



Community Groups and Leaders

Checklist on skills, knowledge and abilities;

Please add new ones you think groups and leaders will especially need in the current climate:

- finding out about local needs
- planning new projects
- fundraising and accessing resources

- being an accountable to the community
- skills in managing volunteers and giving practical support

- conflict resolution skills
- skills in negotiation
- teamwork and committee skills

- confidence and self-worth
- being able to listen and learn
- ability to ask questions

- presentation skills
- handling the media
- knowledge of how local authorities, agencies and partnerships work and plan their activities
- evaluation skills

Handout: The Six Roles and related methods of engagement

The use of the Six Roles as the basis for choosing methods is only given as a general steer to help creative thinking about community engagement methods, rather a clear cut typology of methods.

- *Enabling decision-making* - take a presentation around different centres, distribute information through council newsletters, hold informal community forums, use council website based surveys, visit service user feedback forums, meet with service users on site or in their centres, use electronic voting at community meetings.
- *Enabling action* - help set up working groups on specific local issues, hold small scale, informal action planning meetings in community centres, recruit residents as volunteers to improve the local environment, encourage street champions to take care of their area.
- *Building bridges* - carry out a regular walk-about of your ward, design participative community meetings that help people to mix and mingle, hold community festivals that showcase different cultures, visit groups in their own centres and arrange invites for them to other centres, use small grants to support mixing of people of different backgrounds, encourage inter-faith forums.
- *Identifying local priorities* - act as a broker to establish neighbourhood planning, use the Community Infrastructure Levy, arrange workshop style planning sessions, use Planning for Real, invite presentations from local interests, use electronic voting on a range of possible actions on local issues.
- *Joint working* - bring together service managers with community leaders in workshop style sessions, invite community representatives to work jointly with you on tackling local issues, initiate research on the area's needs involving residents, organise locally based commissioning of services.
- *Building Stronger Communities* - organise a directory of training opportunities, help open council training to community groups, support mentoring and networking between groups and local leaders, ask local companies to open their staff training and coaching to local groups.

Six roles for Elected Members as community leaders

Enabling decision-making

Central to an effective local partnership and its associated activities is the process of local people getting involved in decision-making. For this to really mean something it is about asking people their views and making it clear to them in what ways they can influence a decision. For many Elected Members this is a challenging role, very different from the normal approach of acting as a political representative who speaks on behalf of others. It will involve letting people know the extent of influence they can have, for example whether it is a *joint decision* or a *consultation about a decision*.

Enabling action

Enabling action can include, for example:

- * clarifying priorities and tasks that need to be carried out
- * sharing tasks with people, rather than doing it yourself
- * providing practical support to people with less confidence
- * supporting self-help and community initiatives
- * asking challenging questions to push things along
- * chasing up on agreed actions to ensure they are happening.

Identifying local priorities

Effective locality working will need a longer term idea of where the area is heading and broadly how it will tackle the problems it faces. Without this, the activities and new initiatives may not really add up to much - a bit of a scatter gun approach. Ideally the future priorities for the area will not just only be based on the ideas of the Elected Members but involve other people and local organisations. Identifying local priorities will need to be carried out in the context of the wider strategies that an authority may have.

Identifying local priorities could involve for example:

- * supporting the collection of information on local needs and local resources
- * introducing new ideas and challenging set ways of doing things
- * devising a shared view of the future as the basis for action
- * involving parish and town councils, local businesses and enterprises
- * inviting views on the ways forward to tackle local problems

* encouraging the use of under used 'assets', such as buildings and land that could be used for community benefit.

Joint Action

This role can involve working with representatives from local public and voluntary sector services, enterprises and local businesses to improve the quality of life in the area. It may take the form of a partnership with a forward plan or act more informally. It may involve chairing or facilitation roles or ensuring such roles are carried out for effective co-ordination. Joint action can be how the local priorities are focused on and worked towards.

Building bridges

This role is about helping stronger links and relationships to form between groups and organisations at ward level. Such links can help to improve the ability of communities to get on better. It could include, for example:

* involving parish and town councils, local businesses and voluntary organisations

* encouraging links and understanding between community groups, especially where groups may have different faiths or identities e.g. a Polish community group based in a white English neighbourhood.

Building bridges is about building links both between different organisations and between different community groups to achieve better understanding and community cohesion.

Building community strengths

Over the long term, real changes will need to involve many people, groups and organisations. It is about creating and strengthening local leadership and groups so that communities are well organised and take responsibility. In the long term, this can take some of the pressure off the Elected Member. In order to *build community strengths* it can involve:

* providing a key point of contact for community groups and leaders and supporting them to get things done

* encouraging local leadership and groups to be based on sound principles, such as equal opportunities

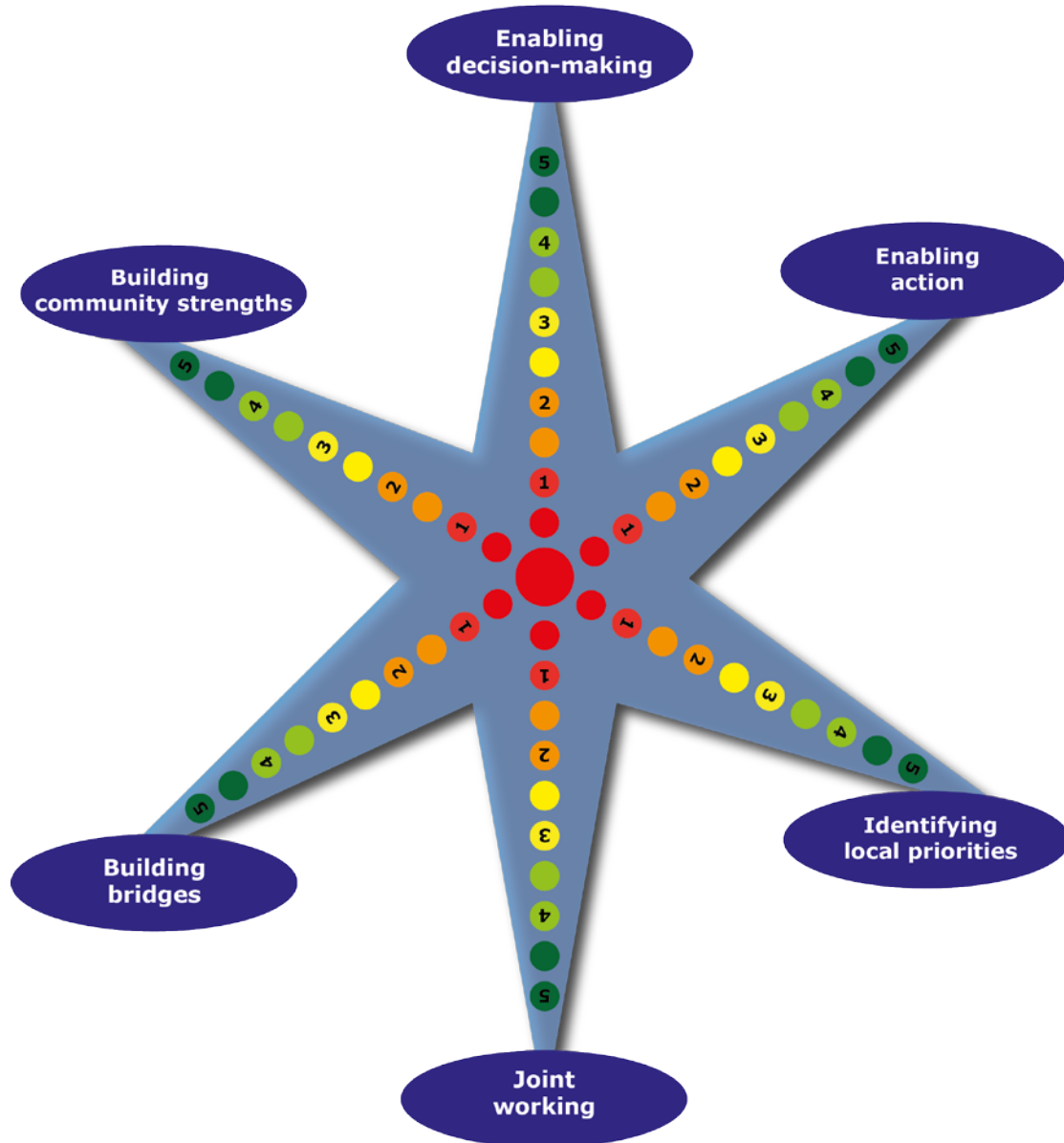
* Members sharing information, skills and experience to build local confidence.

