

May 2024

Community Engagement – Members working group – Recommendations.

Background

Five meetings have taken place of the Members working group with a focus on Community Engagement. The meetings have been led by Councillor Andy Adams – Chairman, and Councillor Christopher Evans – Vice Chairman. The meetings have focused on examples of good practice, defining value and benefits of community engagement, what works well for members in the locality (included guest speakers where appropriate) and the community engagement toolkit and platform developed by the Council’s talent programme (Aspire) cohort for 2023.

Some outcomes of the review include:

- Communication is key to effective community engagement.
- Continuing to build on the success of events such as the Parish summit and continue to use these as the platform to bring community issues and external partners together.
- Continue to promote the role Locality Enablers have in supporting members with work in their respective wards.
- Agreeing a collective definition of “Community Engagement” and what that means in South Staffordshire.

A number of general points have arisen from the member working group:

- Officer presentations are useful at Parish level to address burning topics.
- Members identified local groups such as mother and baby groups – which provides an opportunity to utilise existing groups to engage with who may not traditionally respond to surveys.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Proposed Action
Using commercial publications such as the Connect/villager magazine to engage with residents.	Officers to explore costs of publishing through village magazines, used alongside information online.
Guidance/FAQ of standard questions Members may be asked by their constituents to identify the team/service area.	Action for the Members development group.
Using Facebook more and improve how we communicate to residents how they should report a crime.	Establish which parishes have Facebook pages: Action for Locality Enablers Annette Roberts /Clodagh Peterson to discuss at meeting with Parish Clerks.

Community Engagement Toolkit – developed by Aspire group – share with Elected Members	Access to Members to be provided.
Include prize draw or incentives to encourage people to complete the survey.	Aspire cohort 2023 to consider.
Consider the possibility of a Youth Organisation Day.	Action – For Officers to explore as an option.
Could utilisation be made from letters that will be going out to all members of the district such as council tax letters.	Action - For next year add QR codes for next year’s billing if appropriate.
Alternative social media channels such as Instagram could be used.	Action for the Communications Manager to explore.
Scope for the Parish Summits to be rotated through different times of the day to allow for different representation from the parishes.	Action: Officers to explore with parishes.
Definition of Community Engagement “Community Engagement is a way of working with our communities to ensure we achieve a shared goal.”	Members to consider adopting the definition.