

West Lothian's Community Plan – Towards 2020

Report on the Community Engagement activity undertaken in 2008

BACKGROUND

The current Community Plan, Shaping the Future, planned a direction of travel and activity until 2010. Given the significant changes that have occurred in West Lothian since the plan was conceived in 2000, the Community Planning Partnership agreed in August 2008 it was now time to re-look at the vision and long-term goals for the area.

The CPP was keen to engage the community (both geographic and communities of interest) in determining the wider vision for the area in 2020, as well as the broad areas of work that we need to work together on. The CPP Board agreed that a short life sub group of the Community Planning Working Group should be convened to take this forward. Representatives from West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, Lothian and Borders Police, West Lothian College, and the voluntary sector in West Lothian met twice to discuss and plan what should happen and what methods would be used to engage with groups and communities.

A community artist was employed to help the sub group visualise the process and to develop visual materials that all partners to could use.

The sub group also agreed to use the National Standards for Community engagement as the framework for monitoring and evaluating the engagement activity.

METHODOLOGY

Planning

The CPP set a tight timescale within which to carry out the engagement activity, with all initial work to be completed by December 2008. The sub group agreed that we should try to cover geographic communities across West Lothian, as well as specific interest groups. The sub group also agreed that a range of communication methods should be employed to try and capture peoples views; including, face to face, written, email and text.

Where possible the sub group would try to utilise existing meetings or events to gather peoples views rather than set up individual opportunities. Partners were asked to share plans for meetings and events so that opportunities could be maximised. A timetable of engagement opportunities was developed. (Appendix 1).

Partners agreed to use the draft vision created in 2007 as the basis for starting to plan the work, to help people think about their long-term hopes for the area. A range of visual aids, including a 2020 icon, were developed to help to take people through a process. This included posters, postcards and leaflets. These materials were piloted at a session with community planning partners and a range of staff from across the Council that had not been

involved in the planning of this work. This session allowed us to tweak the way we planned to use the materials, ensure the materials were fit for purpose and that all partners were fully conversant with the materials and felt confident in using them.

Firstly, we challenged people to think about what age they will be in 2020, and to think about what that may mean for the services that they may need. We highlighted the changes that have taken place in West Lothian over the last decade or so via pictures from West Lothian taken in the 1980s, as well as artefacts such as pieces of technology (eg Sony Walkmans, floppy discs, LP records etc). We also tried to get people to project forward 12 years to think about what changes may occur in the future.

We also gave people information about what we are already predicting will change over the next 12 years based on the information in the Local Plan regarding population change, new house building, new community facilities, new transport routes etc. This gave people a context for the conversation.

The key question we asked people was what were their hopes for West Lothian in 2020. This was not designed as a way of gathering a “wish list” of specific services, but rather a way of eliciting the higher-level aspirations for the whole community. Based on the previous draft vision for the Community Plan, we created a “Tree of Hope” giving suggestions about what some of the high level aspirations may be.

Execution

Based on the timetable of engagement activities members of the Community Planning Working Group were asked to volunteer to help out at the various events and “street” sessions. Members of the Council’s Communities Team also volunteered to work at sessions in their ward areas. This resulted in a cross section of partners working across the 20 groups and events.

Other methods were employed that did not require staff to take people through the process such as static unmanned displays in 10 libraries and 3 leisure / sports centres; Mail shot to all 2780 Citizens Panel members; Information and links on the Council’s Website; Article in Bulletin, delivered to every house in West Lothian; Information sent to members of the Public Partnership Forum.

Where a specific group was being engaged with, for example the P7 children of the Bathgate cluster, specific meetings were held between the community planning staff and colleagues that work with the people in that group. This allowed us to tailor the sessions to the needs of the group, but still use the basic 2020 materials that had been designed. A plan of how the session would run, and how the materials would be used was formulated for each group. An example can be found in Appendix 2. During the in depth discussions with interest groups we were able to discuss ideas about how we may achieve these aspirations, and what some of the barriers may be to getting there.

