community engagement toolkit

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
2015 - 2018

Scottish Borders COUNCIL

CONTENTS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline Scottish Borders Council's commitment to working with the Borders community. The council defines community in this instance as everyone who lives and/or works in the Scottish Borders.

It is essential that Scottish Borders Council continues to work closely with our Community Planning Partners, engaging with everyone that has a stake in the services that the local authority delivers.

By working together where possible, across the Council and the Community Planning Partnership, appropriate resources can be maximised and the possibility of consultation fatigue reduced.

To help us deliver this we have developed this community engagement toolkit. The toolkit is part of a library of guides to support us deliver our engagement activities in a consistent, cost effective and transparent manner.

Scottish Borders Council

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOLKIT

- To ensure the Council is open and responsive to the views of the Borders community
- To reduce duplication in engagement activity and increase capacity across Scottish Borders Council
- To create better understanding of engagement practices through a consistent approach
- To support sustained community involvement in the planning and decision making processes
- To support Scottish Borders Council Officers when undertaking joint engagement activities with Partners whilst remaining cognisant of differing statutory requirements, e.g. integration of Adult Health & Social Care.
- To support Scottish Borders Council Officers meet the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNITY?
Everyone who lives and/or works in the Scottish Borders.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?
Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences.

The National Standards for Community Engagement

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

The National Standards for Community Engagement define community engagement as developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences. This also applies equally to public, private and third sector organisations.

There are many terms that can be used when describing the levels of community engagement, including:

- **Informing** - telling individuals and communities what we are going to do and why
- **Consulting** - presenting information for comment
- **Involving** - working with individuals and communities to develop options and make the decisions

It is important that in all communication we should make it clear what the level of engagement is and what this means for the community.

INFORMING

The Scottish Borders Connect newspaper is distributed three times a year to every household in the Scottish Borders. It is one of the many ways the Council uses to provide information to the public. It contains information about Council services, work the Council is involved in and information that is of use to the community. The Winter 2014 edition included winter weather advice and information.

CONSULTING

During 2014 a working group of Scottish Borders Councillors and Community Councillors developed a set of recommendations to amend the Scottish Borders Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils. Following public consultation one recommendation was rejected and all other proposals, including those for the establishment of two new community council areas which had been made by the communities involved, were accepted.

INVOLVING

Scottish Borders Council established and commissioned the Scottish Borders Youth Commission on Bullying on 1st March 2011 to present evidenced recommendations on the prevention and management of bullying behaviour to inform the development of a revised Anti-Bullying Framework for the Council.

From July 2011 to March 2012, 12 Youth Commissioners (aged 14-23 years old) gathered evidence, researched sources, analysed results, before presenting their recommendations. The youth-led methodology resulted in three work-streams investigating bullying behaviour within the contexts of school; community; and equalities. Evidence was gathered through interviews, focus groups, surveys, observation, and secondary sources The Commission produced 33 recommendations that led to the Council policy for the prevention and management of bullying behaviour.

WHY SHOULD THE COUNCIL ENGAGE?

Effective community engagement provides a range of benefits to Scottish Borders Council and the community.

It can:

- Empower people to plan and influence the future of their own community producing a greater sense of community spirit and pride.
- Help keep the community informed.
- Provide ways of measuring how satisfied the community is with the services the Council delivers.
- Encourage people to get involved; if people can see that their views do make a difference they are more likely to become involved.
- Build a better relationship between the community and Scottish Borders Council.
- Assist Scottish Borders Council to identify what needs to be improved.

WHO WILL THE COUNCIL ENGAGE WITH?

The Council will seek to engage with everyone who lives and/or works in the Scottish Borders. However, it is accepted that not everyone will want to be involved and that decision will be respected.

It is important to identify and employ engagement methods that are best suited to the groups we wish to engage with. For example, methods best suited to engaging with young people may not be the most appropriate way to engage with other members of the community. Carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment prior to engagement will assist in identifying the groups that should be to engaged with.

> Methods best suited to engaging with one group may not be the most appropriate way to engage with other members of the community.

Due to the rural nature of the Scottish Borders thought should always be given as to how people facing rural barriers will be engaged with, these barriers may be physical isolation, lack of public transport etc. Much of the Council's engagement work will need to address this to ensure that all members of the community are included.

THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

Elected Scottish Borders Councillors have an essential role in engaging with the Borders community about the services the Council delivers. Where local engagement is planned Officers will make sure that Councillors are kept informed and involved.

Councillors are very active within the community, such as attending local village hall or community council meetings as well as their involvement with special interest groups. They play a vital role in the Council's engagement with the public.

There are five Area Forums in the Scottish Borders. Membership of each Forum includes the Councillors for that area. The Area Forums have a role:

- To inform and consult communities on matters affecting their local area as well as the Borders as a whole.
- To make sure that decision making takes place at a local level within a corporate framework.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The principles set out below have been developed by Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership to ensure a consistent standard for community engagement activity. As a partner Scottish Borders Council has adopted these principles and will use them to guide its own community engagement activity.

1. CLEAR PURPOSE - the reason for any engagement activity should be clearly identified in any documentation and communication.

2. LEVEL OF INFLUENCE - state what is up for proposed change and how much influence consultees have on the outcome. If the decision has already been made, say so.

3. LEVEL OF RESOURCE - all known costs should be identified, and provision made for unexpected costs, when planning any engagement activity.

4. COMMUNICATE - engagement activity is a two way process so the communication channels should be well supported, clear and easy to use for all concerned.

5. CO-ORDINATE - engagement activity should be co-ordinated with others, and where possible joined up, to maximise resources and minimise engagement fatigue.

6. BE EQUITABLE - equality and diversity is an integral part of community engagement and an important part of the way we engage is to recognise diversity within the Scottish Borders and make a conscious effort to engage with all groups.

7. MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE - partners will ensure that engagement activity is fully accessible to all those who wish to be involved, by:

- Publicising the date, time and location of events and any relevant information so that it is easily accessed by those who wish to attend
- Holding events in accessible venues and locations
- Providing material in a range of formats, however to be cost effective some of this may only be produced on request
- Communicating in Plain English. Where this is not possible we will provide a glossary of terms used.
- Using a suitable variety of engagement methods

8. DELIVER APPROPRIATE TRAINING - training should be provided to enable staff to understand the importance and benefits of community engagement and how it can support them in their work, and to partner organisations to help them lead or participate in the community engagement processes.

9. REVIEW - there are always lessons to be learnt from any engagement activity. Time should be spent to review, document and share these.

10. ALLOW TIME - ensure enough time is given to planning and undertaking engagement activity.

11. PROTECT - many engagement activities result in the collection of personal information e.g. names and addresses and this information is required to be protected by law. Personal information cannot be shared with other stakeholders without the individual's permission. The individual must be made aware if it is intended to share information with Partners.

WHAT IS MEANT BY EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY?
That individual as well as group differences will be recognised.

DATA PROTECTION

Many engagement activities result in the collection of personal information e.g. names and addresses. Organisations that handle personal information about individuals have legal obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 to protect that information. There are eight data protection principles that Council Officers should follow:

1. Personal information must be fairly and lawfully processed.
2. Personal information must be processed for limited purposes.
3. Personal information must be adequate, relevant and not excessive.
4. Personal information must be accurate and up to date.
5. Personal information must not be kept for longer than is necessary.
6. Personal information must be processed in line with the data subjects' rights.
7. Personal information must be secure.
8. Personal information must not be transferred to other countries without adequate protection

Scottish Borders Council has a dedicated officer who can advise on data protection issues.

Queries should be forwarded to:
dataprotection@scotborders.gov.uk

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Equality and diversity is an integral part of Council services and is recognised as a cross cutting theme across all areas of work.

An important part of the way the Council engages is to recognise diversity within the Scottish Borders and make a conscious effort to engage with hard to reach groups. A hard to reach group is a group of people who share common characteristics which may make it more difficult to engage with. Some of the characteristics could be language barriers, cultural barriers or even a small and dispersed population which make a group hard to engage with.

Hard to reach groups are often not hard to reach in physical terms, we know of them and how to make contact, but not necessarily how to engage. They are in fact, hard to engage groups rather than the commonly termed hard to reach.

