

# “I-spy” my ward

## A virtual ward walk knowing and engaging your community

“The role of the councillor has to change from being a decision maker to an enabler. You will have to show the way, provide the links and enable things to happen in your local community, while seeing the bigger picture around you. Knowing your ward will help you to make this work and LGID’s “I-spy” my ward was a fun and revealing insight into this.”

**Cllr Nick Worth, Deputy Leader, South Holland District Council**

## GETTING STARTED

Did you have an i-spy book as a child? Or maybe you know a child who did? If so, then this exercise will feel a bit familiar, although points are not being awarded!

This exercise is a virtual walk around your ward, which looks at the type of place it is, what happens there, how people know what is going on, as well as the approaches you use to engage with people in your ward.

**Spend about 20 minutes completing the worksheets.**

Much of the questions and information asked for is distilled from more detailed resources available through LG Improvement and Development, such as the [\*How strong are your neighbourhoods? A community empowerment mapping tool for Local Authorities and their partners\*](#), [\*How strong is your neighbourhood? A mapping tool for communities\*](#) and the [\*Equalities framework for local government\*](#). If you are interested in finding out more about the background or sources for further information look on [www.local.gov.uk/improvementanddevelopment](http://www.local.gov.uk/improvementanddevelopment)

# WHO LIVES, WORKS AND PLAYS HERE?

The habits and behaviours of people in each area will be different. Understanding how people participate in the community and which people have extensive networks in a community can be an asset for a councillor.

