

APPENDIX TWO

Connecting Communities: Toolkit

What Public Services are offering

To deliver our Connecting Communities commitments, the Public Services Board are setting out a clear offer to local communities, consisting of:

- A “Core Offer”: this is designed to support all areas and communities in Bath and North East Somerset
- A “Locality Based Offer”: this will for the first time provide a “menu” of projects and engagement mechanisms from which localities can choose those most appropriate to their needs. It is expected that the choices made will be different in different clusters.

The Core Offer

The following sets out what is contained in the proposed “core” framework for engagement across the whole of Bath and North East Somerset,

- Our joint work with groups who form “**communities of interest**” - such as with parish councils, voluntary and community groups, students, business and equalities groups. For example, our **Parishes Liaison** meeting provides a useful link with this tier of governance, and our **Independent Equalities Advisory Group** brings together the Council and local police with equalities groups
- The democratic leadership and governance provided by our **elected members** - this currently includes access to the **Ward Councillors Initiative** which provides investment in small local projects that make a difference in communities. The democratic role of **parish councils** is also a key part of the governance framework for our area
- Partnership Conferences, such as the **Bath City Conference**, and local events – bringing together public services, local organisations, business and residents to discuss issues of local importance
- The point of contact for local services provided by our **One Stop Shops and Council Connect** - increasingly bringing together public service partners and VCSE groups under one roof
- Curo’s **neighbourhood management** framework
- The Police’s commitment to ensuring there is a mechanism for community safety concerns to be raised with the relevant agencies – e.g. through the **PACT process** and **beat surgeries**

- **Local Healthwatch** - to provide feedback and views on health and care services locally
- The Council's **formal decision-making** process, which will continue to ensure **consultation** on specific issues, as well as the **Policy Development and Scrutiny** process
- The **Pupil Parliament** as a way of engaging with young people
- Support for **social media and online tools** - particularly to share good practice and keep people informed
- Access to **research data and analysis** about our area. We will work to make our information more available for communities to use and help them collect and use their own information more effectively

The Locality Offer

To embed the changes set out in this document, the Council and public services will increasingly be required to think about the needs of local communities “in the round” rather than through service “silos”.

Public services have many different ways of engaging at this local level but these are often driven by particular service or agency requirements. Our communities are sometimes not sure exactly which is the best route to get involved, and it is possible for important issues to be missed. Neither do these mechanisms always encourage the dialogue between services and communities which are central to Connecting Communities. There are clear opportunities to streamline these ways of working.

Understanding our area

Bath and North East Somerset has many diverse communities. There is no “one size fits all” way of engaging areas with so many different needs - towns, villages, rural areas, the City of Bath and many “communities of interest”.

Throughout our areas there are active PACT meetings, Curo neighbourhoods and residents’ groups as well as a wide range of local engagement projects including the “Better Together” project. Outside of the City of Bath, our parishes also provide a clear building block for local working as the first tier of governance and Parish Cluster Groups allow for parishes to discuss common concerns. Wider engagement is also carried out through our area-based partnerships including our Somer Valley Partnership and Chew Valley Area Partnership which comprise local representatives from the Council, local businesses, voluntary and community groups and local residents.

The City of Bath is not parished and the Bath City Conference and its sub-groups involve a wide range of local resident, community and business groups in the City.

This wide and set of engagement mechanisms can lead to both duplication of effort and to some issues “falling between the gaps”. Our local public services therefore wish to streamline the approach by working with local communities to help them choose the most appropriate “mix” of engagement mechanisms for the needs in their area. For example, there are often practical needs within rural areas concerning transport which affect how meetings are planned. Because our areas are different, there will also be differing requirements relating to regeneration needs, demographic change, service priorities and the types of concerns which local communities are raising.

A menu for localities

Connecting Communities will provide the means do this by offering a “menu” of projects and approaches which can be tailored to local requirements. Opportunities will be taken to adopt effective ideas from elsewhere and also to remove duplication and streamline existing engagement processes. The “menu” - a mix of what is currently happening in Bath and North East Somerset as well as other tools currently not used in our area - is there to support what works in each community based on the different requirements different areas will have. The menu will be kept up to date and made available online.

Connecting Communities will emphasise specific and practical approaches to involving people in their local areas, rather than structures and meetings. As well as using the “menu”, communities will also be supported and encouraged to devise their own approaches which are tailored to local needs and to support the conversations which local people want to have. It will be important also to ensure that local engagement processes and projects are sustainable, achievable and resourced and meet the overall aims of the Programme.

A “cluster” approach

For practical purposes, public services will develop and roll-out this offer through a “cluster” approach across the whole of Bath and North East Somerset. Given the importance of local elected leadership, we expect these clusters to be built around ward groupings. This will be supported by a “Cluster Profile” for each cluster which sets out key information about its assets, strengths and opportunities.

