

Community Engagement and Capacity Building Portfolio Holder Report**1. Community Engagement**

We started a campaign across the District to increase our communities' understanding of why we have a need for growth, and what this means, in terms of new housing. The campaign will provide a useful 'warm up' to the Local Plan work which will require the Council to carry out a range of formal consultation exercises starting in the autumn. These events are specifically not part of this future consultation, they are designed to inform and engage our communities and aimed at having a richer discussion about growth.

We have started with the distribution of a leaflet to all households within the district. We have informed our MPs, County, District and Parish Councillors (and we have tailored our messages to recognise the commitments of communities involved in neighbourhood planning). We have also targeted community groups and partner organisations through the Community Action Suffolk network.

We want the campaign to be far reaching and involve as many elements of the community as we can, including those we have sometimes found hard to reach. Details of the events have been circulated to Members in a separate briefing pack. A copy of the leaflet was also included within this briefing pack.

Following on from the leaflets and our advance publicity, are a series of drop-in events. We have been canvassing within each locality in advance of these events to encourage participation and will adapt our approach as we go.

2. Suffolk Show

Members of the Administration and staff from the Communities Service supported the SCC Pavilion at the Suffolk Show. Community Resilience, Dementia Friendly Communities and Volunteering formed the core of our offer. The two days were very busy with many opportunities for engaging the community across these topics, we estimate that over 500 people met with staff and Councillors over the course of the two days.

3. The Stowmarket Dementia Action Alliance

This is now up and running and has an active steering group and partners who are delivering community events. The launch of the new living well class at Stowmarket Leisure Centre is on 6 June. We are now delivering community dementia friends awareness sessions across the District and will be undertaking a business engagement event in August.

4. Mid Suffolk and Babergh Year of Walking

The current brochure is out with around 55 different walks for the period May-October. A new brochure will be out for November 2016. This supports the Suffolk Year of Walking 2016.

5. Crucial Crew

This year Crucial Crew in Mid Suffolk will be organised and led by The Mix. As a specialist centre for young people within Stowmarket this is an exciting development and a good example of the community taking a lead role in delivery.

6. Mid Suffolk Armed Forces Day Event on Saturday 25 June 2016

The Event is being delivered in partnership with one of our Stowmarket Voluntary Sector Groups, the Friends of Pikes Meadow, to enable and encourage armed forces members and their families to take an active and enjoyable part in their local communities.

Councillor Julie Flatman