**What is the population?**



**How many households are there?**



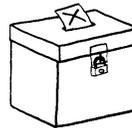
**What is the tenure mix?**

*e.g. owned, rented, social housing*

**What proportion of people regularly volunteer?**



**What proportion of people voted in the last local election?**



**What types of people do you as a councillor have most contact with?**

*e.g. through your surgeries, meetings, email, phone etc.*

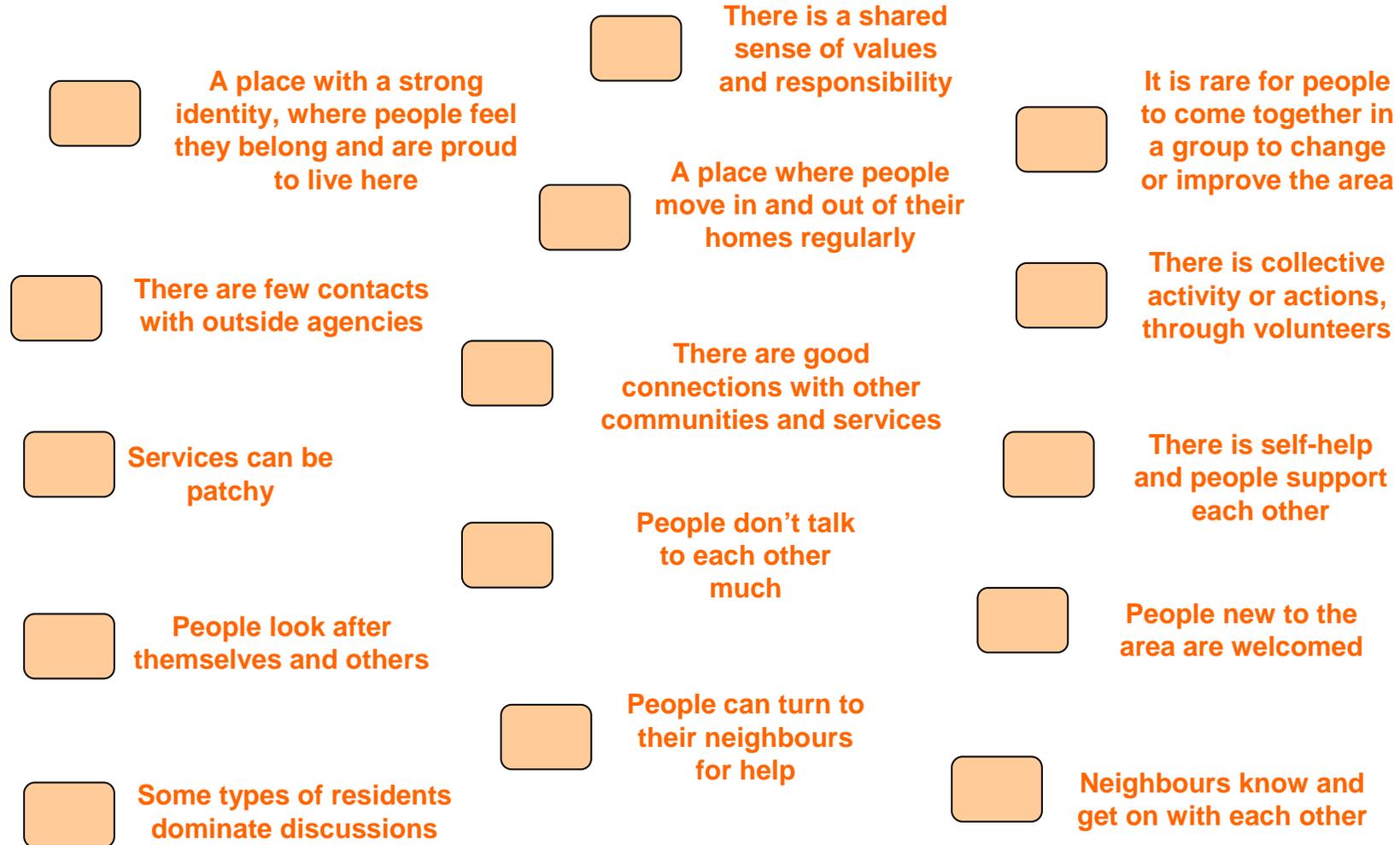
**Who are the community connectors?**

*e.g. the people who have their finger on the pulse, have extensive networks and are good at bringing people together*

# WHAT TYPE OF PLACE IS IT?

Everywhere feels different, there are some characteristics which can show you how empowered the communities in your area are.

*What characteristics best describe your ward overall?*

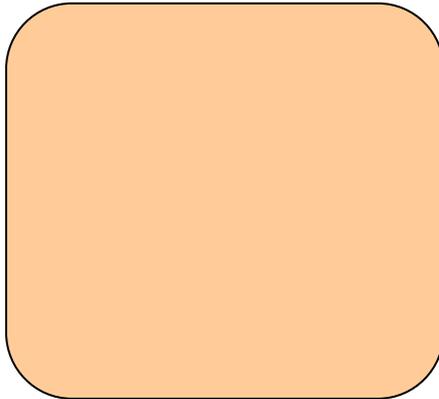


# WHAT HAPPENS HERE?

Services and public benefits are delivered by many voluntary and community organisations, as well as public bodies.  
*What groups or organisations are in this area?*

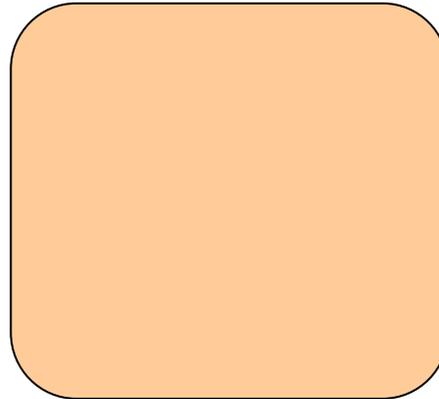
## Active community-led organisations

e.g. lunch clubs, playgroups



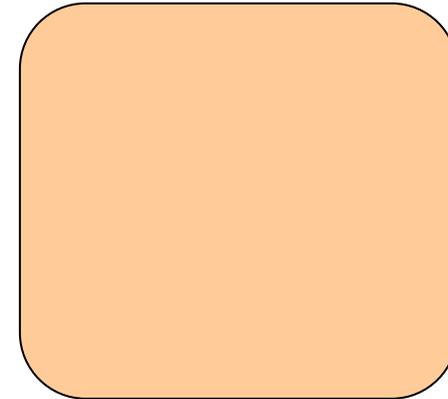
## Social groups

e.g. Scouts, WI



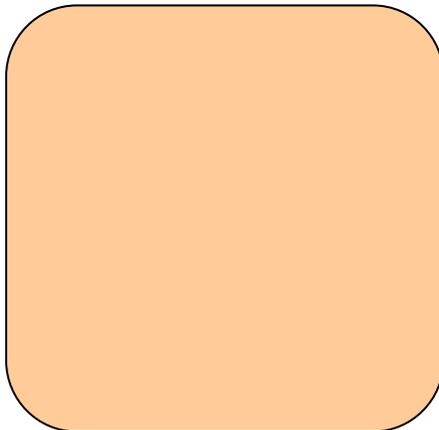
## Social enterprises

e.g. Development trusts, co-operatives, mutual organisations



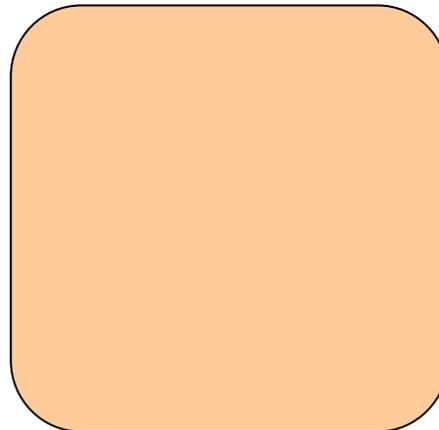
## Organisations that support community groups

e.g. CVS, volunteer centre



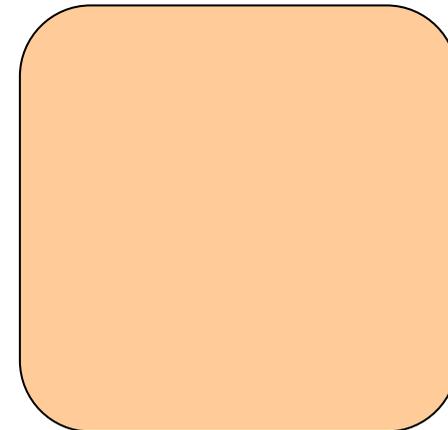
## Groups that help govern the area

e.g. Parish council, tenants association, area forums



## Social events

e.g. fetes, street parties, festivals



# LANDMARKS AND PLACES TO GATHER

Places where people can meet and gather are important to knowing where you can engage people and also for supporting social networks in a place. These networks can be the starting point for people to take actions to resolve local problems.

*How many are there in your area?*

## Schools and children centres



## Play areas



## Allotments & community gardens



## Health centres



## Community centres & buildings



## Parks and green spaces



## Squares and public spaces



## Other meeting places, e.g. pubs, shops, cafes etc.



## Places of worship



# KEEPING IN TOUCH

## Physical notice boards

For many years notice boards (or on occasion trees and lamp posts) have helped people to promote things that are happening, spreading information and inviting people to join in. Even in the modern age of electronic communications they still have their place.



*Where are the notice boards?*



## Newsletters and Parish Magazine

Produced by parish councils, community groups or church groups. These newsletters are often delivered to every house in the area, and share news of what is happening, local issues and events.

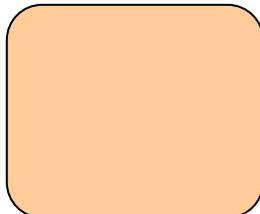
*What printed or e-newsletters are there?*



## Citizen run neighbourhood websites

These sites have been set up and are run by local people. Most of the information they contain is about local issues or interests. The websites are generally open to anyone living in an area, or who has an interest in the place.

*What are the local websites?*



## Bloggers and email groups

Who are the people that have active online networks that talk about what is important to them in the ward? Are there people who regularly blog about the area or are there email groups that share news?

