Community-focused transformation (Transformation masterclass) – 25 October 2023

Chair: Cllr Nazia Rehman, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

Spotlight presentation introduction from Cllr Neil Prior, Pembrokeshire County Council

- Cllr Prior introduced the importance of community by highlighting assistance with partners to restore water availability in the ward during the 'Beast from the East'.
- Since then, Cllr Prior has been proactive to introduce transformation through his cabinet member role, with extensive engagement with communities being a key part of this.
- To better engage communities, employing people who hold the skills to effectively communicate with hard-to-reach groups has been key.
- Since 2022, Cllr Prior has held cabinet responsibility for Corporate Improvement and Communities, in Pembrokeshire County Council, with a strategy that has a critical emphasis on building confidence in communities.
- Cllr Prior is also chair of the Pembrokeshire Public Services Board, which brings to together leaders of public sector organisations. Boards such as these can sometimes be in danger of becoming talking shops but have been very useful in finding ways to collaborate and not duplicate work.
- These approaches and changes can be made despite budget cutting, with them being cultural and not financial.
- Relationships are key, change requires trust and can't be rushed or faster than earning this.
- Collaborative leadership is extremely important in gaining the trust of communities, moving away from a hierarchical leadership structure is necessary to achieve this.
- This work starts with the individual and can be scaled up, it's important to work beyond boundaries and for your area, not just your local authority.

Spotlight presentation from Sarah Oliver, Business Change Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council

The journey so far
- Pembrokeshire has been on the transformation journey for 7 years, with the key pillars including technology, culture, and relationships.
- Before the Covid-19 pandemic there was a struggle with what relationships the council had with residents and what this meant, resulting in them not being organic and something enforced by the local authority.
- Relations with the community and the third sector improved with the outbreak of Covid-19, as it gave a sense of urgency and provided a common cause to work together on.
- Post Covid-19 relationships with communities have continued to be strong, with a key focus on building resilience and getting communities back on their feet.
- Encouraging employees to change how they feel about place and understanding they are also part of the community has also been important.
- With increased budget pressures, programmes with less tangible impacts tend to be the first to go, so proving impact is vital. Pembrokeshire is doing this by using health economics to show improvement and promoting social value benefits through the collection of stories from residents.

What has been done?

- A volunteering scheme has been introduced, which allows employees to work within the community for three days a year.
- A stakeholder mapping exercise as a public sector body and local authority has taken place.
- Policies have been put in place to ensure commonality of language across the council, to ensure terms and meanings are widely understood.
- Local resilience forums have been important to give a full 360 degree understanding of communities and what they are doing.
- Existing relationships have been built on, recently a seminar was held by the third sector at the council to help with engagement with very positive results.
- Work is currently being undertaken with the think tank New Local, which is looking into what enabling communities means to residents, members, and officers.

Vision

- The strapline 'Working Together, Improving Lives' has been at the centre of all the work done in the community.
- Communities will be a continued priority and programme for the council into the future.
- Moving from the traditional top-down way of working to a collaborative approach which involves both communities and partner agencies.
- Building up community capacity, capability, and confidence to help equip them with resources and skills they need to participate in local actions.

Next Steps

- Pembrokeshire is developing a new community strategy, with the focus being on the place as a whole and not just the organisation.
- It's key that culture and strategy come together, if not culture will evolve faster than the strategy.

Q&A

Q
There is often a hesitation to community-based approaches in local authorities, how did you get people on board and how were you able to test projects?

A
Measurement depends on the service, with some areas easy to measure and others more difficult, but one good way is to use videos to show a narrative. Weaving back data to demonstrate cost is also important, Pembrokeshire is working with the University of Swansea to help with this. Collecting experiences is another way to demonstrate value, for example interviewing people who use soup kitchens to find out what impact they've had. Cllr Prior has been working on gathering evidence in his ward, with a connecting community project, paid for with £10,000 of second home council tax, attracting half a million pounds of investment into the local area.

Q
How do you provide relevant data for needs assessments and ensure these are up to date?

A
This can be a problem because this is done via a wellbeing assessment that is only conducted once every few years. Wigan has been using recent census data to develop future plans, it's also important for joint intelligence services to be constantly gathering data.