We used creative techniques with the groups to engender debate such as, mind mapping; giving digital cameras to people to take photos of what needs to change; postcards; music and videos; and drawing. We recorded the session with the P7 children on a DVD, which each school got a copy of.



For the “street sessions” we set up display boards with the basic display materials and tried to engage people in conversation about what the partners were trying to do. We gave people a copy of the explanatory leaflet as well as a postcard, which had a free post address, and encouraged them to record their hopes for 2020 and send them back to us. Some people took the time to complete the postcards there and then.

Where there were unmanned displays in the libraries and leisure centres people could pick up a leaflet and postcard, which they could either complete and leave in the box provided, or take away and post back to us. In total around 5000 leaflets and postcards were distributed using all the methods of engagement. The information contained in the article in Bulletin, and the information on the website encouraged people to email, phone or text us with their comments.

RESULTS

The work with groups and events resulted in 928 people being engaged with from across West Lothian. The specific numbers are recorded below.

Groups

Date	Venue	Number taking part
22 Oct	VSSG	5
7 Nov	Youth Congress	6
10 Nov	Disability West Lothian	15
17 Nov	Business event - Whitburn	6
24 Nov	Business event – Livingston	20
28 Nov	Primary School Focus Group	24
3 Dec	Voluntary sector event	60
4 Dec	Race Forum	10
15 Dec	Fauldhouse Devt Trust	6
	Total	152



The debate within the groups was recorded via mind mapping. With the majority of groups we split into smaller groups of about 6 people and used paper tablecloths to record the thoughts and comments of the participants. This allowed them to see the flow of the conversation and ensured that everyone was able to contribute. The dialogue from the mind maps was distilled into key themes that emerged from the conversations

The group session with Primary 7 pupils resulted in the children creating their own tree of hope.



Events	Place	Numbers spoken to
12 Nov	WL Connected	100
13 Non	Strathbrock	98
13 Nov	Addiewell	33
20 Nov	Armadale CIS	74
21 Nov	Bathgate	103
24 Nov	St Johns Hospital	103
27 Nov	Mill centre Blackburn	35
29 Nov	Farmers Market Linlithgow	120
30 Nov	Multi Cultural event	50
5 Dec	Craigshill Mall	20
7 Dec	Knightsridge Xmas Fair	40
	Total	776

The conversations that took place with individuals at the events was not recorded verbatim. People were encouraged to complete a postcard with their hope for 2020, either doing this at the time, or posting it back using the freepost facility.



Linlithgow Farmers Market

The number of postcards and locations they came from is recorded in the table below.

Location	Number
Strathbrock	79
East Calder Library	3
Linlithgow Xcite	3
Youth Congress	46
Addiewell door knocking day	7
Disability West Lothian	10
St Johns Hospital	34
Bathgate street session	35
Post	303
Total	520

The comments from the postcards have been sorted into themes and recorded.

With regards to the other methods of people giving us their views, the following have been recorded; Email 5, Letter 5, Phone 2, Text 0.

ANALYSIS

The issues coming from the postcards and the areas of debate within the groups have been separately analysed and then this analysis has been combined under the six themes of the Community Plan, i.e Caring, Changing, Healthy, Learning, Prosperous and Safer.

Partners will discuss the detailed analysis at the Community Planning Away Day on 26 January 2009. However the key issues to emerge under each theme are as follows.

Caring

Activities and facilities are required for both young and old
People have to be able to access affordable housing

Changing

Transport needs to be affordable, available and linked together
All town centres need to be improved
Places are cleaner and litter free
West Lothian retains and enhances its green spaces

Healthy

NHS Services should be kept and enhanced at St Johns Hospital
Healthy lifestyles need to be taught and encouraged
Leisure facilities need to be accessible, affordable and fit for purpose

Learning

Schools need to be available and accessible to all
Training for young people for all vocations should be available
The facilities for learning across the area should be enhanced, including the possibility of Higher Education facilities

Prosperous

The mix of industry needs to be kept and enhanced
The entertainment /tourism product needs to be increased
Skills gaps need to be addressed
Innovation should be supported and encouraged

Safer

Issues such as anti social behaviour, alcohol and drugs should be addressed holistically
The role of the Police in the community should be sustained and enhanced

EVALUATION OF ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The sub group responsible for planning the engagement activity met again on 16 January 2009 to evaluate the process using the National Standards for Community Engagement as the framework.

Using the prescribed indicators, the groups scored themselves against each standard. The results are shown below:

Standard	Score **	Comment
Involvement	2.75	Good effort made to engage with all "equalities" groups. Needed other services/organisations to be involved to help meet some of the more difficult to reach groups. Partners were involved in putting the materials together.
Support	2.91	We did ensure that everyone was supported to be involved where we were able by making sure the barriers were overcome. The speed of the exercise was a flaw as it did not allow us to train community activists to do some of the engagement work for us. The Youth Congress did do some of this in schools though.
Planning	3.09	From an agency perspective we have good evidence of the planning process, and all partners were involved from the start. Timelines were agreed but not the roles and responsibilities of partners. The community were not involved in the process of planning the approach. We did however work with representatives of the groups to plan the way we would approach the groups using the

		materials we had designed. Due to time constraints we did not share ongoing evaluation of the process.
Methods	2.6	Strong efforts were made to use a range of methods to gather views. However, we did not utilise the wide range of expertise that was available across the partnership.
Working together	3.25	It was only by working together that we managed to achieve the wide engagement that we did. All participants were encouraged to share their views by working one to one or in small groups.
Sharing information	2.91	All information was clear and made available to everyone, in a variety of formats. The timescales precluded wider engagement.
Working with others	3	The CPP drove the engagement activity and it was clearly routed within the partnership. The partnership recognises that individual organisations need to get better at ongoing engagement as part of the “day job”.
Improvement	2.75	The partnerships commitment to develop engagement skills is acknowledged, and demonstrated by the training that had been provided to 80 staff. These skills now need to be embedded in every day practice.
Feedback		This standard was not assessed, as the feedback has not yet been given, although the plans to do this are being put in place (see below). Partners did commit to using the indicators within this standard as an “aide memoir” to ensure all aspects are covered.
Monitoring and evaluation	3.25	This standard was partially assessed as the full process is yet to be completed.

**
1=Unsatisfactory – major weaknesses
2= Fair – some important weaknesses
3=Good – strengths outweigh weaknesses
4=Very good – major strengths

Overall the sub group assessed the engagement activity fairly positively but were keen that lessons were learnt and areas for improvement highlighted.

The lessons were;

- Have a realistic timescale to plan and conduct engagement;
- If we want to engage people on the street, do it at a time of year that is more conducive; and
- The static stands did not really work for this particular engagement activity.

Areas for improvement;

- Ensure that agencies and people who have access to groups and individuals are included in the process and have a role to play;
- Have the “community” more involved in the actual engagement activity;
- Make efforts to include organisation’s staff as participants;

FEEDBACK TO PARTICIPANTS

The themes that have emerged from this community engagement activity will be used to formulate the Community Plan – Towards 2020. A draft Plan will be shared with all the groups that took part in activities, and the people who gave us their contact details. There will be an opportunity for these groups and individuals to comment on the draft plan.

In addition, another round of community information sessions will be held to alert people to the contents of the draft Plan.


The culmination of all this feedback will be reflected in the final Community Plan. This will be available in Summer 2009.

