

# Community Engagement Plan

## Northwich and Rural North Area

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Community Engagement Plan (CEP) for the Northwich and Rural North area comprising the wards of Frodsham, Helsby, Kingsley, Weaver and Cuddington, Marbury, Hartford and Greenbank, Winnington and Castle, Witton and Rudheath and Shakerley.

This CEP has been commissioned by the Northwich and Rural North Area Partnership Board (N&RN APB) who are a collection of partners including Fire, Police, Health, Cheshire West & Chester (CWAC) staff and Councillors, representatives of both Voluntary Sector and Town and Parish Councils who are working together to develop the area action plan with [key priorities from the sub groups](#) to improve Northwich and Rural North.

Central to the aim of the area action plan is community engagement and wanting to encourage partners to work together on engagement activities with the local community.

### What is Community Engagement?

There is no standard definition of community engagement however the Improvement & Development Agency (IDeA) suggests that community engagement involves the Local Authority (and partners) working together with the local residents in their area to improve their quality of life by involving them in decision making to give more say over services they receive.

Community engagement can be thought of in terms of four inter-locking dimensions like a “Rubik’s cube”. Partners can engage with a number of communities in relation to:

*Community of Place – A community linked to a particular geographical location such as ward, parish, neighbourhood or a housing estate. This location usually has a physical boundary.*

*Community of Interest – A group of people with a shared interest, experience or need, such as a group of allotment holders or support group.*

*Community of Identity – A community that is defined by how people identify themselves or how they are identified by society such as older people.*

*Community of Faith – A community of those who share a common religious belief.*

## Why is Community Engagement Important?

There is an increasing emphasis on Local Authorities to involve communities in the setting of local priorities and making decisions about their area. There are three key themes to community engagement; informing, consulting and engaging. There are many reasons why the APB and its partners should, and need to, engage with residents. One essential reason is to improve reputation and build trust. The outcome of increased involvement and engagement will be a stronger community with active citizens who have the power to shape their local services.

Community Engagement activity that cuts across all partners throughout Northwich and Rural North will help to avoid duplication, reduce the number of meetings, rationalise structures and allow for joint consultation and communication.

Along with the Cheshire West and Chester CEP, Ellesmere Port as part of the Our Place (National Pilot) project has developed a Community Engagement Toolkit for the Ellesmere Port area which promotes “An important part of community engagement is relationship building and empowering. The keys to successful relationship building and empowering include communicating, listening, being flexible, open-minded and having a long-term commitment”.

Ellesmere Port in developing their toolkit state Engagement isn't a new concept, Councils have always engaged with the public in order to deliver public services. Since 2009 the [Duty to Involve](#) has been a key requirement of local authorities and listed public bodies and requires them to involve interested persons or their representatives in decisions which may affect them.

In March 2010, the Conservative party published plans to establish [Big Society](#) in which ‘People come together to solve problems and improve life for themselves and their communities; a society in which the leading force for progress is social responsibility, not state control’.

“The Decentralisation and Localism Bill referenced in the Queens Speech 2010 aims to ‘devolve greater powers to Councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions’. The Bill proposes that communities play a much stronger role in local decision-making and holding local government to account. This coupled with an emphasis on both social responsibility driving change, on the importance of volunteers, social enterprises, charities and other voluntary and community groups which links into the central aims of this engagement plan.

## Community Engagement Plan Subgroup - Northwich and Rural North Area

The Northwich and Rural North Area Partnership Board (APB) agreed that a suggested way forward for Community Engagement in the area is to produce its own CEP through a sub group, with an annual events calendar that looks the develop one key partnership event each month ensuring that activity is rotating across the area, targets key geographical areas in line with the sub group priorities and ensuring as many of the relevant key partners have involvement.

The CEP Subgroup has agreed that the way forward is a co-ordinated approach which involves partner agencies working together. The aim is to have this plan as a flexible working document that can be used by partners and voluntary sector that are looking to undertake community engagement activity.

## Northwich and Rural North Area Partnership Board (APB)

Both the plan and calendar of events will be reviewed and updated on a monthly basis to include new engagement techniques with endorsement and approval by the APB.

In developing an Annual CEP, the APB will consider using different techniques to link into communities, some of which are listed in this document as a [toolkit](#) . Other useful examples of good practices can be found on various websites such as [www.community-toolbox.org](http://www.community-toolbox.org)

An aspiration of the APB is that each Town and Parish Council within Northwich and Rural North works with their community and other key partners to develop Parish Plans that link into the CEP and Area Action Plan. We are also keen to work with established community groups and activity such as Homewatch groups, Faith groups, Community Pride 'Best Kept Villages', Village in Bloom, litter picks (clean teams), tenants and residents associations, Community Associations and Village Hall Committees.

Special effort should always be made to engage people whose opinions are seldom heard. This includes people often referred to as 'hard to reach', 'difficult to engage'. Everyone can be reached somehow. Examples of groups or individuals 'seldom heard' include: Elderly people, young people, people from ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, mobility difficulties, hearing impairment, visual impairment, people with learning difficulties, Rural communities(include people who are isolated geographically), Gypsy and traveller community, People who have difficulty reading, writing or speaking English and People on low income.

## Community Engagement Plan – Why have one?

The CEP will map and promote engagement activity across all partners in order to avoid duplication, reduce the number of meetings, rationalise structures but allow for joint consultation and communication whereby all partners will;

- Identify why and what they want to inform, consult and engage on
- Identify where and when they want to engage
- Identify how they want to engage which will be a more flexible approach
- Show how engagement activity links to the APB plan and work activity
- Include an assessment of what activity is already taking place
- Include Town and Parish Councils in the engagement activity as they are already close to the heart of communities
- Create engagement activity to allow balance between local priorities and strategic or national statistical priorities.

## Community Engagement Plan – How it works

This plan is divided into easy to use sections:

A [Toolkit](#) which provides an introduction to the various methods that can be utilised to inform, consult and engage with the local community. This will provide a consistent approach to engagement, with the methods and mechanisms included as ideas to be used to ensure consistent quality in our communication. In the case studies shown we have tried to use a local example.

An [APB Priority Line diagram](#) which shows how the engagement activity for Northwich and Rural North Area is linked to the APB priorities. We want to take a joined up approach to engagement, showing the direct link from the CEP to actions/projects that are developed under the APB priorities.

[http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area\\_partnership\\_boards/northwich\\_and\\_rural\\_north\\_apb.aspx](http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area_partnership_boards/northwich_and_rural_north_apb.aspx)

A [Calendar of Events](#) which shows month by month partnership activity for 12 months throughout our area. One of our key aspirations is to have at least one partnership event every month. This will be developed on an annual basis. The calendar will ensure all engagement activity i.e. events are rotated across the area, key areas will be targeted in line with priorities and we will ensure that key partners are involved. We want to work together to ensure the maximum number of residents are able to have contact with partners and view a co-ordinated calendar which sees events distributed across the whole area allowing the maximum number of residents to be involved.

**Action Plan** The priorities of the APB will form the basis of an action plan which details how partners will inform, consult and engage, as well as marketing and communications across the area.

[http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area\\_partnership\\_boards/northwich\\_and\\_rural\\_north\\_apb.aspx](http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area_partnership_boards/northwich_and_rural_north_apb.aspx)

**Neighbourhood Plans** are being developed for specific areas throughout Northwich and Rural North namely:

Town and Parish areas

The Neighbourhood area of Northwich and Witton.

Engagement with local people will be a central to these plans.

[http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area\\_partnership\\_boards/northwich\\_and\\_rural\\_north\\_apb.aspx](http://www.westcheshiretogether.org.uk/area_partnership_boards/northwich_and_rural_north_apb.aspx)

## Marketing and Communications Plan – Northwich and Rural North

### [Marketing and Communications Plan](#)

It was agreed at the Community Engagement Sub Group that a Marketing and Communications Plan be developed to work alongside the CEP. The aims of the group are:

- To raise awareness and understanding of the N&RN APB.
- Promote monthly partnership events
- Raise awareness and understanding APB sub groups, Northwich and Rural North Area Team and partner organisations
- Promote key messages and keep communities informed
- Promote key community activities e.g. Community Forums or equivalent, Town and Parish Council planning days.

## Cheshire West and Chester Community Engagement Plan

This plan of engagement for Northwich and Rural North links into the key aims of [Cheshire West and Chester Community Engagement Plan](#), which includes a set of standards and principles which in order to ensure that there is a consistent, relevant and meaningful approach to engagement and empowerment across all of its services. By doing this the Council are able to co-ordinate its engagement and empowerment activities with partners and other local organisations in a much more effective way.

## How will Councillors Contribute

This Engagement Plan links into the [Cheshire West and Chester Community Engagement Plan](#), which promotes engagement as a key tool for the Council and highlights Councillor involvement.

Each Ward Councillor has a 'councillor budget' which is funding allocated to them, "councillor budgets support local decision making and are designed to encourage the involvement of local people in what happens in their local area and any improvements agreed"

As stated in the Cheshire West and Chester Community Engagement Plan, "Ward Councillors engage with communities and their representatives through, for example, Community Forums, ward surgeries, residents meetings". The Councillors develop the Community Forums for each area not only in Northwich and Rural North but, across Cheshire West and Chester as an area. Each Forum produces a "You Said, We Did" newsletter highlighting the main issues discussed at the Community Forums along with answers to any questions or queries raised. However, Community Forums are currently under review and an alternative method for councillors may be developed and included in the action plan.

Cheshire West and Chester Council is made up of 75 democratically elected ward councillors who have a unique role as both community leaders and advocates because they are accountable to the public. This gives them the mandate to be central to community engagement in their constituency and play a key role in the process of engagement and empowerment. In Northwich and Rural North we have 17 councillors.