Q
How are you planning on pitching your community strategy to stakeholders?

A
Lots of gentle conversations to start off with to find out what people think, conversations with the third sector and the public services board having already taken place. It's important not to rush this step and spend the time building up relationships, as this ensures the strategy is authentic. Audience is also something to consider when pitching the strategy, as it's never going to reach every resident. Working with a variety of organisations, such as town and parish councils, and voluntary organisations to engage with residents is also key.

Q
Do you have any advice on how this thinking has been embedded across teams and the organisation?

A
Working with extended leadership teams and ensuring they attend meetings with stakeholders is essential. Budget pressures tend to make people stick to their areas but encouraging people to work across the organisation can make significant budget savings and alleviate pressure. Change management theory needs to be made real across the organisation, not just in a few teams. Councillors need to be involved and be on board with changes.

Q
How can we better engage with existing communities and embed initiatives in communities in a transformative way?

A
Pembrokeshire are doing this via the public services board, looking to see if innovative funds can be used to support community groups. Supporting communities to lead on events is a good way to engage, for example the recent conference at Pembrokeshire.

Key discussion points
- Data mapping is key to identify the best people to speak to in communities and other key stakeholders.
- Handing over power to communities can be difficult, as this creates a new dynamic that needs navigating.
- Transformation officers often need to work independently from the local authority structure, which can risk more silo working.
- Desk based research to find out what residents want to see in future plans is key.
- Jargon, such as co-production, can be inaccessible for residents, depending on the audience it is better to use terms such as 'working together' to keep people engaged.
- Although transformation journeys with communities can take a long time this is necessary for good engagement.
- It's not always possible to have an end goal, as community engagement can lead to unexpected ideas, and this needs to be reflected in the development of programmes.
- Getting senior officers and members to engage will depend on leadership structure, especially as not all councils have community transformation as an area.
- When engaging with communities, authenticity is key, which means some people's personalities aren't going to work with some communities.
- Reflection is needed after engaging with communities, this shouldn't just be a box ticking exercise.

- Workforce networks for sharing activities can be helpful for staff sharing of learning and experience.
- When the council is unable to do something that a community is asking for, an option could be funding or empowering the community to act and ultimately help achieve their goals.
- Council officers need to be empowered to make change and have the natural permission to innovate.

Good practice

London Borough of Bromley
Bromley have been successfully with their loneliness prevention offer, which works across all services and allows people to connect. This stops people working in silos and helps with cohesion.

Bromley has also had success with a site called [Simply Connect Bromley](#) with community groups that are being supported and information from the UK as a whole. A lot of people access this, evidenced by the number of emails received from people who have viewed the page.

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Collating already existing data has been very useful very useful for Reigate and Barnstead in identifying which stakeholders should be targeted. Social media is also important in identifying key issues within the community.

Reigate and Barnstead have also developed a consultation toolkit, which empowers officers to run surveys without the need for research to get involved. This has freed up research to focus on other areas and has built up officer skill sets (Please see screenshots from the toolkit in the appendix).

Cheshire East Council
Cheshire East used a smaller scale citizens assembly called a 'People Panel' to gather recommendations and ideas from residents. Data tools were used to ensure the group was demographically representative of the area and a third party was used to assist with delivery. This was very successful and the recommendations were presented by the participants to members, with most of the recommendations being taken forward and those that were not explained.

Appendix

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

Consultation Toolkit

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Welcome!

Below are materials designed to help guide you when planning and delivering a consultation. Michael Broad, our Research Officer, will guide you through this training using narrated slides, videos and helpful checklists, templates and supporting documentation.

We hope you find this training interesting and valuable. We would love to hear your feedback.

Welcome
Section 1

Welcome to the consultation toolkit

Before you begin

Before using the toolkit to develop your consultation, please let the Data & Insight team know if your consultation:

- may generate significant public / political interest
- relates to a statutory duty
- relates to a corporate plan priority
- requires broader research, mixed methods or extensive fieldwork
- involves the participation of vulnerable groups
- is the first consultation your team has run

This is so we can assess if the toolkit is suitable for your consultation.

