

Ward Community Meeting (WCM) Pilot Project – Evaluation Form

The WCM pilot project was introduced to trial and develop an improved approach to the delivery and communication of Ward Community Meetings and to make them more accessible to members of general public. This evaluation questionnaire aims to assess the performance and impact of this project.

The findings from this exercise will be used to develop a detailed evaluation report which will be shared with pilot Councillors, NCSI Scrutiny Commission and help to shape the approach moving forward.

What motivated you to become involved with the WCM pilot project?

- Before I became a ward councillor I went to lots ward and community meetings across the city and saw different approaches being used, saw turnout, issues, etc
- Was aware that the ward had low residents turnout – was keen to improve attendance figures
- Engagement from officers attending the meeting was poor
- Wanted to make the process better and more accessible
- Respond local need, being mindful of demographics
- Wanted to trial series of options to improve my ward meeting, new ways of engaging and increase attendance figures

Do you feel the project has met your expectations and the objectives of your ward's community meetings?

- In first instance it's hard to say – expected some merging of WCM with Saffron Mgt Board, Police/JAGs, etc
- When I had met with Miranda – was led to believe that pilot would provide a 'shopping list' of different ideas and options to trial but this didn't happen
- Acknowledge that some improvements did take place i.e. less formal meetings, different room layout, agendas tightened, developed admin process, targeted publicity but unfortunately, communication and resident's attendance figures did not change, partly did, partly didn't.
- Would have been nice to have found a solution along the way.

What impact did your involvement with the project have on you as a ward councillor and on your ward?

- Disappointed that WCM attendance did not improve
- I invited lots of people to attend, told them the ward was in the pilot, expectations were raised
- On a positive note, WCM did get good feedback on the resident forms from those who did attend
- Still need to find out what are the expectations from wider community
- Number of community issues that could be brought forward for discussion to the WCM are resolved at active resident group meetings, need to investigate how we can merge different layers of groups with the ward meeting so we are all effective with our time and efforts
- Despite pilot, there is no change to public perception of the ward meetings, so we need to continue work in this remit

What were the main barriers to the implementation of this project?

- Honestly think it was a lack of officer time and resources in the pilot team, one person cannot cover 5 wards and give equal service to all
- Communication and expectation of councillors and officers differed
- Separate agenda between councillors and officers
- Pilot lacked strategic direction (as outlined in the Shaun Miles project plan)

How would you like your ward's community meetings developing in the future?

- Explore use of engaging with residents using social media networks - Saffron and Eyres Monsell Face book page have 400/500 followers

- MSO officer commitment was fantastic but need more officer dedicated time to the ward
- Need regular dialogue/presentations from front line service officers i.e. housing
- Merge/dovetail ward meeting with other resident group meetings and community forums
- Need to keep investigating on how to improve attendance figures – maybe consider more radical options i.e. have 4 to 6 ward meetings a year, all with different styles i.e. one could be an open meeting, another a mini community walk about, another with an earlier time, like 4pm to get mums/dads/carers - speak to local schools and get them to put a leaflet in children's school bags to publicise the meeting, etc.
- Cllr and officer debriefs after each ward meeting to consider what worked well and what did not.

| Tick as appropriate* | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
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| Did the WCM pilot project help to shape your ward's community meetings? | | | √ | | |
| Did you like the approach taken by your lead officer? – need more resources | | | √ | | |
| Would you have liked to see more significant change as part of the pilot? | √ | | | | |

* 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree