

Craven District Council

Community Engagement Strategy

2010 - 2013

Last updated by
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1. Background

1.1 The new Duty to Involve came into force in April 2009. This new duty seeks to ensure that people have greater opportunities to have their say and aspires to embed a culture of engagement and empowerment in our public services.

1.2 This means that Craven District Council must now consider as a matter of course the possible information provision, consultation and involvement opportunities they need to provide across all of their functions.

1.3 The duty is set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and was extended to include more public authorities in the most recent Empowerment White Paper 'Communities in Control'.

1.4 The Craven Community Engagement Strategy will ensure we are meeting the Duty to Involve. The Strategy will be refreshed every three years and the Action Plan (Appendix 1) will be updated every year.

2. Purpose of the Community Engagement Strategy

The aim of Craven District Council's Community Engagement Strategy is to:

'Improve the way the Council listens and responds to its customers. This will lead to increased levels and improved quality of engagement with our communities and partners.'

3. The Importance of Engaging with the Communities we serve

Successful Community Engagement will help Craven District Council to demonstrate that through its normal day to day business it:

- Understands the interests and requirements of our local communities.
- Uses this understanding to ensure information, consultation and involvement opportunities are provided on the right issues, targeted at the right people and accessible to those the authority is trying to reach.
- Has an appropriate corporate approach to providing information, consulting and involving in other ways that flows throughout Craven District Council. This will include working with partners where appropriate through the LSP and

encouraging members to be involved in the dissemination of community engagement principles within their wards.

- Ensures that local people feel that the authority provides relevant and accessible engagement opportunities and will know how to get involved, either directly or through elected representatives.
- Will promote joined up multi-agency working
- Will give local people all the facts of the matter, helping them to recognise the difficult choices and decisions that need to be made in providing services which reflect local needs. This will be built into the consultation process at all stages so that the public can be aware of the difficulties faced in decision making.

4. Measuring Residents Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things is measured every two years through the Place Survey. The Place Survey measures local people's perceptions about the place they live based on the following national indicators.

NI 1: The % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.

NI 2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood

NI 3: Civic Participation in a local area.

NI 4: Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.

NI1 and NI3 are included in the Local Area Agreement, a three year agreement between the main public sector agencies in the area, other partners and central government to improve services and the quality of life in North Yorkshire.

The 2008 Place Survey show Craven District Council's current performance in relation to Community Engagement is as follows:

NI 1: 78% of residents said they believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local.

NI 2: 71% of people who agreed that they belong to their neighbourhood.

NI3: 20% of residents said they had been involved in decisions affecting their local area.

NI 4: 34% of residents said they can influence decisions in their local area, placing us among the top 25% of Council's in England.

49% of residents said they were satisfied with the way the Council runs things

36% of residents said they feel well informed about how to get involved in decision making

22% of residents said they would like to be more involved in the decisions that affect their local area.

63% said that whether they got involved or not would depend on the issue

48% of residents feel well informed about public services

5. Corporate Context

5.1 The Craven District Council Plan 2009 – 2012 highlights the importance of Involving the Community and gives the following corporate commitment: ‘We believe that it is important to involve the local community in developing and shaping service delivery. We want to involve local residents in key decisions about local services; especially those groups who are often most dependent on the services we provide; in order to ensure that services meet local needs and are accessible for all.’

5.2 The new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will assess the implementation of the Duty to Involve. In particular it will assess how well the council and partners know and engage with their communities (especially the hard to reach) and the degree to which community involvement has informed priorities and the assessment of outcomes.

5.3 The outcome of implementing the Duty will partly be measured by NI 4: ‘The percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.’ NI1* and NI3† are also relevant and these are reported to the NYSP through the LSP Strengthening Communities Action Plan.

5.4 The Communities and Local Government (CLG) department have included in the guidance on the duty a statement of what success will look like:

“The activities authorities undertake to meet the duty will depend on local circumstances. Appropriate engagement should be embedded as standard practice throughout authorities, central to service delivery, policy and decision making.

- Understand the interests and requirements of the local community
- Use their understanding to ensure information, consultation and involvement opportunities are provided on the right issues, targeted at the right people, and accessible to those the authority is trying to reach
- Have an appropriate corporate approach to providing information, consulting and involving in other ways that flows throughout the organisation - from strategic policies into individual service delivery and that they work with partners where appropriate and
- Local people will feel that the authority provides relevant and accessible engagement opportunities and will know how to get involved, either directly or through their elected representative. Local people will recognise that the authority’s policies reflect this involvement and services are tailored to local needs, even though difficult choices in service provision need to be made.”

