



Empowering and engaging citizens in our communities roadshows

Evaluation Report

Index

	Page
• Introduction	3
• Background	3
• Attendance	4
• Speakers	5
• Additional Information	12
• General Overview on Feedback Received and Comments Made by Delegates	14
• Areas Identified to Support Delegates	17
• Recommendations	18

Introduction

This report was written by the South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre after successfully delivering six regional *Empowering and Engaging Citizens in our Communities* Roadshows across the South West of England. All delegates were asked to complete feedback sheets to enable us to evaluate the Roadshows and gain valuable information around their priorities.

These Roadshows were delivered with the collaboration of Government Office South West (GOSW), Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership SW (RIEP SW), the Audit Commission and the National Empowerment Partnership (NEP).

We are very proud that the events enabled delegates to leave with a better understanding of their responsibilities, examples of how to improve community empowerment and engagement and how they can access opportunities to help achieve the Government's vision of

“Building vibrant cohesive communities of empowered, self-confident citizens who contribute to their community in many different ways”

Background

Community Engagement and Leadership are paramount in the Local Government White Paper - *Communities in control: real people, real power*. Also from April 2009, 'Duty to Involve' will become obligatory. The South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre saw a need to provide elected Members, professionals, practitioners and residents with advice and support to equip themselves with knowledge and understanding to ensure that residents' needs are at the heart of the Local Area Agreements (LAAs) that are developed.

We also wanted to provide an opportunity for delegates to network and form contacts during the events. The Roadshows offered opportunities for delegates to link into organisations that already develop collaborative and complementary approaches to community engagement such as GOSW, the RIEP SW, the NEP and, of course, the South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

We believed that to successfully carry this forward, we would have to provide guidance and information covering the South West sub-regionally. Regions covered were as follows:

• Wiltshire	Swindon	16 June 2008
• Cornwall	Wadebridge	22 October 2008
• Devon	Plymouth	23 October 2008
• Dorset	Bovington	6 November 2008
• Gloucestershire	Cheltenham	19 November 2008
• Bristol & Avon	Bristol	4 December 2008

Attendance

Invitations were sent out regionally, offering delegates the chance to take part in any of the Roadshows. A breakdown of delegates who attended the Roadshows is given below:

Organisation	TOTAL	Wiltshire	Cornwall	Devon	Dorset	Glos	Bristol
LA Elected Member	12	1	2	2	3		4
LA Partnership Officers	14	6			1	2	5
LA Housing/Landlord Services/Tenant Part.	13	1		12			
LA Policy Officers	5	1				2	2
LA ASB Co-Ordinators	2			1	1		
LA Comm. Development/Support/Tenant Part.	30	3	2	14	3	1	7
LA Customer Services/Information	2	1		1			
LA Housing	7	2		1			4
LA Engagement/Consultant	2				1	1	
LA Development/Commissioning	1	1					
LA Community Safety	9	1		2	1	1	4
LA Environmental Services	2		1		1		
LA Legal/Democratic Services	2			1	1		
LA Regeneration	3		2		1		
LA Planning	4			1	1	2	
LA Marketing and Comms	1					1	
LA Community Learning	2				1		1
LA Library Services	1				1		
LA Social Services	2			1	1		
LA Tourism	1					1	
LA Rural Advisor	2					1	1
LA Customer Access and Service Trans.	1					1	
LA LLA Co-Ordinator	1					1	
Town Clerk/Town Warden	4		1		1	1	1
Parish Council	5		3	1	1		
HM Prison CJ Liaison	1	1					
CJ Board	3	1				2	
PCT	19	10	1	1	2	3	2
Ambulance Service	1				1		
Fire and Rescue	11	2	2	2	5		
HM Court Services	4	1		1	1		1
LSP	4	3				1	
Police	22		15	1	3	1	2
British Transport Police	1						1
Voluntary Sector	43	2	2	5	3	22	9
MP/Political Officer	3	2					1
RDA	1				1		
Housing Associations	7		4			1	2
Tenants/Residents	10		8			2	
Consultants	3	1				1	1
Neighbourhood Partnerships	3	1	1				1
Urban Regeneration Co's	1					1	
Commission for Rural Communities	3					2	1
Enterprise Staff	2					1	1
Neighbourhood Management	1	1					
Local Involvement Networks (LINKS)	1						1
TOTAL NUMBERS OF ATTENDEES	272	42	44	47	35	52	52

Speakers

We were very fortunate in having the support of government agencies willing to speak during these events. We were not so successful in securing resident involvement in each region. As the event was focused on community engagement and empowerment, it was felt that more could have been done to encourage community groups to take part in the Roadshows.

