
MEETING	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK GROUP
DATE	20 FEBRUARY 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS RUNCIMAN (CHAIR), BARNES, STEWARD AND WISEMAN

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been three registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme in respect of this review and The Groves Residents Association.

Joy Jones spoke as the Chair of The Groves Residents' Association, making a number of observations in relation to the report. She confirmed that although the Association had achieved a great deal during the time it had been in operation, residents had a perception of a 'them and us' attitude, with the Council only undertaking work that benefitted the authority. Concern was also expressed at the language used in CYC communication with residents and for the need for this to change to encourage engagement. She confirmed that residents were prepared to assist the authority and to engage however this involved working together.

Joanna Ingerson spoke as the Secretary of The Groves Residents' Association (RA), pointing out that some of the information set out in the Groves RA Case Study was incorrect and that it would have been helpful if consultation had been undertaken prior to publication. She went on to expand on the workings of the RA and to confirm that they wished to play a

greater part in contributing and influencing decision making on matters affecting their local area.

Gwen Swinburn also spoke as a member of the Groves Residents' Association, referring to requests for additional information submitted to the Council by the RA which had gone unanswered. Concerns were also raised regarding governance issues and reference was made to the opportunity for setting up inner city parish councils.

The Chair confirmed that the issues raised at the meeting would be taken up by Mary Bailey the Head of Communities and Equalities (Neighbourhood Management Unit, Equalities and Play) and other officers.

3. INTERIM REPORT

Consideration was given to the interim report of the Task Group which had been set up to undertake a review of the issues affecting levels of community engagement across the city.

Details of the information gathered to date, together with the review remit and objectives were set out at paragraphs 3 to 10 of the report.

Further information on work undertaken around community engagement with Parish Council's and Residents Associations and the development of Community Contracts and Action Plans, Ward budgets and team meetings were reported. Statistical information provided by the CYC Customer Contact Centre and Community Services had been examined together with issues around financial inclusion and ongoing community based work and additional services provided in an effort to engage residents.

To enable Members to conclude work on the review they were asked to meet with the Parish Council Liaison Group and the Residents Association Federation to further inform the findings from the review and the arising recommendations.

Members agreed that clear outcomes were required from this review and that the views of consultees should be listened to and taken into account.

In response to the comments made by the Groves RA representatives, officers confirmed that feedback received from Residents Associations had been considered and that there had been CYC Officer representation at Residents Association Federation Meetings with the Federation being considered 'a critical friend'.

In relation to their review findings to date, the Task Group expressed:

- Concern that not all areas of the city were covered by either a Parish Council or RA.
- The need for the use of plain English in all communications and information sent out by CYC and on the CYC website.
- The importance of CYC taking account of consultation responses and providing feedback on the outcomes.
- The need for promotion of Residents Associations to increase their number and their membership.

The Task Group also considered how Parish Councils and RAs could be better used to improve communication with residents.

Following further lengthy discussion Members thanked representatives of the Customer Contact Centre for their attendance and data provided for the review, and it was

- RESOLVED:
- i) That Task Group Members attend the next informal meeting of the Residents Association Federation on Thursday 7 March at 11am and the Parish Council Liaison Group meeting on Wednesday 13 March at 2pm to discuss the review findings to date.
 - ii) That the next Task Group meeting be arranged for Wednesday 3 April at 4.45pm.
 - iii) That an Officer from the Corporate Communications Team be invited to attend the next meeting to outline the processes used in providing information for residents.

- iv) That Task Group members provide a verbal update to the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee at their next meeting on 11 March 2013.

REASON: To progress the work on this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Cllr C Runciman, Chair
[The meeting started at 4.45 pm and finished at 5.55 pm].