Local or ward councillors are the key to connecting the council to its citizens. Their role is to provide effective communication between residents and the council, or other stakeholders, about local needs, issues and priorities. They should be at the heart of, and support, a vibrant local democracy that enables local people to have their say about the things that matter to them. Councillors should then ensure that appropriate action is taken.

The Councillor call for action is designed to allow local people and community representatives to work with their elected ward councillor to raise neighbourhood issues for discussion in order to try and tackle some of the difficult problems. The challenge to ward councillors is to recognise, understand and cater for the diversity and dynamics within their communities and to work with local people in ways that facilitate their engagement.

Ward Councillors should:

- Engage with communities and their representatives through Community Forums and other local groups and networks.
- Play a key role in joined up working with public sector partners and other stakeholders.

## Resources, Milestones and Outputs

### Resources

The Community Engagement Planning Sub Group has secured £2,433 from APB funding for 2011-2012. The group are looking to combine consultation, information giving and engagement activity to reduce duplication and create efficiencies. The group will be 'piggy backing' off existing activity to maximise impact and funding but want to create 6 defined joint events.

However, by partners working together and different agencies leading on different events it is anticipated that the need for large funding resources will be minimised.

### Milestones

<b>April 2011</b>	Draft CEP
<b>May 2011</b>	First joint event – Rudheath Fun Day
<b>June 2011</b>	APB Agree the Draft Plan
<b>June 2011</b>	CEP including Town and Parish Council activity
<b>June 11–March 12</b>	5 Further joint events
<b>Sept 2011</b>	Update APB on plan, events and way forward
<b>March 2012</b>	CEP for 2012-13
<b>Quarterly</b>	Update at APB and endorsement by APB group
<b>Quarterly</b>	Review of plan and activities by sub group
<b>Ongoing</b>	Mapping of Community Groups/Stakeholders
<b>Ongoing</b>	Further develop database of groups within N&RN

### Projects Outputs

1 partnership event per month  
6 key joint partnership events  
10 partners participating at each event

### Project Outcomes

Greater awareness by residents of partner services and activities  
Greater awareness of Area Partnership Board and its work  
Residents consulted on APB priorities  
Northwich and Rural North website promoted

### Publicity\*

Some key places where residents will be able to keep up to date with the CEP include;  
Northwich Guardian  
Northwich and Rural North Website  
Mailshots/email newsletter via database contacts  
Posters  
Partnership newsletters/websites

***\*Link into N&RN Marketing and Communications Plan***

## How do we engage in Northwich and Rural North?

This CEP is a practical guide containing best practice and information about how to engage with people who live, work and visit Northwich and Rural North. We have included easy to use information and the various methods and approaches to engagement, outlining who, what, why and how of each method.

Community Engagement involves a number of methods and approaches:

- Inform** - Informing people about services, future plans, strategies, forthcoming developments and issues in a local area.
- Consult** – Consulting people to seek their views on services, future plans, strategies, forthcoming developments and issues in a local area.
- Engage** - Engaging with people provides the opportunity for issues and needs to be jointly discussed and assessed.

**The focus of this plan is primarily to work with local communities and is in line with CWAC Community Engagement Strategy which places a strong emphasis upon two areas namely:**

- Collaborate** – We will work in partnership with all public agencies and stakeholders to deliver better outcomes for local people
- Empowerment** – We will provide support, opportunities and resources for communities to identify their issues and concerns and to design and deliver their own local responses.

Collaboration and Empowerment will be central to all our engagement activity within Northwich and Rural North.

With any engagement activity it is important to plan effectively and learn from the experience. Planning and evaluation are central to its success. Looking at best practise and existing engagement can help greatly in the planning process.

## What needs to be considered before you start to inform, consult and engage?

Below are a number of key points to consider when planning to inform, consult or engage with the community:

- Why you are planning this initiative and what the outcomes will be?
- Be clear about who you will be informing, consulting, engaging with and what specific needs/requirements they may have.
- Identify the partner agencies and/or the people you will be working with and make contact early.
- Identify what your initiative will mean for the people involved. What are the benefits? What are the time commitments? Has the idea come from you? What is the basis for your proposal?
- Set up a communication/marketing plan and identify how you will promote and market what you plan to do.
- Make sure your information is clear, honest and easily accessible.
- Always take into account equality and diversity principles – if in doubt get advice.
- Is your initiative long, medium or short term? Or is it testing the waters?
- What resources are needed? (Include staff and volunteer time)
- Respond to issues as they come up and keep an open mind
- Always be willing to learn different perspectives and be honest when you are not sure of something
- Inform those involved regularly and remind them when meetings will be. Communicate the outcomes/decisions made of any engagement.
- Remember the procedures, such as Health and Safety at a meeting/event.
- Keep clear records of your planning process and what happened throughout the initiative. It always helps when looking back at the end and can help inform/improve/do things differently in the future.
- Make sure you are ready to communicate clearly, concisely and honestly.

## Methods of Approach to Inform, Consult, and Engage

The table below indicates a number of methods that can be used to inform, consult or engage along with examples of best practice. Please note that it is only an indication – the method you choose depends on the nature, size, subject and objective of the particular exercise.

**Key code:** ● ok ●● useful ●●● best method to use

	Methods	Inform	Consult	Engage
1	<a href="#">Action Learning Sets/Open Space</a>		●●●	●●
2	<a href="#">Appreciative Inquiry</a>		●●●	●●
3	<a href="#">Arts as Consultation</a>	●	●●●	●
4	<a href="#">Blogs</a>	●●		
5	<a href="#">Campaigns</a>	●●●	●	
6	<a href="#">Circulating documents</a>	●●●	●●	
7	<a href="#">Citizens Juries</a>	●●	●●●●	●●
8	<a href="#">Citizens Panels</a>	●	●●●●	●
9	<a href="#">Community Consultation Groups</a>	●	●●●●	●●
10	<a href="#">Community Forums</a>	●●	●	●
11	<a href="#">Community Representation</a>	●●	●●●●	●●●●
12	<a href="#">Community Visioning</a>	●	●●●●	●●
13	<a href="#">Conferences</a>	●●	●	
14	<a href="#">Customer Comment Cards</a>		●●	
15	<a href="#">Deliberative Opinion Polls</a>	●	●●●●	●
16	<a href="#">Doorstep Interviews</a>		●	
17	<a href="#">Exhibitions/Roadshows</a>	●●●	●	
18	<a href="#">Facebook</a>	●●		●●
19	<a href="#">Focus Groups</a>	●	●●●●	●●
20	<a href="#">Future Conferencing/Visioning</a>		●●	●●
21	<a href="#">Imagine</a>		●●	●●
22	<a href="#">In-depth Interviews</a>	●	●●●●	●●
23	<a href="#">Leaflets/Newsletters</a>	●●●	●●	
24	<a href="#">Local Press</a>	●●●	●	
25	<a href="#">Market Place</a>	●●	●●	●
26	<a href="#">Mediation</a>			●●
27	<a href="#">Mystery Shopping</a>			●●
28	<a href="#">Northwich and Rural North Website</a>	●●●	●	●
29	<a href="#">Participatory Appraisal</a>		●●●●	●●●●
30	<a href="#">Participatory Budgeting</a>	●●●	●●●●	●●●●
31	<a href="#">Partnership Approaches – Impact Weeks</a>	●	●●●●	●●●●
32	<a href="#">Planning for real</a>	●	●●●●	●●
33	<a href="#">Priority Search</a>		●	●
34	<a href="#">Public Meetings</a>	●●●	●●	●
35	<a href="#">Select Committees</a>	●●	●●	●
36	<a href="#">Staff feedback &amp; Suggestions</a>		●●	●
37	<a href="#">Surgeries – Councillors/Police/Highways</a>	●●		●
38	<a href="#">Surveys - Self Completion</a>		●●●●	
39	<a href="#">Surveys - Telephone</a>		●●●●	●
40	<a href="#">Topic Forums</a>	●	●●	●●
41	<a href="#">Twitter</a>	●	●●	●
42	<a href="#">User Panels</a>	●	●●●●	●●
43	<a href="#">Walkabouts – Ward Walks</a>	●	●	●●●●
44	<a href="#">Workshops</a>	●●	●●●●	●●

# No 1. Case Study

## Action Learning Sets

Also known as Open Space, Co-production, Participatory Appraisal

### What is this?

Action Learning is an accelerated learning tool which can be applied to any number of different issues and challenges. In Action Learning sets, participants meet regularly with others in order to explore solutions to real problems and decide on the action they wish to take.

### Who is it for?

Active Learning is for people to work on particular problems but also as a method of teaching and self-improvement. It is ideal for smaller groups of people across all society.

### How to do it?

Learning sets meet on a regular basis for 1-2 hours or more for discussions on any number of different issues. The stages of progression include:

1. Describing the problem
2. Receiving contributions from others
3. Reflecting on the discussion and deciding what action to take
4. Reporting back on what happened
5. Reflecting on the problem-solving process and how well it is working

### Why use this method?

Active Learning enables people to work together to check perceptions, clarify the issue and explore alternatives for action. It makes people aware of group development and encourage effective ways of working together. People are able to act on their new ideas and try to change the situation.

### Cost to consider

This is a very low cost approach; however Costs that arise can include external facilitators and time spent in set meetings.

### Tip

Can help change old, inflexible teaching methods. Not suitable for larger groups in public engagement

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## No 2. Case Study

### Appreciative Inquiry

#### What is this?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) builds a vision for the future using questions to focus people's attention on past and future success. These questions are then taken to the wider community. Issues addressed often revolve around what people enjoy about an area, their hopes for the future, and their feelings about their communities.

