



“Ten years and my door ain’t fixed” – the importance of community owned PIs

Introduction

This report and toolkit (see appendix) identify an approach to developing community owned performance indicators that:

- Contribute to Area Profiles

Area Profiles provide a wide ranging picture of the quality of life and public services in a local area.

- Contribute to Area Based PIs

However, as importantly it offers ideas for developing community participation including with “hard to reach” groups.

This toolkit is based on the process used for the project, that involved targeting all sections of the community, including under-represented and “hard to reach” groups; and training them to run their own focus groups to develop resident-based performance indicators. The project then developed follow-up mechanisms for ensuring that the indicators are maintained, together with mechanisms for sustaining resident involvement in this process.

The toolkit

The toolkit for developing community-based performance indicators comprises tools for service providers and residents to develop community owned performance indicators.

Indicative performance indicators are included, however, it is not intended as a definitive guide, but rather as an approach which can be adapted, to develop tenant participation from all sections of the community. This becomes a means of developing performance indicators on issues that matter most to local communities and ways of sustaining their involvement.

The importance of local PIs

Boxed case studies of what we did on the project

Local PIs:

- provide information for service providers to self certificate their performance and prepare for Audit Commission inspection
- provide the basis for local estate compacts
- provide the basis for cross provider local area inspection

need to demonstrate close fit with library of local PIs

refer to GIS

Having a good understanding of the concerns and priorities of equality target groups is an important part of what it means to be a good social landlord and community leaders. Engaging with equality target groups can give you information about how effective your services are; for all your residents and not just the majority. It will also assist you to meet local, regional, and national equality agendas and make a significant contribution to social cohesion.

The Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry and the recent CPA Harder Test, require Local Authorities, ALMOs and Housing Associations to:

- Use BME resident's views to improve housing services through resident participation
- Comply with statutory requirements on equalities and diversity and human rights

Local Authorities and Housing Associations may find it difficult to know how to begin to engage with "Hard to Reach Groups", the tool kit is intended to help with this by outlining both the process and mechanisms the BME Performance Indicator used to engage with these groups. The methods in this document draw solely from the experiences of the researchers working on the BME Performance Indicator Project and describe what we found to be effective. However, many of these practices are applicable to the non BME communities. The methods in this toolkit are not intended to be exhaustive but highlight some of the most effective methods for engaging with BME communities.

The importance of community owned PIs
***Boxed case studies of what we did on the project re
community training etc***

empowering local communities/

accrediting involvement

Need to check Bolton use of local PIs and tenant inspectors

*Information on community satisfaction and community
satisfaction gains*

Appendix – the toolkit

TOOL KIT Engaging BME Communities

Introduction

The toolkit comprises:

Community engagement guide

- ii) Resident involvement: Why do we want resident-involvement? Do we have a strategy for this, what does it consist of, and what would we like it to achieve?
- iii) Community makeup: How far do we know who makes up the local community and how are addressing gaps in our knowledge?
- i) Economic/social/diversity initiatives: What kind of policies and practice do we have in place on economic/social regeneration which meet the needs of our diverse community?
 - ii) What stage are these policies at, and what mechanisms are in place for their co-ordination?
 - iii) How far does it, and the tenants' association (if there is one) represent the community, and how do they work in practice?
 - iv) A vision of the future: Have we thought about what kind of advantages might result, if we had a system of tenant-based indicators and greater resident involvement, that dovetailed with other initiatives across the borough, and how we could work towards that?

Performance-Indicator Audit Guide containing

- v) What are Performance Indicators?
Local Indicators: What systems do we use to collect our main and our local indicators at present? How much co-ordination is there across departments?
- vi) How are “community-owned” different from these and how will they fit in with existing ones?

