Community Engagement Strategy

April 2009

Community Engagement Strategy

Contents

Refer to the **Community Engagement Guidance** document for more detail on methods of community engagement. The guidance includes questions to address before community engagement is planned, an outline of different community engagement methods and a directory of projects and contacts.

Current Document Status

Version	0.3 Draft	Approving Committee	Cornwall Strategic Partnership
Date	20 April 2009	Ratified by Council	
Responsible Officer	Policy Advisor	Review Date	
Policy Links		Process	
Procedure links		Training links	
Location	Z:\Limited\0.Design & Policy\Engagement		

Version History

Date	Version	Author/Editor	Comments
09 February 2009	0.1 Draft	K. Byfield	First draft for consultation
06 March 2009	0.2 Draft	K. Byfield	Amendments from consultation.
20 April 2009	0.3 Draft	K. Byfield	Amendments for Cornwall Council Corporate Leadership Team

Equalities Impact Assessment Record

Date	Type of Assessment Conducted	Stage/Level completed	Summary of Actions Taken Decisions Made	Completed by.	Impact Assessment Review date
Feb 09	Full	Complete		E. Cook	

Executive Summary

The Community Engagement Strategy brings together all community engagement activity into one strategy to ensure that regardless of the method or purpose of the engagement, it is **meaningful as part of a wider picture**.

There is a clear need for organisations engaging with communities in Cornwall to link up better and **strengthen co-ordination** of engagement activity. Furthermore, with increasing emphasis on community engagement activity, focus must not be lost on **follow up action taken** as a result. This strategy will set in motion these improvements.

It is not the aim of this strategy to outline rigid methods for engagement. Instead it recognises that **a customised approach** is fundamental to effective community engagement. Different communities, citizens and businesses are comfortable with different engagement methods, and being mindful of this is a central principle of this work.

Furthermore, to truly achieve real power passing to real people, organisations in Cornwall must provide strong leadership and support citizens to take action into their own hands. **Active involvement** of citizens must be nurtured to ensure improvements penetrate beyond the reach of local agencies, and to the very heart of communities.

Community engagement is an essential means for determining service priorities. This is the basis of localism, which is the name for our new approach to how we deliver local services to better reflect local needs. For many organisations in Cornwall, it is not a new concept. Neighbourhood management, user group forums and environmental interest groups are just a few of the many examples where trust has developed over a number of years. **Building upon existing projects** and networks will set the foundations for stronger citizen empowerment in Cornwall.

As citizen empowerment moves up the agenda among Cornwall Strategic Partnership partners, there are exciting opportunities to build trust and mutual understanding.

Thanks

Many thanks to all those who have contributed their thoughts and knowledge to this strategy. The wide range of experience and perspectives that have fed into this work has been hugely valuable. A full list of contributors can be found in appendix 1 (page 16).

1   Introduction

1.1 The CSP's leadership role and community engagement (policy statement)

The statutory HM Government guidance Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities (July 2008) outlines that the role of the local authority with its local strategic partnership partners is to "Exercise a **leadership and governing role** through identifying and articulating the needs and aspirations of local communities and reconciling or arbitrating between competing interests". The following policy statement and principles will guide our role in community engagement.

Policy statement: Citizen involvement should be pursued where there is the scope and opportunity for them to influence decisions or become actively involved. However, leadership and the final judgement of CSP partners must remain central to decisions that make a fundamental contribution to CSP and organisational priorities.

1.2 Principles

Based upon the findings of research into community engagement in Cornwall, the following principles will underpin improvements:

- Co-ordination – partners will endeavour to co-ordinate community engagement activity with other teams and organisations in Cornwall;
- Follow up action – partners will only pursue citizens' views and influence if there are realistic plans and resources in place for constructive follow up action;
- A customised approach – partners will adapt their approach to community engagement to the target audience and outcomes being sought;
- Active involvement – partners will support citizens and voluntary groups to be actively involved in improving their communities.

1.3 Strategy purpose and background

Purpose: The purpose of this strategy is to provide Cornwall Strategic Partnership partners with a clear understanding of local community engagement issues and to outline the local response to the Duty to Involve Act.