The questions encourage people to tell stories from their own experience of what works. By discussing what has worked in the past and the reasons why, the participants can go on to imagine and create a vision of what would make a successful future that has a firm grounding in the reality of past successes.

#### Who is it for?

AI begins with a core group setting the focus of the Inquiry, and developing and testing the 'appreciative' questions. These are used by many people in the community to gather information through stories as well as set out their hopes and wishes for the future.

#### How to do it?

- Interview questions can be developed, tested and analysed in a few hours or in a workshop.
- Data from the interviews can be looked at and turned into information by a few people or, preferably, by the whole community.
- Everyone can then decide collectively how to best go forward.
- AI works best when there is something that needs to be worked on in the whole community and where there is a long-term commitment to change.

#### Why use this method?

AI is story-based. People speak from their own experience;

It involves the community and partners working together;

It is easy to include the people who normally don't take part in engagement activities;

AI builds on what has worked well in the past;

Creates a strong vision for the community

#### Costs to consider

Cost usually between £1,000 and £15,000 depending on size of organization and ability to pay, and scale of enquiry.

#### Tip

It is a useful tool when a complex situation needs some collective views to address it.

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## No 3. Case Study

### Arts as Consultation Also known as Creative Consultation

#### What is this?

Arts-based engagement refers to a number of techniques namely drama, music, dance and performance, creative writing, poetry and storytelling, music and the visual arts (drawing, painting, collage, photography, video and three dimensional arts) as a way to engage with people about a particular issue.

#### Who is it for?

All ages. Arts based engagement techniques are useful when you have mixed groups of people that need to work together – an arts activity can give a common focus. Arts based or creative consultation is becoming increasingly popular. Using the arts as a way to discuss the possibilities of a place undergoing change can engage both individuals and communities who may not necessarily respond to other methods of engagement.

#### How to do it?

Decide on the subject/issue you wish to consult on.

Decide on the appropriate technique i.e. drama, music etc

Agree timescale for the consultation

Promote the consultation – works well as a standalone event or part of an existing event

Working with artists, photographers, writers, poets, actors and dancers can obtain an accurate picture of people's relationship with and aspirations for a place which can inform the decision making process using visual arts, puppetry, video, drama and music.

#### Why use this method?

The process can also deliver individual benefits such as skills development, confidence-building, fun, personal expression and widening horizons.

#### Costs to consider

Varies

#### Tip

Utilise a facilitator such as a local artist

Link into local arts groups

This is a great way to engage school children

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## No 4. Case Study

**Blogs**  
**Councillors/Community Groups/Community Representatives**  
See also [Twitter](#)

### What is this?

Blogs are online journals or notice boards where individuals or organisations can provide commentary and critique on news or specific subjects such as politics, food and local events. Within the Northwich and Rural North Area a number of blogs have been set up by Community and Voluntary Groups, Ward Councillors and Community Representatives.

Blogs provide a quick and informal way to disseminate information to the wider public or specific groups and can play an important role in public engagement alongside more involving processes.

### Who is it for?

Blogs can be targeted at any groups who wish to provide comment and critique on news, places, people and objects as well as online comments and discussion.

However access to Blogs relies on people having the technology and skills necessary to go online, therefore some groups are excluded from accessing blogs.

### How to do it?

Blogs are based around an existing website and promoted through weblinks on a variety of relevant websites. Blogging on a host website can usually be as simple as emailing your story/blog to the host site which they will upload.

### Why use this method?

Blogs engage people who might not normally be involved in face-to-face consultations.

### Costs to consider

Time associated with updating the Blog and initial development of the blog.  
Minimal financial costs (free if blogging on someone else's site).

### Tip

Blogs run by individuals can be completely free as there are a number of sites that provide free hosting for blogs.  
Potential for offensive, personal, pointless and inappropriate comments written on blogs - content may need to be moderated.

A number of blogs can be accessed for news within the Northwich and Rural North Area;  
[Grozone](#) [Cllrs](#) <http://www.talkingwestcheshire.org/blogs.aspx>

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## No 5. Case Study

### Campaigns

#### What is this?

A campaign uses a wide variety of techniques to inform people of a particular issue, service or publicise a change. Campaigns can be run in a number of ways but generally target a specific audience they want to promote a message to. Timescales for a campaign can be for a specific period of time or a particular time of year i.e. Summer.

#### Who is it for?

All campaigns can be used to target any members of the community.

#### How to do it?

Campaigns can be high profile using a mix of media such as flyers, radio, newsletters, local newspapers and radio.

Decide on the subject of your campaign

Decide media to be used as part of the campaign, i.e. billboards, flyers

Determine timescale of the campaign (one off or Ongoing)

Agree the successful outcomes of the campaign i.e. Greater awareness of service/project/product.

#### Why use this method?

Campaigns can ensure that more people are aware of:

Services

Products

Changes to Services

Issues that affect them

The ways in which they can get involved and influence change.

#### Costs to consider

Campaigns can use a mix and match approach to the media they use. Therefore costing depends on the length of the campaign and type of media used.

#### Tip

Involve the target audience in developing the campaign e.g. young people can design/develop the image of the campaign.

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## No 6. Case Study

### Circulating Documents

#### What is this?

Circulating documents for consultation is a way of getting members of the public to provide feedback on documents or reports. Circulating these across existing networks and in public buildings is a key way of engaging, informing and consulting.

#### Who is it for?

Residents of Cheshire West and Chester, along with statutory organisations, community and voluntary sector groups, schools and local businesses.

#### How to do it?

Ideally a copy of the plan, with a covering letter should be mailed out or emailed out to consultees, libraries, local council officer, schools as well as an article or advert in the local press.

Documents should be made available on CWAC and partner websites and emailed to interested parties such as the residents of the Borough and partner agencies. It is important to let people know the date by which you need to receive comments and to explain the different ways in which people can include their comments.

#### Why use this method?

Responses informed the future spending/budget/priorities of a strategy, project or area and provide valuable feedback from your target audience. Advertising consultation plans is important in gaining the views and opinions of local residents.

#### Costs to consider

Cost of printing consultation document;  
Advert and publicity;  
Officer time to produce the consultation document and analyse results.

#### Tip

Ensure consultation documents are widely available.  
Publicise the consultation as much as possible.  
Documents are easy and clear to read and understand.

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## No 7. Case Study

### Citizens Juries

#### **What is this?**

The Jury is made up of between 12-25 people who have been selected as representative of the general public. A Citizens Jury is a decision-making or decision-advising tool modelled on the idea of a criminal jury. They are used to involve members of the public in a structured way about an issue of local or national concern and can be used to make or inform decisions about strategic planning or service prioritisation.

#### **Who is it for?**

Residents of a particular area.

#### **How to do it?**

The jury is selected as representative of a particular area. Members of the public who participate as jury members. They hear evidence over a few days about proposals and make a judgment based on the evidence given. The format might be:

Day 1 General information about the issue

Day 2 and 3 expert presentations (witnesses) on different approaches to the issue.

Day 4 Jury deliberates about its recommendations.

A number of recommendations are developed by the jury, which in turn are passed to the local council/partner agencies.

#### **Why use this method?**

Provides a good opportunity to develop a deep understanding of an issue.

#### **Costs to consider**

Can prove expensive as jury members can be paid expenses along with the cost of a facilitator.

#### **Tip**

Budget fully for the whole exercise including monitoring

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## No 8. Case Study

### Citizens Panels View West – CWAC Citizens Panel

#### What is this?

CWAC Council has a Citizens Panel which comprises a cross section of local people who agree to take part in research and consultation with the Council on a regular basis. Usually, people are selected at random and invited to participate. Panel members might fill in questionnaires, attend discussion groups and take part in other events.

#### Who is it for?

[View West](#) is the Cheshire West and Chester Council Citizens Panel. It is a cross section of local Cheshire West and Chester residents who are willing to take part in surveys and discussion groups is a cost effective way of finding out what residents think about particular issues. Seeking the views of local people means that the Council is better able to target resources and develop services that meet local needs.

#### How to do it?

Identify the role and purpose of the group  
Plan to group carefully – how often will they meet? Where? What costs will be involved? What will their purpose be?  
Plan how the panel may be conclude, refreshed and over what timescale.  
Ensure the panel is representative of the target population.  
Ensure members can contact you with any concerns or questions.  
Send out information about meetings, with plenty of time and always remember any accessibility or language factors.

#### Why use this method?

Greater and regular consultation with the residents of Cheshire West and Chester.  
Regular updates on residents views and issues.  
It makes residents feel like they are able to influence decisions.

#### Costs to consider

Arranging meetings  
Staff time  
Postage costs associated with consultations  
Membership

#### Tip

Panel membership should be refreshed regularly  
[http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/community\\_and\\_living/research\\_and\\_intelligence/citizens\\_panel.aspx](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/community_and_living/research_and_intelligence/citizens_panel.aspx)

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## No 9. Case Study

### Community Consultation Groups

#### What is this?

Community Consultation should be related to a decision that the Council or Partner agency intends to take, but where the views of the community must be taken into account. The process should include as many people as possible and provide feedback on any decision made.

#### Who is it for?

Community consultation groups are made up of members of the Local community who should be involved in decision making on a relevant issue.

#### How to do it?

Community Consultation activities can include a number of methods such as surveys, focus groups, workshops etc. Input comes from the community in that they provide information or attend an event to express their views.

Decide the issue/subject to be discussed

Agree on the types of consultation to be used i.e. focus groups, workshops

Agree timescales, venues

Send invites out to the local community and partners

#### Why use this method?

Consultation Groups collect clear ideas from the local community using a number of engagement methods.

#### Costs to consider

Facilitator

Materials/resources

Publicity

Suitable venue

#### Tip

Can be used as an ongoing consultation approach.

Brings together existing groups to look at an issue.

Easy to do but, may only reach the usual suspects

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## No 10. Case Study

### Community Forums

#### What is this?

Within the Northwich and Rural North Area Team there are four Community Forums based around the ward within the area boundary namely Frodsham, Helsby, Kingsley, Weaver and Cuddington, Marbury, Hartford and Greenbank, Winnington and Castle, Witton and Rudheath and Shakerley.

The Community Forums provide local residents and organisations with an opportunity to contribute to decision making at a local level; feel they can make an impact on improving both their local area and the services functioning locally. It is also an opportunity for Councillors to engage with the residents of their ward and a means by which the Council can provide information.

#### Who is it for?

Each of the Forums is focused on individual wards covering the Northwich and Rural North Area therefore target groups include: residents from the wards of Frodsham, Helsby, Kingsley, Weaver and Cuddington, Marbury, Hartford and Greenbank, Winnington and Castle, Witton and Rudheath and Shakerley.

#### How to do it?

The current format of the Community Forums within the Northwich and Rural North (N&RN) APB area includes the following routine tasks: organising venues, agreeing agendas with councillors, marketing the event, sending out flyers and posters as well incorporating a new Market Place approach to give residents the chance to raise issues of concern and talk face to face with councillors, partner agencies and council services which so far has been greatly received.

#### Why use this method?

People are better informed of the issues within their area.  
Cllrs are able to engage with their constituents.

#### Costs to consider

Venue hire/Refreshments; Officer time/Members time  
Publicity – printing of flyers  
Postage and Mileage of CWAC officers/members and partner organisations

#### Tip

Can act as a focal point for engagement at a ward level  
All areas within Northwich and Rural North are covered by a Community Forum.  
Only certain members of the community will attend the Community Forums.

[www.talkingwestcheshire.org/my\\_community/community\\_forums.aspx](http://www.talkingwestcheshire.org/my_community/community_forums.aspx)

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## No 11. Case Study

### Community Representation Rudheath and Witton Neighbourhood Management Area

#### What is this?

Community Representatives are local residents living a particular area who attend meetings, working groups and engage with other local residents on the events and issues specific to their area.

#### Who is it for?

Local Residents, in this case Rudheath and Witton Neighbourhood Management Area. Each of the community representatives are involved in decision making and developing their community.

#### How to do it?

Community Representatives within the Rudheath and Witton Neighbourhood Management Area, assist the Neighbourhood Manager to engage with local community groups, involving local communities in neighbourhood activities, developing a local community group plan, and participating in the performance review of neighbourhood targets and outcomes.

#### Why use this method?

Greater community involvement  
Ownership of community issues

#### Costs to consider

Expenses paid to community reps.

#### Tip

Can take time to train community reps.

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## No 12. Case Study

### Community Visioning

#### **What is this?**

Community visioning involves a group of people coming together to develop ideas about what they would like their community to be. After the vision is agreed the group will then work on looking at what needs to be done to bring about that vision and put this together in an action plan.

#### **Who is it for?**

This is a useful technique to ensure that local people are involved in community regeneration planning. Visioning can be used on an area-based level or to examine specific services, such as health or education.

#### **How to do it?**

Community visioning can involve conference or workshop events. It is likely that drawing up the vision and the action plan will take place over a period of months. Groups meet and are assisted by a trained facilitator to agree on a vision for their area and look at ways of achieving this goal.

#### **Why use this method?**

Community visioning encourages ownership and is a positive approach to talking about change. It also gives an opportunity for the community and service providers to work together on developing agreed, shared priorities and actions.

#### **Costs to consider**

Hire of meeting rooms and trained facilitators.

#### **Tip**

There needs to be a process, framework and resources in place to translate community visions into action

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## No 13. Case Study

### Conferences

#### **What is this?**

Conferences provide a positive opportunity for a great number of people from a variety of backgrounds, organisations, services and experiences to discuss a number of issues. The use of presentations and other media such as exhibitions and information packs, add to the success of a conference. Key speakers can be invited to give specialist advice.

#### **Who is it for?**

Conferences can include key partners, local people with a key interest in a certain issue, geographical areas, interested in discussions and networking with a range of organisations.

#### **How to do it?**

Conferences begin with a welcome by the chair/host and moves onto a key note speech.

Conference delegates can then split up into groups for workshop sessions. There can be a number of workshop topics and each delegate could participate in a choice of one hour workshops. Each of the workshops has a facilitator and note taker.

After the workshops, the delegates are brought back together as a whole group, with the chance for question and answer sessions.

Finally the conference ends with a summary by the host/chair.

#### **Why use this method?**

Workshop sessions usually provide a number of ideas and suggestions.

#### **Costs to consider**

Can prove expensive as a venue, refreshments, lunch and delegate packs are usually provided. Considerable staff time is used for the organisation and planning of the conference as well as running the workshops.

#### **Tip**

Be clear about the focus/aim of the conference  
Decide clear topics for workshops  
Consider accessibility issues when choosing a venue

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## No 14. Case Study

### Customer Comment Cards Suggestion Boxes

#### **What is this?**

Customer comment cards can be used to consult on facilities/services such as leisure centres, to allow members of the community to comment on facilities and services.

#### **Who is it for?**

Users of a particular service and/or facility.

#### **How to do it?**

Ensure wording on the cards is clear and friendly

Bold black print on a white card is easy to read

Allow enough space on the cards for comments

Any comments that are received face-to-face or via email should also be considered.

Comment cards can be situated at several locations throughout a building with a small posting box for replies. Newsletters can also include customer comment cards along with posting information directly to users.

#### **Why use this method?**

Clear idea of service/facility users.

A monitoring log of comments for management information and monitoring purposes.

#### **Costs to consider**

Costs associated with producing cards, staff time and postage.

#### **Tip**

Situate the cards in different areas throughout the building.

Publicise the comments cards.

Only ask about the things you are willing to change

Ask if the customer would like to be contacted regarding their comments and feedback

Offer an incentive or reward to customers who fill out the comment card

Act quickly to resolve any complaints

Save money by directing customers to complete comments cards online.

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## No 15. Case Study

### Deliberative Opinion Polls

#### What is this?

Deliberative Opinion Polls (DOP's) measure informed opinion on an issue. Compared to ordinary opinion polls, DOP's differ in that participants are informed via briefing notes, access to experts on a particular issue and have time to consider the issue in detail. Participants in ordinary opinion polls do not have the opportunity to learn about the issue being measured and may know little about the issue.

#### Who is it for?

The DOP's use a random sample of the population so that participants are representative of the wider groups in the community.

#### How to do it?

- Determine a random sample of the population, to gain a wide representative of groups in the community.
- Conduct baseline survey of opinion.
- Contact experts who may be required to inform the participants on specific aspects of the issue.
- Brief participants and dispatch written information.
- Give participants two-four days to compose questions and engage politicians and experts in plenary discussions.
- Record views on a particular issue before the poll begins and again at the completion of the poll.
- Changes in opinion are measured and incorporated into a report.
- DOPs are often conducted in conjunction with television/media companies.

#### Why use this method?

DOP's will deliver a report which reflects informed public opinion on an issue or proposal. Such reports may then be distributed to the wider community via the popular media.

#### Costs to consider

Staff and telephones, Briefing papers, Expert knowledge

#### Tip

Resource intensive and can be expensive

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## No 16. Case Study

### Doorstep Interviews

#### **What is this?**

Doorstep interviews are used to gain feedback or to complete questionnaires.

#### **Who is it for?**

Target groups can be a ward area, estate, streets or particular houses. Can be a specific selection of people or random sample of residents.

#### **How to do it?**

Doorstep interviews involve a researcher visiting residents and ask for their opinions. By asking very clear and appropriate questions. Closed end questions are usually used.

#### **Why use this method?**

Quick response rate

One-to-One approach to obtaining people views

#### **Costs to be considered**

Can be costly and time consuming as you will need to employ people to undertake the interviews.

#### **Tip**

Can be a good way to target specific areas.

Always carry ID

Inform people beforehand that the interviewers will be in the area

Considerations include:

People may not wish to be contacted via their doorstep

Not everyone will be available during the daytime, so alternate times when people visit.

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## No 17. Case Study

### Exhibitions and Roadshows The Big Drop In - Northwich

#### What is this?

Exhibitions and Roadshows are a visual presentation of information and are portable, with the ability to move to various appropriate venues or can remain at one site for a long time. The Big Drop In focussed on partners agencies attending with exhibition stands and information to discuss with the local community.

#### Who is it for?

The target group was residents within Northwich and surrounding areas who are seeking information and advice on Housing, Census, Benefits, Job search, Training.

#### How to do it?

A wide range of advice and help organisations were on hand to offer information and advise local residents concerned about benefits, housing, job search, training, family issues, health etc.

Information was also gathered on what local people think the big issues are. This also provides a useful networking opportunity for those organisations that have stalls and bring information.

#### Why use this method?

The 'Big Drop In' achieved its aim of raising awareness amongst the local community of the advice and information available to them throughout Cheshire. The event also widened knowledge amongst service providers about the needs on the local community.

#### Costs to consider

Staff time for attending the market place – in kind  
Hall Hire  
Refreshments  
Promotional Material

#### Tip

Engage support from a variety of stakeholders.  
Widely publicise to promote attendance.  
Inform those attending what will happen to the comments they have given.  
Big Drop In's can be focussed on other issues relevant to another area.

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## No 18. Case Study

### Facebook

#### **What is this?**

Facebook is a social networking site with over 600million users sharing profile, pictures, and messages.

#### **Who is it for?**

Facebook is available to everyone who declares themselves to be over the age of 13 years and have a valid email address.

