



Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement



Key Questions & Handy Hints

ANALYSE



Q1. Our purpose for engagement is....?

Handy hints:

- Think about your reason for engaging the community. For example are you doing it because you want to:
 - » Gain new understanding?
 - » Improve policy or practice?
 - » Plan or rationalise services?
 - » Involve the community in meeting need?
- Think about:
 - » How you will explain your purpose?
 - » Why might the community want to engage with you?
 - » Are their interests the same as or different from yours?
 - » How might the community react to your motives?

Q2. Which is the right level of involvement for our purposes?

Handy hints:

Are you seeking to:

- Inform: this means you are only going to tell people what you plan to do.
- Consult: This means you will offer people restricted options to choose between.
- Engage:
 - » To take shared decisions - this means the community will influence choices and options for action.
 - » To take shared action - this means the community will share in any actions taken.
 - » To support community led action – this means the community will lead the action.

Before we plan the engagement:

Q3. What do we know?

Q4. What do we need to know?

Handy hints:

- Clarify exactly what the issue is that you think community engagement could help you to address.
- Answer these questions:
 - » Do you already have any information that is relevant to the focus of the engagement?
 - » How useful, reliable and up to date is this information?
 - » Can you use any of this information?
 - » What do you need to know more about?
- Check:
 - » Is this an issue that is recognised by the community

Q5. Who has an interest in our focus of engagement?

Handy hints:

- Who in the community has an interest in this?
- What agencies have an interest?
- How do we encourage those whose interests might be affected to become involved?

Q6. Who needs encouragement?

Q7. Are there any conflicts of interest that might emerge?

Handy hints:

Think about differences of view that stakeholders might have:

- » Are some voices louder and better organised and could this disadvantage others?
- » What can you do to enable all voices to be heard?



PLAN



Q1. What outcomes are stakeholders looking for?

Handy Hints:

- Outcomes are the differences that result from an action. At the start, the lead person(s) should seek to establish what difference or differences key stakeholders want the engagement to make.
- Clarify:
 - » What is each stakeholder looking for from the engagement? i.e. individual participants
 - » What is each stakeholder group looking for? i.e. interest groups (e.g. young people), organisations (e.g. the police)
 - » Are they looking for the same things?
 - » If not, can all their interests be accommodated?

Q2. What will success look like?

Handy Hints:

- You should now know what outcomes you are looking for but how will you know they have been achieved? Think about:
 - » What types of evidence would be convincing to you and other stakeholders?
 - » How would you be able to collect evidence as the engagement develops?
- With the other stakeholders, identify measures or indicators of performance for each outcome.
 - » For more information see Step 2 of the LEAP model <http://leap.scdc.org.uk/>

Q3. What barriers might affect anyone who should be involved?

Q4. What resources might be needed to overcome these barriers?

Handy hints:

Though we have identified who has an interest they can only exercise their interests if they can participate. So,

- » What physical or financial barriers might affect anyone who should be able to be involved?
- » How can you develop your plans for engagement to minimise these barriers?
- » What resources might be needed to overcome barriers?

Q5. Is there a need for independent community development support or specialist advice and, if so, where would it come from?

Handy Hints:

Communities you want to involve may feel that they need help to represent themselves but feel this lacks objectivity or detachment if it comes from an agency that is engaging them. So:

- » Who can provide independent community development support or specialist advice?

Q6. What resources are available to us: skills, experience, budgets, facilities, time etc?

Handy hints:

Identifying the resources available to you is a key part of developing an action plan for engagement. The resources available to you will influence your choice of methods. Think about the following:

- » What skills are available to us?
- » What experience can we draw on?
- » What facilities can we access?
(e.g. buildings, equipment, transport)
- » What time is available?
- » What is the budget?
- » Who holds these skills and experience?

Q7. What methods will we use?

Handy hints:

Be imaginative – think about having more than just meetings. Ask yourself:

- » Who are we trying to involve?
- » Where and when would they feel most comfortable?
- » What styles/types of communication would most suit them?
- » Can we use more than one method?

There are lots of options e.g. World Café, citizen's juries, citizen's panels, community forums, Planning for Real, Story Dialogue, interactive displays, participatory drama etc.

(See: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/regeneration/engage/HowToGuide/Techniques)

Q8. What actions will be taken?

Handy hints:

To conduct your community engagement methods effectively you need to be clear who will do what, when and how they will do it, and who will co-ordinate and monitor. To do this most efficiently you need to use those best equipped for the tasks. So, think about the methods you plan to use and the resources available to you and ask:

- » What are the key tasks?
- » Who is best equipped to do them?
- » When do they need to be done?

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TABLE 6

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PARITY OF ST

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TABLE OF IMPACT

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

DO



Q1. Are we doing what we said we would do when we said we would do it?

Handy hints

A plan is only as good as the way in which it is implemented. So you need to be sure that what is agreed is done when it should be done. You should already have identified who will co-ordinate and monitor your action. So, ask yourself:

- » Is the engagement being co-ordinated?
- » Is the information needed for monitoring being recorded and shared?
- » Are we doing what we said we would do when we said we would do it?
- » Is progress being chased when it needs to be?
- » Keep records of progress.

