not to rely on MCC as much
- Partnership resources, skilled staff, gazebos, badge makers
- Listen more effectively and act on short term wins to gain trust and credibility
- Look at best practice and do what works
- Piggy backing existing events
- Read the toolkit
- Improve access
- Be honest
- Listen – get information from people
- Less events better quality
- Tacking worklessness – work locally increase opportunities – encourage don't ask too much
- Tell people what options exist
- More activities in all wards
- Voting to find out what people want – e.g. U Decide
- Environment – consider enforcement
- Need to align working districts
- Making sure as many people as possible know about engagement opportunities to avoid any gaps
- Pulling partners together to provide a co-ordinated approach
- Challenge and work collaboratively with religious and cultural groups that don't recognise sexual orientation in order to engage with everyone
- Get on to things quickly – treat areas equally
- Tell people about the website and toolkit
- Follow up consultations with action
- Learn the lessons from the past
- Communicate what we can and can not do
- Evaluate what worked well and what didn't work well
- Redesign partnership consultation methods
- Transparency
- Publicise previous successful outcomes of engagement
- Repeat what works well
- Reach groups not currently being engaged with
- Evidence of services needs in the future
- Continue good relationships in the future and share effective communication

3. What skills and resources do we need to improve engagement?

- Outreach – people on the ground (****)
- Feedback impact to communities (***)
- Community groups need training to manage services rather than have them managed by MCC – same resources used, use of community expertise (***)
- Give engagement to the community to run - Commission it out
- Meeting in non traditional places (**)
- Eye catching and fun engagement for adults and everyone
- More innovative ways of engaging with diverse communities (**)
- Listen(**)
- Innovative (**)
- Mapping existing groups (*)
- Learn from past mistakes (*)
- Models of sustainability, sustainable exit strategies. Use structures that are not so affected by withdrawal of funding. Use business communities more effectively (*)
- Ability to build trust (*)
- Be creative (*)
- Use the residual skills in our community (*)
- Empower communities e.g. let them manage the CASH grants (*)
- Funding (*)
- Training best practice for workers and volunteers (*)
- ways to communicate with those who can use IT website etc
- Stop recreating ways of working that we already know
- Prove we act on community priorities
- Referendum on key issues in schools for young people. Giving young people a voice, a role and impact on the world around them
- Ensure join up of communities across Manchester (colleagues did not know about the strategy and toolkit) making internal process clearer. Speak in language that people can understand
- Consistency in support for work with young people. Ensure engagement messages about why things change or disappear. Ensure engagement has been of benefit for those who are being asked to respond.
- Do we need to parachute people into communities. Ensure skills are in the community and share the experience
- Manage expectations
- Kick the Tories out and get a proper government
- Don't make promises that can not be kept
- Accessibility for various groups
- Keep agenda local
- Know your community
- Outsource community engagement
- Open attendance for any time with councillors making decisions
- Engagement for the service user not the engager
- Longsight and Moss Side Community Project

Your Manchester

- How to Guides – best practice guides
- Toolkit for engagement
- Understood community purpose
- Royal oak centre, Baguley
- Public sector need enabling skills
- Links with job centres for volunteers
- Health and safety knowledge for events
- Managing expectations
- Facilitation skills
- Experience and realism
- Empower people where their skills can be developed
- Developing the skills of people and residents
- Stability – time to build trust
- Build on what's already in place
- Plain English
- Clarity about what can and can not be influenced
- Range of opportunities to engage
- Put your own house in order
- Networks of active community groups
- Model the engagement that works well in both the LA and CVS
- Listening
- More training
- Volunteers – people power – database of organisations
- Business knowledge – CIC support. Local business expertise, time funding cliental
- Fundraising
- Community expertise
- Honesty and transparency
- Have a unique selling point
- Adequate funding
- Using existing networks/groups
- Conflict resolution
- Community expertise
- Beyond tick box
- Partnership working is a skill
- Training
- communication
- Skills and resources
- Clear goals, action planning
- Time
- Time and money
- Appropriate partnerships
- Learning to listen – setting expectations as to what can be achieved – manage expectations from the outset
- Patience, time, flexibility – one size does not fit all
- Work in partnership
- Peer 2 peer support and mentoring