#### **How to do it?**

Users create profiles showing their interests, photos and details of themselves and add other users as 'friends', similar to twitter and 'followers'. As well as being able to set up individual profiles, users can create and join interest groups which other users can join and show there interest in. Organisations create their own interest pages promoting their activities along with individual volunteers and staff.

#### **Why use this method?**

Target audience is guaranteed to be hit with over 600million users on Facebook

#### **Cost to consider**

Use of Facebook is completely free as long as you can use a computer

#### **Tip**

If you make a group public (as apposed to a private, invite only group) watch out for spam messages from users.

Try not to put personal, sensitive information on your facebook page.

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## No 19. Case Study

### Focus Groups

#### What is this?

Focus groups consist of a small number of people who are selected to discuss an issue or series of issues. The purpose is to encourage honest and open discussion to enable people to voice their feelings, perceptions and opinions about the issue.

This is a useful tool when seeking the views of particular interest groups and even more so when they are usually not involved in providing feedback on issues.

#### Who is it for?

Special effort should always be made to access potentially socially excluded or hard to reach groups such as the traveller community.

#### How to do it?

It is important that an experienced facilitator leads the meeting keeping the discussion within an agreed structure and who allows members of the group to participate, to provide a comfortable venue and to ensure that the participants feel confident about expressing their views. The discussion can be taped or notes taken which can then be analysed later.

#### Why use this method?

Obtain the views and opinions of groups who don't normally get involved in other forms of consultations e.g. surveys and written exercises.

#### Costs to consider

Venue hire  
Refreshments  
Facilitator  
Payment for attendees

#### Tip

Requires skills to ensure everyone participates equally and not dominated by the loudest person/people.

This method can be time consuming with discussions easily straying from topic.

A strong facilitator can keep things in check.

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## No 20. Case Study

### Future Conferencing/Visioning Also known as Future Search

#### What is this?

Future conferencing is about bringing together stakeholders to share a future vision for a community or an organisation. It helps people to focus on common ground and desired futures – rather than focusing on conflict/problems; and allows local people to take responsibility for implementing things.

#### Who is it for?

Future conferencing and visioning brings people from all walks of life into the same discussions.

#### How to do it?

They are intensive events, usually taking place over a number of days. A great way of finding creative solutions for problems through topic-based workshops. It is a structured process which looks at the following:

1. Review the past
2. Explore the present
3. Create ideal futures
4. Identify Common Ground
5. Make Action Plans

#### Why use this method?

It's a very good technique to use for developing a vision for a community. Involves a great number of people.

#### Costs to consider

£5,000 - £25,000

Venue hire over several days

Facilitator costs

Workshop leaders

#### Tip

Can prove very costly compared to other engagement activities.

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## No 21. Case Study

### Imagine

Based on 'appreciative inquiry'

#### What is this?

Imagine is a new approach to community participation based on 'appreciative inquiry'. Imagine focuses on exploring ways to consider 'what could be' and 'what is possible' by reflecting on past positive experiences. It helps participants identify a collectively desired future and vision and consider ways of translating possibilities into reality and belief into practice.

#### Who is it for?

It's a very inclusive method – all sections of the community can take part.

#### How to do it?

Imagine asks people to tell stories of what works and involves a six-stage process of:

- Defining the issues and a set of exploratory questions
- Using the questions to draw out stories
- Dreaming how the future could be and expressing people's ideals – Ideally done in a one-day workshop
- Co-creating the dream by forming partnerships that in turn use the Imagine methods for continuing workshops
- Celebrating the project and its achievements
- Evaluating the project

#### Why use this method?

Imagine creates a vision of the future that is realistic and achievable.

#### Costs to consider

Venue hire  
Facilitators

#### Tip

A core group of participants could be trained to facilitate the Imagine process, which would enable them to guide and train other sessions.

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## No 22. Case Study

### In-depth Interviews

#### **What is this?**

In-depth interviews use largely open-ended questions to record experiences, explore issues or problems without being restricted to a series of questions.

#### **Who is it for?**

Target groups can be a ward area, estate, streets or particular houses. Can be a specific selection of people or random sample of residents.

#### **How to do it?**

Open ended questions are generally used to allow people to provide full answers and give opinions on issues.

#### **Why use this method?**

This method is particularly appropriate for exploring complicated or sensitive issues which may prove difficult to capture using another method.  
It's very much a customer focused approach and  
Can be a very empowering experience for those being interviewed as their perspectives a very much valued.

#### **Costs to be considered**

Analysis of answers could prove quite costly and time consuming.  
Providing opportunities for community members to act as paid or volunteer interviewers can be an important capacity and relationship building strategy, but do come at a cost.

#### **Tip**

Very resource intensive way to obtain peoples views.  
Can sometimes be difficult to analyse due to the different ideas and interpretations people have.

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## No 23. Case Study

### Leaflets/Newsletters You Said, We Did Newsletters/Community Forum Flyers

#### **What is this?**

Northwich and Rural North Area team have “You Said, We Did” Newsletters which detail the notes from the Community Forums within the area.

#### **Who is it for?**

Residents within the Community Forum area i.e., Frodsham and Helsby ward.

#### **How to do it?**

“You Said, We Did” newsletters provide a summary of the issues discussed at the Community Forum including presentations. Questions and statements from both residents and partners are recorded at the Forums. A flavour of the night is provided in the newsletters with answers to the questions raised by residents.

#### **Why use this method?**

Newsletters provide a greater awareness of Council activity within the ward area and Residents feel more informed on the Council work within their local area.

#### **Costs to consider**

Officer time  
Printing of newsletters

#### **Tip**

Circulate the newsletter via email and post.  
Make sure the newsletters are available in libraries, post offices, community centres.

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## No 24. Case Study

### Local Press Northwich Guardian and Cheshire FM

#### What is this?

Local Press is a useful way of advertising within a specific area. There are a number of ways in which local newspapers can be used; placing an advert; press releases; public notice and advertising local meetings. Along with advertising on the local radio station Cheshire FM.

#### Who is it for?

People within the readership area – in the case of Northwich Guardian it's the Northwich area and surrounding villages. More localised publications can be used as well such as Town and Parish Councils newsletters; village hall/community centre newsletters, Frodsham post, Frodsham life, and church newsletters. Cheshire FM the local radio station aims to provide an area of over 100,000 residents with a local service across the Mid Cheshire Area including Northwich.

#### How to do it?

This can take the form of a press release and/or the meeting flyer which is sent directly to the Northwich Guardian.

#### Why use this method?

A great number of people read the local papers and are informed of local events using the media.

#### Costs to consider

It is usually free to advertise with the Town and Parish Councils, village hall/community centres. However, local papers such as the Northwich Guardian will charge a fee for a flyer/poster to be included in the paper, with press releases free of charge. CWAC communications team purchase a full page of the Northwich Guardian each month to highlight CWAC developments in the area.

#### Tip

Familiar publication to a large number of people

Very limited feedback

Unable to ensure you are reaching your target group – radio announcements can be staggered to reach a target audience i.e. reach parents during school run times.

Potential for ongoing features

Media coverage may provide a negative slant on a story

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## No 25. Case Study

### Market Place Northwich and Rural North Community Forums

#### What is this?

Market Place was initially developed to improve the numbers of People and Partners attending the forums.

Initially, the forums consisted of the main meeting 7pm start with key agenda items and a community safety surgery starting 6:30pm prior to the main meeting. The aim was to expand on the community safety surgery introducing the 'Market Place' – which is an opportunity for local people to meet services and groups in their area, such as Fire, Police, Councillors, Community Safety Wardens, Highways and Streetscene.

#### Who is it for?

The target group was residents within the ward of the Community Forum area.

#### How to do it?

The market place starts at 6:30pm prior to the main meeting with partners from CWAC services such as Highways, Streetscene and Leisure, community and voluntary sectors, local businesses, town and parish councils to promote their activities to the local community, services and obtain feedback on consultations. This also provides a useful networking opportunity for those organisations that have stalls and bring information.

#### Why use this method?

Agencies and members of the community who attend responded well to the opportunity to discuss issues and gain further information regarding their local ward area.

#### Costs to consider

Staff time for attending the market place.  
Publicity as part of the Community Forums.

#### Tip

Engage support from a variety of stakeholders.  
Widely publicise to boost/improve attendance.  
Inform those attending what will happen to the comments they have given.

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## No 26. Case Study

### Mediation

#### What is this?

Mediation is a way of trying to resolve disagreements that arise between people. It can be used even when a disagreement has been going for a long time or where other agencies such as the police have been involved.

#### Who is it for?

Mediation can help with any kind of community, family, relationship and workplace problem.

#### How to do it?

In mediation, an independent third party, a mediator, acts as a facilitator between two or more parties who are involved in a dispute. The mediator assists the parties in reaching an agreement/resolving the dispute.

#### Why use this method?

Mediation is confidential, impartial and voluntary and is a safe, neutral environment where disputants can discuss relevant issues and know that they will be assisted in trying to find a mutual, positive and constructive way forward for the future.

#### Costs to consider

Costs include bringing the relevant people together, training people to be mediators or paying for specialist mediators.

#### Tip

Mediation can vary in the length of time needed to resolve conflicts.

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## No 27. Case Study

### Mystery Shopping

#### **What is this?**

Mystery shopping is used to test specific areas of service delivery, e.g. frontline operations.

#### **Who is it for?**

This type of method is more applicable to front-line, person to person services.

#### **How to do it?**

It involves someone posing as a service user making typical service requests in order to test the service. The shopper looks at a number of pre-determined areas and then reports back.

#### **Why use this method?**

Precise and detailed feedback;  
Simple to implement;  
Equivalent to asking other users for their experiences;  
Flexible and immediate;  
Can be used to praise/motivate.

#### **Costs to consider**

Mystery shoppers should be compensated for their time and effort.