- vii) How developing community-based indicators can be part of a wider process of economic and social development in the community (in conjunction with other local economic/social/equality based initiatives)

Community owned performance indicators

How to do it

Developing PIs in a context of empowerment and economic regeneration

Community ethnicity audit

- i) Examples of good practice in diversity and resident involvement in LSPs/Compacts/LAAs
- ii) Examples of good practice in community involvement (info from audit commission) in I.a.s who already use community involvement in developing their local indicators
- iii) Examples of co-ordination across departments on the following strategies and their implementation: Diversity and Equality: LSPs: LAAs: Economic regeneration: Compacts etc
- v) Examples of resident linked employment and training schemes which fit in with the I.'s wider economic/social regeneration policies

Starting up

You will need to think about:

- What is the main objective of the project?
- Who is going to manage the project?
- What are the different tasks involved?
- Who will carry out specific tasks?
- Do project members need additional training?
- How much will it cost?
- How much time will it take?

Which Equality Target Group?

Who you decide to focus on will influence what you will need to consider when planning publicity and the kind of venue you use. Standard ethnic categories are not homogeneous and most BME groups are very diverse. For example, the Black/African category

used in the 2001 census is used to describe people from many different countries, cultures, religions, beliefs and languages.

It is recommended that some basic research is carried out to understand the ethnic profile of the area you are targeting. Making educated guesses based on casual observations or anecdotal evidence will not give a full picture or the result you require. Some BME groups are isolated and will not be well represented in the community but their needs should also be considered.

Some information on BME populations will be available from a range of internal strategies and reports such as BME Strategy, Equalities Strategy, Supporting People Strategy or Housing Strategy. More information on local BME populations can be found from the Office of National Statistics Website.

Trust

For engagement with BME communities to succeed it is essential to have trust on both sides. The communities you wish to engage with may be apprehensive about whether the landlord will follow through with the initiative and as the landlord you may wonder whether the community will engage. Trust is not something that is achieved overnight; neither side can afford to give up at the first hurdle.

Consultation Fatigue

Consultation with BME communities has become a priority in recent times for many community research and voluntary organisations. In order to minimise the affect of consultation fatigue it could work to your advantage to find out what research has recently been carried out in the area you are looking at so that you can work in partnership with them and share information.

Incentives

Understand what the group you want to engage with consider to be an adequate reward for their involvement. This will vary from group to group and will depend on their circumstances. Once again guessing what BME residents consider to be an adequate reward will not give you the result you require, it is always advisable to ask.

Incentives may include:

- Cash or gift vouchers

- Seeing improvement in their environment
- Qualifications and training
- Having continued involvement
- Feeling appreciated by other residents
- Knowing that their landlord will listen and act on their concerns

As the list above shows there are many factors that will enhance BME involvement, therefore the inability for the landlord to provide payment should not act as a disincentive for engaging with BME communities.

Moreover, these incentives can and does co exist. If there is a consensus that payment is the most appropriate means of reward, this should go through the appropriate channels and be agreed by the budget holder.

Building the consultation

Gatekeepers

Gatekeepers maybe an external organisation or another department within your organisation and they will be able to help you to make the initial contact with the communities you wish to target. It is important to get them “on board” from the very beginning. The importance of gatekeepers can not be over emphasised it is important that you and your project team have the support of essential gatekeepers. Lack of co-operation from them could mean the difference between the success and failure of your project.

Community Contacts

Knowing local voluntary community groups is key to making in roads into previously unengaged communities. Therefore, it is important to keep an up to date list of community organisations. Unfortunately, small BME voluntary and other specialist organisations have a short life span mainly due to a lack of funding. Therefore, it is advisable to update your local community contacts on a regular basis.

Working with voluntary groups

Initial Communication

The first stage of your communication strategy should be publicising the participation event. The event should be publicised in key community languages. If you wish to engage with a particular language group then you should ensure that your publicity material is translated in the relevant language.

Venue

Depending on the group you are engaging with, it is important that you select a venue that is appropriate. The venue should be local and be fully accessible to those with disabilities. Moreover, you are more likely to get people to attend if you use venues that are familiar to the group you are targeting.

The event should be welcoming; providing food will help to create a relaxed atmosphere. However, it is important to ensure that you provide food which is culturally appropriate and healthy. If you are aware of who are coming to your consultation event, it is advisable

to ask what their dietary requirements are.

Child care

Childcare facilities should be provided or the resident should be reimbursed for childcare.

Interpreters

Where appropriate provide interpreters for your event. Interpreters can be provided by residents or professional interpreters can be employed. If you choose to use residents ensure you pay them the standard rate for providing the service.

Timing

Timing is also important. Religious festivals and prayer times should be taken into account when arranging times for meetings. It is always advisable to ask potential participants for the most appropriate time to hold the meeting.

Doing the consultation

Leafleting

Although many resident surveys show that leafleting is the preferred method of communication, the response rate tends to be disappointing. However, responses could be increased by targeting community venues such as voluntary organisations

Door Knocking exercises

If a resident does not speak English take a note of their address and the language they speak and provide translated material. If the resident shows an interest in getting involved then provide an interpreter.

Community Training

Many residents in the BME Performance Indicator Project had not run a focus group before and some lacked confidence. Therefore, it was important for the trainers to provide encouragement as well as practical advice and support. This approach helped to maintain interest and created confident and capable focus group leaders who were more likely to take part in similar groups in the future.

All community based training, regardless of the subject, should include a section on:

- Health and Safety
- Equality and Diversity
- Contact details for project members

Incentives

Focus group leaders in the BME Performance Indicator Project were paid for attending the training and running a focus group. The total cost of producing the report was broken down into bonuses which were awarded for writing the final report according to the guidelines and within the timescale set.

Community Events

One of the most effective methods used to engage with BME residents was through the “Resident Fun Day”.

Camera project

Texting, I-Pods and Blogs

Women only events

Feedback Strategy

Decide how and when the results of the project will be communicated. It is also important to clearly communicate how residents' contributions influenced the decision making process. Good timing is important, whether it is a detailed project spanning over a long period of time or a short project of several weeks. In either case it is worth considering a mechanism for updating residents and delivering the final results of the project e.g. newsletters, e-bulletins, working groups etc.

Use this opportunity to get them involved in mainstream tenant and resident organisations. Mainstreaming BME resident involvement is key to the overarching equalities agenda and is essential to improving the quality of customer services to all residents. However for mainstream involvement to succeed it is important that mechanisms are in place for tackling discrimination within the group. Therefore it is essential that the methods for dealing with discrimination:

- Are clearly and effectively written in the terms of reference of the Tenant and Resident Association (TRA)
- That landlord establish a protocol that deal with discrimination in relation to TRAs
- How to make a complaint about discrimination is freely available
- There is mandatory equality and diversity training
- All tenant and resident participation meeting are monitored according to all the equality strands i.e. age, gender, religion/belief and ethnicity

How to keep it going

- i) Ways of taking the draft indicators forward..
- ii) Ways of keeping residents involved..
- iii) Recommendations for new structures of resident involvement, (ie block reps and payment): practical ways of ensuring links and co-ordination, (including reducing duplication in collection of environmental and other indicators with other departments): ensuring cross-departmental cohesion in line with corporate policy....

Performance management

- viii) The Bigger Picture: How this community-based PIs fit into other Government policy initiatives (including Audit Commission ones) to develop customer-satisfaction and user-involvement in services... and reduce the regulatory burden
- ix) LAAs and Compacts: What stage are our Local Area Agreements and Compacts at?
- x) Co-ordination: How far do these initiatives link up with each other and with the existing resident involvement structure?
- xi) LSPs:What stage are our Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) at?

Draft indicators matrix

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
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Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Cleanlines of lifts	<p>ie. Lifts should be clean 5 out of 7 days, over next 3 months, equating to a green light. Could say ...3 out of 7 days equals amber, less than that is red. Would need to decide on that.</p> <p>After the first 3 months, could say it should be clean 7 out of 7 days, equating to a green light etc...</p>	Resident checks at specific times eg. weekends in the morning and one morning in the week?	<p>This would then become the detailed scoring? Absence of litter, clean smelling etc</p> <p>How would this be scored – using a traffic light or a percentage? And how would the breakdown of the scores affect the overall traffic light, if for example, lift is clean, but full of litter? Could decide at outset how to deal with this (a two-tone traffic light perhaps?!)</p> <p>Or two lights side by side?</p>	Red/Amber/Green