The following speakers kindly spoke during regional Roadshows. You will see beneath commentary about the speaker sessions, and a graph displaying delegate ratings received from all feedback sheets received.

David Duggan, Assistant Director, Safer, Stronger Communities, GOSW, gave an overview of Government policy and its vision around building a vibrant, cohesive community of empowered, self-confident citizens who contribute to their community in many different ways.

David outlined examples of policy developments and why empowerment is so important. Duty to Involve, coming into effect on 1 April 2009, was also highlighted as a key obligation, with David outlining its main expectations along with the organisations it applies to. In each region that David spoke, he interpreted what approaches were being taken to increase empowerment.

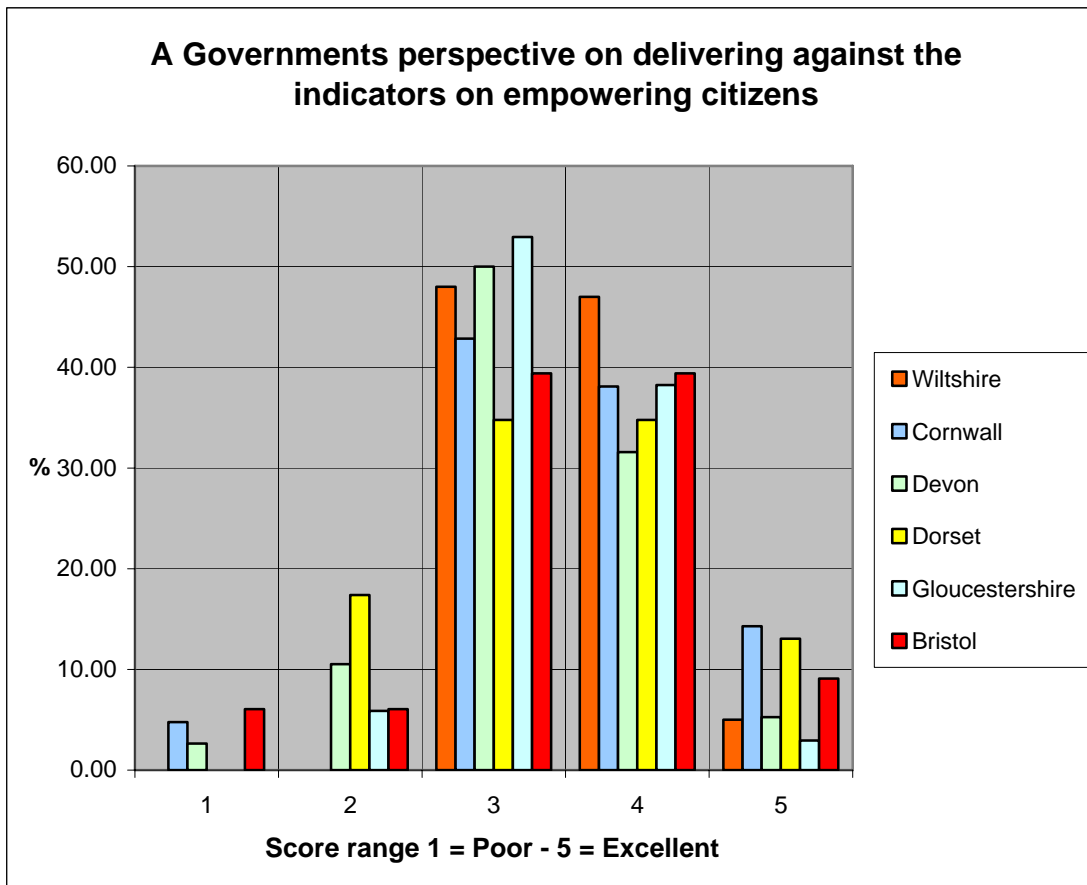
The Audit Commission, used the same Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and Community Engagement presentation with different speakers addressing the audience during each Roadshow.

The speakers clarified what CAA is and the challenges faced by local services around community empowerment and sustainable communities. The speakers also outlined the questions that need to be addressed, which focus on priority outcomes targeted within Local Area Agreements and Sustainable Communities Strategies.

