

how to build...

neighbourhood priority setting

East Staffordshire Borough

checklist:

- There are many pitfalls that can impede successful neighbourhood priority setting so it is very important to get the preparations right for a priority setting meeting. This means meticulous planning of the event with a clear action plan, timetable and identified responsibilities.
- Pre-preparing delegates is essential:
 - Resident representatives should submit their priorities prior to the meeting.
 - These priorities should then be used to ensure the right services are invited.
 - Service representatives should see these priorities before the meeting so they can be pre-checked.
- Without this preparation residents will be frustrated because the right services are not there to respond to their priorities and services will be frustrated if they are presented with a list of impossible or ill-informed priorities.
- An unfocused/poorly prepared meeting will make it difficult to accurately record proceedings. This in turn makes it difficult to follow up on the actions agreed and make sure they happen!
- Encourage resident representatives to identify their priorities through existing groups (for example a neighbourhood forum or parish council). That way their voice will carry more weight.
- Over time all parties will come to support the meetings because they will see that the benefits and outcomes are greater than just the priority setting. For example, they increase community participation in the local political process and provide an opportunity for residents to have a voice and show they are being listened to. In addition they become good networking events for local services, encouraging joint working.

jargon buster

Neighbourgood priority setting-
A definition;

Neighbourhood priority setting is the process by which residents and services come together to agree the priorities for action for that particular neighbourhood.

In East Staffordshire this is done at a district level by residents, service decision makers and elected members getting together in a community meeting where priorities can be presented, debated and agreed.

Top Tips

1. Have a clear agenda on the day so the meeting stays focused.
2. Make sure the meeting is recorded.
3. Have people in place to progress and chase the priorities that have been agreed.
4. Do not let a few voices dominate a meeting.
5. Make sure the right people are present.
6. Make sure people come prepared for the meeting.
7. Come to clear and agreed decisions.

case study

where it worked

East Staffordshire Borough



Before



Early April



June



Hanbury Common

A38, Undepass, Branston

East Staffordshire Borough Council runs a neighbourhood forum programme to promote community involvement and leadership.

The focus of the forum activity is a Neighbourhood Action Plan which, in turn, is based on priorities identified by communities and then agreed with key partners. In order to reach as many people as possible the forum structure is based on three geographic areas – urban, semi-rural and rural. An example of the types of priorities these forums have been agreeing is as follows:-

Urban Neighbourhood Forum

The proposal for a skate park was agreed at forum meetings and this has since gained further support through the use of a Facebook campaign and additional consultation with young people. Other partner agencies, including the Police, Borough Council, County Council, East Staffordshire Voluntary Services, and a local business owner are now on board.

It is intended that the majority of the project will be funded by the 'Big Lottery'.

Semi-Rural Neighbourhood Forum

For a number of years local residents in Branston complained about the condition of an underpass that connected the village to other local amenities. As a priority in the Neighbourhood Forum, partners were consulted and as result agreed with the assistance of the Neighbourhood fund to carry out improvement work to the underpass.

Rural Neighbourhood Forum

At the Neighbourhood Forum a local priority was identified to construct a footpath from the Car Park at Hanbury Common to Hanbury Hill.

The benefits of this project are to open up an area of land to local people and visitors to enjoy the views and local places of interest. It will also mean that an area that has become overgrown will be managed to encourage wildlife and

plants.

The work has started and is a partnership with Staffs County Council, Countryside and Environment Dept., Hanbury Parish Council and Sudbury Prison. Weekend volunteers concentrate on site clearing and maintenance, whilst the prisoner volunteers are involved in the construction of the path.

Contact details:

Andy Mason, Senior Neighbourhood Co-ordinator at East Staffordshire Borough Council

Tel: 01283 508533

Email: andy.mason@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk