

Abbey Hey Community Conversation and U Decide Evaluation 2010-11

Introduction

In July 2010, £8,800 was secured from North West Together We Can to:

- deliver 2 community conversations in the Gorton North ward, with a focus on Abbey Hey in order to identify future priorities within the ward
- deliver 1 “U Decide” event and fund a number of community based projects to help improve the local area
- train ward staff in delivering a community conversation which can be used as an ongoing dialogue with residents

A further £2,000 was secured from Gorton People Stronger Together and £1,371 Manchester City Council CASH Grants fund.

Community Conversation

In October a “Community Conversation” training event was held for staff working in Abbey Hey. The training was led by Mike Blaney, Manchester Community Central. The Community Conversation model is based on appreciative inquiry and asks residents 4 key questions:

- What do you like about the area?
- What do we need for the future?
- What skills do I have?
- What can I do?

Following the training 2 Community Conversations were held in Abbey Hey to identify resident priorities for the area. The key themes that emerged from the conversations are outlined below:

| Key Theme | Comments |
|----------------------------|--|
| Environmental improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public notice boards• Dog bins and rubbish bins• Regular planting throughout the year• More cohesive planning approach to the area• Trees in the street• Picnic benches in the park (Vine Street) for older residents and young mums• Trees on the Ladders |
| Sense of community | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More community events• Good links with local shops – not big firms• Community police presence• Residents to take more ownership of the area• Increased interaction with the local community centre• Promotion of what is happening and the good things in the local community (community newsletter)• Better communication with the City Council |
| Community facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clubs / activities for retired people• Basketball/Ball court on Vine Street Park• Support projects for young people- activities for them |

U Decide Event

Following the Community Conversations, a U Decide Event was carried out in Abbey Hey on 9 December 2010. The event was funded by North West Together We Can (£6,000), CASH Grants, (£2,000) and Gorton People Stronger Together (£2,000).

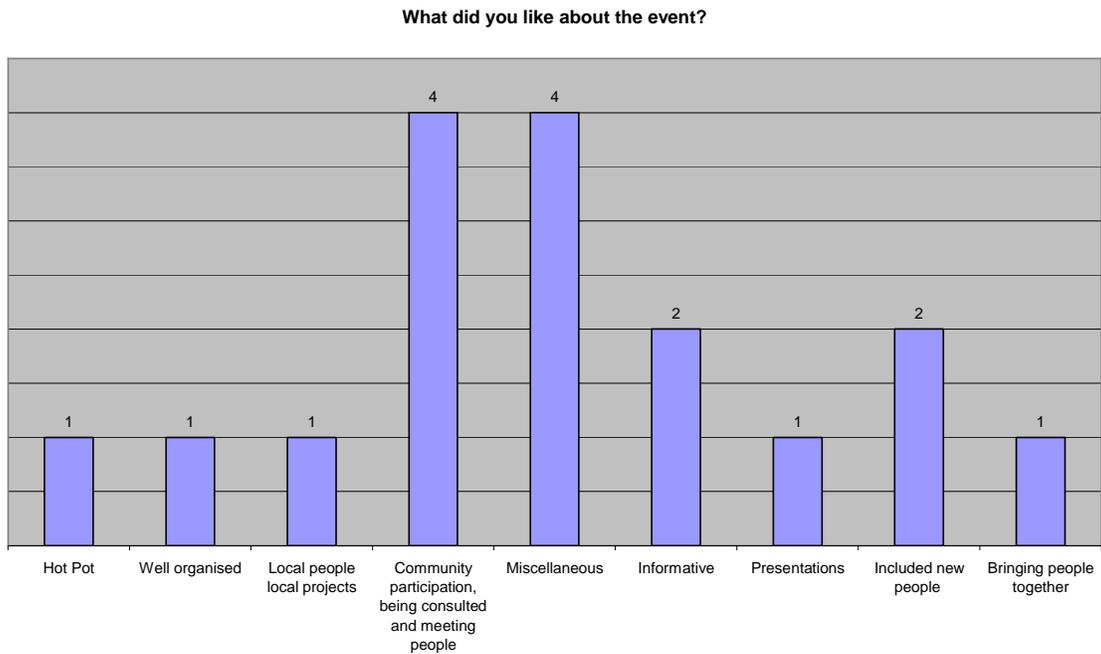
The purpose of the event was to:

- Increase the number of people who feel that they can influence decisions in the local area
- Increase overall satisfaction with local area
- Increase resident engagement and empowerment
- Enable people to identify improvements to the area and support in delivering those improvements
- Identify and engage with different residents and groups and evaluate whether PB can be used to engage a broader spread of people - not just the “usual suspects”.
- Improve community cohesion (NI 1, percentage of people who feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together)
- Increase the number of volunteers within the ward (NI6- participation in regular volunteering)

Through the Community Conversations, residents were encouraged to put forward project proposals to help improve their local area. The maximum amount for each bid was £1,000 for individual bids and £2,500 for joint bids which were submitted by more than one resident or community group working together. 9 project proposals were submitted to the value of £12,200.00. 42 people attended the event and 31 people voted on spending priorities. The following projects were funded:

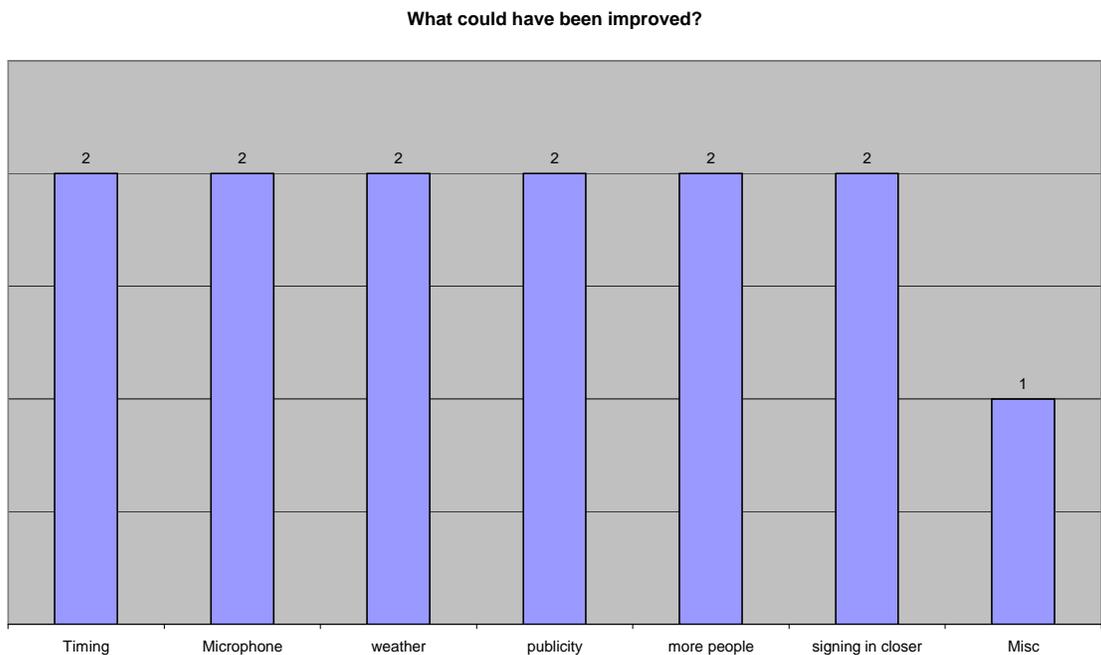
| Project No: | Project Title: | Funding Amount: |
|-------------|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Gordon Street RA/Abbey Sand RA - New benches for Vine Street Park | £2,500.00 |
| 2 | Abbey Hey RA/Jetson Street/Green Fold - New plaque for Lees Street War Memorial | £2,500.00 |
| 3 | Luncheon Club – Hold a weekly luncheon club at Gorton Community Centre | £500.00 |
| 4 | Residents of Abbey Hey Lane/Gibson Avenue/Ackroyd Avenue - Replanting of Abbey Hey Lane barrels and planters | £700.00 |
| 5 | Abbey Hey Allotment Society - Sow, Grow and Eat project for residents | £1,100.00 |
| 6 | Gorton People Stronger Together - Equipment for junior and senior youth club | £1,000.00 |
| 7 | Rainbow Haven/PJ's - Art Project, Café Morning and Trips | £800.00 |
| 8 | Gorton Community Association - 3 blocks of 12 week exercise classes for over 50's | £900.00 |