This document does not seek to be a visionary strategy – there are other national strategies that serve this purpose (see Communities in Control white paper). Instead it aims to provide a practical reality check of community engagement.

Audience: The main audience for this work is people directly involved in community engagement within the Cornwall Strategic Partnership.

Objectives: Strategy objectives include:

- Review and map existing community engagement activity across the public, voluntary and community sectors in Cornwall.

- Explore issues and obstacles with individuals involved in grass-roots community engagement, and draw out the common themes.

- Highlight the main areas and steps for improvement.

Methodology: The development of the work has taken a 'review and improve' approach with the main messages of the strategy being drawn from discussions and meetings with over 100 people directly involved in community engagement in Cornwall. In particular, crucial knowledge for this work has been feed in from council departments, police, NHS, voluntary and community sector groups, councillors and community network managers (see appendix 1, page 16, for list of groups and organisations involved).

Due to the far reaching nature of community engagement, there are a number of other local documents and strategies that link strongly to this work. These are outlined in appendix 3 (page 18).

1.4 National policy context

Aspirations are growing for communities to have a greater influence over the services and support they receive. There is increasing pressure from communities themselves to be involved in the design, planning and delivery of services. In addition, central government has outlined its expectations in the government white paper **Communities in Control** (DCLG, 2008).[1]
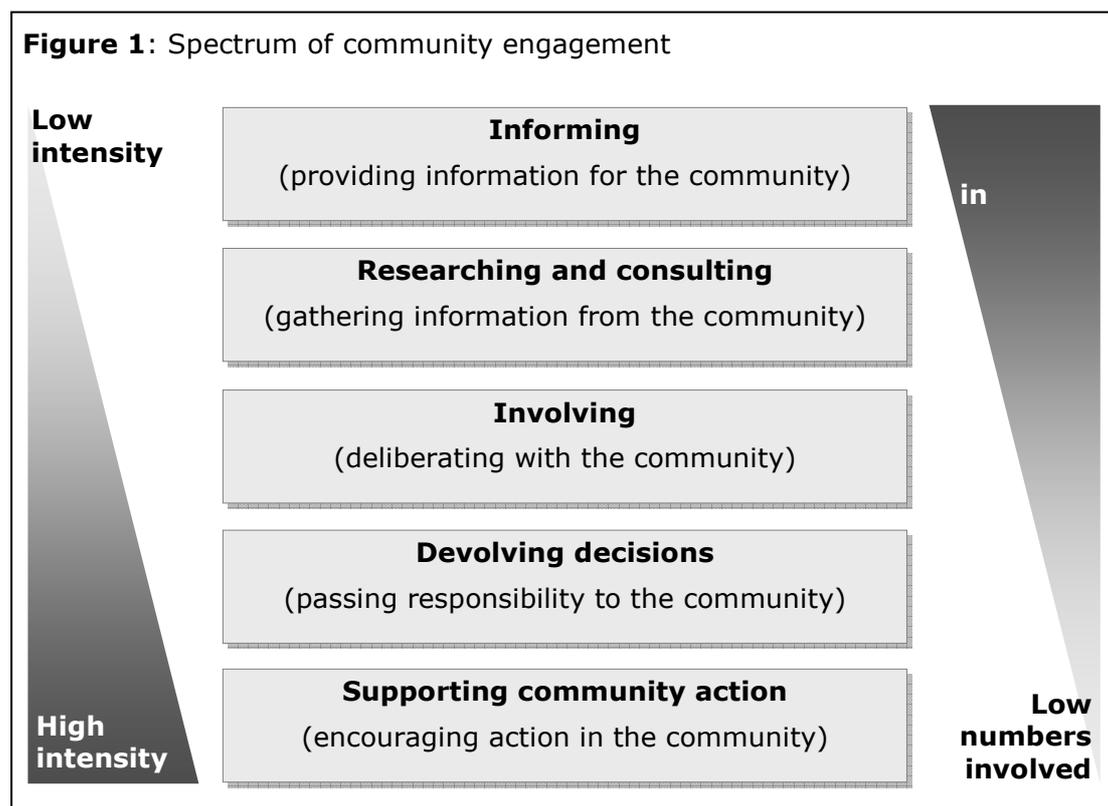
Furthermore, the **Duty to Involve Act**, articulated as part of the **Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act** (2007)[2] outlines a clear shift for local authorities, health authorities and other local agencies towards improvement being driven primarily by citizens' needs, rather than central targets. This act came into affect 1 April 2009 (see appendix, page 16, for more details on the relevant government papers, bills and legislation).