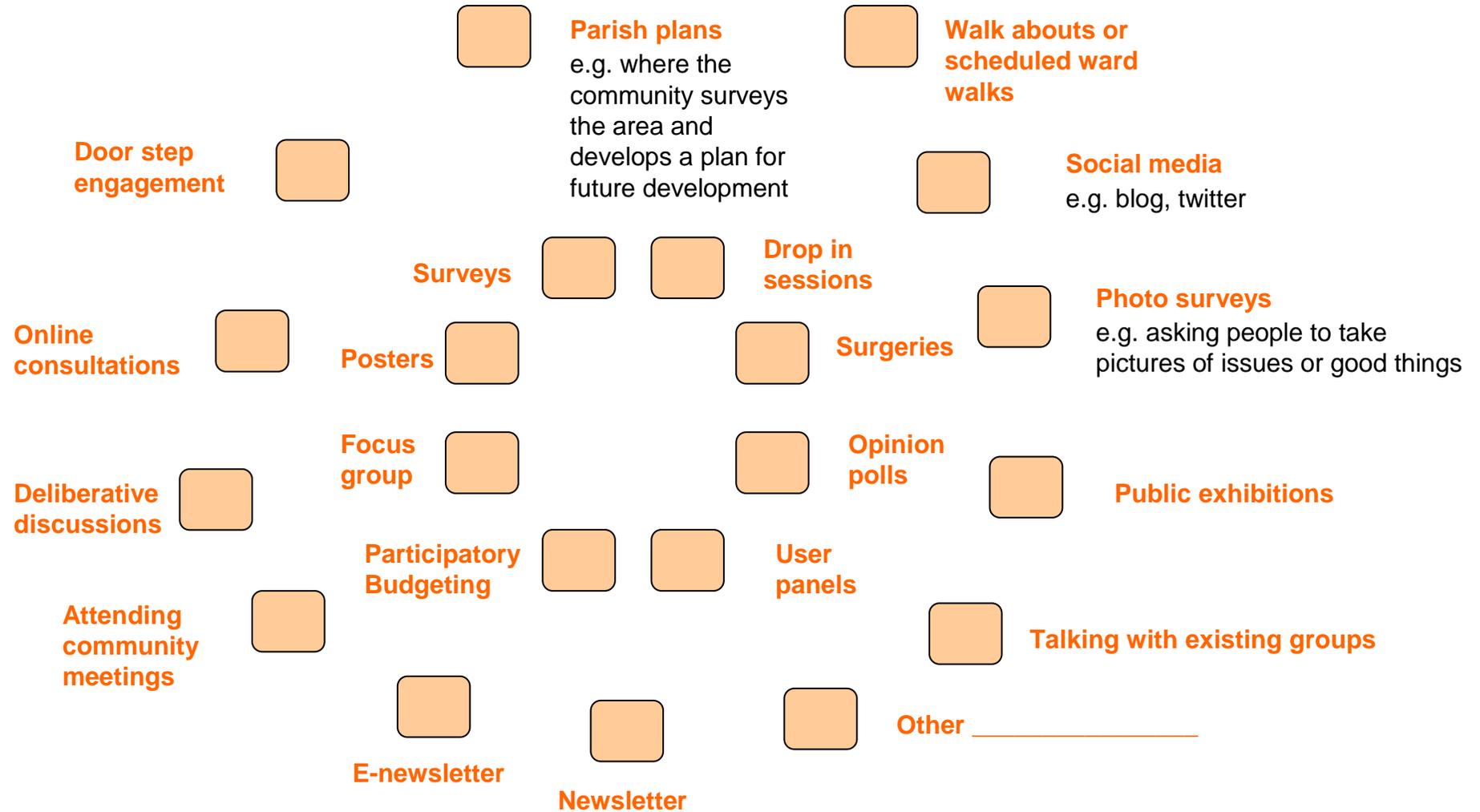


*Who are the blogger and email groups?*

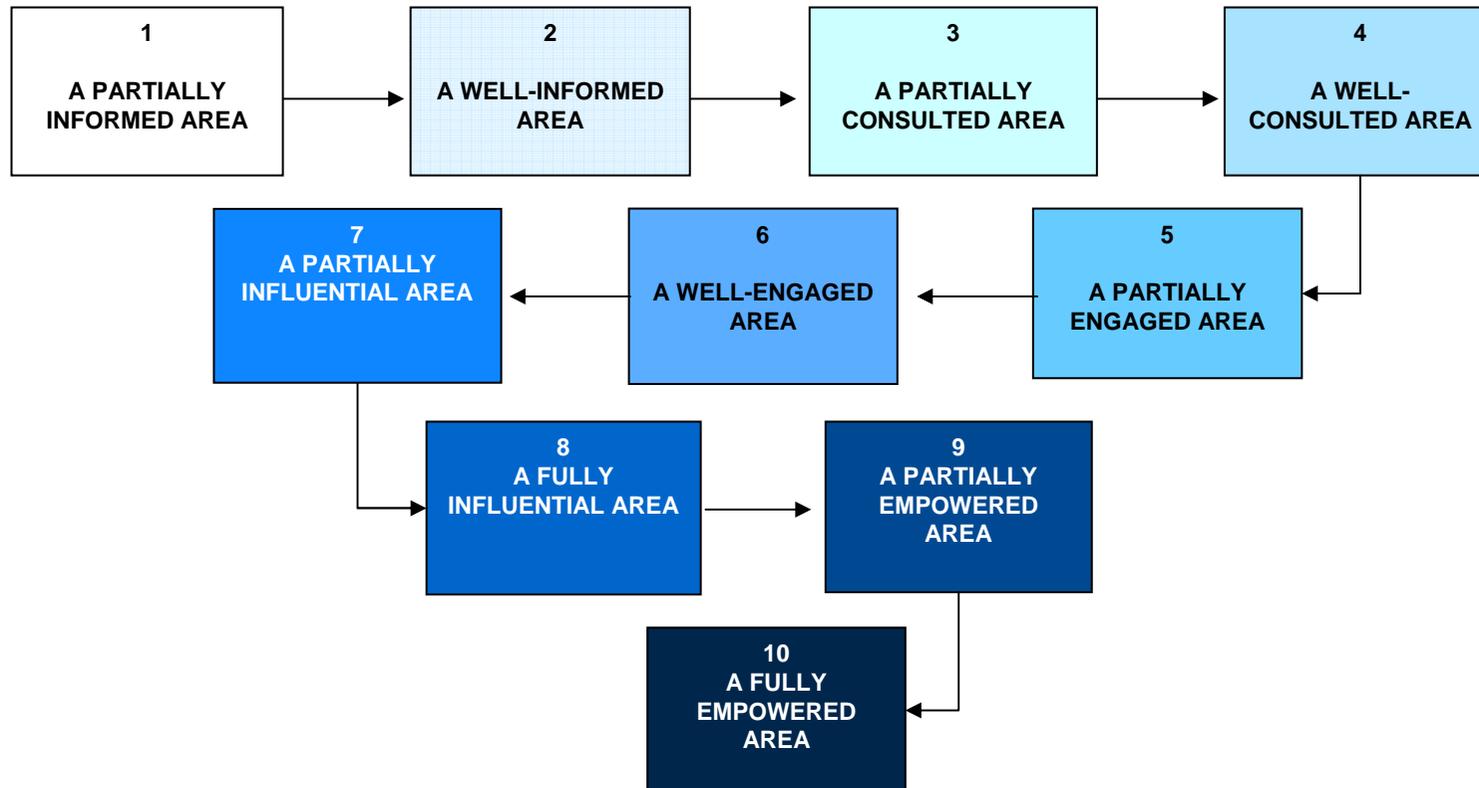


# THE WAYS I ENGAGE

What approaches do you currently use to engage with your community?



## HOW ENGAGED IS THE AREA?



## AT WHAT STAGE WOULD THE AREA LIKE TO BE?

[See the next sheet for more of an explanation of each of these levels]

## LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT – THE TERMS EXPLAINED

### A **well informed** neighbourhood:

Services provide clear, regular and accessible information to the community in a variety of ways, there are occasional consultation exercises with patchy feedback, the structures are confusing and not always easy to access, it does not feel easy to get your voice heard and there is little evidence of things changing when you do

### A **well consulted** neighbourhood:

Services provide clear, regular and accessible information to the community in a variety of ways; they regularly consult with all sections of the community and usually feedback about what changes will result. However, there may be too many structures and it is difficult to know how and where to get your voice heard. Sometimes it seems there is too much consultation and not enough action

### A **well engaged** neighbourhood:

Services provide clear, regular and accessible information to the community in a variety of ways; they want to listen to people and engage with them on an on-going basis, there are numerous and varied ways to engage which are easy to understand and access. Consultation is co-ordinated and results in action / change, structures are fairly easy to understand and access, but on the whole, service providers are still in control and set the agenda

### A **fully influential** neighbourhood:

Services provide clear, regular and accessible information to the community in a variety of ways; they meet local needs, there are many and varied ways for communities to have a say, a few clear and accessible structures which make it easy to have your voice heard, clear, simple and regular feedback about what difference your contribution makes, very few barriers to influencing, there is appropriate and available support to be able to influence

### A **fully empowered** neighbourhood:

Services provide clear, regular and accessible information to the community in a variety of ways; they are tailored to meet local needs, services work in equal partnership with the community – there is usually discussion before decisions are made; there is significant self-help and self-determination in the community, the voice of the community is strong, consistent and gets results, the community owns/manages assets and has its own income