#### **Tip**

Encourage the mystery shoppers to report back on both good and bad service.  
Mystery shoppers should be similar/typical of existing shoppers.

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## No 28. Case Study

### Northwich and Rural North Website

#### What is this?

Northwich and Rural North Area Team are piloting a website hosted by Cheshire West and Chester Council to promote events, local councillors, services across the area boundary.

#### Who is it for?

People who live, work or visit the Northwich and Rural North Area are the target group for this area based website. Along with partner agencies who are encouraged to promote activities, etc through the use of the website.

#### How to do it?

Talkingwestcheshire.org has key sections that can be accessed including: My community; My councillors; My services; Love to live; My news; Events and Blogs.

Home - hot news for the front page including RSS feeds;  
My News - anything which may be of interest to communities;  
Events - any event taking place no matter how big or small;  
Love to Live - activities and things to do;  
My Community - what's going on including meetings;  
My Services - what your service is doing, you can also place a web link on this page to direct people to your own site;  
My Councillors - news from local Councillors and Parish Councils. Again you can place a link to your own website, own blog etc.

#### Why use this method?

Residents and Partner Agencies are able to access up to date information in one place.

#### Costs to consider

Time to update the website  
Costs associated with the website domain name, development of website

#### Tip

Access to computers may be limited for some residents – signpost to libraries/learning centres.

Allow companies to advertise on your website to cover some costs (may slow down your site, choose carefully).

**Website - [www.talkingwestcheshire.org](http://www.talkingwestcheshire.org)**

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## No 29. Case Study

### Participatory Appraisal

Similar to [Appreciate Inquiry](#) and [Action Learning Sets](#)

#### What is this?

Participatory Appraisal is a way of learning about communities through their local knowledge and experience.

The short term can be used to map local priorities and peoples understanding of issues. The long term aim of this particular approach is to empower and enable local people to identify, analyse and tackle their problems themselves.

#### Who is it for?

Groups of local people including local voluntary and groups and services and organisations who all wish to share their knowledge and experience.

#### How to do it?

Agree facilitator for PA event

Book venue for event

Invite local people to attend PA event

Encourage people to identify their own priorities and decisions about future.

Important that the facilitator listens to the discussions and encourages everyone to participate.

#### Why use this method?

This is an effective tool when you are willing to let the community take control;

It empowers participants, creates better relationships between participating groups;

Provides reliable and realistic local knowledge and priorities;

#### Costs to consider

Can be expensive – costs of hiring properly trained PA facilitators.

#### Tip

Local community members learn approaches themselves; therefore the cost of hiring trained PA facilitators is reduced.

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## No 30. Case Study

### Participatory Budgeting Frodsham/Helsby

#### What is this?

Participatory budgeting directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined public budget.

#### Who is it for?

Local groups who are based in AND working for the benefit of communities within the Frodsham and Helsby area.

#### How to do it?

1. Each group at the event will be asked to do a 3-4 minute presentation on their chosen project to be funded. Each group will also receive a summary of the types of projects the other groups are requesting funding for.
2. Each group will nominate a spokesperson, who will be given 3 tokens at the start of the event. These tokens will be used by the groups to vote on their favourite project – all votes will be weighted the same. Councillors have the casting votes in the event of tied votes.
3. After the presentations have concluded the nominated person will be asked to place one token in 3 different boxes.
4. Groups are not permitted to vote for themselves – each group presenting their ideas for funds will be allocated a number. This number will be displayed on the tokens. The voting boxes are also numbered corresponding to the number allocated to the group, hence it would prevent groups from voting for themselves.
5. Once the votes have been cast, a refreshment break will take place, during which the votes can be counted.
6. After the refreshment break, the three successful groups will be announced and certificates presented to them by a local Councillor.

#### Why use this method?

It is a “participatory budgeting” event, passing control of the decision making to the other local groups attending on the night and deciding where councillor budgets should be spent.

#### Costs to consider

Funding available to give to groups – Members budgets

Venue hire, Staff time, Application packs, Postage, Officer Time, Refreshments

#### Tip

Allow minimum of six weeks for groups to receive the form, completed the application and send back for consideration by councillors ensuring they meet the criteria

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## No 31. Case Study

### Partnership Approaches – Impact Weeks

#### **What is this?**

Impact Weeks have taken place across the Northwich and Rural North area and involve partners working together at a particular location i.e. ward, housing estate to improve the environment and quality of life of residents.

#### **Who is it for?**

Residents of a key area i.e., Greenbank estate in Northwich saw a number of partners working together to improve the area.

#### **How to do it?**

A week/several days are chosen to improve a particular area and a number of partners namely Police, Fire, Housing, Highways and the Area Team work together to develop an action plan of issues and improvements that can make the area better.

Ward walks are included in the impact weeks which prove popular as they focus on improving the environmental aspects to an area namely, parking issues, and highways. Promotion campaigns along with consultations are also part of an impact week.

Impact weeks are very much focused on engagement with the community and positive outcomes such as increased take up of a service, greater awareness of partner/council services.

#### **Why use this method?**

Residents have greater involvement in their local area.  
Improved environment.  
Encourages greater partnership working in the future.

#### **Costs to consider**

Staff time;  
Publicity.

#### **Tip**

Promote the impact week's activities in advance to local residents.  
Try and get as many partners involved as possible.

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## No 32. Case Study

### Planning for Real

#### What is this?

Participants make a 3D model of their local area and add suggestions of the way they would like to see their community develop. They then prioritise these in groups and create an action plan for decision-makers to take away.

#### Who is it for?

Local residents are the focus of a Planning for Real process. There is no upper limit to the number of participant's i.e. local residents and partner agencies that can be involved, as they do not have to attend at the same time or place.

#### How to do it?

Community members are involved from the beginning in deciding on a suitable venue and subject for the process.

The model of a neighbourhood is often made by local people themselves in order to create a sense of ownership over the process. A number of events are run depending on the number and nature of the participants. Sometimes separate events are run for specific groups, such as young people.

People go on to use their knowledge of living in the area to make suggestions by placing cards directly onto the model. There are both ready-made cards with common suggestions (around 300) and blank cards for participants to fill in themselves. These suggestions are then prioritised in small groups on a scale of Now, Soon, or Later. These resulting priority lists form the basis for an Action Plan that decision-makers are charged with taking away, considering and implementing. Delivering the Action Plan is easier if the community is involved in delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

#### Why use this method?

A deliverable action plan is developed produced and owned by the local community.

#### Costs to consider

Depends largely on the number of events and the size of the venue required. A trained facilitator is also necessary. The eye-catching three-dimensional models are usually created by schools or local groups and aren't necessarily expensive

#### Tip

Encourage local groups and schools to create the 3D models of schools, buildings etc which is relatively inexpensive.

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## No 33. Case Study

### Priority Search

See also [Focus Groups](#) and [Surveys](#)

**What is this?** Priority Search is a way of using focus groups and surveys to identify the most important issues to communities or residents in a particular area.

#### Who is it for?

Priority Search can be used by Residents of a particular area and local communities.

#### How to do it?

Priority Search is a specialist technique, and can only be used through buying Priority Search software. It involves using focus groups to identify some of the main issues affecting people in their local area. The issues raised in these focus groups are then fed into the Priority Search software, which automatically generates a survey for use with a wider group of people.

The survey is designed so that there are various different statements about key issues, and respondents identify which is more important to them. Statements are presented in different ways throughout the survey, with the aim of identifying which issues are most important to the respondent.

#### Why use this method?

This approach is just one way of using focus groups and surveys to identify key issues in your area. It is most applicable if you are at the initial stages of finding out about local needs and priorities, and are seeking help in designing an appropriate survey.

#### Costs to consider

Setting up and facilitating focus groups  
Priority search software licence  
Collection and analysis of the questionnaire data

#### Tip

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## No 34. Case Study

**Public Meetings**  
See also [Community Forums](#)

### What is this?

Public meetings are arranged for members of the community to find out about, and express their views on, a particular issue. Attendance is open to any interested member of the public. Meetings are generally held at a public place such as a church halls and community centres, which is convenient for people to get to. The topic of the meeting is usually advertised through posters, leaflets, newsletters, emails, websites, letters and invitations.

### Who is it for?

Interested residents who have concerns about the proposals; are seeking further information or wanted to pose a question.

### How to do it?

Hold at times/locations to suit target audience;  
Appropriate publicity for the event;  
Clearly defined objective;  
Defined meeting structure;  
Staff attending the meeting.

### Why use this method?

Opportunity to provide information and receive feedback.  
Builds relationships with local community

### Costs to consider

Hire of Hall  
Officer and Members time  
Refreshments  
Publicity – printing of flyers, posters,

### Tip

Widely publicise meetings to promote attendance  
Inform those attending what will happen to the comments they have given and where, when and how the final decisions on the issue will be taken.

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## No 35. Case Study

### Select Committees

#### What is this?

Select committees are a tool which can be used to carry out a wide-ranging review of any issue. They are based to some extent on the parliamentary model, and involve the public, service users, staff, interest groups and experts in submitting evidence and views. They are mostly used by Councils and are made up of Councillors, reflecting the political make-up of the Council, plus co-opted members as needed.

#### Who is it for?

The select committee investigates or monitors an issue by listening to a wide range of views from interested parties both inside and outside the Council. The committee members then draw conclusions from the evidence presented, and make recommendations on the issue.

#### How to do it?

Select committees can be set up as standing committees of the Council, or can have a limited life span. They can:

- invite any member of staff or Councillor to present information
- ask for reports to be prepared
- co-opt external expertise or representation
- invite or commission evidence from outside the Council

At Council level, select committees are used sparingly. They need policy, research and administrative support, usually involving staff from the relevant service. They can also have a high public profile. The Policy and Resources Committee's approval may be needed before establishing a select committee of the Council. The select committee format could be adopted on a smaller scale within a service or used in other settings.

