





Orkney Community Planning Partnership

Working together for a better Orkney

 Orkney Community Planning Partnership

 Consultation and Engagement Strategy

 2010-2011





Introduction

This Strategy considers the way in which the Orkney Community Planning Partnership (the Partnership) will listen and take on board the views of the public to inform decisions. It is intended for use by staff of the Partner organisations who are involved in the planning and interpretation of community engagement. It is complimented by the Partnership's Consultation and Engagement Guidelines.

"The main aim of community engagement is to improve the planning and delivery of services by making them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of communities."

Local Government in Scotland Act (2003)

Following a Best Value review of consultation in 2007/08, a number of improvement recommendations were made in relation to consultation and engagement. In summary, these were:

- Current hybrid structure is retained (with a mix of in-house and contracted consultations)
- Consultation and Engagement Strategy produced and adopted
- Consultation and Engagement Guidelines produced and adopted (link available at page 6)
- Central register of consultations made available to the partnership (link available at page 6)
- Generic training packages produced and adopted (for more information please e-mail named contacts on page 6)

The Partnership recognises that there is no one engagement method which is suitable for everyone, or every topic in Orkney. The type of method to be used will depend upon the needs of the group, the topic being consulted upon and barriers to engagement.

This Strategy covers the period 2010-11 in line with the first Partnership Single Outcome Agreement. This is the first version of the Strategy and it is to be reviewed annually and approved by the Steering Group.



About the Partnership

The mission of the Orkney Community Planning Partnership is to:

“ensure that local organisations work together and with communities to improve the quality of people’s lives, provide better services, and create a shared vision for the future to which we can all subscribe”

(Orkney 2020 – Our Community Plan)

The structure of the Partnership is fluid, in that it changes to meet changing priorities. The Partnership itself does not have legal powers however the duty to facilitate Community Planning is enforced by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The Partnership is an invisible umbrella and the work and work priorities are guided by the Steering Group, comprised of:

- Orkney Islands Council (lead organisation)
- NHS Orkney
- Voluntary Action Orkney
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Northern Constabulary
- Highlands and Islands Fire and Rescue Service

A wide range of other agencies, and organisations from the public, community, third sector and private sector play an active role in the Partnership.

The Partnership is structured around the eight shared strategic priorities, with thematic groups who meet to put actions in place:

- Health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Transport and travel
- Our environment
- Our economy
- Learning
- Culture
- Keeping Orkney Safe

The Community Planning website includes a Family Tree and other information on the purpose of the Partnership, the structure and who is involved. The Orkney Community Planning Partnership Guide has useful introduction to the roles and remits of the groups. Electronic links to these documents can be found the end of this Strategy.



The standards for good practice

The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) has produced ten standards as a good practice tool for engagement between communities and public agencies. Orkney's first Single Outcome Agreement notes that Orkney is committed to following these ten standards (item 3.1.7) and the Best Value Review of Consultation Arrangements advised that the indicators provided by the National Standards be utilised by the Partnership. These indicators are available at Appendix 1.

The National Standards for Community Engagement are:

1. Involvement – to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in any consultation exercise.
2. Support – to identify and overcome any barriers to the public being consulted/engaged.
3. Planning – to ensure that community consultations are properly planned and unnecessary duplication is avoided.
4. Methods – to ensure that the method of consultation is fit for purpose.
5. Working together – to agree and use clear procedures that enable participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently
6. Sharing information – to ensure that any necessary information is communicated between participants.
7. Working with others – to work effectively with others with an interest in engagement.
8. Improvement – to develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all participants
9. Feedback – to feed back the results of engagement to the wider community and agencies affected
10. Monitoring and evaluation – to monitor and evaluate whether community engagement exercises are achieving their purpose and meet with the national standards.



■ Putting the standards in place in Orkney

The Consultation and Engagement Guidelines provide information which should be referred to when planning consultation and engagement. It covers introductory information such as the meaning of community engagement, and methods for reaching minority groups. These topics are also covered by the generic training packages.

The Best Value Review of consultation and engagement estimated that 53 consultations had been undertaken in one year in Orkney. Examples of consultations carried out by partner organisations include: Harbour charges, Orkney core paths plan and Initiative at the Edge. The resource in terms of staff time can be significant and the Best Value review recommended that there be no substantial increase in resources for consultation and engagement. Therefore the tools such as the Strategy and the Guidelines aim to consolidate, develop and improve the current mechanisms and not create additional work which may distract from the task.

Orkney's Community Plan "Orkney 2020: Our Vision" identifies "working with communities" as one of its six key principles and states that all partners should work to the following principles when planning engagement:

- Fairness, equality and inclusion in involving people
- Clear sense of purpose
- Effective methods for achieving change
- Learning from experience
- Building on the skills and knowledge of all those involved
- Providing accurate and timely information and feedback

Each of the ten National Standards has several indicators, set out by the SCDC. These are available at Appendix 1 in a checklist format. It would be considered good practice for this checklist to be given consideration of at various stages throughout the consultation event. Consultations vary in size and as the checklist is quite extensive, it may be that some parts are more relevant to larger consultations. It is at Officers own discretion about the extent to which it is applied to the consultation.

The elements of the Consultation and Engagement package are promoted through the multi agency training provided by the Orkney Community Planning Partnership.



Contact information

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Links to information referred to within this Strategy

All documents referred to can be found on the Community Planning web pages:
orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/

- Consultation and Engagement Guidelines
<http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/documents/Community%20Engagement/Community%20Engagement%20guidelines.pdf>
- Consultation database
<http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/CONSULTATIONDIARY/>
- Partnership Guide
<http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/documents/PARTNERSHIP%20GUIDE%20v1.2%20May%202009.pdf>
- Family Tree
<http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/documents/Structure/Fam%20tree%20front%20cover.pdf>
- Single Outcome Agreement
<http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/documents/Single%20Outcome%20Agreement/OCPP%20SOA%202009-11-%20submitted%20to%20SG%2015%20May%202009.pdf>
- Community Plan
<http://www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/COMMUNITYPLANNING/documents/Orkney2020/Orkney%202020%20Our%20Vision%20-%20Plain%20text%20version.pdf>
- Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) www.scdc.org.uk