We know these groups exist and there are individuals and organisations that work successfully with them. The challenge for Scottish Borders Council is to build connections with 'hard to reach' groups and increase engagement opportunities.

Council Officers should pay particular heed to the nine protected characteristics in all work:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Equality Act 2010 states that all public bodies have a legal responsibility to assess and consult on how their policies, functions and services impact upon people from the different equality groups, and requires them to take account of the findings of their impact assessment within its decision making process.

To take account of these duties, Scottish Borders Council has developed a generic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The process aims to ensure that by focussing on all equality groups services, polices and functions meet the legal requirements by promoting equal opportunities, fostering good relations and not discriminating.

> All public bodies have a legal responsibility to assess and consult on how their policies, functions and services impact upon people from the different equality groups.
>
> *The Equality Act 2010*

An EIA consists of three stages:

1. **Stage 1** - for early stage proposals, project initiation
2. **Stage 2** - for use during the project, proposal or policy development
3. **Stage 3** - for use at the end of project, proposal or policy development

WHY DOES THE COUNCIL NEED TO IMPACT ASSESS FOR EQUALITIES?

IT NEEDS TO

Equality Impact Assessments support the Council to appropriately serve the diverse local community, and ensure that services are provided equitably and are genuinely accessible to all.

IT HAS TO

All public bodies must undertake impact assessments of their policies and functions, as set out in equalities legislation. Equality Impact Assessments are not optional.

IT WANTS TO

Equality Impact Assessments actively support the practical delivery of policies and strategies, helping the Council meet required standards and contribute towards other inspection systems and partnership arrangements.

WHEN SHOULD AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT BE CARRIED OUT?

An impact assessment should be carried out when:

- Developing a new policy, strategy, service or function
- Reviewing existing policies, strategies, services or functions

An Equalities Impact Assessment can help to identify groups that may require additional encouragement and/or support to engage.

The Equalities Impact Assessment proforma is available in the Committee Report Guidelines Appendices pack issued by the Democratic Services Team.

HOW WILL WE ENGAGE?
THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Council will utilise existing channels to promote engagement with Borders' communities, whether it be to promote an event, consultation or survey - the following channels will be maximised to reach the intended audience:

- **Website** – the Council's website www.scotborders.gov.uk receives over 60,000 visitors per month. The website has a consultation section where all existing consultations and previous consultations must be hosted. The website can also be used to host surveys and contact forms for people to provide feedback. Staff must take care to ensure the results or actions from any consultation are made available to the public.
- **Social Media** – the Council's social media (Facebook www.facebook.com/sbcouncil and twitter www.twitter.com/scotborders accounts) are used regularly to promote council news and information. It is an effective tool to signpost users to the council's website
- **Media releases** – media releases can be issued to local and national press. These are turned into news items for the website, and also posted on Facebook and Twitter.

- **SBConnect** – the Council's community newspapers is delivered to every household in the Borders three times per year (as mentioned on page 4). This should be utilised to its full potential to encourage engagement between SBC and the Borders' community. It is a useful way to reach residents not online
- **SBScene/Intranet/SBUpate** – the Council has a staff magazine, staff intranet and fortnightly staff e-bulletin which are all used to encourage engagement among staff and elected members.

Any promotional materials e.g. leaflets/posters/newsletters should be used only when considered appropriate depending on the project. Any means of promotion (as above) should be co-ordinated with careful consideration of the target audience and channelled through the Council's communications team to ensure consistency of messages and branding. The use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) throughout any project should help identify the target audience (see page 8) to ensure the most effective channels of communication are used.

VOiCE

www.voicescotland.org.uk/

Before undertaking any community engagement activity it is important to identify the level of engagement that is required and make a plan that will guide it. The VOiCE system, developed by Scottish Community Development Centre, is designed to assist individuals and organisations to design and deliver effective community engagement and should be used by Council Officers when undertaking any engagement activity. VOiCE will be used to gather information about the Council's community engagement activity.

