



To: North Area Committee  
Report by: Head of Community Development  
Scrutiny committee: NORTH AREA COMMITTEE 14 July 2011  
Wards affected: North Area

## **Participation Pilot: Findings from “CB4” Community Consultation**

### **Key Decision**

#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 North Area Committee is trying out new ways of working to encourage the engagement of local people in its work. For example the Community Forum has been introduced, which is a more informal style of meeting where people can meet their elected representatives and get involved in discussions about issues that affect community life.
- 1.2 Meetings are only a small part of the changes. North Area Committee has been engaging local people to find out what they feel are the best things about living in north area and what one thing would make living in their area better. This engagement process concluded on 30 June.
- 1.3 Local people are invited to discuss the findings of the “CB4” engagement process presented in this report in the Community Forum and to propose priorities that the committee should take forward and seek to address. The intention is that this will allow the committee’s work to be better directed by the needs of local people and will inform the discussions and debates at future meetings. The list of priorities will be a starting point and further evidence can be added about issues as they emerge.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Area Committee is asked to:

- a) Consider the issues arising from the “CB4” engagement process with members of the public during the Community Forum and agree a short list of priorities for the committee to develop and take forward as future work.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 “CB4” postcards, with two questions and a covering letter from the Committee’s Chair, were sent out to community groups and community activists in north area to encourage their members and neighbours to complete and return them. A separate postcard for young people was used and collected on the Dec Bus. Nearly 500 cards have been returned.
- 3.2 Officers in north area, such as Rangers, Community Development Officers and Housing Officers, in close contact with local people and groups, also promoted the return of the cards and attendance at a drop-in community event on 18 June.
- 3.3 The drop-in event, held in the Meadows Community Centre, gave local people an early opportunity to look at the issues pulled out of returned cards (grouped under themes) and to indicate the priorities (using sticky dots) they supported. There had been a lot of activity in the local press about what people felt about living in north area and the event received some publicity.

## **4. Issues**

- 4.1 One of the learning points has been that people prefer to discuss their issues face to face. Feedback worked best where small groups of people were engaged so that they understood what we were trying to achieve before they shared ideas and issues and completed the postcards. Arbury Carnival and Chesterton Festival gave an opportunity for this kind of contact and a large number of cards were collected in this way.

This was one of the reasons why the cards were channelled through community groups and local outlets, rather than sending them out cold as mail to individual households.

## **5. The Findings**

- 5.1 The best things about living in the area and the things people wanted improved were presented at the community event on the 18 June. It was really great to hear how positive most people were about living in the north of the city.
- 5.2 In terms of the things people want to see improved, the overall theme that received the greatest level of support was improving the Street-scene, followed by more things to do for young people.
- 5.3 More analysis will need to be done to identify any “hotspots”. This was because the consultation covered four wards and in some cases people valued the cleanliness of the place where they lived and felt that there was a lot for young people to do – so care must be taken not apply any findings across the whole area, which has different characteristics.
- 5.3 The level of support given at the community event to issues, under the themes, is a first indication of how the issues could be prioritised. These are shown in bold.

5.4 The Community Forum is asked to:

- Consider the long list of issues, grouped under themes
- Add any issues they feel are missing,
- Prioritise the issues and identify any hotspots for them.

## 6. What people liked

6.1 People said they liked living in north area because:

- **People are friendly**
- **There are wonderful green spaces**
- It is quiet
- There is community togetherness
- There is a lot to do
- There is a feeling of safety
- It is near to the City Centre
- There is a good bus service
- There are great Community Centres and Churches

## 7. People said they wanted:

A. Improvements in their Street-scene

- **Reduce the amount of litter on the streets**
- **More dog bins**
- **Better pavements, as some are uneven**
- Reduce the amount of dog fouling on pavements and in green spaces
- Improve the appearance of recycling areas
- More frequent rubbish collections
- Prevent dumping around flats
- Reduce parking on grass verges
- Being able to park
- Too many cars parking on bends
- Reduce the noise from the A14
- Fewer cars
- Better care for trees

## B. More things for young people to do

- **Activities for young people in the evenings, indoors**
- More organised recreational activities in open spaces
- Encourage clubs for 8 – 13 year olds
- Provide tennis courts
- Extend the opening hours of the community centres
- Provide free Wi-Fi in the area
- More activities on the river
- Local swimming pool

