Delivery Plan - Community Engagement and Participation Strategy 2023-26

Action	Suggested Lead	New or existing workstream	Resources
Theme 1 - We will improve how we engage with Watford's communities			
1. Building upon our key partnerships across core areas including leisure, business, arts and culture to deliver stronger relationships, links into and collaboration with community organisations	Community Lead	New	Small project: Review approach and implement recommendations across lead officers
2. Implementing strategic priorities in the next iteration of our Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework that enable strategic stakeholders across key interest groups to identify and connect with groups within our community who are not yet known to us	Community Commissioning Lead	Existing	Within existing project: Implement this as a recommendation of the VSCF review
3. Continuing to deliver effective and timely engagement with the VCS across areas including health inequalities, arts development and broader consultations and engagement initiatives	Area leads	Existing	Small project: Bring key workstreams engaging with VCS into an internal officer forum to update and share outcomes

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4. Supporting the strategic role of the VCS in our response to the health agenda, setting commissioning priorities that encourage and enable engagement and partnership working so that the VCS can represent the views of communities experiencing the greatest health inequalities and help to deliver services that address health and wellbeing needs	Health Lead	Existing	Within existing project: No change to current workstreams
5. Continuing to utilise the contacts, skills and experience of councillors and to explore opportunities and challenges raised to them	Customer Services Operations Manager supported by the Strategic Initiatives Officer	Existing	Small project: Deliver a process to raise feedback raised to councillors at an officer level (and SLA for response)
6. Building best practice approaches into how we design, carry out and report back on consultation and engagement activities:			
i. Developing a toolkit for consultation to ensure consistency and quality of approach	Strategic Initiatives Officer to lead, with support from Communications and Engagement who will own in BAU	New	Small project: Develop, test and implement toolkit

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ii. Implementing best practice recommendations underpinned by skills training for officers across our content, making sure that information we present is always interesting, accessible and easy to read	HR	New	Small project: Set out recommendations and collaborate with HR to implement skills training
iii. Promoting ways to keep updated with news and to share information with the council	Communications and Engagement	Existing	Small project: Regular small campaign
iv. Establish ownership of and process for a publicly available consultations forward plan, ensuring awareness of cultural events and faith festivals is at the forefront of planning	Communications and Engagement	New	Small project: Create plan and process for updates

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Theme 2 - We will address barriers to and encourage broader participation			

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1. Testing and learning from best practice approaches to remove barriers and encourage participation, including exploring new digital approaches as well as more traditional methods	Communications and Engagement	Existing	Within existing workstream: Continue to test approaches in community engagement activities
2. Trialling new participation initiatives such as a People's Panel, to provide opportunities for local people to take part and be directly involved in decision making and linking to engagement with the VCS	Director of Performance	Existing	Within existing project: No additional work required
3. Commissioning projects and organisations via existing funding streams that seek to broaden engagement and improve participation	Community Commissioning	Existing	Within existing project: Build this into the VSCF review
4. Promoting opportunities to take part in democratic processes, such as observing council meetings and committees	Communications and Engagement	New	Small project: Review how we communicate this information and implement recommendations
5. Creating a forum for officers and members to exchange ideas	Director of Performance	New	Small project: Establish a Community of Practice'

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and engagement skills that encourage participation			
6. Delivering a digital engagement hub to share information in one place, in a format that makes it easier to participate	Digital team	New	Small project: Collaborate with digital team to deliver a webpage in the short term

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Theme 3 - We will deliver a clear feedback loop to show the difference sharing views makes			
1. Committing to publishing how feedback will and has shaped what we do and embedding this in the consultations toolkit –	Communications and Engagement	New	Within existing project: Carry out under the toolkit development action

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'you said / we did'			
2. Establishing an internal officer forum to improve how we share best practices and outcomes around the VCS within the council	Associate Director of Environment	New	Small project: Agree governance and implement
3. Working more closely to share feedback with strategic partners in the community	Community Lead	New	Small project: Scope a quarterly update for strategic partners

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Theme 4 - We will empower our communities, enabling opportunities to network and share information, resources, assets and services so that all can flourish			
1. Recognising the strength of our local assets (including skills, knowledge, resources and	Community Lead Community Network (output)	New	Small project: Define local assets and create the opportunity to share

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volunteers) and using our leadership role to facilitate better connections between our communities and allow everyone to benefit from these shared opportunities			updates at Community Network events
2. Empowering our commissioned organisations through the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework to enable delivery across the wider VCS	Community Commissioning Lead	Existing	Within existing project: Make this a priority of the VSCF review
3. Implementing a new Community Asset Strategy, improving our policy and processes so that communities can make the most of council assets	Property and Asset Management CFRB	Existing	Within existing project: This is already happening
4. Establishing a space in the Town Hall for VCS organisations to collaborate and network in a vibrant co-working environment	EPMO Lead	Existing	Within existing project: This is already happening
5. Through Community Wealth Building, empower our business community and voluntary sector to work in partnership	Economic Development Lead	Existing	Within existing project: Align with the Community Lead

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and build strong, local networks of support			
6. Exploring the creation of a Community Network in Watford to enable organisations to network, collaborate with one another and the council, and facilitate long term connections, reviewing existing forums and facilitating a centralised forum which enables opportunities for direct dialogue across groups, at regular events with a focus on the key priorities of the town	Community Commissioning Lead	Existing	Within existing project: Scope and deliver this event
7. Continuing to engage with the voluntary and community sector in the design of key strategies, initiatives and place based projects such as the Town Hall Quarter, that create opportunities for them	Service Area Leads Communications and Engagement Community Network	Existing	Within existing project: Establish a process to ensure delivery of this action

Governance

Implement monitoring and governance of the strategy	Community Lead	New	Small project: Establish a process with the EPMO