

Civic Leadership

Following engagement events and meetings hosted by the Lord Provost and the Chief Executive, a number of representatives subsequently organised a community event held on 27th January 2017 which was attended by c.70 - 80 people from across the City's civic and community life. The purpose of this event was to provide an open forum in which to give more time and thought to questions such as:-

- a) What are the issues that the City needs to talk about?
- b) How can we jointly tackle challenges and design solutions?
- c) How can civic engagement be brought more directly into decision making structures?
- d) What might shared and supported civic leadership in Aberdeen look and feel like?
- e) What are the opportunities for the future and areas of positive development we can work toward together?

The format of the event used an "Open Space" technique. Under a broad theme, this allows participants to set the specific agenda for the day and for individuals to choose which topic discussions they wish to participate in. The theme agreed was:-

"How shall we support each other and our City to build a future – prosperous and successful, which makes a real difference to the everyday lives of all its citizens?"

The detailed outputs of the event are being currently being analysed by the organising group of volunteers, supported by Council colleagues, and a full report from the event will be produced and made publicly available.

In summary, the topics raised by participants fall into two broad categories:-

- i. subject specific service delivery issues; and
- ii. issues which relate to both the principles and practical delivery of civic leadership and engagement.

Emerging Themes

Colleagues have captured and are responding to the specific service delivery issues raised. In relation to principles and practical delivery of civic leadership and engagement, there were a number of common and related themes raised which can be summarised as:-

1. Supporting shared understanding and transparency through active engagement, communication and accessible information and, through this, building mutual trust across the City.
2. Exploring ways for citizens, groups, communities and businesses to become more actively involved in the prioritisation, planning and delivery of "services" which matter to them.
3. Exploring ways for citizens, groups, communities and businesses to become more involved in shaping the future of the city and its communities, in addition to responding to current needs and priorities.
4. The engagement, representation and empowerment of individuals and communities who are not, traditionally, involved in civic leadership.

5. Exploring mechanisms for connecting the civic voice with institutional, partners as well as the Council's, decision making processes.

In the period since the event on 27th January, the group of volunteers who organised it have met to consider the output and have made a number of specific suggestions, which are set out below, for the Council's consideration:

Values and Principles

Values

- Independence:* We will each make up our own mind.
- Integrity:* Decisions will be made in an open and understandable manner. Information and communication will be open and transparent, and everyone will have the opportunity to influence decisions.
- Positivity:* We will look for solutions not just describe problems.
- Respect:* Understand that everyone has an equal voice and is worth listening to.

Principles

We will adhere to these values by challenging ourselves, and each other, to:

1. *Focus on making the right decision for the people of Aberdeen. Avoid identifying ourselves so personally with a particular position that this in itself excludes constructive discussion.*
2. *Be prepared to be swayed by the arguments of others and be confident about admitting mistakes or changing our mind;*
3. *Sustain an intention to involve all relevant stakeholders sharing with them any relevant facts/documents on which decisions and subsequent actions are based.*
4. *Understand the value of constructive dialogue, listening appreciatively to the thoughts and conclusions of others.*
5. *Share leadership and responsibility, and take time to communicate the intention of the work we undertake as citizens, and the approach we use to make decisions and initiate actions.*
6. *Trust and have confidence and optimism in other people's expertise, knowledge and intentions.*

Target Operating Model Design Principles:

Governance

Transparent

The decision making process should make clear the priorities of decision makers in deciding what we do and how we do it, to drive the LOIP outcomes; the roles and responsibilities of each individual involved in making a decision; the basis and evidence on which decisions are made.

Informed

Decisions should be made having given consideration to: available options, an assessment of impact, an assessment of risk, the views of stakeholders, and how these decisions will be implemented, including performance and improvement measures.

Inclusive

The decision making process should allow all stakeholders to feel that they have a mechanism for being heard, and promote community involvement in decisions and result in decisions which place more ownership in the hands of the communities, for instance, promoting models like self-directed support.

Technology

Engaged

Technology will be used to re-cast our relationship with the communities we serve by enabling more citizen engagement and participation.

Open

Make things open: it makes things better.

Partners & Alliances Approach

Shared vision and values

While recognizing and respecting differences – and welcoming dialogue and debate – sufficient common ground must be found for our partnerships and alliances with others to be viable.

Complementarity of purpose and value added

The emphasis will be placed on identifying the common outcomes to which we are working, whether in long or short-term relationships, looking to build on the distinctive contribution of all parties, and ensuring that our combined efforts bring about change.

Autonomy and independence

While there must be some commonality in vision and values in order for the partnership to be viable, we accept that partners may not share all our views. The right of each partner to determine their own institutional identity, directions and priorities should be respected.

Transparency and mutual accountability

In working towards a common outcome there will be transparency and mutual accountability to one another, our customers and other stakeholders.

Clarity on roles and responsibilities

We will discuss our understanding of roles with partners, clarify the ways in which we will work together and determine who is best placed to deliver what, both as we start the relationship and as the relationship evolves over time.

Commitment to joint learning

We should have upfront agreement on how we can learn from our joint work, and from each other, with the aim of incorporating learning, communications and knowledge-sharing into the relationship.”