

Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission
4th December 2013

Supporting Information:
Ward Community Meeting Improvement Project Phase 2

Background

As a local Councillor, one of the main ways in which we engage with our constituents is via Community Meetings. During these meetings we address Local, City and National issues that are of importance to those we represent, and are therefore intrinsic to our role.

The most objective way to measure the success of ward meetings is by looking at attendance figures, although it must be recognised that this is not the only measure.

With the first phase of the pilot scheme having been in operation since April 2012 and the second phase implemented in August 2013, it would be useful to see the attendance figures for each ward meeting over the last calendar year.

The basis of seeing the figures is to get an indication of the variations in attendance of residents in each ward. From this we can consider reasons behind the figures, and in particular consider reasons for why certain wards attain higher attendance to see if we can learn lessons that can be adopted by other ward meetings.

Although we must consider the limitations of this exercise, as the transitional period is approaching for when the pilot ends and all ward meetings move over to community services, the commission should consider the various factors that are involved and ensure that best practice is considered across all ward meetings.

Attendance figures from Jan 2013 to date

The attached table shows the attendance figures for members of the public at ward meetings for each ward from January 2013 to date. Whilst not overly comprehensive these figures do provide a quick snapshot of the average attendances at meetings, enough to formulate a picture to build from.

It's worth noting that there are a few peaks in attendance where the meetings achieved attendances higher than that ward would normally expect. These are marked in red and can be explained as follows:

- Thurncourt's attendances at the start of the year were following on from discussions around the future of the Scout Hut.
- Rushey Mead and at Belgrave & Latimer there was a high attendance due to public interest in discussions about the Sainsbury's move from Belgrave Road to Troon Way.

- Castle saw a peak due to discussions regarding the development of a Tesco store which attracted 170 people. There was a lot of work done by members to raise awareness of this and we also targeted publicity canvassing to households in that area.

Historically we know that any high profile local issue can lead to untypically high attendances, other such examples of this include:

- Abbey and Beaumont Leys considering Gypsy and Traveller sites
- Stoneygate considering the introduction of a parking scheme
- Coleman considering changes to Housing Options
- Aylestone considering traffic & highways issues related to the A426 bus corridor

Best-attended wards

Belgrave and Latimer always hold their meeting at the same Neighbourhood Centre which is very much the hub of the community for those wards. In addition to this the Members Support Officer (MSO) for that ward sends reminder emails and letters to registered local residents. All of these factors could be reasons for the high attendances they achieve.

Knighton's attendance figures have been steadily increasing over the year, and although hard to pinpoint why, it could be that the MSO has adopted similar methods for raising awareness of the meetings as done in Belgrave and Latimer.

Aylestone, along with the Bus corridor issues stated above have had consistently high attendance figures, factors for this should be considered.

Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Castle, Thurncourt and Westcotes all have a regular hub of attendees that have meant a consistent trend of fairly well attended meetings.

In brief

Factors that appear to effect attendance figures include;

- Time & venue of meeting
- Local demographics & active groups
- Local issues
- Communication & promotion – both by local Councillors & City Council
- Number of bids in for community funds

Other points to note

Coleman has shown a steady rise in the numbers attending and has been taken over as part of the pilot so it would be good to understand what the pilot has changed to achieve this.

Spinney Hills has had a dramatic drop in the numbers attending since being incorporated into the pilot, so again it would be good to understand what changes have been made there and why they have led to a decline in those attending.

Summary

These figures are intended to be a starting point to evaluate some of the successes we currently have across the city and do require some further work to look at methods and practices that can be transposed to lead to more effective ward meetings across the board.

It is clear to see an important issue within a ward can draw in a large audience so we may need to look at how that can be incorporated on a more regular basis to keep people engaged.

Councillor Elly Cutkelvin
Chair, Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

Attendance Figures for Members of the Public at Ward Community Meeting's in 2013

KEY:

1 st Phase of the Pilot	2 nd Phase of the Pilot	Red	Higher than normal attendance
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WCM	Members of the Public Attendance Figures (Jan 2013 – date)					Averages			
	End of last financial year	1 st Quarter		2 nd Quarter		3 rd Quarter	Non-pilot	Pilot	Total
Abbey	7	8		5		11	7.75		
Aylestone	42	65		Not currently meeting			53.5		
Beaumont Leys	7	8		19		4 th Dec	11.3		
Belgrave & Latimer	85	54		38		3 rd Dec	46		59
Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields	8	10	12	8	14	17 th Dec	9.5	14	10.4
Castle	20	20		15		170	18.3		56.25
Charnwood	12	17		6		22 nd Jan		11.7	
Coleman	9	12		17		3 rd Dec	10.5	17	12.7
Evington	9	24		11		5 th Dec	16.5	11	14.7
Eyres Monsell	Patchwalks (figures not recorded)								
Fosse	9	15		20		9	13.25		
Freemen	10	10		6		2		7	
Humberstone & Hamilton	15	9		20		23 rd Jan	14.5		
Knighton	16	25		34		7 th Jan	25		
New Parks	3	18		7		6	10.5	6.5	8.5
Rushey Mead	26	12	75	20		9 th Jan	19.3		33.25
Spinney Hills	37		15	9		3	26	6	16
Stoneygate	28	16	17	18		3 rd Dec	19.75		
Thurncourt	58	46	22	26		27 th Jan	42/22	26	38/24
Westcotes	16		27	29		21 st Jan		24	
Western Park	28	8	21	13		14 th Jan	17.5		