These clusters are being used as starting points to deliver the Connecting Communities programme and to encourage locality-based thinking amongst public services. Residents, businesses, parishes and other groups will therefore be encouraged to be involved with the cluster(s) that are of most concern to them rather than work within restrictive boundaries.

Draft “Menu” for localities across Bath and North East Somerset:

Tool	What this is and where it exists within Bath and North East Somerset	Guidance / support
<p>Active community roles (including Snow and Flood Wardens and Energy and Street Champions)</p>	<p>Our pilot snow warden scheme - through which neighbourhoods are involved in helping to spread salt and clear snow - has been a huge success. The Local Energy Champions Awards also supports local community activity which helps to save energy and reduces carbon emissions across our neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>B&NES Snow Warden Scheme</p> <p>B&NES Local Energy Champions</p>
<p>Area Based Partnerships</p>	<p>Within Bath and North East Somerset we have a number of area-based partnerships which bring together local people, organisations and community groups from the local area. Our Chew Valley Partnership has members from B&NES, Town and Parish Councils, local businesses, VCSE organisations and residents representing Keynsham and the surrounding area. The Partnership aims to act as a ‘champion’ on behalf of the local area, promote its economic development potential, attract inward investment and ensure appropriate linkages are made with our wider Partnership Framework.</p> <p>Our Somer Valley Partnership is another independent partnership body which brings together local organisations concerned with ensuring the long term economic and social wellbeing of the area.</p>	<p>Chew Valley Partnership</p> <p>Somer Valley Partnership</p>
<p>Area Needs Assessments</p>	<p>The Bath and North East Somerset Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) aims to provide the “big picture” about current and future needs of the local population. It does this, not only through examining the local statistical data available, but through analysing the views and feedback provided by local groups and residents on what they feel are the</p>	<p>B&NES Council - Research and Intelligence Document Library</p>

	important issues that our area faces at the moment.	
Assets of Community Value	<p>This new Community Right (sometimes called the “Community Right to Buy” or “Community Right to Bid”) allows defined community groups, including Parish Councils, to ask the Council to list certain assets as being of “community value”. This is designed to give communities more opportunities to take control of the assets and facilities important to them. If an asset is listed and then comes up for sale, the new right could give communities that want it a total of 6 months to put together a bid to buy it (including a 6-week cut-off for an initial proposal to be put forward).</p> <p>We have already seen considerable interest in this new community right and the Pack Horse Inn, Southstoke and Bath City Farm have been successfully nominated and registered onto our list of assets of community value.</p>	<p>B&NES Council – Assets of Community Value</p> <p>Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012</p> <p>Locality - Community Right to Bid</p>
Big Local	<p>Big Local is an opportunity for residents in the communities of Radstock and Westfield to use at least £1m to make a massive and lasting positive difference to the area. Big Local is only available on the areas which have been selected for this through the Big Lottery.</p>	<p>Big Local – My Radstock and My Westfield Local Trust</p>
B&NES Partnership Framework	<p>The Bath & North East Somerset Partnership Framework is a non-statutory and voluntary partnership. At the centre of the Partnership Framework sits the Public Services Board which brings together key public service partners and provides leadership and co-ordination of activities across the theme partnerships.</p>	<p>B&NES Council – Working in Partnership</p>
Business Volunteering	<p>Within Bath and North East Somerset there are many opportunities for volunteering and many of our communities are actively involved in offering their time to support local charities or improve the area they live in.</p> <p>B&NES Volunteer Centre is an independent charity offering free advice and assistance to</p>	<p>Volunteer Centre</p> <p>B&NES Council -</p>

	<p>volunteers and they have also recently launched a new involve Business Engagement Network supporting employees and local businesses to get involved in social action. The network will act as a single point of contact for hundreds of local organisations and provide a range of ways for business employers to volunteer in their local communities.</p>	<p>Volunteering Advice</p>
<p>Community and Parish Plans</p>	<p>A Community Plan is a way for communities such as neighbourhoods or parishes to influence the future development and have a say in how their local area and services are managed.</p> <p>Within B&NES we currently have sixteen plans which have been adopted by Parish and Town Councils with further plans under consideration or development.</p>	<p>B&NES Council – Community and Parish Plans</p>
<p>Community Asset Transfer</p>	<p>Community asset transfer is the passing of ownership or management of a building/land from a public sector body to a third sector organisation. It can help deliver a variety of benefits and support the development of a strong and vibrant civil society through improvements to an organisation’s sustainability.</p> <p>Within B&NES, a programme of transferring Council community based assets and services to voluntary groups and parish councils is being developed and a series of “quick wins” are currently being progressed. These are aimed at reflecting the diversity of community organisations delivering services in our area, both in terms of structure and in the types of outcomes being achieved. The Council is also looking to develop a wider programme for Community Asset Transfer.</p>	<p>B&NES Cabinet Report (February 2012) – Community Asset Transfer Programme</p> <p>Locality – Community Asset Transfer</p>
<p>Community Budgeting</p>	<p>Community budgets are a way of bringing different national and local funding strands together into a single local funding pot and, by doing so, enabling various different agencies covering the relevant subject to work together more effectively. They allow providers of different public services to share budgets with the aim of improving outcomes for local people and reducing duplication and waste.</p> <p>Several areas are in the process of piloting this initiative at a more localised level with areas such as Ilfracombe, North Devon, working towards co-commissioning neighbourhood services, libraries and highways.</p>	<p>LGA Community Budgets</p>