Q2. Are we getting the stakeholders involved and contributing appropriately?

Handy hints:

- Involving all the stakeholders and reviewing whether they are contributing appropriately improves the prospect of successful outcomes. Look back at who you thought had an interest and ask:
 - » Are the stakeholders participating and if not why is this?
 - » Are we communicating with them effectively?
 - » Are there barriers that we should address?
 - » Are the methods proving appropriate for the participants?
 - » Is the focus of the engagement really relevant to them?

- It is not just whether stakeholders are there that matters but whether they can contribute positively and play the roles that are required of them. Observe and talk to agency and community participants, do they feel:
 - » Confident?
 - » Well informed
 - » Committed?
 - » Able to take part consistently?
 - » Able to act as genuine representatives of others?
 - » Able to use their authority?
- What can you do to address any barriers to effective participation?

Q3. Are we all working well together?

Handy hints:

For community engagement to be effective the participants have to be able to work effectively and positively with one another. Look at the quality of the working relationships and their impact on the overall performance of the engagement system. Ask yourself question like:

- » Have we established openness, mutual trust and confidence?
- » Do we behave with respect for one another?
- » Do we address conflicts?
- » Do we take decisions in a clear way?

Q4. Are we keeping everyone informed?

Handy hints:

Community engagement requires good communication between the participants, between them and the communities and agencies that they represent, and with others who might be affected.

Check:

- » Are the participants satisfied that they are getting the information they need in suitable form?
- » Are those they represent getting the information they need in suitable form?
- » Is there effective communication with others that might be affected?
- » If not what action is needed by whom?

Q5. What are we learning?

Handy hints:

Monitoring of progress should lead to adjustment of practice. Waiting to the end to identify lessons may be too late. So share monitoring information and discuss progress with the participants. If anything is not working do something about it!

- Keep asking yourself:
 - » What is going well and do we need to consolidate it?
 - » What is going wrong and how do we change it?
- If change is needed be specific about who needs to take action about what and when

Q6. Do we need to revise our analysis, methods or action plan?

Handy hints:

- You may discover that things are not going quite as planned. There can be different reasons for this;
 - » Those responsible may not be doing what they said they would do
 - » They may not be doing it well enough
- However the problems could lie deeper:
 - » The methods you have chosen may not be right for your purposes
 - » You may have discovered flaws in your analysis of the need for engagement
- If any of these things have happened go back to the Analyse and Plan sections of VOiCE and reconsider why you are doing this and how you are going about it.



REVIEW



Q1. How have stakeholders been involved in collecting evidence and judging performance?

Handy Hints:

Everyone who committed themselves to being involved will want to know whether the outcomes that were agreed at the start have been achieved. They should all be party to reaching judgments of the quality of the engagement. Ask yourself:

- Who are the stakeholders who should be involved? (see Analyse section)
- Have we involved them effectively and to their satisfaction:
 - » In gathering relevant evidence?
 - » In judging performance?
- Have they been enabled to participate in evaluating both the process and results of the engagement?

Q2. How well did we meet the National Standards for Community Engagement?

Handy Hints:

The focus here is on the way that the engagement was conducted. Things rarely go exactly as planned. So, before you conduct your review look back at the records you have kept and ask yourself:

- Did we implement the plan?
- Were there any aspects that we did differently?
- Were there any things that we did not actually do?
- In the light of this real picture of what happened, with the stakeholders, review the evidence and ask yourselves:
 - » Which standards indicators are most relevant to us in judging performance against this standard?
 - » To what degree has each standard been met?
 - » Is there consensus about these answers or do different stakeholders have different views that need to be recorded?

Q3. Reviewing the outcomes from your plan, how successful have you been?

Handy hints:

The quality of the process of engagement does not necessarily determine its outcome. It is essential to ask the direct question: to what extent have the purposes set in the plan actually been achieved? Everyone who committed themselves to being involved will want to know the answer to this question.

In relation to each outcome that was set in your action plan, ask yourself:

- » To what degree has the engagement addressed the needs we identified?
- » To what degree has the engagement achieved the outcome that we sought in relation to these needs?
- » Is there consensus about these answers or do different stakeholders have different views that should be recorded?

Q4. Have there been any unanticipated outcomes?

Handy Hints:

Only knowing whether you achieved what you set out to do is not enough. What you do will commonly have other results than those that you were looking for. These can be good or bad. If you are going to learn from what you have done you need to know what else happened.

With the stakeholders, review the evidence and ask yourselves:

- » Did any outcomes result other than those we planned for?
- » Are there any significant implications of these outcomes?

Q5. What key lessons have been learned as a result of the engagement?

Handy Hints:

There is no point in evaluating your performance if you don't reflect on how it may help you in the future. So, with the stakeholders, ask yourself:

- What have we learned from the experience of this engagement? In particular:
 - » How could the process have been improved?
 - » What should we be doing now and in the future to address the needs and achieve the outcomes we identified?
 - » What new issues have we identified and what should we be doing about them?



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