If you have any questions or require further support please email engagement@reigate-banstead.gov.uk

About this toolkit

The toolkit is split up into three sections. These sections contain bitesize narrated presentations, videos and resources to assist the development of your consultation.

Section 1 covers the foundational research concepts and best practices needed to run a great consultation

Section 2 guides you through the process of designing a consultation using a fictitious example

Section 3 demonstrates how to use Smart Survey

You may also find it useful to refer to the below process map when designing your best practice consultation.

Intro

Build your consultation

Introduction to the consultation toolkit

The journey to running a great consultation

01 — Check if the toolkit is right for your consultation

02 — Define the aims and goals of your consultation

03 — Ask internal colleagues and stakeholders to provide feedback on the aims and goals of your consultation

04 — Draft the introduction, questions and closing statement

05 — Ask internal colleagues and stakeholders to provide feedback on your draft introduction, questions and closing statement

Section 1

Bite-sized mini-lectures on research methods
- 1.1 what is a consultation?
- 1.2 how to write great questions
- 1.3 stakeholder mapping and distribution
- 1.4 ethics and compliance

1.1 What is a consultation? [17 min]

1.2 How to write great questions [26 min]

1.3 Stakeholder mapping and distribution [21 min]

1.4 Ethics and compliance [26 min]

Section 1: Additional resources

These resources are available to assist you in designing your consultation.

These documents are set to 'read only'. To edit, you will need to download the documents and save them outside of SharePoint.

Journey to a best practice consultation

Section 1: What you need to do

1. Decide if a survey is right for you.
2. Think about the do's and don'ts of writing questions.
3. Familiarise yourself with the stakeholder mapping matrix.
4. Make yourself aware of ethical good practice.

Section 2

Applying research methods to a fictitious consultation
- 2.1 the brief
- 2.2 defining the aims and goals
- 2.3 using aims and goals to write great questions
- 2.4 doing stakeholder mapping
- 2.5 assessing if a consultation is ethical and compliant

2.1 The brief [4 min]

2.2 Defining the aims and goals [13 min]

2.3 Using aims and goals to write great questions [33 min]

2.4 Doing stakeholder mapping [12 min]

2.5 Assessing if a consultation is ethical and compliant [11 min]

Section 2: Additional resources

These resources are available to assist you in designing your consultation.

These documents are set to 'read only'. To edit, you will need to download the documents and save them outside of SharePoint.

Consultation aims and goals: how to guide and checklists

Writing great questions: how to guide

Writing great questions: objectives to questions table, template introduction and closing statement

Writing great questions: example survey

Writing great questions: blank template questions

Stakeholder mapping and distribution: how to guide and blank stakeholder mapping matrix

Ethics and compliance: how to guide and checklists

Section 2: What you need to do

1. Draft your survey aim and goals.
2. Make internal stakeholders aware of your research and its implications.
3. Write your survey introduction, questions and closing statement.
4. Map your stakeholders and consider how you will distribute your survey.
5. Compile a stakeholder list.
6. Ensure your consultation will be performed legally and ethically.
7. Complete the preparation checklists to ensure you've not missed anything.

Section 3

Smart Survey walkthroughs
- 3.1 introduction to Smart Survey
- 3.2 setting up and testing a survey
- 3.3 converting an online survey into a word/pdf document
- 3.4 distributing a survey
- 3.5 monitoring and exporting results

3.1 Introduction to Smart Survey [3 min]

3.2 Setting up and testing a survey [24 min]

3.3 Converting an online survey into a word/pdf document [5 min]

3.4 Distributing a survey [12 min]

3.5 Monitoring and exporting results [7 min]

Section 3: Additional resources

These resources are available to assist you in designing your consultation.

These documents are set to 'read only'. To edit, you will need to download the documents and save them outside of SharePoint.

Converting online surveys to word documents or PDFs guide

Section 3: What you need to do

1. Complete this form to tell us about your plans and gain access to Smart Survey.
2. Export your data from Smart Survey once your consultation is complete.
3. Relinquish your Smart Survey login for use by the next person.