<p>Community First</p>	<p>Community First is a government-funded initiative which is designed to help communities come together to identify their strengths and local priorities in order to plan for their future and become more resilient.</p> <p>Community First has awarded Southdown £17,000 to help support local initiatives within the area. Southdown Community First will be considering how best to use the funding and is made up of a group of local volunteers who live in the area and understand the local needs.</p>	<p>Southdown Community First – News release</p> <p>Southdown Community First</p> <p>Community Development Foundation – Community First</p>
<p>Community Governance Review</p>	<p>A Community Governance Review is a legal process where a council can ask the public and other interested parties for their views on the most suitable way of representing local communities. They enable us to review and put in place, or make changes to, community governance systems and structures for example by creating, merging, abolishing or changing parish or town council arrangements in the review area.</p> <p>A review was conducted in 2010 within the Norton Radstock area and, as a result, separate town councils for Midsomer Norton and Radstock and a parish council for Westfield were established.</p>	<p>Guidance on Community Governance Reviews</p>
<p>Community Libraries</p>	<p>The Community Library Programme helps residents within B&NES to play a part in running their own local libraries and aims to develop alternative methods of delivering library services to communities which are beyond easy reach of the existing libraries. The Programme offers support through providing stock and shelving, management support, advice on design, and support in setting up reading and children’s groups.</p> <p>The first three Community Libraries are being set up in partnership with Bath & North East Somerset Council, Combe Hay, Chew Stoke and Larkhall and are in the process of opening during 2013.</p>	<p>B&NES Community Libraries</p>
<p>Community Organisers</p>	<p>Community Organisers challenge and support public and voluntary sector organisations and local people to come together to develop strategic plans and actions based on deep listening. They listen to the concerns of people in their area, build relationships and help support communities to take action on their own behalf to tackle issues which matter</p>	<p>Community Organisers</p>

	<p>most to them and find local solutions.</p> <p>Within Bath and North East Somerset, RE:generate Community Organisers are currently working in the Foxhill and Radstock areas as part of the “Better Together” project.</p>	<p>Re:generate</p>
Community Right to Challenge	<p>The Community Right to Challenge aims to give voluntary and community bodies and parish councils the right to express an interest in running a local authority service. The process does not give an automatic right to those organisations expressing an interest to deliver the service but it enables interested groups to challenge to take over services that they feel they could run differently and better.</p>	<p>B&NES Community Right to Challenge</p> <p>Community Right to Challenge – Statutory Guidance</p>
Community Share Offer	<p>Community Shares are a form of finance which allow numerous small investors to club together to buy community assets and carry out projects. They have been used in a variety of ways to buy pubs, shops and community buildings, as well as to fund green energy projects.</p> <p>Locally, Bath and West Community Energy raised £722,000 through a community share issue from more than 200 people, who each invested at least £500. Supporters of the Bell in Bath recently raised £778,000 through a community shares campaign which has put them in the position to be able to buy the pub.</p>	<p>Third Sector – The Rise and Rise of Community Shares</p> <p>BWCE website</p> <p>Bell website</p>
Cornwall “Shaped By Us”	<p>Shaped By Us is an online platform which has been created by partners within Cornwall where local organisations, groups and residents can raise questions and ideas, pool resources and collaborate to tackle the issues that matter most to them. It aims to encourage online collaboration with the objective of making positive local change. The initial pilot saw over 100 “challenges” submitted and 250 ideas on how to solve these challenges.</p>	<p>Cornwall Shaped By Us</p>
Friends of Groups	<p>A Friends of Group is a group of local people who have an interest in a community facility and have a collective desire to work to further improve it. Groups come in all shapes and sizes and cover a wide range of facilities, including parks, libraries and other buildings and services.</p> <p>Activities are varied depending on the need and objectives but are broadly focused on</p>	<p>B&NES Friends of Parks</p> <p>Friends of Salford Library</p>