#### Why use this method?

Expert opinions, all views considered, unbiased decision making.

#### Costs to consider

Expenses  
Officer time

#### Tip

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## No 36. Case Study

### Staff Feedback and Suggestions Northwich and Rural North Area Team

#### **What is this?**

This type of approach can be used for all staff within an organisation.

#### **Who is it for?**

All Staff of an organisation whose opinions you want.

#### **How to do it?**

Engage staff by using survey questions, comments boxes available in paper form, via email and online feedback system.

#### **Why use this method?**

Useful to gain the views of people who see your service

#### **Costs to consider**

Software/website for people to access surveys/questions regarding feedback and suggestions.

Analysis and feedback.

#### **Tip**

Promote staff suggestions schemes actively rather than simply expecting people to just complete it.

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## No 37. Case Study

### Surgeries – Councillors/Police/Highways

#### What is this?

Surgeries are usually of an informal drop-in nature. Police and Councillors hold regular surgeries to discuss matters with small groups and or individuals. The Highways department in partnership with the Northwich and Rural North Area Team have undertaken a couple of informal surgeries at Local supermarkets.

#### Who is it for?

Residents of a particular area who would like their issues recorded, questions answered.

#### How to do it?

The Highways Surgeries were held at Tesco stores in Helsby and Northwich. Both the Northwich and Rural North Area Team and Highways officers were able to hand out leaflets about the CWAC Road Care Scheme which enables local residents to report any issues relating to Potholes, street lights, etc. Any issues can be reported and or discussed with the Highways Officers.

#### Why use this method?

Local people have a better understanding of your service, in this case the Highways Roadcare scheme.

#### Costs to consider

Printing of flyers

Display boards

Officer time – Northwich Area Team, Highways staff.

#### Tip

Take more leaflets than you think you will need!

At least two people need to be handing out leaflets.

Strike a balance between length of surgery and time of day to utilise staff time.

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## No 38. Case Study

### Surveys – Self Completion

#### **What is this?**

Self-completion surveys are used to gather quantifiable information on uncomplicated issues. Can be used to gather views and opinions and to measure attitudes, satisfaction and performance. Postal and web based surveys can be used.

#### **Who is it for?**

Audience can be selected on a random basis, by geographical area, age, gender or ethnicity.

#### **How to do it?**

Target people in busy street (shopping), by post, website and email.

#### **Why use this method?**

Can be an effective way of quickly getting information from a great number of people. Analysis can be relatively straightforward.

#### **Costs to consider**

Postal Charges  
Production and Printing of surveys

#### **Tip**

Open-ended questions can be difficult to analyse.  
Unsuitable for complex issues.  
Be prepared for a low response rate.

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## No 39. Case Study

### Surveys - Telephone

#### What is this?

Telephone interviews with stakeholders can be used to gather views and opinions and measure attitudes, satisfaction and performance.

#### Who is it for?

This method can prove useful when trying to access hard-to-reach groups.

#### How to do it?

Write out your survey. Double check that the questions are in a logical order, are relevant to your purpose and are succinct.

Make a list of people to contact.

Create a simple spreadsheet that includes columns for your contacts' names and phone numbers, the date you called, comments (e.g., "talked to secretary and scheduled callback"), and the status of the survey (e.g., complete/incomplete).

Let the respondent know the survey is complete.

#### Why use this method?

- Provides fast results
- You can manage the response rate
- Can be easy to analyse

#### Costs to consider

- Interviewer
- Cost of Phone Call

#### Tip

- Interviewer cannot respond to any questions
- Limits participation to people with a telephone
- Be prepared for people saying 'no' to answering questions

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## No 40. Case Study

### [Topic Forums](#)

See Also [Community Forums](#)

#### **What is this?**

Topic forums focus on specific issues or areas of concern.

#### **Who is it for?**

Forums are for People and partners with an interest in the specific topic being discussed e.g. Community Safety.

#### **How to do it?**

Organise a public meeting in an appropriate venue.

Ensure the forum is well promoted.

Invite the relevant representatives/officers/stakeholders who wish to be involved in the forum.

#### **Why use this method?**

Topic forums provide a specialist approach to issues and problem solving.

#### **Costs to consider**

Venue hire/Refreshments

Officer time/Members time

Publicity – printing of flyers

Postage and Mileage of CWAC officers/members and partner organisations

#### **Tip**

Use of a facilitator/chair helps to ensure:

The forum runs smoothly

That balanced consideration is given to the issue

All views are aired

A way forward is worked out

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## No 41. Case Study

[Twitter](#)  
See also [Blogs](#)

### What is this?

Twitter is a rich source of instantly updated information. It's easy to stay updated on an incredibly wide variety of topics.

Twitter can be an engaging and informal way of communicating with large numbers of people. Very similar to [Blogs](#)

### Who is it for?

Residents of Cheshire West and Chester can access the main Cheshire West Page. A specific page has been developed for the Northwich and Rural North area.

### How to do it?

A twitter account is established for both an individual and group. It allows people to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers, allowing people to follow others activity or updates others on news of what is happening or what they are up to.

### Why use this method?

Regular updates.

You can see how many people known as “followers” are viewing your updates.

### Costs to be considered

Time involved with updates and responding to questions.

### Tip

Similar to Blogs, as twitter is not moderated either.

[www.twitter.com/go\\_cheshirewest](http://www.twitter.com/go_cheshirewest)

[www.twitter.com/Go\\_CheshireWest/northwichandruralnorth](http://www.twitter.com/Go_CheshireWest/northwichandruralnorth)

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## No 42. Case Study

### User Panels

#### **What is this?**

User Panels consist of a small group of users, who meet on a regular basis to provide input and feedback on the quality of service delivery and development over a long period of time.

#### **Who is it for?**

Users of a particular service, facility or project.

#### **How to do it?**

The format of meetings may vary but would generally be similar to that of a [workshop](#).

#### **Why use this method?**

User panels are particularly useful for feedback on services where sensitivity to individual need is important. They help to identify the concerns and priorities of the experts – those who use the service – and to identify any problems as well as obtaining ideas for improvement.

#### **Costs to be considered**

Venue costs;  
Facilitator Costs.

#### **Tip**

Effective way of developing meaningful participation of users – from user's perspective

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## No 43. Case Study

### Walkabouts – Weaverham/Frodsham/Greenbank Ward Walks

#### **What is this?**

Ward walks can take many forms; they can be several members from one organisation looking at a particular issue or a number of organisations working together to look at any issues that may need to be improved can also form part of the agenda for Impact Weeks. A number of these have taken place within Northwich and Rural North namely Weaverham and Frodsham/Helsby wards.

#### **Who is it for?**

Walkabouts can be carried out in a number of areas such as wards, estates, roads/streets targeting the residents in those areas.

#### **How to do it?**

A number of partners gather at a specified location to look at key areas that need improvements along with looking at areas that have already seen improvements.

#### **Why use this method?**

Walkabouts give people a greater knowledge of the area and show a visible presence for local residents that agencies are working together.

#### **Costs to consider**

Officer time;

#### **Tip**

Include local ward councillors.

Try to engage with a number of the local residents to join the walk along with streetscene, fire, police, community safety team including wardens and the area team.

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## No 44. Case Study

### Workshops

#### **What is this?**

Workshops are a formally organised discussion group to exchange and gather information.

#### **Who is it for?**

Workshops can help build relationships with different groups. Each workshop can have a mixture of people looking at a theme or strategy.

#### **How to do it?**

Workshops usually start with a presentation followed by small group discussions, ending in a large group discussion of key issues.

#### **Why use this method?**

Workshops encourage a range of ideas to be discussed.  
Encourages the face-to-face meeting of different people

#### **Costs to be considered**

Venue  
Facilitator  
Flipcharts  
Refreshments

#### **Tip**

Not necessarily the best method to use for people who lack confidence in meetings. Different methods of engaging people can be used such as a team work activities to engage and encourage the quieter participants.

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## **Appendix A**

### **List of Partners**

- 1 Police
- 2 PCSO's
- 3 Wardens
- 4 Community Safety
- 5 Fire Service
- 6 CEC PCT
- 7 Western PCT
- 8 Vale Royal GP Consortia
- 9 Age UK
- 10 Children's Centre
- 11 Chester University
- 12 Hartford College
- 13 St John Deane's College
- 14 High School
- 15 Primary School
- 16 EIP
- 17 Job Centre Plus
- 18 WVHT
- 19 Cheshire Community Action
- 20 VAVR
- 21 Regeneration Team
- 22 Weaver Valley Partnership
- 23 Councillor
- 24 Parish/Town Council
- 25 Groundwork
- 26 Adult Learning Team
- 27 Connexions
- 28 British Rail
- 29 British Waterways
- 30 Cheshire FM
- 31 Benefits Team
- 32 CAB
- 33 ChALC
- 34 Cheshire & Warr Social Ent P'ship
- 35 Street Scene
- 36 Highways
- 37 LINKs / Healthwatch
- 38 Leisure & Culture
- 39 Mersey Forest
- 40 Planning
- 41 Rangers
- 42 Transport
- 43 Northwich and Rural North Area Team
- 44 Muir Housing Trust
- 45 Salvation Army

## Appendix B

### Community Engagement Events – Northwich and Rural North Area – Upto Dec 2011

<b>APRIL</b> <b>Whitley 10k</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>MAY</b> <b>Rudheath fun day</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>JUNE</b> <b>Marbury LINK event</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners
<b>JULY</b> <b>Leftwich Impact week</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>AUGUST</b> <b>To be confirmed</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>SEPTEMBER</b> <b>Northwich food fair</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners
<b>OCTOBER</b> <b>Barnton Big Drop-in</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>NOVEMBER</b> <b>Volunteers fair</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>DECEMBER</b> <b>Town Centre Christmas market</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners
<b>JANUARY</b> <b>Event to be confirmed</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>FEBRUARY</b> <b>Event to be confirmed</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners	<b>MARCH</b> <b>Event to be confirmed</b> Priorities Engagement activity Partners

## **Appendix C**

# **JUNE 2011**

### **EVENT**

LINK – Marbury  
The Big Lunch

### **PRIORITIES**

Food Waste Reduction  
Adult and Community Working  
Promotion of Play Issues (Active Play)  
Waterways Safety  
Transport Access

### **ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Play (Active Play)  
VAVR Leaflets, Promote Adult & Community Learning  
Love Food, Hate Waste  
Promotion of:

- Volunteer arts events activities
- Wear Purple
- CWAC events

Promote use of Embrace the Games  
Choose Well  
Tennis at all local clubs  
Could we be involved with consultation – What Matters?