Local public services' performance with regard to citizen involvement will be assessed as part of the Government's new form of independent inspection, **Comprehensive Area Assessments** (CAA). CAA will focus on how well public services are working together to improve quality of life for local people and will reflect locally defined priorities and protecting people at most risk of disadvantage. How effectively partners collectively involve the public in determining service priorities will form an important part of the assessment findings.

1.5 Definitions

For the purposes of this strategy it is important to outline a shared understanding of the terms 'community' and 'engagement'. The following definitions have been agreed by partners who have contributed to the strategy:

▪ **Community** refers to a group of people that share a common **place** (for example, an individual neighbourhood); a common **interest** (for example, an interest in the environment, sport and health and social care); or a common **identity** (normally demographic characteristics for example, age). There are also individuals and groups with common **needs**. These could link with interests or geography (they are generally associated with particular service focus).

▪ **Engagement** refers to a spectrum of interactions which are fit for purpose for all parties involved. It may range from information giving to supporting community action. As figure 1 below shows, it spans a range of activities (Note: the intensity and numbers involved are general guides and not fixed).

Figure 1: Spectrum of community engagement

Low intensity

Informing
(providing information for the community)

in

Researching and consulting
(gathering information from the community)

Involving
(deliberating with the community)

Devolving decisions
(passing responsibility to the community)

High intensity

Supporting community action
(encouraging action in the community)

Low numbers involved

See the **Community Engagement Guidance** document for further background to these engagement methods.

2   Benefits of community engagement

Well run community engagement brings extensive benefits to the citizens and agencies involved. The main benefits to meaningful, two way community engagement include:

- **Trust** – it builds trust between agencies and service users.
- **Opportunity to influence** – it gives communities the opportunity to influence decisions that will affect them.
- **Removing barriers** – it removes physical, language or social barriers to communities getting access to information or voicing needs or opinions.
- **Citizens' understanding** – it helps communities to understand the services and support that are available to them.
- **Satisfaction** – it increases satisfaction with public services.
- **Knowledge of local issues** - it allows service providers to reach a better understanding of their communities and be more in tune with needs or problems as they arise.
- **Community spirit** – it supports community spirit and encourages citizens to take control of their own neighbourhoods.
- **Improves opportunity for joint projects** – it can give rise to joint planning, development and delivery of services where appropriate.

However, in addition to the benefits, many people involved in community engagement highlighted the potential drawbacks. Some examples of the drawbacks include:

- **Expectations** – it can raise expectations about the amount the influence citizens have.
- **Resource intensive** – well run community engagement is often very resource intensive.
- **Managing competing interests** – community engagement will often expose diverse and competing community interests. Managing how this is captured and reconciled may be a complex task for the agency involved.
- **Exposure to strong frustrations** – community engagement may expose staff to citizens who use it as an opportunity to vent frustrations and anger over issues that may be out of their control.

3   Findings

3.1   Current activity

As the diagram below shows, there is already a wealth of community engagement activity in Cornwall. The diagram broadly aligns each activity to communities of place, interest or identity.

Figure 2: Overview of some of the community engagement activity

1. See directory section of the Community Engagement Guidance for more detail.
2. This diagram represents a mixture of activities and organisations as in practice it is difficult to disentangle them.
3. Activities marked with a '➤' indicate engagement targeted at communities at risk of disadvantage.

A few examples of community engagement projects are detailed below.

