



# Community Power Strategy



## Foreword

### **Councillor Richard Cox, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement**

Our thinking about community engagement has moved on since we published the first iteration of our engagement strategy in June 2020, influenced by New Local and their powerful project about putting community power into practice. New Local describes 'community power' as a belief that people should have a say over the places in which they live and the services they use. It describes a growing movement – with communities across the country, and the world, working together to improve places, public services, and each other's lives.

This second iteration of our community engagement strategy is an attempt to rise to the community power challenge and genuinely put this transformational approach into practice with our communities across Lichfield District.



*It is the small, everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love.*

J. R. R. Tolkien

## Context

Community power captures a wide range of different practices, approaches and initiatives. The basic premise is that communities have the knowledge, skills and assets which mean they themselves are well placed to identify and respond to challenges they face, and to thrive. The principle is not just theory, it already exists in neighbourhoods, in local networks, and in voluntary and community organisations where people come together to overcome challenges and support each other.

This power has come to life through the huge generosity, support and sharing we have witnessed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Individuals, groups and whole communities have risen to the challenge of protecting the vulnerable in their neighbourhoods and in doing so, done their part to protect the NHS.

We now recognise the benefits of actively collaborating with communities. This strategy is about just that, about enabling community insight to shape what we do, about understanding local community needs and empowering them further to be part of the solutions.

## Our Vision

We want to **understand, engage** and **involve our communities** in what we do. By improving how we engage with our communities we can deliver more collaborative and devolved activity at a local level – involving the communities best placed at identifying local issues and supporting them to deliver the solutions to these issues.

## Priorities

- Understand our communities and their needs
- Engage our communities in decisions that affect them
- Encourage everyone to have a voice and build trust
- Ensure we have the right skills and qualities in place to support communities to help themselves
- Work with local groups and organisations to improve the outcomes for our communities
- Create a shared vision for change at a local level



## Our objectives will be delivered through themes

Theme	Timescale	Activities	Outcomes
<b>People are considered active:</b> 'citizens', 'communities', 'participants'	March 2022	Determine a set of guiding principles to ensure transparency and clarity in the engagement process.	Transparency and understanding by all involved in the process.
<b>Reciprocal relationship:</b> 'what can we do together to make things better'	March 2022	To engage with local communities about what we measure and what's important to them.	Improved community and engagement by improved knowledge.
<b>Joined up working style:</b> shaped by a shared vision for change and horizontal connections	March 2022	Communications plan to advise ward councillors and local communities and community leaders of intentions.	Communities to become more connected, engaged and empowered
<b>Combining institutional and community expertise:</b> to gain diverse insights	July 2022	Utilise data and insight in order to understand our communities and their needs	Tailored and increased engagement and consultations opportunities based on the demography of the locality.
<b>Facilitative and collaborative partner:</b> with local groups and partners	July 2022	Work with Ward Councillors to understand localities and their requirements.	Locality based engagement.

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<b>Collaboration model which incentivises flexibility:</b> and a focus on improving community outcomes	September 2022	Locality commissioning protocols to determine services and organisations who can design and deliver services at a local level with our communities.	Clear and transparent commissioning of services and projects
<b>Deliberative engagement style:</b> ‘what do you want to do together?’	December 2022	Deploy officers locally to start to start engagement activity based on community designed and led action plans to enable local communities to identify and take forward their own initiatives and projects.	Greater project and service delivery at a local level.
<b>Distributed networks of leadership:</b> where everyone has a voice	December 2022	Create local steering groups. To place the final decision in the hands of the community. Groundwork for Area Management Committees	Community groups designed around community needs.
<b>Experimental learning culture:</b> emphasising trust and development	Ongoing	To work directly with the community throughout a process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and taken into consideration.	Plans being delivered that are community led.

## Success Measures

1. Residents feel empowered in their communities, and feel part of the solutions to local problems
2. Residents feel the council provides value for money
3. Residents are overall very or fairly satisfied with LDC
4. Fewer complaints received
5. Residents express trust in LDC
6. Residents feel fairly, or well informed about our services
7. Partners are overall very satisfied or satisfied with LDC