* encouraging community enterprise and self-help

* helping to build local organisations, charities and trusts that can act as catalysts for long term change.

The six roles of community leadership

- 1 Level One** I do not carry out this role
- 2 Level Two** This role is carried out by me to a minor extent
- 3 Level Three** This role is carried out by me to some extent
- 4 Level Four** This role is carried out by me to a large extent
- 5 Level Five** This role is carried out fully by me



Adapted from *Liberating Leadership* published by the Community Sector Coalition. 2009 written by Steve Skinner and Guy Farrar. Based on the Outcomes Star created by Triangle Consulting.

Handout One

Organising a public meeting or event

Increasing community participation – some issues to consider:

- **Timing/date** – is the date you propose a religious festival? Is day time better than after dark? Is a Saturday a useful alternative? Hold same meeting at different times and on different dates?
- **Publicity** – what methods will gain most response? - Leaflets? Local newspapers? Radio? Word of mouth? Internet? Posters? What combination will work best?
- **Transport** – is venue on bus routes? Is there parking? Is venue well known? Is it someone else's 'territory'?
- **Venue and access** – if licensed it may put some people off. Consider wheel chair access through the entrance, moving around the building; toilets; participation in activities.
- **Reception and layout**– can a staff member do meet and greet? Is seating in rows? Can it be less formal?
- **Programme** – does it include any participatory activities? Can people be divided into smaller groups?
- **Speakers** – ask them to use less or explain jargon.
- **Presentations** – can you use visual images to add to use of words? Use posters/wall charts instead of power point?
- **Refreshments** – reflecting different needs? Is halal meat kept separate from other meat dishes?
- **Special needs** – e.g. hearing loops? Do they work? Do interpreters know about the issues being discussed? Can the pace be slower to give time for people to take things in?

***Supporting Community Groups
to be more enterprising***

Options for increasing income

Please think of a community group you know fairly well and consider different options. Which could work that still match the groups aims and values?

Increase numbers of people who pay for an activity or service	Increase level of charges for an activity or service	Provide the same service or activity in a different neighbourhood
Provide same service to a different group of users	Provide a new service or activity	Reduce costs e.g. move to a cheaper building
Develop part of your service or activities so you can sell it a e.g. a training pack	Put in bids for commissioned services	Rent space to another organisation e.g. for offices/a cafe



Handout Three: Comparing community engagement methods

Please choose one or two of the community engagement methods from the Handout Two and discuss the pros and cons of each method, jotting down a few key points.

Method	Pros	Cons

Resource list of community engagement methods

- Public meetings e.g. area forums
- Large community events
- Open days
- Focus Groups
- Surveys – e.g. household or on-line
- Working groups
- Citizen panels
- Area committees
- Service user panels
- Participative budgeting
- Electronic voting
- Council magazine
- Customer Call Centre
- Petitions
- Council website
- Blogs
- Web cast or pod cast of council meetings
- Use local press
- Live phone in on local radio
- Use third sector networks' newsletters
- Visit users of services
- Visit to community group's own meetings
- Third sector infrastructure organisations
- Third sector networks
- Bus with exhibition
- Walk about the area
- Stalls/exhibition at festivals
- Wishing wells
- Post cards with questions to be completed
- Customer feedback boxes