



## Cabinet

<b>Title</b>	<b>Barnet Community Participation Strategy. Year 1 Progress report</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	16 January
<b>Report of</b>	Councillor Sara Conway - Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Participation
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Key</b>	Non-key
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – Community Participation Strategy Year 1 Progress report
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### Summary

The Community Participation Strategy (CPS) was approved by Community Leadership and Libraries Committee in October 2022. It set out a vision for changing the way the Council relates to its residents and introduced new participatory methods through a number of pathfinder projects. It signalled an organisation-wide commitment to involving communities in the work of the council and listening to the voices of communities we have engaged with less often. The CPS has implemented new ways of working, fostered community connections and enabled the council to learn more about the lives of residents in our borough.

Community Participation is one of eight 'tier one' workstreams in the Transformation Programme of the Transformation Strategy, approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 22 February 2023 to launch change programmes initiated by the new administration.

This report, enclosed as Appendix A details the achievements made in the first year of delivering the strategy. This has seen Barnet make great progress in advancing community participation and redesigning how we relate to communities. It describes a large and varied programme of work, but

this is only as selection a few of the many projects and initiatives delivered in this first year. The pace and scale of the work has been considerable, and the consequent changes can already be felt inside and outside the organisation.

## Recommendations

- 1. That Cabinet note the progress described in this report in delivering the Community Participation Strategy.**

### 1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 The Community Participation Strategy was the first strategy to be produced under the current administration and helped pave the way for *Our Plan for Barnet* – the council’s new three-year corporate plan. It put into policy some of the manifesto priorities of the administration, and in particular its vision to make Barnet a ‘listening council’. This update report reflects on the progress that has been made in embedding the principles and approaches in the CPS, delivered as a tier 1 transformation workstream.
- 1.2 The CPS included four ‘pathfinder’ projects. These were pieces of work that were either planned or already underway and were all based on various forms of participatory practice. The CPS proposed that the Strategy and Community Participation Team should use these pathfinders to test and model community participation techniques, and to report the learning from them after one year.
- 1.3 This report sets out the learnings from the four pathfinders, as well as several other projects that have been delivered this year. It assesses the impact of the change that the CPS has brought to the organisation and the borough in what has been a year of significant delivery. Some of the successes have been very visible, such as the programme of community events. Others, such as our ethnographic research projects have impacted a smaller number of people but often in deeper, more meaningful ways.
- 1.4 While for some in the organisation, these ways of working might be new, the strategy also highlighted that there were already many examples of good practice in community participation happening in the council. The CPS aimed to build on these and to share the techniques and learnings from them. The publication of this report coincides with the launch of Barnet’s new Community Participation Toolkit. This will help to further enable participatory practice across the organisation and enable us to go even further in the next phase of this work.

### 2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

- 2.1 The council made a published commitment to report on the delivery of the CPS after one year, and to not do so would be in breach of that commitment.

### 3. Post Decision Implementation

- 3.1 Community participation is an ongoing journey of change. With Cabinet’s approval the Strategy and Community Participation Team will continue to develop its expertise and to further embed a culture of reflective evaluation that will enable continued improvement.

3.2 While there is no longer a need to designate projects as ‘pathfinders’, the team will continue to look for opportunities to pilot participatory approaches.

#### **4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations**

##### **Corporate Plan**

4.1 Community participation is a key element of the Engaged and Effective Council theme in the corporate plan.

##### **Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures**

4.2 Several corporate reporting indicators relate to the successful implementation of community participation, including Neighbourhood Working and Partnerships.

##### **Sustainability**

4.3 Many of the projects covered by the CPS have positive sustainability goals at their heart. One of the pathfinder projects included in this report is the Citizens Assembly or Climate Change and Biodiversity.

##### **Corporate Parenting**

4.4 No particular impact.

##### **Risk Management**

4.5 The pieces of work described in the CPS and the methods they employ are too varied to enable a meaningful assessment of risk across this report.

##### **Insight**

4.6 This is an evaluation report and is therefore based on a range of insight that has been gathered across the last year. Various quantitative and qualitative methods have been used both in the work it describes and in the evaluation of those projects.

##### **Social Value**

4.7 Community participation relates to social value in many ways, but there is no particular impact from this report.

#### **5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)**

5.1 As the recommendation is to note the report, there are no resource implications.

#### **6. Legal Implications and Constitution References**

6.1 No implications.

6.2 In accordance with the Council Constitution, Part 2D, the terms of reference of the Cabinet includes the following responsibilities:

- Development of proposals for the budget (including the capital and revenue budgets, the fixing of the Council Tax Base, and the level of Council Tax) and the financial strategy for the Council;
- Monitoring the implementation of the budget and financial strategy;
- Recommending major new policies (and amendments to existing policies) to the Council for

approval as part of the Council's Policy Framework and implementing those approved by Council;

- Approving policies that are not part of the policy framework;
  - Management of the Council's Capital Programme;
- and All key decisions

## **7. Consultation**

7.1 A great amount of consultation and engagement has been conducted to inform this report. Many of the projects it describes are themselves consultative pieces of work.

## **8. Equalities and Diversity**

8.1 Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that Cabinet has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular to the need to:

- a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- a) Tackle prejudice, and

b) Promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- a) Age
- b) Disability
- c) Gender reassignment
- d) Pregnancy and maternity
- e) Race
- f) Religion or belief
- g) Sex
- h) Sexual orientation
- i) Marriage and civil partnership

Advice on completing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) can be found [here](#).

## 9. Background Papers

- 9.1 Barnet Community Participation Strategy 2022: [Community Participation Strategy final cleared CLLC 311022.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#).