* % of people who believe people from different backgrounds can get on well together in their local area.

† Civic participation in a local area.

6. Principles and Standards

6.1 So that everyone is clear about what we are trying to achieve Craven District Council has adopted the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) Community Engagement and Neighbourhood Management Framework for North Yorkshire. This will ensure a strategic approach to meet the requirements of the Duty to Involve.

6.2 We will work to the principles and standards outlined by the NYSP to ensure that we have shared purposes. The Framework is the foundation of joint working across the North Yorkshire and act as building blocks towards better engaging with the communities of North Yorkshire. The following principles demonstrate that Craven District Council is committed to:

1. Ensure engaging with communities is a mainstream activity
2. Agree neighborhoods and communities of interest
3. Develop shared engagement structures
4. Set shared community priorities
5. Develop shared profiling and mapping
6. Share and co-ordinate information
7. Support community development and empowerment
8. Ensure better engagement with voluntary and community organisations
9. Make effective use of community representatives including councillors
10. Provide nominated officers in each agency
11. Identify a neighbourhood co-ordinator where appropriate
12. Develop joint performance measures
13. Provide strong leadership
14. Commit shared resources

6.3 We have adopted the following standards as outlined by the NYSP to ensure robust methods of community engagement are adhered to:

Clarity of Purpose

Before beginning any engagement activity, we will be clear about why it is happening, what the relevance is to the people we are involving, what we want to achieve, which engagement activity we will use, what the community can and cannot influence, and how we will use the information gathered through the engagement activity.

Evidence Base

We will use all available research, knowledge and community intelligence including qualitative information to help us plan engagement activities. We will not carry out engagement activities if the information we need is already available. However, we recognise that sometimes the process of involving people is an end in itself to ensure that everyone is committed to the outcomes.

Timing

We will allow sufficient time to design and carry out engagement activities that are inclusive and encourage participation from all affected communities. We will also allow sufficient time to ensure that the results of engagement activities can shape our policies, plans and services to meet the needs of our communities.

Quality

We will work to ensure that staff responsible for engagement have the skills and capacity to achieve high quality engagement. We will ensure that they are aware of the barriers there can be to engagement and how they can be overcome. Equally, we will work to ensure that communities have the opportunity to develop their skills and capacity to engage if they wish.

Partnership

We will identify the appropriate partners, with particular recognition of the knowledge and expertise of the voluntary and community sector, and carry out engagement activities in partnership where appropriate. This will allow us to appropriately target engagement activities and to avoid duplication of effort (this will help us to avoid 'consultation fatigue' in our communities).

Communication

We will always be open, honest, and accountable when sharing information and responding to contributions from all participants. We will also communicate between partners to create joined-up engagement activities and avoid duplication of effort. We will ensure there are clear referral routes for issues which arise during engagement activities.

Inclusion

We will support a variety of engagement activities to reflect the diversity of our communities and will be responsive to the ways that the community wants to engage with us. We will carry out equality impact assessments and endeavour to involve people in a way which meets their needs rather than ours, ensuring that there are accessible ways for them to initiate engagement.

We will recognise the complexity of engaging with seldom heard groups and vulnerable groups, and people who face additional barriers to engagement, such as accessibility and transport issues.

Feedback

We will provide feedback to the community about the engagement activities we carry out and will explain how the community's input contributed to the decision-making process. We will explain how and when we will provide feedback to the community at the same time as we carry out the community engagement exercise. We will also make the feedback as widely available as possible.

Monitoring & Review

In partnership with stakeholders, we will monitor and review the engagement activities we carry out to ensure that all sections of the community have the opportunity to engage should they choose to, particularly those whose voices are often not heard, and change our practices accordingly. We will evaluate effectiveness and share learning.

Resources

We will plan engagement activity and underpinning community development activity carefully in the light of what those activities seek to achieve and in the context of available resources and will communicate any constraints clear

7. Key Mechanisms for Implementing Community Engagement

7.1 Craven District Council works with the Craven Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to “make sure that the views of local people are reflected in the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the development of local services. Through the LSP we will work with partner agencies to co-ordinate our joint community consultation processes and to make sure we have effective ways of listening and responding to all sections of Craven’s community. Craven LSP will produce an annual plan of the key engagement activities that each LSP partner is planning to undertake and an annual programme of joint engagement activities.