Participants were asked to complete a feedback form following the event. 19 people completed evaluation forms (45%). Below is a summary of the results:



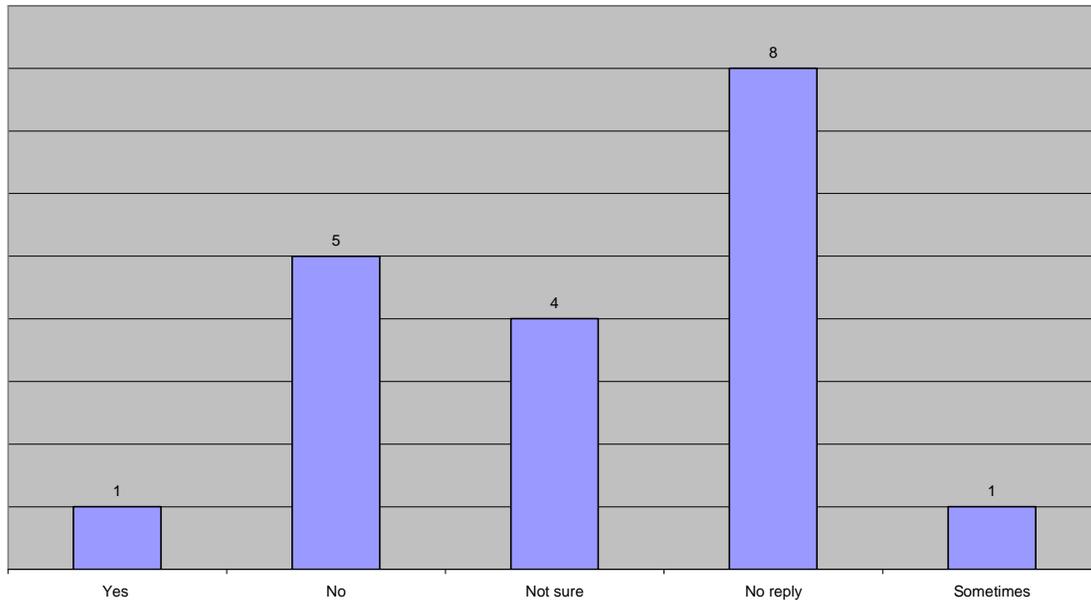
People said that they enjoyed the following:

- bringing people together and making our own decisions
- being consulted and meeting people
- community participation
- it included people who do not usually come to meetings
- bringing the community together



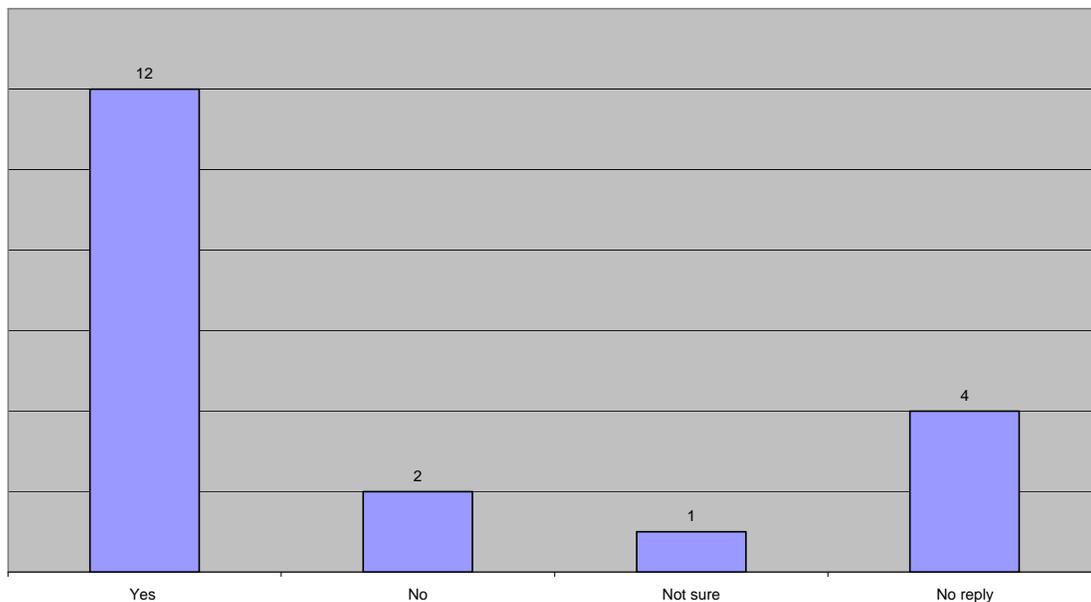
The main areas that attendees felt could have improved the event included: the weather (it was snowing); the microphone/PA system; the timing of event, having the signing in desk closer to the presentation area; additional publicity and more people attending the event.