Example 1:	**U Choose in Pengegon** (Camborne)
Agencies:	Kerrier District Council, One Cornwall.
Features:	▪ **Participatory budgeting** in a deprived area. ▪ Local children and parents attended a Christmas party event which incorporated presentations from prospective projects aimed at young people. ▪ Participants voted on the projects. ▪ 150 participants.
Outcomes:	Funding allocation to the community projects was based upon the balance of votes from local residents who would benefit.
Lessons:	▪ For this pilot, focusing on a small geographical area was an advantage. A wider area would have attracted very different applications. ▪ The relationship the neighbourhood manager has with the local residents ensured excellent turnout. ▪ A great deal of ongoing support will be required to assist residents managing these funds.

Example 2:	**St Blazey Community Garden**
Agencies:	All Hands Together Residents Association, Ocean Housing Association, Groundwork.
Features:	▪ **Environment-based community engagement in a deprived area**. ▪ The garden of a community flat owned by the residents association required improvement. ▪ Agencies assisted residents to put together a design and bid for funding. ▪ The residents association managed local contractors once the funding was in place. ▪ The project was community led, needing only technical design and fund raising support.
Outcomes:	A community garden that has developed community spirit.

Example 3:	**The Beacon Regeneration Partnership** Old Hill, The Beacon, Penwerris, Laburnum and Trescobeas (Falmouth)
Agencies:	Carrick Housing, Carrick District Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, Primary Care Trust, tenant and resident associations, Falmouth Primary School and Dracaena Centre.
Features:	A **resident-controlled organisation** with the purpose of **regeneration** of: housing, infrastructure, the environment and social opportunities.
Outcomes:	Spend in the community has been resident led. Wider outcomes have been indentified by a University of Exeter study (Durie, 2007): Breast feeding rates increased by 50% Postnatal depression rates down 77% Childhood accident rate down 50% Child protection registrations down by 80% 40% drop in household burglaries £2.2m generated by tenants and residents, which paid for loft insulation and central heating, leading to a fuel saving of £180,306 in the first year.
Lessons:	Project sustainability requires: Long-term agency champions and mentors in the partnership; core funding and capacity building over the set-up project period (at least ten years). Need to improve understanding and collaboration between agents and give greater responsibility to local people. For more information contact the partnership on beaconp@hotmail.com

3.2 Main issues

The key to developing this strategy and ensuring it reflects local issues, is that it has been built upon research into existing activity and the knowledge and views of individuals directly involved in community engagement. The table below outlines the main issues and some examples that arose from these discussions.

Table 1: Main issues and examples*

Consultation fatigue	Six separate agencies planned to conduct door-to-door surveys in an area of St Austell that is classified as deprived. 'Consultation fatigue' acts to break rather than build bridges and appears to be a particular issue in deprived areas.
Joint standards and collective responsibility	There is evidence that survey work conducted by one agency is not always acted on and accepted as valid by other agencies. This is sometimes a problem with survey techniques, and sometimes a problem with organisation's policy to only act on consultation they conduct themselves.
Outcomes of engagement	Citizens and businesses do not always feel their views will be acted upon or were acknowledged.
Varied audiences	Service and support agencies have a wide variety of audiences and traditional or prescribed methods of engagement only appeal to a small proportion of citizens. For example, traditional engagement structures such as committee meetings has given rise to the voices of 'professional meeting goers' and 'hard to avoid' groups dominating.
Community engagement skills	There is increasing expectations for service providers to engage with communities, but some to whom this task falls do not feel adequately equipped to conduct this work.
Lack of empowerment of local people	Local citizens who want to be involved in community development and assist in service delivery do not feel adequately supported or empowered to do so. Furthermore, there has been a tendency for some service providers to treat local citizens as passive recipients.