7.2 In order to co-ordinate our own engagement activities Craven District Council currently produce an Annual Community Engagement Plan which will be developed and reviewed on a six monthly basis. This plan will be agreed by the Council Management Team (CMT). See Appendix 1 for a copy of The Annual Community Engagement Plan (2010 – 2011). The Plan will:

- Ensure we are consulting on key issues to facilitate service improvement
- Ensure coordination, reduce duplication and ensure that resources for consultation are not wasted.
- Promote joined up working, including opportunities for sharing costs of community engagement with key partners.
- Reduce consultation fatigue amongst out local communities

An annual summary report on consultation undertaken, results and intended action will be produced by the Community Engagement and Equalities Officer making use of data available on the Craven Community Engagement Database.

7.3 The Craven Community Engagement Database contains information about past, present and future consultations and community engagement events run by Craven District Council and its partners. This is available to the public via the Craven District Council website and is updated on a monthly basis.

7.4 The Residents Feedback Panel is a mechanism for residents of Craven to regularly give their opinions and comments on a range of Council issues. Craven District Council will contact residents regularly and ask for residents opinions on a number of issues. All services will be invited to feed into this and it will act as another way of coordinating all consultations.

7.5 Local Area Engagement Groups, using examples of rural best practice we will work with partner organisations to develop area based groups which identify and tackle local issues and concerns.

7.6 Customer Profiling Information obtained from Craven Community Safety Partnerships Data Analyst will be used to develop targeted engagement activities for specific groups.

7.7 The Craven District Council Community Engagement Toolkit contains general advice and minimum standards for undertaking consultation and community engagement events. This includes methodologies, advice for engaging with minority groups, monitoring and reporting and producing feedback. This also includes a registration form for intended consultations to be added to the Craven Community Engagement Database and a Monitoring Form which must be completed once any consultation or community engagement activity has been completed and the results are known, this will monitor results/ outcomes, actions and feedback.

7.8 The Equalities Monitoring Guide to Gathering Data on Service Users specifies standards for the collection of demographic data, and data protection statements. Gathering this data will help us to know our communities and know who is using our services. This will help to ensure that services are tailored to the needs of the people who use them. Any data collected using the Equalities Monitoring Guide must be taken into account when producing annual service plans.

7.9 PR and Communications play an important role in Community engagement and ensure that residents are kept up to date with services and are informed about all Council consultations and Community engagement events. They are responsible for the resident's newsletter 'Your Craven' which is distributed to all households in Craven. The 2009 Reputation Plan and Communications Strategy (2010 – 2013) ensures that a coordinated and strategic approach is given to all Communications activity.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

A number of groups and individuals are key to effective Community Engagement in Craven. The chart below highlights those individuals and groups and outlines their responsibilities.