Prior to the event, did you feel you could influence local decisions?



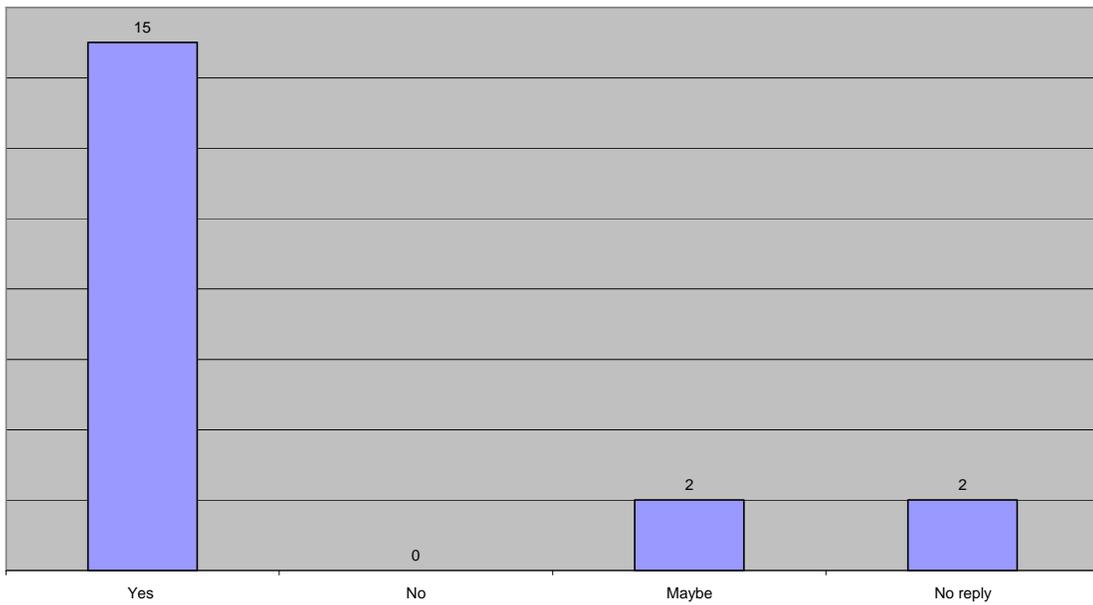
Prior to the event only 1 respondent (5%) thought that they could influence decisions in their local area. This increased to 9% if considering the number of people who responded to the question. 26% disagreed that they could influence decision making in their local area, which increased to 45% if considering the percentage of people who answered the question.

Do you feel you have influenced local decision making by attending this event?



