

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

To: Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date: 20 October 2015

“As long as my bins get lifted ...” – A Citizen
Engagement Project

For Information

Linkage to Corporate Plan	
Strategic Priority	Leader and Champion
Objective	Civic Leadership
Lead Officer	Elizabeth Beattie
Cost: (If applicable)	

1.0 Background

1.1 “As Long as My Bins Get Lifted” is an 18-month project which will run from September 2015 to February 2017.

1.2 There are five partners involved in the project with Corrymeela taking on the lead project co-ordinating role. The partners are:

- Ballymoney Community Resource Centre;
- Beyond Skin;
- Charo Lanao-Madden;
- Corrymeela;
- Rural Community Network.

1.3 The project is being financially supported by the Building Change Trust as part of a funding programme for civic engagement projects. In 2008, the Building Change Trust was established by the Big Lottery Fund with a National Lottery grant of £10million as an investment for community capacity building and promotion of the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland.

2.0 Project Design

2.1 The “As Long as My Bins Get Lifted” project aims to engage with a wide range of citizens in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area using a range of creative methods to:

- Collect stories and understandings of citizens' relationships with Council, with community and place, and with each other;
- Imagine possibilities informed by stories of what has worked and is working;
- Explore what it would take to create relationships that work for people;
- Help inform the community planning function of Council.

2.2 The project has three distinct phases and each phase will use a different creative community engagement tool:

Phase 1:

Pop Up Democracy - initial engagement with the general public in 20 or more different locations across the Council area through the performance of a street-theatre piece to gather initial perspectives and thoughts. These sites will include supermarkets, nail bars, buses, hairdressers, car boot sales, schools/FE Colleges, sporting fixtures, festivals, churches, benefits offices, and workplaces.

Phase 2:

Community Visioning – an invitation to people to step into an 'inside space' following a street-theatre presentation for a more focused conversation on experiences and possibilities in their relationship with the new Council.

Phase 3:

Forum Theatre - an invitation to be part of a residential to begin identifying key stories of change, power and possibilities informing a final public event using forum theatre to rehearse new realities and possibilities.

The project partners will also be using a variety of creative social media tools contributing to wider public conversation with the hashtag *#don'tbinyourvoice*.

3.0 Project Outcomes

The project partners envisage the following tangible and intangible outcomes coming from this project:

3.1 Tangible Outcomes

- Good practice stories as to how citizens engage with the Council;
- List of new possible stories and first steps into bringing those to stories into reality;
- Provide a temperature check as to how citizens see the possibilities of their new Council at the beginning of a community planning process;
- Number of people interacting on social media platform.

3.2 Intangible Outcomes

- Giving voice to those who feel on the edges. For example: people from low income backgrounds; migrants; refugees and asylum seekers; members of the LGBT community; black and minority ethnic citizens, etc.
- Tapping into and supporting people's sense of agency and power in their neighbourhoods;
- Changes in the stories we tell ourselves about each other and about politics;
- Contribution to participatory skills development among Council staff;
- Citizens with the skills and confidence to engage with their Council.

4.0 **Council Involvement**

- 4.1 Following a meeting with a representative from Corrymeela it has been suggested that the Council could consider becoming a learning partner in the project. This arrangement would impose no direct financial obligations on Council as the project has already been fully funded by the Building Change Trust.
- 4.2 It is envisaged that any learning partnership the Council enters into in relation to this project would be one based on mutual learning and 'in kind' support. For example, borrowing bins for the street performance, placing stickers on bins that communicates the themes of the project.
- 4.3 The project also has the potential of contributing to the community engagement aspect of the community planning process and Corrymeela have already expressed their willingness to use the process to try to tease out wider issues within communities.
- 4.5 The project partners have also indicated that they would be more than happy to brief Councillors on the project in more detail if Councillors wish to hear more.