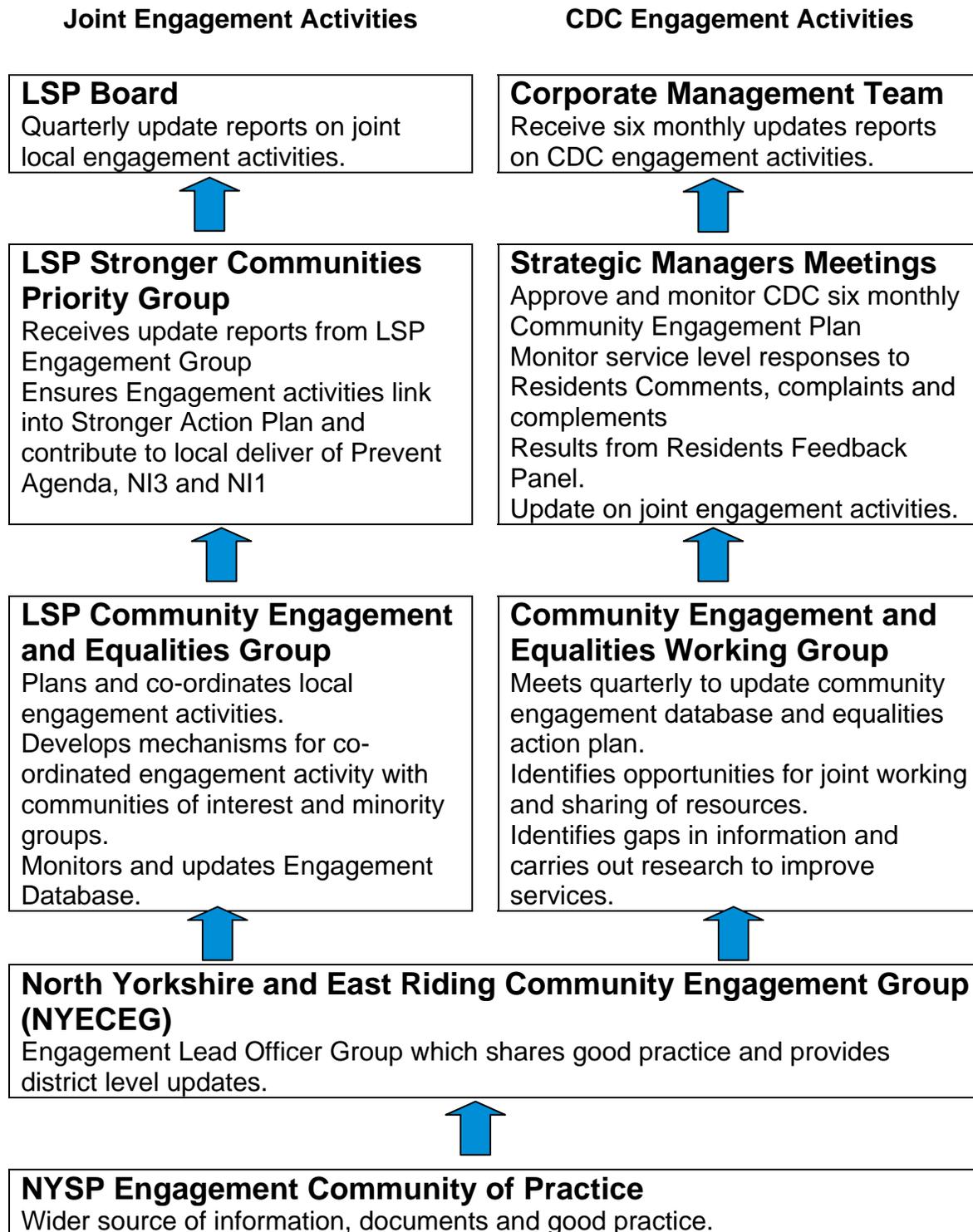
ROLE IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
The Council Management Team (CMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the outcomes of the Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the authority and the Duty to Involve; • Monitor the progress annually of the Community Engagement Working Group; • Establish the priority areas of work for corporate consultation and community engagement events • Take overall responsibility for ensuring that policy direction agreed by Council is translated into effective action through the Community Engagement Strategy, Community Engagement Toolkit and Annual Community Engagement Plan.
Strategic Managers Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on joint engagement activities • Monitor progress on the CDC Annual Community Engagement Plan Comments, complaints and complements and results from Residents Feedback Panel. • Monitor feedback to service level consultations and residents comments. • Monitor the progress of consultations and community engagement events and ensure appropriate feedback is disseminated to relevant audiences. • Ensure that feedback from residents are considered in the key day-to-day responsibility for running the Council services used by local people; • Determine the level of need to consult their customers on Council services and policies; and inform the Community Engagement and Equalities Officer in Stronger Communities of any Community Engagement work which they plan to do, using the Craven Community Engagement Database;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Community Engagement work which they feel should be undertaken on a corporate basis by the Authority and advise their departmental representative on the Community Engagement and Equality Working Group;
Community Engagement Member Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises awareness of Community Engagement to other members via guidance, advice and promotion of good practice from Community Engagement and Equalities Officer.
CDC & NYCC Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out regular local formal and informal engagement with residents Advises Community Engagement and Equalities of any emerging community issues or needs.
Parish & Town Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives information on major consultations being carried out by statutory bodies. Gives feedback on behalf of local community to statutory bodies. Raises community issues or needs through Parish Liaison Meeting.
Community Engagement and Equalities Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raises awareness of community engagement via guidance, advice and promotion of best practice using the Council's Intranet; Reports and reviews departments Community Engagement activities to the group, identifies opportunities for joint working and sharing of resources, identifying gaps in information and carrying out research to improve services. Monitors progress against the Equalities Action Plan.
Community Engagement and Equalities Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises members about engagement activities Reports progress on Community Engagement twice yearly to CMT and quarterly to Strategic Manager Meeting. Co-ordinates community engagement work of Craven District Council and partners, including the internal Community Engagement and Equalities Working Group and the LSP Engagement Group. Prepares and implements an Annual Community Engagement Plan; Shares information on forthcoming consultation and the results of completed consultation with CMT and partner organisations Via the Craven Community Engagement Database.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinates effective consultation with the via the Residents Feedback Panel; • Monitors and reviews the Council's Community Engagement Strategy and Community Engagement Toolkit. • Identifies community engagement training needs and works with HR to meet them.
Performance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors progress against NI 1, NI 2, NI 3 and NI 4. • Is responsible for conducting the Place survey
LSP Engagement Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces update reports for the LSP Management Board • Ensures Engagement activities link into Stronger Action Plan and contribute to local deliver of Prevent Agenda, NI3 and NI1
Customer Services Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages the Customer Complaints, Comments and Compliments scheme.
PR & Communications Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces the Communications plan. • Provides support about channels for communicating consultation and community engagement activities to residents of Craven.