ANALYSE

PLAN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

REVIEW

DO
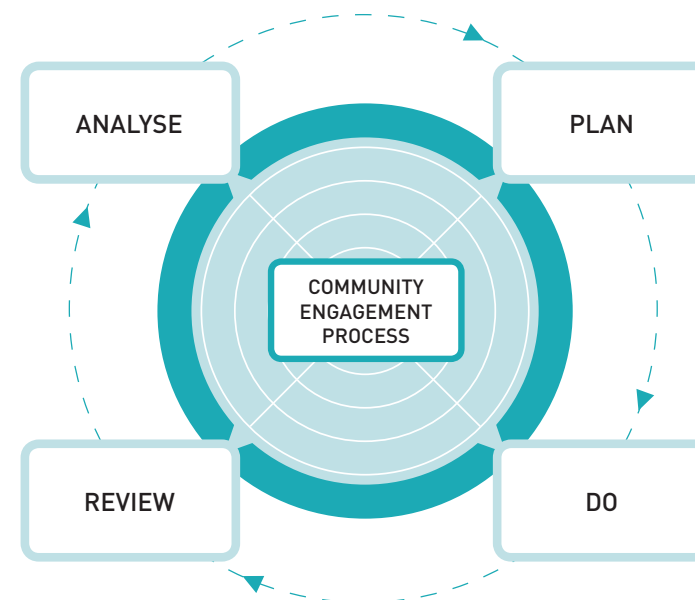
The software supports users to:

- plan community engagement and service user participation
- conduct it effectively (do)
- review and record the process
- analyse the outcomes

VOiCE can be used to support a range of engagement and is designed to be relevant both for individual services and for joint pieces of engagement work.

VOiCE can be applied to communities of geography, interest or identity. Community participants may therefore reflect a cross section of residents in an area or more specific groups defined by age, gender, ethnicity, relationship to a service provider (e.g. patient, tenant) or other factors. It can also be applied to other types of communities e.g. online or professional communities.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/

The National Standards for Community Engagement is a practical tool to help improve the experience of all participants involved in community engagement to achieve the highest quality of process and results.

The standards can be used in both formal and informal community engagement and underpin this Framework, they are:

- **Involvement**: we will identify and involve the people and organisations who have an interest in the focus of the engagement
- **Support**: we will identify and overcome any barriers to involvement
- **Planning**: we will gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken
- **Methods**: we will agree and use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose
- **Working together**: we will agree and use clear procedures that enable the participants to work with one another effectively and efficiently

- **Sharing information**: we will ensure that necessary information is communicated between the participants
- **Working with others**: we will work effectively with others with an interest in the engagement
- **Improvement**: we will develop actively the skills, knowledge and confidence of all the participants
- **Feedback**: we will feed back the results of the engagement to the wider community and agencies affected
- **Monitoring and evaluation**: we will monitor and evaluate whether the engagement achieves its purposes and meets the national standards for community engagement

The Standards have been recommended by Audit Scotland as good practice.

2. ANALYSE

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP1.   Clear purpose
KP2.   Level of influence
KP4.   Communicate
KP5.   Co-ordinate
KP6.   Be equitable
KP10. Allow time

WHY DO YOU WANT TO ENGAGE?

Think about your reason(s) for engaging with the community to complete the following two statements:

OUR PURPOSE FOR ENGAGING IS ...

- Gain new understanding?
- Improve policy, practice or services?
- Plan or redesign services?
- Involve the community in meeting need?

WE ARE SEEKING TO ...

- How will you 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?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

BEFORE YOU PLAN THE PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT WHAT DO YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT?

- What we know
- What do we need to know

Clarify exactly what the issue is that you think community engagement could help you to address. Check that this is an issue that is recognised by the community.

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?

SUMMARY INFORMATION
- What area/location are we engaging with?
- Who are you engaging with, are they a group?
- What is the overall purpose of the engagement?

WHO ARE THE STAKEHOLDERS?

WHO HAS AN INTEREST IN THE FOCUS OF ENGAGEMENT?

- Community stakeholders
- Agency stakeholders
- Who needs encouragement?
- Are there any conflicts of interest that might emerge?

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?

CHECKLIST
- Is there a good reason for conducting this engagement?
- Are you approaching it at the right level?
- Should you proceed?

3. PLAN

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP3.   Level of resource
KP4.   Communicate
KP5.   Co-ordinate
KP6.   Be equitable
KP7.   Make it accessible
KP8.   Deliver appropriate training
KP10. Allow time

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE YOU SEEKING?

