

50+ Citizen Engagement

Breaking down the Barriers

Bringing the process of scrutiny and/or council meetings out into the community to a more informal and accessible venue for people 50+

The Basic Idea

The pilot aims to break down the preconceptions that some people 50+ may have of the council and councillors being in Ivory towers and out of touch with the communities that they represent.

This pilot aims to bridge the gap between representative democracy and citizen engagement, by bringing the process of scrutiny and/or council meetings to a more informal and accessible venue for people 50+

It may be possible to challenge such preconceptions by holding council scrutiny meetings throughout the borough, in community settings where people 50+ will feel comfortable, for example a sheltered accommodation, local church etc.

This may make meetings and council business more accessible to members of the public leading to further direct engagement with decision making processes by those 50+

Local 50+ Forum members should be in place to support and raise the awareness of those thinking about, wanting to or attending these meetings in the community. Possibly through peer to peer chats/ briefings and critically to let them know about the potential for further engagement in decision making to “get their voices heard” at these or other events.

An incentive for attendance/participation could be the building up of time bank credits that could be used at local amenities, for example the local leisure centre.

Ideally all local forums should be invited to attend the event when topics relating to them are on the agenda. As well as making the process of engagement more diverse, this should facilitate better networking and the sharing of ideas between local groups.

Prior to the project there will be a need for informal pre planning with older people. This will ensure they find the process of engagement suitable.

At each meeting there should be a direct invitation by the Chair inviting those older people attending to speak if at all possible.