



Kirklees Democracy Commission Working Group

Wednesday 24 October 2018

Present: Councillor Cathy Scott, Councillor David Sheard, Councillor Rob Walker, Councillor Robert Light, Councillor John Taylor and Councillor Andrew Cooper

In attendance:

Carl Whistlecraft – Head of Democracy Service
 Rachel Spencer-Henshall – Strategic Director, Corporate Strategy and Public Health
 David Bundy- Corporate Policy Officer
 Vina Randhawa – Manager, Area and Neighbourhood Action Team
 Diane Sims – Senior Communications Officer
 Spencer Wilson – Group Support and Development Officer
 Penny Bunker – Governance and Democratic Engagement Manager
 Sarah Durdin - Operational Manager
 Viv Williams – Project Manager

Apologies: Councillor John Lawson

1. Notes of Last Meeting

The notes of the meeting of the working group held on 29th of August 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Place-based Working

The working group received a presentation on work taking place to develop a Kirklees approach to place-based working. The following points were noted:

- communities are best placed to know their own local challenges and strengths
- we need to bring services closer to people and put communities and their representatives at the heart of their design and delivery
- Place-based working in Kirklees Is one of the core elements of the Council's Corporate Plan
- An approach should be about using a range of local information and intelligence to proactively achieve the best outcomes for individuals and communities.

- It involves working with council partners to make sure geographical boundaries and organisational “silos” do not become a barrier to people accessing services and support
- Solutions will not be one size fits all but wherever possible tailored to meet personal and local requirements.

The presentation continued to explain how it was crucial that council wards were at the heart of geography. It was important that in building the place-based approach other areas of place-based working are taken into consideration, for example the 17 community hubs centred on schools, the 9 clusters of primary care networks and the 4 early intervention and prevention hubs. The working group observed that there needs to be one map that sets out the places within Kirklees.

While welcoming the underpinning proposals for place-based working, councillors identified that there was currently no system to capture soft data contributed by councillors, which may previously have been fed into discussions at Neighbourhood Management Groups. Councillor Light emphasised that previously the role of place had been an “add on” and it was important going forward that any approach should be seen as ‘how we do business’.

It was noted that the discussion about community could sometimes extend beyond the ward boundary and it was important that whilst there were core expectations around the electoral ward as the initial geographical area, boundaries should not be seen as absolute. There were also concerns about cross-authority boundaries and the need for clear leadership of place.

In response, it was recognised that co-terminosity and partnership working was key to achieving leadership of place and better outcomes with limited resources. It was suggested that if appropriate, the working group could meet with partners to discuss these issues as part of looking at place-based solutions.

The working group agreed that it would be helpful to see the different boundaries on a map, to understand how services operated across districts. It was agreed that a mapping exercise would be undertaken. It was noted that within certain localities, communities were also defined by geographical / physical limitations, including transport networks. It was considered important when looking at a mapping exercise to understand the physical barriers across the district rather than taking a one dimensional focus to the geography.

The working group went onto discuss core citizen engagement principles including:

- local identity
- co-production and behavioural change
- councillors at the heart
- intelligence and citizen insight
- working in plain sight and telling stories

Carl Whistlecraft continued to explain the background to the Place Standard tool which had been developed by the Scottish Government in partnership with Architecture and Design Scotland, NHS Scotland and Glasgow City Council.

Mr Whistlecraft explained how the Place Standard explored 14 themes and brought communities, public sector, private sector and third sector to work together to deliver high quality places. Its focus was on both physical and social environment. Overall it was the conversation that was of primary importance in information and insight gathering. As well as identifying areas where citizens felt improvement was needed it was also a means of identifying what was good and

valued about an area. The tool was versatile enough to be used from street level up to regional level. Although the view was that it was most effective when used in a neighbourhood setting.

In considering the information presented the working group was supportive of the place standard approach and agreed that there was a need to oversee place standard activity to ensure that data was captured by postcode to build a resource that the organisation could draw from when planning work. It was also recognised that there should be opportunity to go back to communities to 'sense check' and report back on conclusions, proposals and actions as a result of the information contributed by communities. The working group acknowledged the importance of adopting a more organic approach to using the place standard which could be a blend of opportunistic, commissioned and citizen-led.