Community Plan- Towards 2020– Engagement Plan			
Date	Event	Place	Time
22 Oct	Voluntary Sector Strategic Group	Addiewell	12 –2pm
7 Nov	Youth Congress	Bathgate	1-4pm
10 Nov	Disability West Lothian	Livingston	1-3.30pm
12 Nov	Connected	Livingston	9.30 – 4pm
13 Nov	Strathbrock	Broxburn	9.30 – 4pm
13 Nov	Door knocking day	Addiewell	9.30- 2.30pm
17 Nov	Business	Whitburn	6pm – 8.30pm
20 Nov	Armadale CIS	Armadale	9.30 – 3.30pm
21 Nov	Road show trailer	Bathgate	9.30 – 4pm
24 Nov	Business	LFC	6pm –8.30pm
24 Nov	St Johns Hospital	Livingston	10am – 3pm
27 Nov	Mill centre	Blackburn	10am – 4pm
28 Nov	Primary School Focus Group	Bathgate	11am – 1.30pm
29 Nov	Farmers market	Linlithgow	9am – 4pm
30 Nov	Diversity Wk Mela	Livingston	10am – 4pm
3 Dec	Voluntary Sector	Whitburn	9am – 2pm
4 Dec	Race Forum	Livingston	6-8pm
5 Dec	Craigshill Community Conference	Craigshill	9am – 5.30pm
7 Dec	Xmas Fair – Knightsridge	Mosswood Community centre	10am – 4pm
15 Dec	Fauldhouse Devt Trust	Fauldhouse	7pm –9pm

Un manned displays

Wk beg	Venue	Place
10 Nov	Library	Broxburn
		East Calder
		Whitburn
	Leisure Centre	Linlithgow
17 Nov	Library	Blackburn
		Dedridge
	Leisure Centre	Whitburn
24 Nov	Library	Linlithgow
		Craigshill
		Deans
		Blackridge
	Sports centre	East Calder

Council's Bulletin article 10 Nov – delivered to all households

Towards 2020 Community Engagement			
Session: Primary school pupil group session		28 th November 2008	
Aims:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable participants to contribute to the vision for West Lothian in 2020 To enable partners to find out what members of the public think the priorities should be for the vision 			
	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS	NOTES
10.30	SET UP	as below	set 4 tables with fruit pictures on
11.00	INTRODUCTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is 'Towards 2020' Who are the partners Who we are (facilitators) Why we are here What will happen today What will happen to the results of engagement 	list of partners	set room for fruit salad
11.15	WARM UP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a badge showing your name and where you live. Put it on! Play 'fruit salad', develop to 'anyone who...' to get to know group Now you will be travelling back in time in the TARDIS to see what West Lothian was like long ago... 	badge blanks coloured pens tardis music	all including facilitators note which fruit is on your table
11.35	BACK IN TIME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the images on the 'past and present' posters Examine the 'ancient' objects Take some time to discuss what West Lothian was like 20 years ago and what has changed How might West Lothian change in the next 12 years? 	West Lothian past and present posters, displayed as tunnel	
12.00	WEST LOTHIAN NOW <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the maps on the tables, put stickers on the parts of West Lothian you have been to. Look at the map showing planned 	maps stickers	

12.15	<p>changes to the area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss what impact these might have on your life or your family's <p>LUNCH</p>	Future prediction stats	
12.45	<p>FORWARD IN TIME</p> <p>warm up with number game - team counting up/down/eyes shut?</p> <p>Now I know you can count, make a badge showing the age you will be in 2020</p> <p>The TARDIS has taken you forwards in time. Imagine you are now living in 2020... here are some things to consider (use prompt cards on tables)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what you'll be doing where you'll be living what your family will be like what your community will be like 	<p>at tables</p> <p>more badges + pens</p> <p>tardis music</p> <p>prompt cards</p>	
1.15	<p>COMMENTS</p> <p>Think about the discussion and write on the leaf shapes (up to 3 each):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your hopes for 2020? Cut them out and stick on to 'tree of hope' Add your name to the tree trunk <p>Collect certificate</p> <p>Group photo</p>		
1.40	<p>EVALUATION</p> <p>What happens now with the comments</p> <p>Thanks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> graffiti wall style evaluation on flip chart paper 	<p>tree of hope background</p> <p>black pens</p> <p>leaf shapes printed on autumn colour card</p> <p>scissors + glue</p>	<p>be prepared to scribe if necessary</p>
1.55	<p>FINISH</p>		
<p>Tools and materials</p> <p>Towards 2020 exhibition materials and artefacts</p> <p>leaf sheets, lots of scissors, pens, glue sticks</p>		<p>badge-making kit</p> <p>stickers (dots or similar to use on maps)</p> <p>Flip chart and pens</p>	

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