

Note of Meeting with Gregor Leishman (SLC)

10th December 2019

Gregor's title is Community Participation and Empowerment Officer and he is part of a new team recently created by SLC.

He was asked for recommendations about how to go about the local action planning process.

His main points were:

- Remember it is the community's plan at every stage
- Have a time lined plan from the beginning that's reviewed throughout the process.
- Be prepared to take time over engaging with the community
- Use a variety of engagement methods; online, paper based, conversations, visiting groups, local events, places that people gather
- Thematic approaches have their place. However, engaging with the community may bring up unexpected themes and once the consultation has been done themes can be drawn from the community material
- Use a simple format, not too many questions
- Map your community first and keep adding to this as you find out new things
- Consultants have their uses but it does mean funding their time. However if there is capacity in the community it would be better to use this resource as this builds ownership of the process and plan
- To be credible, you need to talk to at least 40% of the population. In Biggar, this would be roughly 1200 people.
- Form a steering group to draw in representatives from the wider community
- Include agencies in the steering group at a later stage
- Try and recruit members of the community to the process along the way
- Interrogate your data, check to make sure it is representative of the views of the whole community, including marginalised groups
- Build in feedback stages so people feel informed throughout the process
- Have short, medium and long term goals, try for some quick successes

Things that in Gregor's experience work well:

- Banners: have a logo or brand as this will be recognised throughout the process and help people identify with the work being done
- Getting the voice of younger people by asking schools to involve their pupils in online surveys (P6 upwards)
- Engage younger children using activities e.g. building an ideal town
- Use of business cards
- Gather postcodes. This gives you information about which geographical parts of the community you are reaching
- Use of “snowballing”, you ask the person you complete the survey to ask another couple of people, they ask another couple of people and so on

SLC Resources

- Gregor can act as an independent facilitator and get involved at the initial stages. However, he covers half of South Lanarkshire, so his time is limited. Early Booking is advised.
- There is technology available for meetings which want to take a vote on something, and there are Ipads which can be borrowed. However, these are in great demand and should be booked early
- Gregor's team are happy to provide support and guidance throughout the process

Other

- David Ingles, Health Improvement Officer for Clydesdale could be an important contact within the NHS if hospital provision is being considered
- It would be worth a visit to Tarbrax if we are looking for examples of good practice. Gregor will get contact details for Tarbrax Community Council.
- Gregor was asked if he could find the person responsible for helping community groups set up emergency planning as several attempts by Thelma have not discovered any knowledge of such a person or of any such group in SLC area so far.
- Impressively, East Ayrshire Council have a local action plan in place in every area, and each of the local plans is based on talking to at least 40% of the community.

Next Steps

- Community Council to note this briefing paper
- Working group to meet in the New Year to develop proposals and options to put to the whole community council