Vina Randhawa updated the working group on initial place standard pilot work within the Golcar ward that had tested the Place Standard tools. It was noted that 30 staff had been involved, drawn from across 10 different services. There had been a two-week preparation period followed by two weeks of intense activity within the community, with the aim of completing the work by the middle of August 2018. Ward members had been involved at every stage of the project and were key to helping to develop the engagement plan and contribute local knowledge.

In total 240 individuals had been engaged with 140 assessments completed. Information had been gathered from young people, businesses, individual members of the public and community groups. The team had spoken to people on the street, on their doorsteps, in parks, in playgrounds and around shops.

In identifying the learning from the pilot project it was felt that working together service areas had developed a shared sense of purpose and it helped staff to feel part of changes. Relationships built through the project would continue to be relevant to day-to-day working. Most of the staff team felt that the project has been successful in extending the reach beyond the 'usual suspects'.

In respect of using the tool itself, it was agreed that the tool and materials were easy to use and very helpful for generating conversations. There was strong support that the approach could work at a Kirklees level and the citizens involved were very positive about it as a way of putting forward their views. In moving the approach forward it was felt that a longer lead-in time would be needed and there is a challenge to ensure that consistent data is recorded while still allowing a flexible approach to conversations.

The working group was informed that it was intended to take the standard forward through a "train the trainer" model. This could also be extended to working with community groups so that they could be part of delivering Place Standard information gathering in future projects.

Since the Golcar pilot work, the raw data had been analysed to produce a summary and breakdown by four areas within the Golcar ward. It was noted that one area had a significantly reduced level of engagement and would require further consideration at a later date. Ward members had considered the findings and identified some areas to take forward. One of these included revisiting local businesses who had felt disengaged but were keen to be linked in to what was happening in the community in which they worked.

Agreed: The working group supported the use of the Place Standard approach and agreed that it should be further trialled and training developed to take forward the model. Cllrs Taylor and Walker requested that it be used in specific parts of their ward as part of the next steps of the work.

3. The Changing Councillor Role

The working group received an update on the work that had been agreed at the meeting on 26th June 2018. Councillors Cathy Scott and John Taylor had been leading the project on behalf of the working group and provided an update at the meeting.

It was noted that in order to gain a different perspective on the Councillor role, Councillor Scott and Councillor Taylor had asked that a cross-section of middle managers from the council be brought together for a workshop discussion. A total of 27 officers attended the session in September and were asked to consider the following areas:

- What are the roles that councils need to play in the future?
- What do you think it would take to be effective in those roles?

A summary of the outcome of the discussions was attached to the report and would be used to inform further work to refine the content of the role profile for a Kirklees councillor. It was suggested that in order to triangulate the work a similar exercise should be carried out with a cross-section of Kirklees citizens.

In considering the report it was suggested that there should also be a discussion with a group of councillors who had not previously seen the information and it was suggested that newer councillors would be appropriate.

Agreed:

- (1) That further discussions on the future role of councillors be held with a citizens group, a group of newer councillors and a group of experienced counsellors to get their input.
- (2) The findings of this further work to be bought back to a meeting of the working group for consideration.

4. Local Democracy Week update

Diane Sims, Senior Communications Officer provided an update for the working party on events that had been organised as part of Local Democracy Week 2018.

One of the events welcomed by the working group was the Youth Council 10 year anniversary event, which had been attended by over 70 people. It was noted that there were some excellent contributions from former members of the Kirklees Youth Council. Also highlighted was work with schools and events at the University of Huddersfield.

Agreed: That the update on Local Democracy Week be noted and welcomed.

5. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the working group would be held on Wednesday 28th November 2018 at 10:00 AM in Civic Centre 111, Huddersfield.

6. Any Other Business

The working group noted that in respect of letters sent to national government to progress areas of the Democracy Commission recommendations, no responses had been received to date.