	improving usage of the facility, developing strategies for improved maintenance, organising activities and events related to the facility, or practical tasks such as making it safer.	
Fundraising support	<p>There are numerous funding opportunities open to voluntary and community groups throughout Bath and North East Somerset, both through local funds and national schemes.</p> <p>As well as support from the Council in providing funding advice, our new project “Connecting Capacity” provides advice and support to local groups throughout B&NES in identifying potential funding opportunities and applying for funding.</p>	<p>Common Places – Connecting Capacity</p> <p>B&NES Council – Community Grants and Funding</p> <p>Funding Central</p>
Inter-Agency Forums	Inter-agency forums such as at Chew Valley and Keynsham and in Southdown in Bath the latter sponsored by the Southdown Partnership) are an opportunity for public services and VCSE organisations to come together to discuss local service delivery issues, highlight new projects and best practice and discuss any problem issues that may exist.	
Interagency newsletters / e-bulletins	Within B&NES, there exists a range of newsletters and e-bulletins which are circulated to interested residents and are developed by the Council and public service partners, VCSE groups and local organisations. This includes newsletters on funding, community events, issues relating to health and social care and much more.	
Local conferences and events	<p>Conferences such as the Bath City Conference bring together local people, organisations and businesses with the aim of acting as a community catalyst for sharing ideas, generating innovation and encouraging a greater sense of shared purpose and cohesion. They also help to drive improvements that will benefit the local area and people within it.</p> <p>The 2012 Bath City Conference encouraged those involved to share their own ideas on how we can work together to improve Bath as a place to live, work and visit. Common themes were then identified, and multi-agency working groups have now been formed with the aim of building on these ideas.</p>	Bath City Conference
Neighbourhood Planning	The Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Planning Protocol which outlines advice for residents, community groups and businesses on how to get involved in local planning	B&NES Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

	<p>issues.</p> <p>Freshford & Limpley Stoke Parish Councils are currently in the process of developing a joint Neighbourhood Plan and have been awarded £20,000 funding from the CLG Frontrunners Project in support of the project. Extensive consultation is in the process of being carried out with the aim of engaging interested residents in getting involved and expressing their views.</p>	<p>Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan</p>
<p>PACT meetings</p>	<p>PACT stands for Partnership and Communities Together. PACT meetings are public meetings - open to everyone living or spending time in a neighbourhood. They are designed to be regular meetings where members of the public raise local issues and vote on which issues should be priority. A panel of key partners and stakeholders will then be tasked to action these and report on progress to the next meeting.</p>	<p>B&NES PACT website</p>
<p>Participatory Budgeting</p>	<p>Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending of a defined public budget. It aims to increase transparency, accountability, understanding and social inclusion through engaging local residents and community groups in Council decisions.</p> <p>A “participatory budgeting” pilot in Keynsham was recently carried out and involved local people in deciding how funds were to be invested in community facilities. Local community groups were encouraged to submit ideas on providing or improving community facilities. A local participation day was then held where residents were invited to vote for their preferred projects and these views were fed into the final decision making process.</p>	<p>Participatory Budgeting Unit</p>
<p>Placemaking Plan</p>	<p>The Placemaking Plan will complement the Council’s Core Strategy and will set out key development aspirations and requirements for delivery. The Placemaking Plan is aimed at local residents, developers or interested stakeholders across the area to get involved in determining the specifics of the development proposed in the Core Strategy.</p> <p>The first stage in the production of the Placemaking Plan is the Launch Document which is scheduled to be released in Spring 2013 and is aimed to stimulate debate and discussion through a programme of community engagement.</p>	<p>Placemaking Plan</p>

<p>Regeneration Initiatives</p>	<p>Regeneration initiatives are undertaken with the aim of creating vibrant business and residential areas for local people, with the aim of having positive impacts on the lives of local people and on reducing inequalities across our area.</p> <p>Within Bath and North East Somerset, there are a number of regeneration initiatives including within Keynsham, Midsomer Norton Radstock and the London Road in Bath.</p>	<p>Midsomer Norton regeneration</p> <p>Action for Radstock's regeneration</p> <p>Regenerating the Keynsham Economy</p> <p>The B&NES London Road Regeneration Project</p>
<p>Social Enterprises</p>	<p>Social enterprises are businesses which are set up to tackle social problems and make improvements within their local communities and neighbourhoods. Surpluses made from trading are then reinvested back into the business or local community.</p>	<p>Social Enterprise UK</p> <p>Connecting Capacity</p>
<p>Village Agents</p>	<p>The Village Agents project aims to give support to and work with isolated and vulnerable people in rural areas. It also aims to provide a bridge between local residents and statutory and voluntary organisations (including health, transport, finance, police and fire services as well as social networks).</p> <p>The Chew Valley Village Agents Project has recently received funding through the Performance Reward Programme to connect potentially vulnerable and isolated older people to local services and information. It is also looking as part of this on the gaps that exist in rural transport and potential solutions.</p>	<p>West of England Rural Network – Village Agents</p>