Your Manchester

- Communication tools – explain the benefits
- Equality needs inclusion
- Opportunity to learn examples of good practice
- Suitable review of all parts of the city
- Dedicated time to community engagement
- Equality needs inclusion
- Networking
- Share resources
- Think creatively about methods of engagement – an open channel
- Appropriate communication, materials, accessibility, appropriate to each community

4. What can you or your organisation do to improve engagement practices?

- Develop the evidence base in order to know your community (****)
- Simplify and make engagement opportunities more attractive. Start from a different starting point, on the ground, building interest in enthusiasm. Make it more fun, more related and embed in every day life (**)
- Start local – time on the ground not in meeting, fun activities, activities that matter to local community, that make a difference (**)
- Accessible venues / times(**)
- Involvement training – how residents can engage (*)
- Including people – having ownership (*)
- Build trust (*)
- Share best practice and things that have worked (*)
- Reinvigorate the process as to how we engage with the community to feed back into task meetings (GMP) (*)
- People want to engage about stuff they care about and are interested in (*)
- Feeding back following engagement (*)
- Identify people who represent communities
- Ask for help
- Reaching different groups through surgeries, websites a range of methods
- Visit other organisations and learn from others
- Be honest and open
- Sustainable consultations
- Share good stories and experiences
- Doing what you say you will
- If someone is referred see it through
- Adactus – neighbourhood fund, opportunities for communities, panel of residents who decide on funding and how benefit and impacts on areas
- Joined up thinking
- Improve and review
- Ask don't assume
- Supporting residents to set up their own groups

Your Manchester

- Link to Manchester Community Central
- Realism – some things not possible, communicate
- Improve and review
- Research and involve
- Not promising what you cant deliver
- Phone meetings more solutions and attention focused
- Have access costs covered/ refreshments
- Tailored opportunities based on past success
- Ask relevant questions
- Good advocacy raise profile of where information about service can be found
- Be creative but keep it simple
- Be accountable
- Peer review
- Look nationally, if it works use it – don't be Manchester centric
- Engage trusted people to engage with the community e.g. YPSF can engage young people because we have the skills, trust and confidence
- Make it worth while
- Integrity
- Young people peer research – YPSF John Hartshorn
- Personally can offer learning, training and workshops, conferencing on understanding of engagement
- Visit other organisations and learn from others
- Be adaptable
- faces and names
- talk to each other
- Make sure deaf education advocacy fellowship can deliver training to the deaf aware/BSL to the community. They can improve/ get better communication to the deaf people
- Time spent with groups to tease out what skills and knowledge they do actually have and steer them to utilise this
- Embed your community engagement practice in day to day work. Engage with appropriate people, groups at appropriate times
- Good knowledge in MARIM Team, links to various agencies, localities, communities (refugee asylum seekers, new arrivals). Ensure knowledge skills are shared at other levels
- Understand the needs of communities – be able to interact / communicate
- Language skills courses (ESOL)
- Change grants
- Sharing resources
- Bank of skills
- Invest in public speakers to pass the message on
- Better sharing of information on make up of communities
- Resources for volunteers – travel and other expenses, materials, childcare, training
- Personal contact – one face

Your Manchester

- Language line – language barriers
- Structures – staff and communities understand the process
- Access – websites (cost of internet access), being visual, face to face, going to existing groups rather than expecting people to come to you
- Keeping consultation meaningful and delivering results
- Need to get away from thinking about ‘resources’ as funding and think about how we can share resources such as time, buildings, etc to engage
- City council should have the resources, staff, funds and venues to be an enabler for change, support, improvements
- Promote opportunities to build capacity to sustain
- Generic compliance and enforcement for staff especially those who work in neighbourhoods
- Without cooperation and partnership from any community and local groups and organisations an activity can make little headway in altering collective thought and attitudes to place
- CASH grant, Neighbours Day Grants, Change grants
- Realistic expectations on what we offer
- Provide opportunities to utilise skills
- Local history taught in schools will help sense of place
- Skilled staff, resources, money
- Communication with hard to reach groups
- Networking, pooling resources
- Staff who understand diverse communities who understand culture and religion
- Dedicated time to update engagement opportunities
- What can I give for free - time