9. Coordination of Engagement Activities

Flow Chart showing co-ordination of Engagement Activities in Craven



10. Resources

10.1 At a service level, the responsibility for meeting the costs of consultation and community engagement activities lay with service budgets and managers.

10.2 The corporate budget for Community Engagement meets the costs of:

- The Residents Feedback Panel, including postage, printing, software etc.
- Your Craven
- Other small corporate consultation projects
- Community Engagement training for officers and members.

10.3 Guidance for carrying out Consultation and Community Engagement can be found in the Craven Community Engagement Toolkit.

10.4 The Community Engagement and Equalities Officer can be contacted for guidance and support.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

All Consultation and Community Engagement events should be registered on the Craven Community Engagement Database by filling in a blank registration form, which can be found on the Craven District Council website in the Consultation and Engagement section. This should be submitted electronically to Rachel Wallbank.

After a consultation or community engagement events has taken place a monitoring form should be completed and submitted to Harriet Steventon. This can be found in the Community Engagement Toolkit. This will then be monitored centrally.

12. Further information

For further information about Community Engagement, please contact the Community Engagement and Equalities Officer on 01756 706290.

APPENDIX 1: Corporate Community Engagement Action Plan 2010/ 2011

The Corporate Community Engagement Action Plan identifies corporate mechanisms which will be developed for CDC departments to use to engage with the communities of Craven.

Action	Timescale	Responsible Officer / strategic manager	Outcomes
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
1. Investigate the possibility of a Business Forum or other appropriate mechanism for engaging with businesses.	September 2010.	David Smurthwaite	Improved mechanisms of engaging with Cravens Business Community
STRONGER COMMUNITIES			
2. Map Community Engagement methods carried out by members in their community leadership role and provide a source of advice for expanding ideas	September 2010.	Harriet Steventon	
3. Develop a mechanism for centrally sharing community information gathered by members.	March 2011.	Harriet Steventon	
4. Develop the Residents Feedback Panel and send out quarterly questionnaires to be fed into by service areas.	March 2011.	Harriet Steventon	
5. Establish internal Community Engagement and Equalities Working Group to meet quarterly.	March 2011.	Harriet Steventon	Drive Community Engagement and Equalities agenda internally and ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Duty to Involve and the Equalities Bill.

6. Your Craven	Twice annually	Sharon Hudson and Joanne Fox	Communicate council activity and news to Craven Residents.
7. Local Area Engagement Groups. Work with partner agencies to develop joint engagement activities including joint local structures to engage with the public through the LSP Engagement Group.	March 2011.	Harriet Steventon	Use partner knowledge to develop activities in areas across Craven. This will help to share resources.
8. Establish and develop community of interest groups across the district.	March 2011.	Harriet Steventon	Help to know the requirements of our communities and tailor engagement activities to suit their needs.
9. Develop a system to ensure staff feedback to comments received.	March 2011.	Harriet Steventon	Improved feedback mechanisms to ensure that customer comments gathered at events and consultations are feedback to in a timely and appropriate manner.
10. Lunchtime Learning sessions.	March 2011.	Harriet Steventon, Sharon Hudson and Jo Fox	Raise the profile of community engagement and methods to CDC staff.
11. Use Customer Profiling Information to develop targeted engagement activities for specific groups.	January 2010 – June 2010	Harriet Steventon, Abdul Gulamhusein.	Use of statistical information to make sure we know our communities and are developing our services in an appropriate manner for those communities.