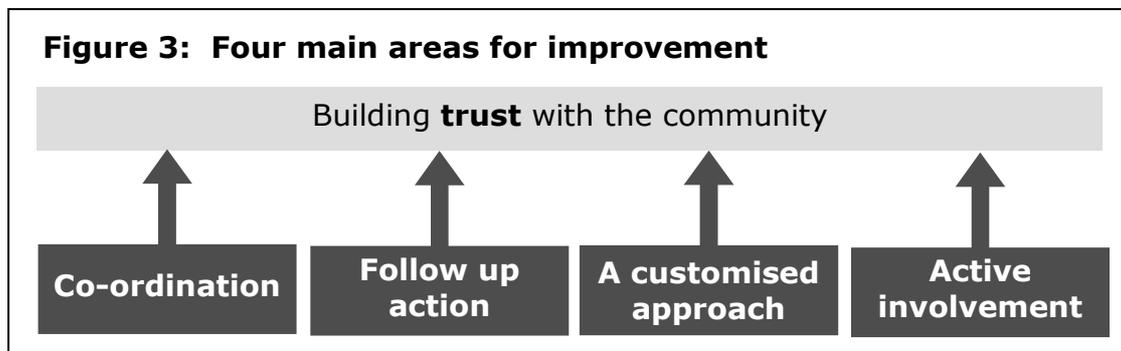*See section 4.2 (page 11) for recommendations to tackle these issues.

4 More effective, not necessarily more

4.1 Key messages

The new unitary authority will operate very differently with regard to citizen empowerment. "A strong voice for local communities" is a key priority for the new council and will largely be implemented through the community network model. Cornwall Council is keen to ensure local communities have a say in how local public services are delivered. This is the basis of **localism** and includes strengthening relationships with towns and parish councils, and setting up community networks and one stop shops right across Cornwall.

However, a fresh commitment to re-connect with our communities does not necessarily mean that more community engagement is needed. Information gathered for this strategy shows that there is already a wealth of activity with more new projects on the horizon, but **collectively partners must ensure more effective use of current resources, not necessarily more**. Harnessing the success of existing mechanisms and networks will be the key to meeting requirements of the **Duty to Involve Act** that came into affect 1 April 2009.

More effective community engagement in Cornwall will involve improvement in **four main areas**, all of which will support the overall theme of building trust (see figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Four main areas for improvement

Building **trust** with the community

| Co-ordination | Follow up action | A customised approach | Active involvement |

The consequence of not implementing these improvements is that partners may waste resources on community engagement activity that does more harm than good and further distances citizens. Constructive community engagement is very resource intensive, but by implementing the improvements above, organisations in Cornwall have an exciting opportunity to ensure Cornwall is truly shaped by its citizens.

The table overleaf details the steps to improvement within these four main areas. As the table shows, these improvements will address the issues identified in section 1.2 (page 9).

4.2 Steps for improvement

Overarching theme: Trust

Theme	Issue	Steps for improvement
Co-ordination	**Consultation fatigue**	**Collaborating and reducing duplication** – There must be a culture change amongst agencies towards increased collaboration with regard to community engagement. **Drawing upon existing sources** – New engagement activity should only commence if there is no other source of information that is being sought.
Co-ordination	**Joint standards & collective responsibility**	**Collaborating and reducing duplication** (as above). **Agreeing standards** – Joint standards of community engagement need to be set to ensure that the messages relayed to one agency are accepted as valid by another.
Follow up action	**Outcomes of engagement**	**Readdressing the balance** – Agencies engaging with communities need to ensure there's a balance between resources designated to community engagement and resources put into the resulting follow up action. **Being realistic** – Meaningful community engagement is very resource intensive. Many organisations need to be more realistic about what communities can influence as a result of engagement activity.
A customised approach	**Varied audience**	**Adapting to the audience** – Methods should adapt to the audience and the purpose of the engagement. **Being sensitive to particular needs** – As part of customising the approach to community engagement, factors such as literacy, confidence, communication skills, language and disabilities must be considered. **On citizens' terms** – Not all citizens or businesses want to engage. If they do, it should be on their terms.
A customised approach	**Community engagement skills**	**Harnessing existing expertise** – There is a wealth of specialist skills in Cornwall with regard to community engagement. To be more effective, community engagement must draw on skills from different organisations. **Improving engagement training and culture** – Understanding of the value of community engagement in shaping service delivery needs to be strengthened.
Active involvement	**Lack of empowerment of local people**	**Leadership and supporting local initiative** – Strong local leadership from the Council and partners of the Cornwall Local Strategic Partnership, combined with support to citizens to take local action when appropriate, will ensure that improvements in quality of life will penetrate to individuals and communities. **Joint production of services** – Involving local groups (such as volunteer groups) in the design and delivery of services at a local level will ease growing demand for public services and empower citizens.