WHAT OUTCOMES ARE STAKEHOLDERS LOOKING FOR, AND WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

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 each stakeholder is looking for from the engagement;
- What is each stakeholder group looking for?
- Are they looking for the same things?
- If not, can all their interests be accommodated?

YOU SHOULD NOW KNOW WHAT OUTCOMES YOU ARE LOOKING FOR BUT HOW WILL YOU KNOW THEY HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED?

Identify indicators of success for each outcome that reflects the interests of the stakeholders.

- 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.

WHAT BARRIERS?

- What barriers might affect anyone who should be involved?
- What resources might be needed to overcome these barriers?
- Is there a need for independent advocacy, community development support, or specialise advice and, if so, where would it come from?

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

SO WHAT BARRIERS MIGHT AFFECT ANYONE WHO SHOULD BE ABLE TO BE INVOLVED?

e.g. physical, financial, cultural, language etc.

- How can you develop your plans for engagement to minimise these barriers?
- What resources might be needed to overcome barriers?
- Who will provide independent community development support?

WHAT RESOURCES?

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

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

WHAT METHODS?

WHAT METHODS WILL YOU USE AND WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN TO MEET YOUR OUTCOMES?

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, citizens' juries, citizens' panels, community forums, Planning for Real, Story Dialogue, interactive displays, participatory drama etc.

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?

CUSTOMER SURVEYS

Scottish Borders Council uses its website to make surveys available to the public. These can be made available to everyone or limited to certain people e.g. those that have used a service. In order to support a consistent approach all council officers will use the website in preference to specialised survey software.

Help and advice on writing a survey is available; queries should be directed to:
SBC.Surveys@scotborders.gov.uk

CHECKLIST

Are you clear:

- What the outcomes should be?
- How you will judge success?
- That you can tackle barriers to involving the stakeholders?
- That you have the resources we need?
- That you have selected appropriate and imaginative methods to meet our outcomes?
- That the actions to be taken are clear and responsibilities allocated?

**Is the plan likely to be successful?
Should you proceed?**

Remember that all stakeholders have to be involved at every stage of the process.

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

4. DO

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP4.   Communicate
KP5.   Co-ordinate
KP7.   Make it accessible
KP8.   Deliver appropriate training
KP9.   Review
KP11. Protect

ARE YOU DOING IT?

Gathering evidence on the process and assessing progress.

ARE YOU DOING WHAT YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO WHEN YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO IT?

You need to be sure that the plan you established and agreed with stakeholders is actually implemented. Problems can arise for many, often unforeseen reasons including lack of access to resources, poor communications, poor working relationships and so on.

So refer back to the plan and check:

- Who was committed to doing what?
- When were they required to do it by?
- Are they meeting their commitments?
- If not, what are the reasons for this?
- What actions need to be taken to ensure that the plan is properly implemented?

ARE YOU GETTING THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED AND CONTRIBUTING APPROPRIATELY?

Active and effective stakeholder involvement will potentially be influenced by many factors. It is for this reason that half of all the standards have been identified as relevant.

Ask yourself:

- Who do we expect to be involved?
- Are they involved?
- If not, are there any identifiable barriers that are preventing them?
- If so, what actions can be taken to remove the barriers?
- Are the involved stakeholders able to contribute appropriately to implementation of the action plan?

IF NOT, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO ENABLE EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE APPROPRIATELY?

For example do you need to:

- Review your methods?
- Deal with issues arising in working relationships?
- Improve communications?
- Support development of skills, knowledge or confidence?

ARE YOU ALL WORKING WELL TOGETHER?

The quality of the working relationships between all the participants in community engagement is likely to be a key factor in whether it is effective.

Ask yourself, are all the participants:

- Equally able to participate?
- Being open, honest and respectful of one another?
- Respecting necessary confidentiality?
- Making best use of the time participants have available?
- Encouraging and supporting one another to work effectively?
- Using plain language?
- Seeking, listening to and reflecting on the views of others?
- Taking decisions on the basis of agreed procedures and shared knowledge
- Clear about purposes, respective roles and responsibilities?
- Addressing and resolving any conflicts that arise?
- Contributing and using available resources effectively?

If any difficulties are identified in these areas consider what can be done to bring about improvement in necessary skills and competences.

ARE YOU KEEPING EVERYONE INFORMED?

Community engagement and service user participation depend on all the participants having access to necessary information to fully understand the issues that the engagement is seeking to address.

Ask yourself:

• Within the limits of necessary confidentiality, is all relevant information being shared between all participants?
• Is the information accessible, clear and understandable?
• Is it made available in appropriate formats for participants and in time to enable them to fully take part and consult others?
• Are any issues relating to necessary restricted access to information fully explained?

WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING?

The key to effective implementation is to monitor progress and act on lessons that are emerging from the process of the action. You should be returning to this section of the toolkit throughout the implementation of your plan.

Each time you do so you should be 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, who needs to take action about what and when?

DO YOU NEED TO REVISE YOUR ANALYSIS, METHODS OR ACTION PLAN?

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. Don't be afraid to revisit and revise your plan if evidence tells you it is not working as you hoped. If anything is not working do something about it!

Keep asking yourself:

• What is going well and how do we consolidate it?
• What is going wrong and how do we change it?
• If change is needed who needs to take action about what and when?

CHECKLIST
REFLECTING ON YOUR ACTIONS

Reviewing and learning lessons is the next and final step in the cycle.

If you have addressed all questions you should have the records that are needed to conduct the review.

Important: To successfully conduct the review you will have to gather the opinions of those agency and community stakeholders who were involved in the engagement process. This can be achieved through a variety of means including questionnaires and/or roundtable discussion.

5. REVIEW

KEY PRINCIPLES (KP)

KP4. Communicate
KP5. Co-ordinate
KP9. Review
KP11. Protect

HOW WAS THE EVIDENCE COLLECTED?

HOW HAVE STAKEHOLDERS BEEN INVOLVED IN COLLECTING EVIDENCE AND JUDGING PERFORMANCE?

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 judgements of the qualities 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?

WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T?

The focus here is on the way that the engagement was conducted. Things rarely go exactly as planned.

So, before you conduct your review of the engagement 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:

- To what degree has each National Standard of Community Engagement been met?
- Is there consensus about these answers or do different stakeholders have different views that need to be recorded?

WHO DID WE ENGAGE?

- **How many of the planned Community Stakeholders did the engagement process reach?**
- **Did all the Agency stakeholders identified in** *Analyse* **continue to be involved throughout the engagement process?**

DID WE SUCCEED?

REVIEWING THE OUTCOMES FROM YOUR PLAN, HOW SUCCESSFUL HAVE YOU BEEN?

The quality of process of the 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?

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

- Overall score based on assessment of process and outcomes of the engagement
- Have there been any unanticipated outcomes?
- In the *Analyse* section we said that the right level for the engagement was
- What key lessons have been learned as a result of the engagement?
- What will we do next?

Firstly, 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?

Secondly, 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?

CHECKLIST
Reflecting on your Review

- Have all review questions been answered?
- Have all stakeholders been involved in answering them?
- Have the necessary actions been taken?

JARGON BUSTER

Community
Everyone who lives and/or works in the Scottish Borders

Community Engagement
Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences.

Community Planning
Community Planning is a process by which public agencies work in partnership with communities, the private and third sector to plan and deliver better services.

Engagement Plan
A plan that details why, when, with who and how engagement will be carried out Equality and Diversity Term used to mean that individual as well as group differences will be recognised

National Standards for Community Engagement
A set of best practice guidelines for engagement between communities and public agencies developed by the Scottish Community Development Centre on behalf of Communities Scotland

Plain English
An independent group fighting for plain English in public communication.

Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement (VOiCE)
A computer based tool for recording, planning and monitoring community engagement work

GUIDES, FURTHER TOOLS AND RESOURCES

To support this community engagement process and toolkit a broad set of tools and resources is being developed. This will include a series of guides on key community engagement topics for example consultation, methods of engagement etc. as well as additional tools, resources and useful links.

Community Engagement advice and support is available from:

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
Council Headquarters | Newtown St Boswells | MELROSE | TD6 0SA
tel: 01835 826626 | email: communityengagement@scotborders.gov.uk | www.scotborders.gov.uk

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