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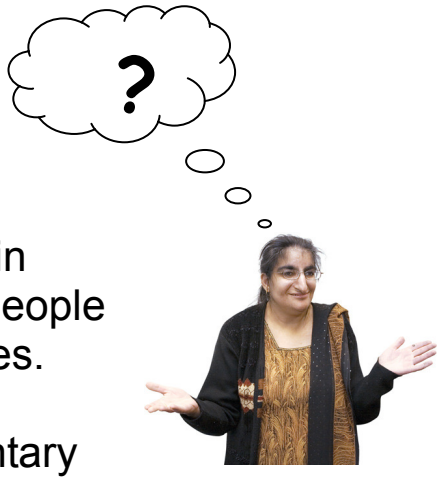
Community Engagement In Brighton and Hove

Community Engagement explained



Community Engagement is used to involve people in decisions that affect them. This includes involving people in decisions about services that affect their daily lives. These services might include the council, business, leisure and health services. They also include voluntary and community organisations.

What is the Community Engagement Framework?

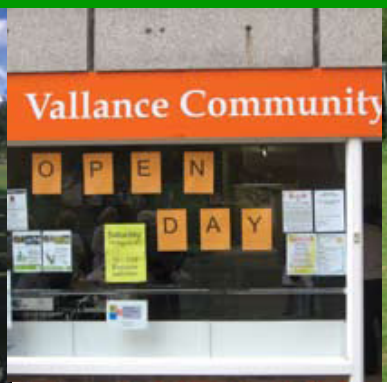
The Community Engagement Framework is a plan written by the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership (BHSP). This is a group of some of the main organisations in the city. These organisations include the public sector (such as the council and the National Health Services), the private sector (such as local businesses) and voluntary and community organisations.

The Community Engagement Framework says that community engagement is important and gives organisations a clear way of working with different communities.

This is the first time that public, private and community and voluntary groups have all agreed on a single plan. The plan is about good ways of working with all groups of people that live in Brighton and Hove.

The aim is to build better relationships between people and organisations in the city. This will lead to people's lives and public services getting better.

What is the Community Engagement framework?



The Community Engagement Framework

- helps public organisations and community and voluntary organisations better understand people and communities needs

- encourages people who make decisions to work more closely together so that better decisions are made and that money is saved

- sets out good ways about how public organisations and others should talk to and with people and communities

- seeks to improve communication between people in the city and the public organisations

- aims to increase and improve opportunities for people get involved and have a greater say in the way the city works

- promotes equality and fairness for all people and communities

What are the aims of the Community Engagement Framework?

Lots of people have said what they think about community engagement and what the plan should achieve.

We listened to what people said. There are three equally important goals that have come out of what people said.

Goal 1

To get better ways to help people to make their lives and their communities better.

We will do this by:

- Supporting people to take control over the issues that affect their lives.
- Making sure people and their communities get the information, advice and support they need

What are the aims of the Community Engagement Framework?

Goal 2

Make sure that people get more opportunities to be involved in their community and to have their say about local and city wide plans

We will :

- Make sure we work out the best way for people to have their say about local and city plans for Brighton and Hove
- Make sure that we find better ways for everyone to be involved

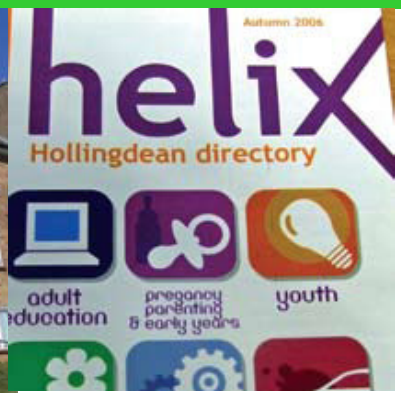
Goal 3

Improve ways of talking to people in different communities. This will make sure that services in Brighton and Hove get better and use less money and resources

We will do this by:

- Making sure residents, community groups, businesses and the council plan and work together better
- Making sure that we continue to learn the best ways to support people to be involved and have their say

What is community engagement?



Community

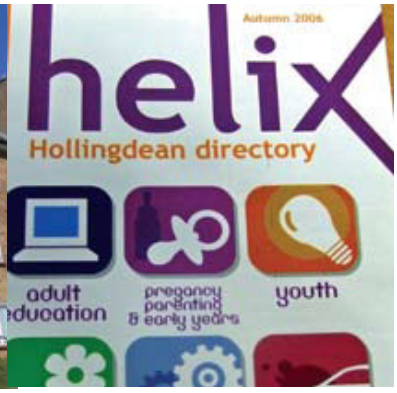
When we talk about Community we mean everywhere in Brighton and Hove (such as streets and housing estates) and all the individual people who live here.

People talk about two different kinds of community.
A community of place is about the people who live, work and see friends (such as a local pub) in a particular area of Brighton or Hove

A community of interest is when people get together because they feel the same as each other or share the same interests. Examples of this might include:

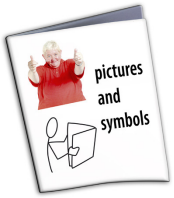
- people with learning disabilities, or people from a different country.
- people who have the same job
- people who have the same interests such as being in an art group or playing football together

What is community engagement?