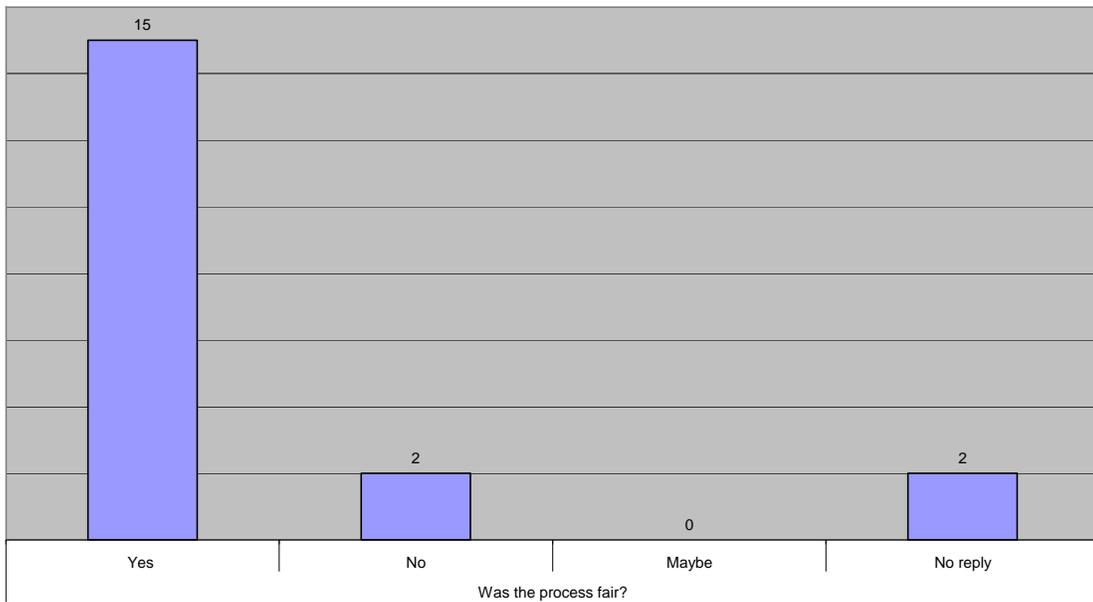
By attending the event, 63% of people felt that they had influenced decisions making in their local area. This increased to 80% if considering the percentage of people who responded.

Will the funded projects improve Abbey Hey?



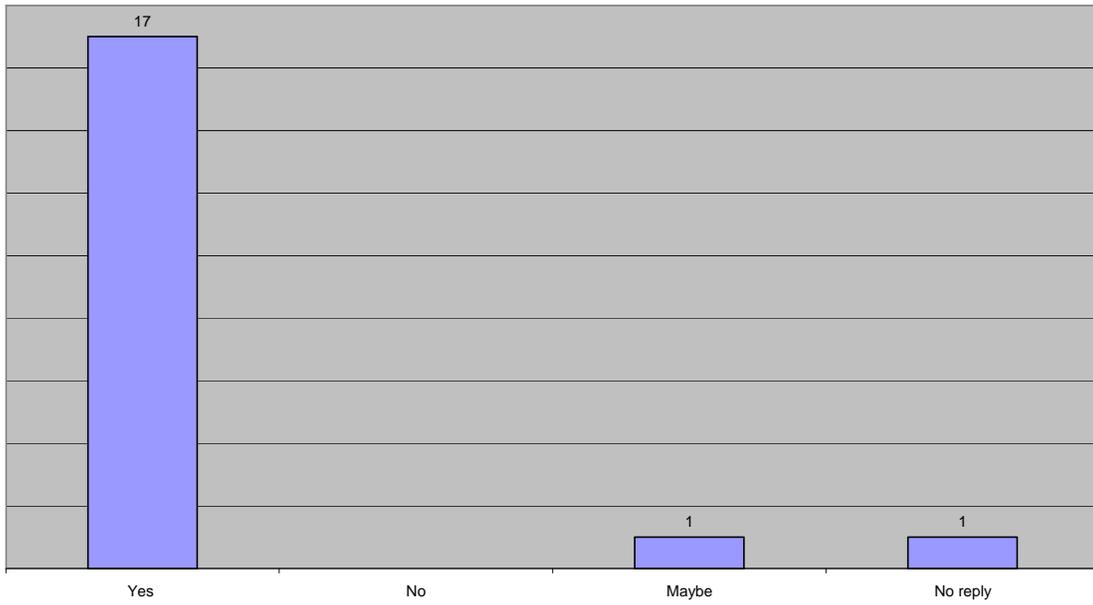
79% of people said that the projects funded would help to improve the local area. This increased to 88% if considering the number of people who responded.

Was the process fair?



Out of the 19 respondents, 79% of people said the process was fair. This increased to 88% when calculating the percentage of people who answered this question. Only 11% disagreed which increased to 12% when calculating the number of people who answered this question.

Would you attend follow up events in the future?



Out of the 19 respondents, 89% of people said they would attend a future event. This increased to 94% when calculating the percentage of people who answered this question.