CUSTOMER SERVICES			
10. Customer Services questionnaire.			
11. Implement the Getting it Right Toolkit and Righting The Wrongs	November 2009 – May 2010.	Deborah Davis, Rachel Wallbank, James Hordern and Val Paley.	Improving customer services and fixing things when they go wrong. Improved customer satisfaction,. Reduce number of 'Avoidable contacts' (NI 14). Increase customers 'ability to influence' (NI 4)
12. Review the Customer Complaints, Comments and Compliments system.	March 2010	Deborah Davis	Improved use and knowledge of customer feedback.
HUMAN RESOURES			
13. Re-establish staff suggestions and comments scheme.	March 2010		Ensure that staff are being listed to and their grievances are being addressed.

APPENDIX 2: Annual Community Engagement Plan 2010/ 2011

The Annual Community Engagement Plan identifies specific consultations and community engagement activities within each department of Craven District Council which will be consulted on over the next 12 months.

Title of Consultation/ Community Engagement Activity	Dates	Service	Responsible Officer
PLANNING AND REGENERATION			
1. On-going consultation with Settle and Skipton Town Teams re. Rural Capitals Projects		Economic Development	Andrew Laycock
2. Craven Townscape Guide		Economic Development and Planning	Andrew Laycock and Roy Banks
3. Customer Users Survey for Settle and Skipton Tourist Information Centres		Economic Development	Yvonne Fortune
4. Craven Improvement Plans		Economic Development	David Smurthwaite
5. Bentham: Gateway to the Forest of Bowland Project		Economic Development	Sharon Sunter
6. Termly consultation on Sport Unlimited programme	Termly	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
7. Invite for FANS membership	November	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
8. Consultation on Coach Education demand analysis for minimum operating courses for Clubmark	October	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
9. Quarterly newsletter to the Active Craven – Community sports network	Quarterly	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
10. Active Craven meetings: Biannual Strategic meetings and then regular sports specific sub group meetings in range of sports	Biannual and bi monthly or quarterly	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore

11. Active Craven Annual report requests for delivery of projects and good practice examples	Summer to Autumn	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
12. Working with target groups and areas over developing and delivering a Walking, Cycling and Swimming	April to March	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
13. Other relevant CE actions that may come out of annual service plans within the new council structure i.e. Playing Pitch strategy update	Various	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
14. Various project meetings with range of community groups – mainly sport. Will included articles in Herald to articles in Parish newsletters	Year round and ongoing	Sports Development	Bruce Dinsmore
15. Festivals' development and support throughout the district	Ongoing	Museums & Arts	Catherine Johnson
16. Craven Events flyer 3 times a year and Craven Events website	Ongoing	Museums & Arts	Catherine Johnson
17. Project support and development, including fundraising with arts and heritage groups	Ongoing	Museums & Arts	Catherine Johnson Suzanne Callaghan
18. Heritage and arts work with schools via Craven Museum & Gallery	Ongoing	Museums & Arts	Suzanne Callaghan Catherine Johnson
19. Arts & Health projects in partnership with Pioneer Projects via Craven Museum & Gallery	Ongoing	Museums & Arts	Catherine Johnson Suzanne Callaghan
20. Sustainable Arts & Design in the Public Realm documentation for LDF	Ongoing	Museums & Arts	Catherine Johnson
21. Heritage and arts Family Fun Days, workshops, talks and events via Craven Museum & Gallery	Ongoing	Museums & Arts	Suzanne Callaghan Catherine Johnson

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE			
22. Your Craven	TBC	Stronger Communities	Jo Fox and Sharon Hudson
23. Pension Roadshows	April 2010/ September 2010	Stronger Communities	Harriet Steventon
24. Resident Feedback Panels	30.01.10 30.04.10 30.07.10 30.10.10	Stronger Communities	Harriet Steventon
25. LSP Engagement Activities	TBC	Stronger Communities	Kate Senior and Harriet Steventon
26. Cohesion Events	Subject to funding	Stronger Communities	Kate Senior and Harriet Steventon
27. Place Survey	Autumn 2010	Stronger Communities	Rebecca Steel
28. Council Plan		Stronger Communities	Claire Mazurke
29. Craven Pride	2 August - 1 October	Stronger Communities	Harriet Steventon
NEIGHBOURHOODS			
30. North Yorkshire Housing Strategy Consultation	February 2010 – April 2010.	Housing	Wyn Ashton
FINANCIAL SERVICES			
31. Budget Consultation	Dec09/Jan 10	Financial Services	Robert Nelsey
32. Benefits Roadshow	Various times	Revenues and Benefits	Deborah Davis



**If you would like this information in a way which is better for you,
please contact us:**

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