Engagement

In Brighton and Hove we have thought of five different kinds of activity which are all engagement. They include



- **Informing:** It is important that people get good information about issues so they can understand them and help with Ideas and making things better.

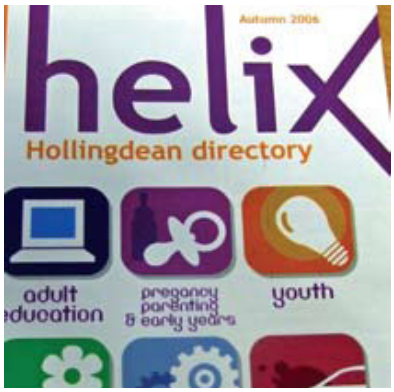
- **Consulting:** This is about asking people what they think, listening to what they say and telling them what decisions were made.

- **Involving:** Where possible, organisations should work directly with communities when planning a service so that people's concerns and dreams are understood and included.

- **Collaboration:** This is when organisations work in partnership with communities to decide together all decisions that are made about a plan or a service.

- **Empowering:** This is when communities make their own decisions and have full control of plans or services. This can happen when the community and public services work together or when the community takes action themselves.

What is community engagement?



Four main ideas are important about engagement.

1. People in communities need support, training and information so they can make decisions about issues in their lives. This is called Community Development.

2. All different ways of engagement are equally important.

3. Residents and communities need to see that services listen to what they say and change as a result.

4. Everyone should be able to have their say and anything that prevents this needs to be stopped.

What we say we will do to make community engagement work

We will:

- Make sure we are always clear about why we need to engage with people and how it will make a difference to their lives
- Work together to make Community Engagement better
- Make sure it is open and honest and anyone can access what we find out
- Make sure it is easy for everyone to take part in
- Use our local knowledge to make sure we plan well
- Treat everyone with respect
- Keep looking at the way we work so it gets better

Our standards for community engagement

The organisations on the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership have agreed to work in the same way to help get better at engaging with communities. They have all agreed to do the following:

Planning and help

- We will have a clear plan about what we need to do and why, and how we will engage people.

- We will use any information there is to help us plan

- We will make sure there is enough time to engage people in the right way

- We will try to give people the support they need to be involved and be clear about what we cannot do.

Our standards for community engagement

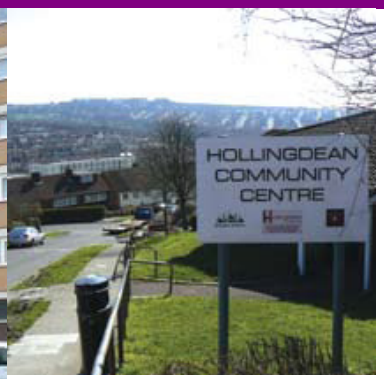
Communication and working with others

- We will communicate clearly and honestly with everyone in a way that they understand
- We will make sure that all engagement activities are accessible to everyone
- We will work with different organisations who understand the needs of different communities. For example, organisations that work with disabled people.
- We will make sure staff and different communities have skills to talk to each other

Learning

- We will tell people how their views affected the decisions that were made
- We will learn the best ways of talking to people from all communities including people who's voices are not often included.

What we need to do to make community engagement better



We talked to lots of people to find out what we need to do to make community engagement better. There are 3 main goals.

Goal 1

Improve the way we help people and communities improve their lives

We will do this by helping people and communities to:

- take more control over issues that affect their lives
- get more information, advice and help. This will help them get confidence, skills and knowledge to tell us what they think.

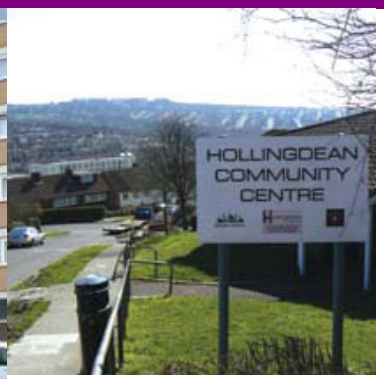
Goal 2

Improve engagement activity so everyone can be Involved

We will do this by:

- Making sure people can represent themselves when decisions are being made which will affect their lives
- Making sure we find ways to include everyone to have their say

What we need to do to make community engagement better



Goal 3

Improve engagement activity so that services get better and resources are used more effectively

We will do this by:

- Getting community groups, businesses and public bodies (such as the council) to work together better

- Making the sure the partners of the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership carry out high quality engagement

- Learning what works well and what does not work so well

How will the Community Engagement Framework be checked?

It is important to know that the Community Engagement framework is working.

The Stronger Communities Partnership will be in charge of making sure the Community Engagement Framework happens and makes a positive difference.

They will check this each year and write a report which will be sent to the Brighton and Hove Strategic Partnership and the Overview and Scrutiny Commission every year..

What is the Stronger Communities Partnership?

The Stronger Communities Partnership is a group made up of representatives from voluntary and community groups, the Council and Primary Care Trust, the Police and others.

It focuses on how people and communities can have their say about services to make a positive difference.

Contacts

For more information about the Community information Framework please contact

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Easy Read Document written by Brighton and Hove Speak Out Advocacy Project

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