4.3 Engaging those at most risk of disadvantage

As outlined in the Corporate Area Assessment (CAA) requirements, in addition to adapting to residents' priorities, **local public services have a duty to protect people at most risk of disadvantage**. To support these groups, there is a need for targeted community engagement.

People at risk of disadvantage encompass people who, due to their circumstances or background, are most at risk of being disadvantaged in terms of: health, employment opportunities, skills and education, social opportunities, safety, financial security and access to services.

Early engagement with individuals who become at risk of disadvantage is particularly important to ensure the impact does not spread to other aspects of their life. For example, if an adult becomes unemployed but is not supported in getting back into employment, negative repercussions may spread to their health, safety and their family's welfare. Early engagement can limit the negative impact of difficult life events and also greatly reduce the cost incurred to support services.

As the local case studies in section 4 demonstrate, some very valuable engagement activity in Cornwall is targeted at disadvantaged communities. These targeted projects play a crucial role in improving the quality of life of individuals at risk of disadvantage. Refer to the activities marked with a '➤' in figure 2 (page 8) for examples.

4.4 Business involvement

Businesses are a significant part of local communities, but all too often the way in which the public sector involves them in decisions falls short of their expectations. Liaising with the business community is very different to engaging with citizens, so a different approach needs to be taken. Feedback from the business community emphasises that in general they prefer frank and plain communication that allows them to have a genuine influence over council decisions on their terms.

Issues particular to the engagement with the business include:
* Local purchasing –communicating with local firms so they are aware of tendering opportunities and understand the process.
* Business rates – engaging with businesses to understand how to adapt rate payment to suit the business environment and cash-flow cycles.
* Planning proposals – involving local businesses in planning proposals that may impact on their trade.
* Availability and cost of business premises – working with businesses to understand the demand for premises.
* Contribution to the wider community – supporting local businesses to contribution to the social and environmental wellbeing of their area. For example, engaging in employer supported volunteering or assisting businesses in taking on placements including possible re-offenders, people with disabilities and people recovering from health problems.

4.5 Research and intelligence

Research and intelligence is a crucial element to successful community engagement. There are three main ways in which it can be used as part of a well-rounded, effective community engagement project:

1. As **background knowledge** and understanding of the communities you intend to engage with.

2. As intelligence about communities that may **reduce the need to gather information** and opinions directly from them.

3. As **a factual balance** to perspectives and opinions gained from community engagement.

This strategy focuses on the information and intelligence gathered on community needs, values and views. However, all parties involved in developing this work recognise the need to consider this in the context of research and statistical evidence and local, regional and national policy. These elements do not exist in isolation and affect one another, for example:

- Factual evidence may inform citizens' views and values.
- Performance indicators may be influenced by citizens' views and values.
- Evidence from community views and local and national data sources should inform policy on decisions.
- Local and national policies affect evidence.

The level of influence of each of these elements has is dependant upon the project, but ultimately it should be the Council and other Cornwall Strategic Partnership partners' role to lead decisions.

4.6 Role of councillors

There is recognition that a change of attitude is needed with regard to interacting with the public, and the role of the unitary authority councillors will form a central part of this. Critical issues around the role of councillors in community engagement include:

- **Being in tune with local issues** - Spending time in the community to ensure they are in tune with local issues, particularly where there is dissatisfaction. Councillors have a duty to reach a mutual understanding with community members and assist in alleviating any unrest.

- **Using informal methods of community engagement** – Councillors should be supported to be available in their communities in informal settings. For example, drop in sessions in well used village locations. One suggestion has been to have village based drop in days based upon a particular local issue where the local councillor and relevant officer are available.

- **Reconciling policies, perspectives and other evidence** - Working with community network managers to reconcile council policies, community perspectives and research and intelligence.