### **PARTNERS TO BE INVOLVED**

Dan (Workshops and Consultation)  
Community Safety  
Cheshire Community Action – Village Plans?

## JULY 2011

### **EVENT**

Impact Week Leftwich  
Northwich Carnival  
Lift Off Festival

### **PRIORITIES**

Environmental Clean Up  
Targetted CCTV patrols in hotspots  
Reduce shed breaks  
Waste and Recycling  
Waterways Promotion Campaign  
Speeding Initiative  
Choose Well  
Adult Skills, Benefits

### **ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Ward Walks  
Youth Engagement?  
Distraction Activities Needed  
Promotion of events toolkit and safety advisory group  
Play developments information pack

### **PARTNERS TO BE INVOLVED**

Skills Team  
DAN – Young People, DJ workshops  
Rudheath School?  
CSW, PSCO's, Cheshire Fire and Rescue  
RAP, Probation  
British Waterways  
C&YP  
WVHT

## **AUGUST 2011**

### **EVENT**

Lift Off Festival Boat Lift  
Medieval Festival  
Play Schemes  
Northwich Festival Moss Farm

### **PRIORITIES**

Unemployment  
Target Areas of Heed

### **ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Food Festival at Boat Lift, Food Waste, Healthy Living

### **PARTNERS TO BE INVOLVED**

RFU  
Parish  
Schools  
(Pete Wallace – Memorial Hall Sports Festival – End Aug)

## SEPTEMBER 2011

### EVENT

Northwich Food Fair  
Belmont Road Opening Event (play area)

### PRIORITIES

Love Food, Hate Waste  
Improve Community Cohesion

### ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Northwich Memorial Centre consultation  
Cooking demo's  
To be determined (play)

### PARTNERS TO BE INVOLVED

Regeneration  
NTC  
VAVR, ACL, Promotion, Recruiting learners  
Play  
Safety Wardens  
Residents  
Police  
Streetscene  
Connexions

## **OCTOBER 2011**

### **EVENT**

Big Drop In – Barnton

Voluntary arts network event - Frodsham

### **PRIORITIES**

Promote partner organisations, information and advice

Choose Well

### **ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Rural Women Film Sharing?

ASB hotline

Community safety information

Play Issues (play dev – info pack)?

### **PARTNERS TO BE INVOLVED**

Parish

British Waterways

## **NOVEMBER 2011**

### **EVENT**

Volunteers Fair – Weaver  
Bonfire – Verdin Park  
Bonfire – Gadbrook Park?

### **PRIORITIES**

Recruit New Volunteers  
Teenage Pregnancy  
Waste Prevention Team CWAC  
Volunteers CWC Programme

### **ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Voluntary arts organisation – recruitment  
Potential play presence

### **PARTNERS TO BE INVOLVED**

VAVR – Recruit volunteers  
Cheshire Community Action  
Parish  
Castle Park Arts Centre  
Marketing Cheshire 2012 volunteers  
Events team for volunteers

## **DECEMBER 2011**

### **EVENT**

Northwich & Frodsham Christmas Market  
Christmas lights switch on

### **PRIORITIES**

Promotion  
Transport arrangement

### **ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

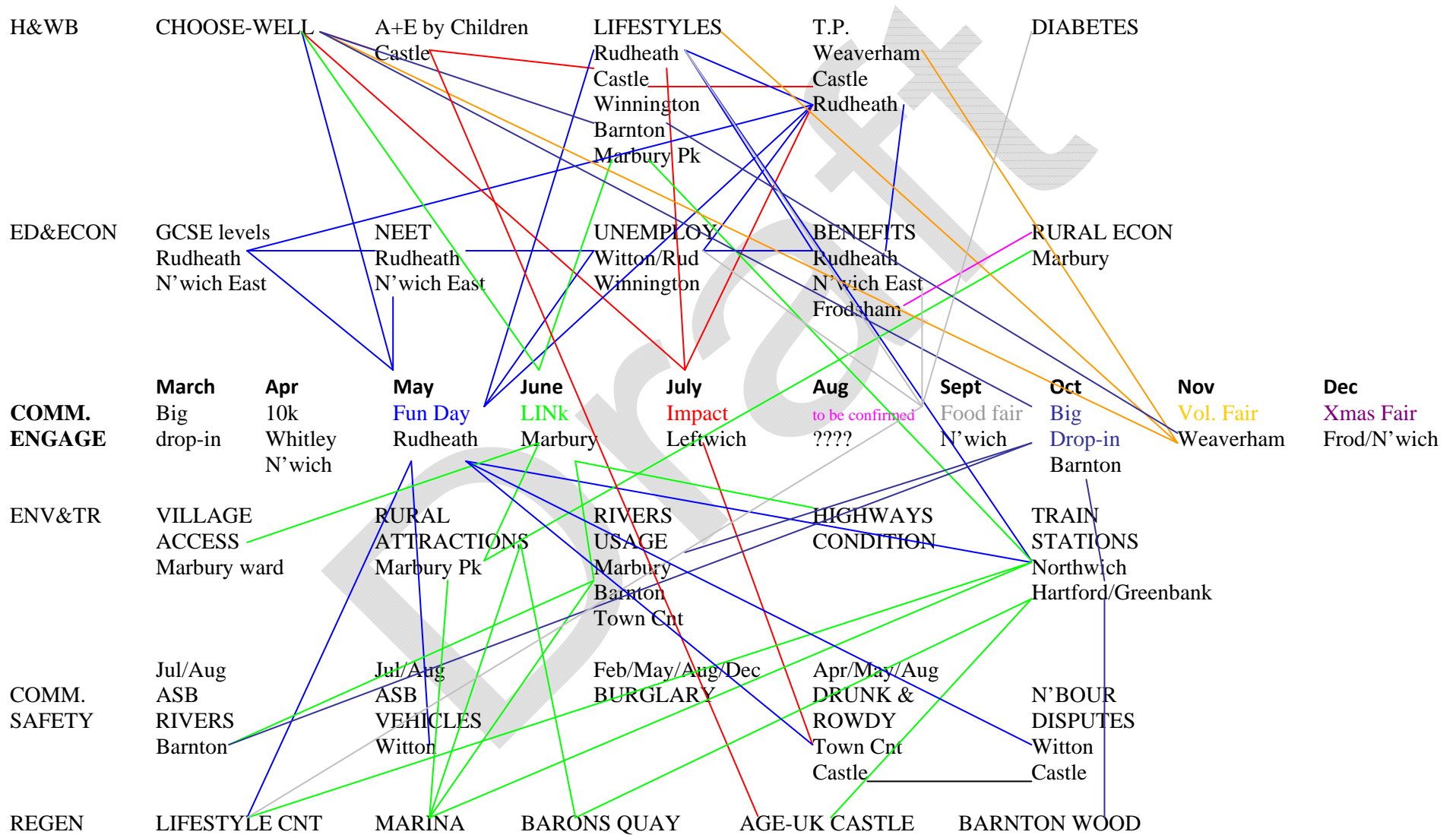
Lantern Procession - Workshops  
Xmas waste collection  
Food fayre  
2012 community dance project, engagement from Cheshire dance

### **PARTNERS TO BE INVOLVED**

VAVR – Recruit adult and community learning  
Father Christmas

## Appendix D

Line diagram of APB Priorities and Community Engagement Activity



## **Appendix E - APB Sub Group Priorities**

### **Health and Wellbeing**

- i. A+E attendances – focus on under 5’s attending A+E between 3-5pm from the Castle area
- ii. Teenage pregnancy – focus on Weaverham
- iii. Admissions for diabetes
- iv. Deaths from heart disease and stroke
- v. Lifestyles – looking at lifestyle periods (teenage, young adult, 30-50, older adult) and link to areas such as Rudheath, Frodsham, Castle

### **Economy and Education**

- i. Unemployment in the Witton & Winnington areas
- ii. NEET in the Witton & Rudheath areas
- iii. Benefit claimants in Witton, Rudheath & Leftwich
- iv. Incapacity benefit claimants in Frodsham
- v. Education attainment in Witton, Rudheath & Leftwich

### **Environment and Transport**

- i. Condition of highways
- ii. Access to transport in villages
- iii. Increase use of rural attractions and links to town centre e.g. Marbury Park
- iv. Train theory - use train stations as focal point to drive improved access to key areas

### **Community Safety**

- i. ASB on waterways with focus on Barnton
- ii. Drunk & rowdy behaviour in the Town Centre & Castle areas
- iii. Vehicle ASB in Witton
- iv. Burglary
- v. Neighbour disputes in the Witton & Castle areas

## **Appendix F - Marketing and Communications Plan**

-To be included once developed.

## **Appendix G – Tracker Survey - To be included once developed.**

Draft