## C. To feel safer

- **Increase the number of police and PCO foot patrols**
- **More Rangers in the area**
- **Greater attention given to disruptive families who can spoil it for the rest**
- Prevent drug dealing
- Clamp down on drug taking
- People abusing alcohol and being rowdy
- Anti-social behaviour outside pubs
- Young people hanging around in groups
- Feeling safe at night
- Reduce the number of burglaries
- Too much late-night noise
- Reduce racism in the area

## D. People to get along better

- **More opportunities for people to get together as a community (carnivals, etc.)**
- **Better promotion of the good things about the area**
- Work to reduce tensions where people live close to each other
- Greater investment in local services
- Encourage more people to get involved in organising community events
- Improve the level of respect people have for each other
- Local people encouraged to get involved in local decision-making

#### E. To get around easier

- **Cheaper bus fares**
- More frequent buses into town
- Buses should run on time
- More bus stops
- Reduce the speed of cars
- Better on-street parking
- Dedicated cycle lanes
- Reduce conflict between cyclists and pedestrians on pavements
- More speed restricted areas
- Better lighting on cycle paths
- Being able to use Park and Ride without driving to Milton
- Less congestion

#### F. Better shops

- Encourage new tenants for shops with a wider range
- Bigger retail outlets in area
- A local bank
- More charity shops
- A good coffee shop

#### G. Improved green open spaces

- **Cleaner playgrounds with regular maintenance**
- **Better equipped playgrounds, with more equipment for young children**
- More playgrounds
- More fitness equipment in open spaces
- Fences around playgrounds to keep dogs out
- Reduce the number of overhanging trees
- Help for older people to maintain their gardens

#### H. To keep libraries in the area open and maintain opening hours

#### I. More local jobs with decent pay

## **J. Better local housing**

- Improve the quality of social housing
- **Provide affordable rents**
- Reduce the amount of high-density housing
- Bigger gardens
- More affordable house prices

## **K. Health inequalities reduced**

- **Easier access to GP surgeries**
- **More “give up smoking” groups**

## **8. Implications**

### **8.1 Environmental**

The community engagement has revealed a number of environmental concerns, which could form the basis of future projects and other environmental work.

### **8.2 Community Safety**

The community engagement compliments the new approach to Neighbourhood Policing and will assist local people in collectively setting out local priorities and exploring solutions to problems.

### **8.3 Equal opportunities**

The community engagement has sought to engage with young people, BME communities and people with mobility impairments, by using community groups representing minority communities of interest to gather issues.

### **8.4 Financial, procurement and staffing**

Additional costs for the community engagement involved the printing of postcards, at £250, and a proportion were mailed second class to approximately 100 groups in north area at 64p per envelope. No payment was made for design or other distribution. A significant amount of staff time was required across service area and across partners during the engagement process.

## **9. Inspection of papers and contact for information**

Background papers can be found at the following link:

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/northareacommittee>

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## Appendix 2.

**Table 1. What could feature in the Pilot**

<b>When</b>	<b>How and what could feature?</b>
<i>May 2010</i>	<i>Community Workshop to launch pilot. This will discuss a vision for the area and priorities to be worked on in smaller groups. A community plan to emerge from the event containing priorities that can be looked at in more depth during other meetings. This type of meeting may be better suited to an early-evening or afternoon.</i>
<i>July 2010</i>	<i>Member and officer surgeries to be held at the start of meeting for half an hour. Discussion about how Workshop went and how to use community plan. Meeting to use interactive voting to help identify priorities – perhaps for neighbourhood policing priorities?</i>
<i>September 2010</i>	<i>Member and officer surgeries to be held at the start of event for half an hour. Café type meeting to discuss various environmental improvements or ideas for neighbourhood improvements and use of community development grants. Could include community representatives talking about local issues.</i>
<i>November 2010</i>	<i>Community Workshop event to give people the chance of discussing in small groups how the pilot is going and what can be improved. This will feed into the Council's decisions about how to extend the pilot to other areas.</i>
<i>January 2012</i>	<i>Member and officer surgeries to be held at the start of event for half an hour. Café type meeting to discuss local issues that could perhaps include how GP Commissioning is being developed or how local community facilities are run.</i>
<i>March 2012</i>	<i>Look for an earlier meeting in the day to involve young people talking about life in the area and problems. Community Fair networking event to help promote community life.</i>