5   Sustainable development, equality and diversity implications

Sustainable development places social, economic and environmental wellbeing, for now and the future, at the heart of decisions and actions. Equality and diversity considerations contribute to social wellbeing, therefore support the wider goal of sustainable development.

Sustainable Development – The benefits of community engagement listed in Section 3 (page 6) also contribute to sustainable development. Any potential negative impacts the implementation of this strategy may have on sustainable development are listed below:

Potential negative impact	Mitigation
Discontent from local people if they feel that they are not being involved in decisions.	Develop opportunities for local people to engage in their own terms.
Stress and unrest caused to community members who do not want to engage.	This strategy highlights the need to co-ordinate engagement activity and avoid unnecessary duplication.
Travel to community engagement events.	Events should be held at venues accessible by public transport. Ideally, the target audience should be able to access the venue without the use of a vehicle at all.
Use of paper and printing for consultations, leaflets and surveys.	The social benefits of each publication should be weighed up against the environmental and economic cost. The volume required on a print run should be carefully calculated. Recycled paper or paper produced from sustainable sources should be used where possible.

Equality impact assessment

This strategy should enable Cornwall Council to improve its approach to the engagement and participation of vulnerable or socially isolated people. Impacts are primarily positive, however the potential negative impacts of the implementation of this strategy are:

Potential negative impact	Mitigation
Equality of access to community engagement events	To ensure equality of access is achieved, meetings and events should be organised using the Cornwall Council Event Management Guidance. Contact (corpcomm@cornwall.gov.uk) for a copy.
Printing and literature for consultations, leaflets and surveys	Refer to the Community Engagement Guidance for more advice on ensuring that information is available in accessible formats when required.
Engaging with equality groups	Some individuals require more time and special measures when being involved in events or

	consultations. Timescales will need to be planned for allowing appropriate and supportive involvement of people who have particular needs.
Training and skills of organisers and facilitators	Events and public consultations should undergo equality impact and needs assessment. The risks identified above require an understanding of equality and diversity. Training should be in place for people who interact with equality groups.

6   Next steps

This strategy includes a review of existing community engagement activity and outlines the main issues and areas for improvement. As community engagement spans across all members of the Cornwall Strategic Partnership, they have overall responsibly to take forward the messages in this strategy.

Beyond this, the following specific steps will take forward the recommended improvements of **co-ordination**, **follow up action**, **a customised approach** and **active involvement**:

- **Cornwall Council Localism service –** within the Localism service of Cornwall Council the area managers and community network managers will be responsible for assisting in the co-ordination of engaging with place based communities. This will include liaising with other services and agencies working at a local level.

- **Cornwall Council services** – work for Cornwall Council has included the development of a service plan for each service. Within each of these, there is a commitment that the any community engagement activities they plan will reflect the four areas of improvement outlined in this strategy.

- **Cornwall Council intelligence** – within the Chief Executive's Department, an intelligence team will seek to bring together research and statistics, council performance data and information derived from community engagement to form a combined source of intelligence. The intelligence team will be advising the corporate management team and councillors to ensure that follow up action reflects the priorities identified by local communities.

Above all, people working on the ground with communities need to take responsibility for carrying forward these recommendations. This work is based upon the perspectives of people directly involved in community engagement in Cornwall and has been developed to deliver the Duty to Involve Act. Achieving the improvements outlined in this work, combined with strong and visible leadership from local public services will pave the way for reaching the wider aim of **real power passing into the hands of communities.**

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of contributors

Representations from the following areas have been involved in developing this strategy:

CSP Chairman's Management Group, One Cornwall Localism Strategic Group, Cornwall Infrastructure Partnership, Equality and Diversity Implementation Board, Older People's Forum, Adult Social Care, Cornwall County Council youth involvement, Treneere Together Partnership neighbourhood management, Beacon Community Regeneration Partnership, council environment and heritage community involvement, neighbourhood policing, transport policy consultation, business engagement, Cornwall Council Community Network Managers, local development framework community involvement, Penwith Community Development Trust, Interlinks, Parish and Town Council Liaison Team, Cornwall Centre for Volunteers, Citizens Advice Bureau, Cornwall Rural Community Council, Local Involvement Networks – LINks, NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly), Health and Wellbeing Board, Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change, area action plans, district, county and parish councillors.

Appendix 2: Summary of relevant papers, bills and legislation

Communities in Control: real people, real power white paper (July 2008) Department for Communities and Local Government
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol

1. Communities in control: real people, real power aims to pass power into the hands of local communities.

2. The paper outlines intentions to shift power, influence and responsibility away from existing centres of power into the hands of communities and individual citizens.

3. The third sector – through charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises – has much to offer from its traditions of purposeful altruism and selfless volunteering. Equally, the Government want to restore people's faith in politics.

4. In the White Paper, seven key issues are addressed: being active in your community; access to information; having an influence; challenge; redress; standing for office; and ownership and control.

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill
www.commonsleader.gov.uk/output/page2664.asp

This Bill promotes local democracy and economic development, devolving greater power to local government and communities and ensures fairness in construction contracts.

The main element of the Bill relevant to this strategy is "strengthening local democracy, by passing more power and responsibility to local authorities, communities and citizens, including taking proposals forward from the White Paper: Communities in control: real people, real power."

The benefits of the bill relevant to this strategy are:

- Empowering citizens and communities to become more active in the design and delivery of local public services.
- A new duty for local authorities to make it easier for people to understand how to influence decisions, stand for office and take up other civic roles.
- A new duty to respond to petitions will give citizens greater power to hold local authorities to account and influence local services.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Act seeks to introduce a range of devolutionary and deregulatory measures to ensure a local government system in England that:
- gives local people more influence over the services and decisions that affect their communities;
- provides effective and accountable strategic leadership;
- Operates in a performance framework – for local authorities working alone or in partnership – which supports citizen empowerment and secures better outcomes for all; and
- leads local partnerships to provide better services for citizens.

Duty to involve - The Government wants to see a streamlining and rebalancing of the performance framework with a greater focus on the citizen experience and local partnership working, rather than central targets, as the main drivers for improvement.

Source: Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and Regulatory Impact Assessment

Sustainable Communities Act

Cornwall has signed up to the Sustainable Communities Act, which gives local people more control over improving their community.

The Sustainable Communities Act aims to promote the sustainability of local communities. It begins from the principle that local people know best what needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area, but that sometimes they need central government to act to enable them to do so. It provides a channel for local people to ask central government to take such action. It is also a new way for local authorities to ask central government to take action which they believe would better enable them to improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area. This could include a proposal to transfer the functions of one public body to another.

For more details see:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/sustainablecommunitiesact

Appendix 3: Links with other strategies
There are a number of other strategies and documents that are particularly relevant to this work. The list below highlights the main ones that partners involved in community engagement should be aware of:

▪ Cornwall Strategic Partnership (2008) **Sustainable Community Strategy**, www.cornwallstrategicpartnership.gov.uk/
▪ Local Area Agreement Strong 1: "To **empower local people** to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services" (use hyperlink above)
▪ Local Area Agreement Strong 2: "Increase and develop **active citizens**" (use hyperlink above)
▪ Local Area Agreement Strong 3: "Improve the quality of life for people in the most **disadvantaged neighbourhoods** and ensure service providers are more responsive to the needs of communities" (use hyperlink above)
▪ Cornwall Council Planning - **Statement of Community Involvement**
▪ Cornwall Council (2009) Listening and Learning – **Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy** and Procedures
▪ Cornwall Joint Improvement Group (2008) **Community Engagement Project**
▪ **One Cornwall One Council** proposal
▪ The Cornwall **Localism Charter**
▪ **Cornwall Compact**
▪ Communication Strategies
▪ Carrick Housing (2000) **Tenant Participation Compact**, www.carrickhousing.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=20410
▪ Adult Social Care (2007) Information, Communication and Engagement Strategy
▪ The strategic plan for improving health and health outcomes in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly www.cornwallandislesofscilly.nhs.uk/CornwallAndIslesOfScillyPCT/AboutUs/Strategy.aspx

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[1] www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol
[2] www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/pabills/200607/local_government_and_public_involvement_in_health.htm