



**Which Council Aim does this case study deliver?**

*To transform the Council.*

**Background**

The Council has a strategic objective of knowing our communities and meeting their needs. The Council has held an aspiration for some time to develop a citizens panel to compliment the range of community engagement and customer insight activities it undertakes.

**What was done?**

The Council has worked with NYCC and the other district councils in North Yorkshire to investigate the most cost effective way of operating a citizens panel which cover the county area and yet remains statistically significant for each district area.

Currently Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Richmondshire LSP, Scarborough Borough Council and Selby District Council run a Citizens' Panel. These are all run 'in house' apart from the North Yorkshire County Council panel which is contracted to an external agency. Additionally Hambleton District Council is in the process of setting up a new panel. Ryedale was at this point investigating the options for operating a citizens panel as follows:

- Jointly with NYCC and other districts
- External provision
- External recruitment of panel and refresh every other year, operation of the panel undertaken in-house

Research has been carried out by NYCC into joint panels in other counties and the cost implications of a joint panel. This research indicates that setting up a joint panel would not be cost effective.

However, the work we have under taken has highlighted that many of the benefits of joint panels could be realised through closer working between partners utilising the existing panel arrangements. We therefore propose that partners work closer together over the coming year.

This closer working will include:

- Using the North & East Yorkshire Community Engagement Group meetings to co-ordinate the work on citizens' panels and share learning.
- Using the IDeA Communities of Practice to share information including questionnaires, reports and lists of topics covered.
- Developing a level of co-ordination between panels so that common themes are run at similar times.
- Sharing of questions so the same questions can be run in different areas of the county.
- Using the same equalities questions
- All organisations are proposing to / will use SNAP so there will be opportunities to share joint training / experience / questions / templates.
- Develop common methodology for sharing the results and outcomes of panel research.
- Investigate the use of customer profiling of panel results to allow learning from research carried out in one district to be transferred to other areas.
- Scarborough Borough Council providing additional support for Ryedale District Council to develop their skills in this area.

As a result of this work, Ryedale District Council has decided to procure the recruitment of a citizens panel of 1100 residents. To recruit a panel of 1,100 residents who are broadly representative of the district in terms of demographics, based upon the 2001 Census and estimates related to this, in terms of:

- Age
- Ethnic origin
- Gender
- Disability
- Socio – economic grouping
- Location within the District (ward level and area based)

The membership of the panel will be updated and refreshed every two years.

The Council has contracted with the company that they considered provided the best value for money based upon the price submitted and following an evaluation of each of the quotations.

### **Who was involved and how?**

All members of the North & East Yorkshire Community Engagement Group, namely all NY councils and police, fire, health and ambulance services.

### **What was achieved?**

The Council has found the most cost effective and efficient way of developing its community engagement activity, to include a citizens panel. We have trained members of the Transformation team so that they can manage the panel and operate it from in-house resources. We are currently developing the programme for the next twelve months inviting suggestions for use of the panel from Service Unit Managers.

### **Who benefited and how do we know?**

The Council was one of two of the districts in North Yorkshire without access to a citizens panel and this position has now been rectified. We are working with other partner organisations as detailed above to ensure findings can be shared and that we are using standard equalities questions and monitoring in all our work through the panel.

### **Resources and value for money**

Expenditure 2009/10

Recruitment of panel £9,000

Budget 2010/11:

Total £14,000

Place survey £10,000

5x Reflector Groups @ £750

Budget 2011/12:

Total £14,000

Citizens Panel refresh £5,000

### **Next Steps / Further Action**

#### **Development of the Ryedale Citizens Panel 2010/11**

#### **Objectives:**

For residents:

- To give citizens the opportunity to influence decision making and improve service delivery
- To Improve the knowledge and understanding of the Council amongst local residents
- To enable citizens to work with us to make a difference improving the quality of life of residents

For the Council:

- To provide the Council and partner organizations with a means of informing, consulting and involving citizens

- To enable the delivery of community engagement activity that is efficient, effective and economic
- To understand our communities and meet their needs
- To engage with a group of residents including under represented or seldom heard groups

**Examples of uses:**

Focus groups  
Citizens Juries  
Participatory Budgeting  
Mystery shopping  
Conferences and workshops  
Commissioning  
Recruitment  
Surveys

**Programme:**

Welcome survey – Responses by end of June 2010  
Spending and cuts tolerance and ideas – July 2010  
Reflector groups October 2010  
Place Survey – September to December – random selection as defined by CLG  
Reflector Groups December 2010

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**Background documents/Links:**

Community Engagement Strategy 2009-13  
IDeA North Yorkshire Community Engagement Community of Practice.  
NYSP papers