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Extent to which visible rubbish on the estate is managed				
Communal areas /Environment	Standard of communal areas e.g. paintwork, stairwells				
	Standard of estate roads				
	Standard of drains e.g. smell				
	Dog mess				
Issues	Indicator		Way measured		

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Grafitti				
Anti social Behaviour and Crime	Noise nuisance e.g. music parties, roads used as race tracks at night		Number of complaints made to the housing office per month		
	Impact of drug use on adults				
	Impact of drug use on children				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as "step" targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
Service Standards	Reliability of repair services/c ontractors				
	Standard of repair services/c ontractors				
	Speed of repairs				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Residents' understanding of council's housing and rehousing policy, complaints procedure and other legal rights		Number of community training sessions on policy and procedure. The presence of up to date leaflets available in different community languages, Braille, large print and audio		
Living conditions	Impact of overcrowding		Tenant and Residents' surveys		

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
Community Cohesion	Extent to which people from different backgrounds have the opportunity to discuss social issues				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Extent to which people from different backgrounds have the opportunity to develop life skills				
	Extent to which local schools are culturally sensitive				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Regular community activities which meet the varied needs of estate residents for adults e.g. an inclusive residents' association, events and activities				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as "step" targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Regular community activities which meet the varied needs of estate residents for children/young people e.g. homework club/events, activities in the school holidays				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as "step" targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Relationships between older and younger				
Facilities	Extent to which Nature Garden meets the needs of residents especially young people				
	Bigger football pitch				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as "step" targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Bigger basket ball court				
	Good standard of recreational equipment e.g. in playground and youth club				
	A coach for football team				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
Education and Employment	Extent to which there are local training which link into local employment opportunities				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as "step" targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Extent to which there are local employment opportunities, which link with resident skills				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as "step" targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome
	Ability to feel empowered by the rise in building and house prices locally, and not excluded from it (with no employment opportunities)				

Issues (Overall target for all issues is score of 100%)	Indicator	Operational Target, say, over 3 month period (ie same as “step” targets?)	Way measured	Disaggregated score over 3 month (for eg) period	Outcome

Level of satisfaction with communal space for residents to relax and socialise (measured by estate wide focus groups conducted at agreed intervals)

Level of satisfaction with green areas for residents to relax and socialise (measured by estate wide focus groups conducted at agreed intervals)

Speed of repairs services/contractors

1. Reliability of repairs services/contractors
2. Standard of repairs services/contractors
3. Bigger sports area (specifically football pitch, basket ball court) and recreational areas for young people to play in with good standard equipment with regular activities plus coach
4. Extent to which Nature Garden meets needs of residents, esp. young people and children

5. Regular community activities which meets the varied needs of estate residents, including homework clubs, events, activities in school holidays, and an inclusive residents' association
6. State of communal areas of buildings and estate's roads (includes paintwork, stairwells, effect of urine, dog mess, smell of drains, graffiti, etc)
7. Extent to which visible rubbish on the estate is managed
8. Impact of drug use/dealing on residents
9. Impact of drug dealing/use on children especially those that attend the Primary School
10. Relationship of older residents with younger
11. Levels of noise (including use of roads as race tracks at night, music, parties etc)
12. Extent to which there are local training/employment opportunities, which link with residents' skills
13. Ability to feel empowered by the rise in building and houseprices locally, not excluded from it (with to employment opportunities..)
14. Extent to which local schools are culturally-sensitive to pupils' needs
15. Extent to which different ages, genders, races given the opportunity to discuss social issues and develop life-skills

16. Residents' understanding of council's homeless and rehousing policies, and other legal rights
17. Impact of overcrowding in flats on the estate.

We also need to address other more specific issues raised by, for eg. Refugees, and other issues (eg. Refugees reporting people sleeping on floors etc and homelessness; people with history of mental health issues being inappropriately housed etc).

Or they will remain invisible !!