The Regional and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP SW), took part in some of our events and focused on supporting the delivery of Local Area Agreement priorities. The presentation gave an insight into the role of the RIEP SW and the support available to Local Authorities with five key workstream groups.

Also focused on during the presentation was the stronger communities programme.

The Feedback Sheets asked delegates to rate the above speakers against:

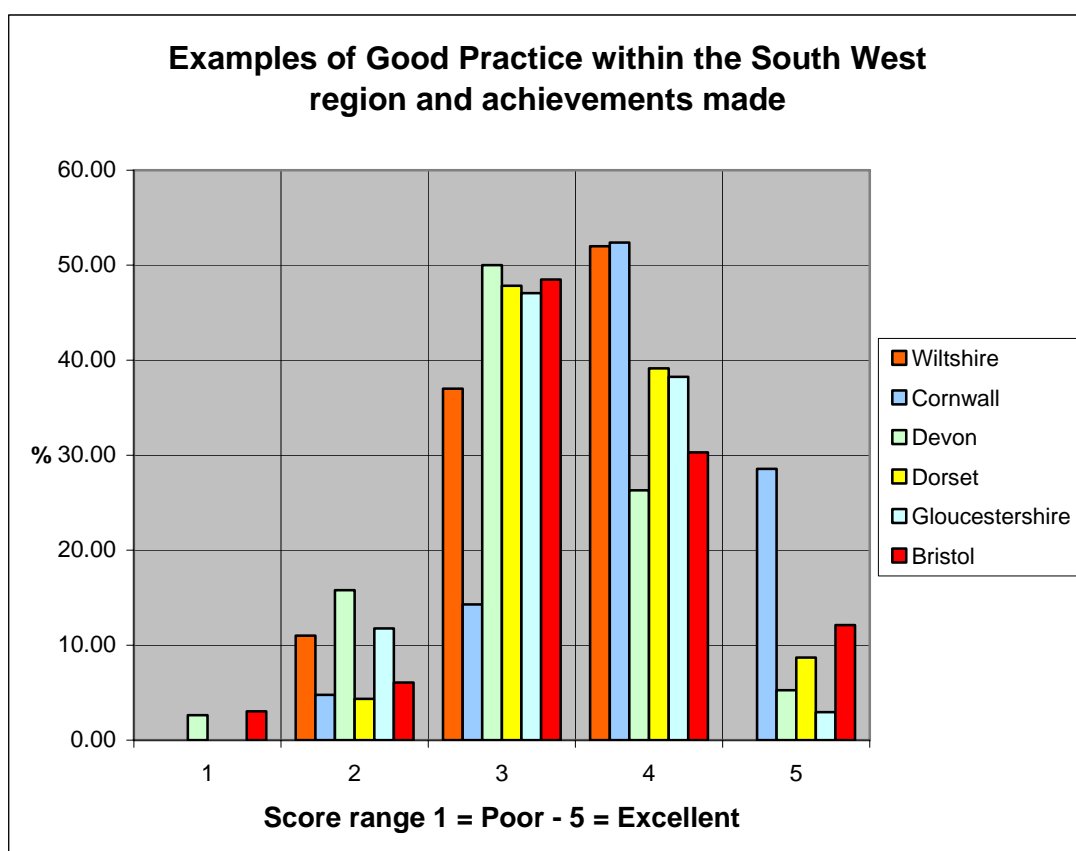


John Skrine, Lead, NEP, spoke about two case studies in the South West that exemplify good practice and the potential pitfalls to look out for around sustainability of programmes. John highlighted examples from Community Counts in Gloucester and Lyme Regis Development Trust in Dorset.

John also provided delegates with details of the National Empowerment Partnership and the work this consortium seeks to deliver around National Indicator 4 and Duty to Involve.

Lynn Jarvie, Trainer, South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre, also gave examples of best practice and looked at two areas – Swindon and Torbay. Both these case studies concentrated on resident involvement and the work Neighbourhood Wardens and a Housing Association do actively to encourage community participation.

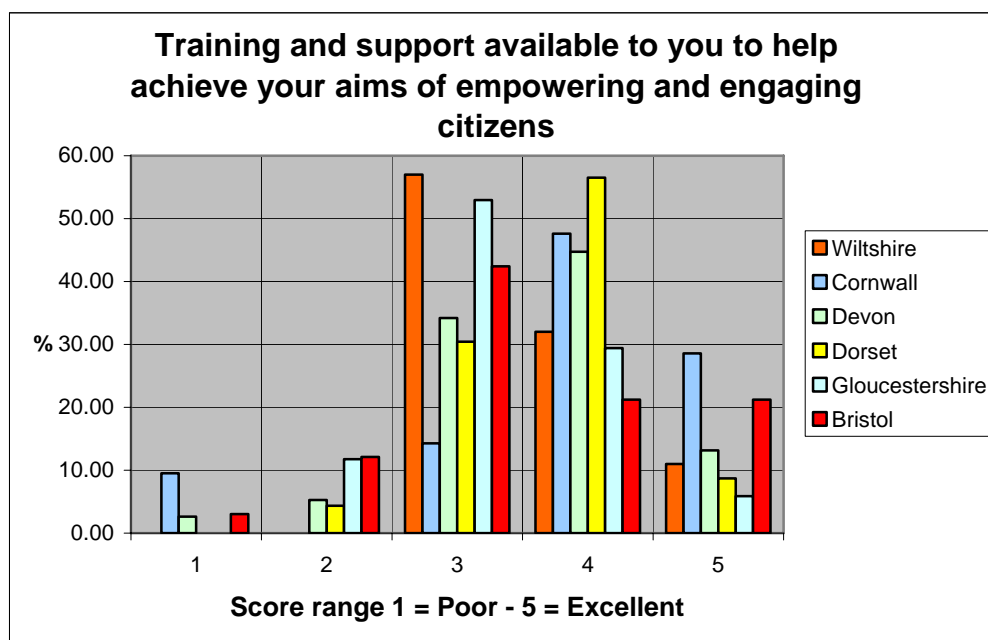
The Feedback Sheets asked delegates to rate the above speakers against:



Sue King OBE, Regeneration Consultant, Neighbourhood Alliance, spoke on behalf of the South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre. Outlining the work carried out by the Resource Centre, Sue provided delegates with a range of options that are available to support community leadership and empowerment.

Sue focused on suggested steps to increase empowerment, Empowerment Champions and tackling worklessness. She also discussed ways of creating opportunities for residents to take the lead.

The Feedback Sheets asked delegates to rate the above speakers against:



Also asked to contribute to the Roadshows were various speakers from around the regions who could provide delegates with a sub-regional perspective of what democracy means to residents.

Wiltshire

Gavin Jones, Chief Executive, Swindon Borough Council, opened the Roadshow at the STEAM Museum in Swindon on 16 June 2008. Gavin spoke of the need to empower residents, giving more power over their lives and enabling public services to be better tailored to the people who use them.

Niki Lewis, Assistant Director: Community Services, Wiltshire County Council, discussed with the audience how the Council is increasing public participation. Niki focused on examples of community engagement and moving towards a coherent governance system.

Cornwall

Mark Jones, Chief Executive, One Cornwall, opened our second event at the Royal Cornwall County Showground in Wadebridge, Cornwall on 22 October, starting with a perspective of Cornwall and drivers for community empowerment. Mark then outlined changes within the Council and One Cornwall's vision around three service delivery areas, dividing the county along the previous district boundaries.

Also taking part during this Roadshows were the following residents groups outlining their experiences:

- **West Cornwall Together**
- **Treenere Together Partnership**
- **Green Fingers**
- **Penzance Central Initiative**

Devon

Karen Kay, Head of Corporate Planning, Plymouth City Council, opened the event at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth on 23 October and described how the greatest achievements can be made through talking to community members and targeting money more appropriately.

Also taking part during this Roadshow was the following residents group outlining their experiences:

- **Devon Heartlands Development Community Trust supported by Devons' Town Forum**



Devon Roadshow – 23 October 2008

Dorset

Pam Donnellan, Chief Executive of Bournemouth Borough Council, opened the event at the Tank Museum in Bovington on 6 November where she gave a presentation on why engagement is important to us all. Pam outlined elements for successful neighbourhood working and gave specific examples such as neighbourhood wardens, clean up days and community garden projects.

Also talking part during this Roadshow was the following resident led group outlining their experiences:

- **Lyme Regis Development Trust**



Dorset Roadshow – 6 November 2008

Gloucestershire

Julian Wain, Chief Executive of Gloucester City Council, opened our event at the Cheltenham Race Course on 19 November. Julian suggested that we must be very clear about what is meant by community engagement and empowerment and ensure that all the community has an opportunity to contribute. In Gloucester City Council, for example, more work needs to be focused on faith groups to enable greater participation.

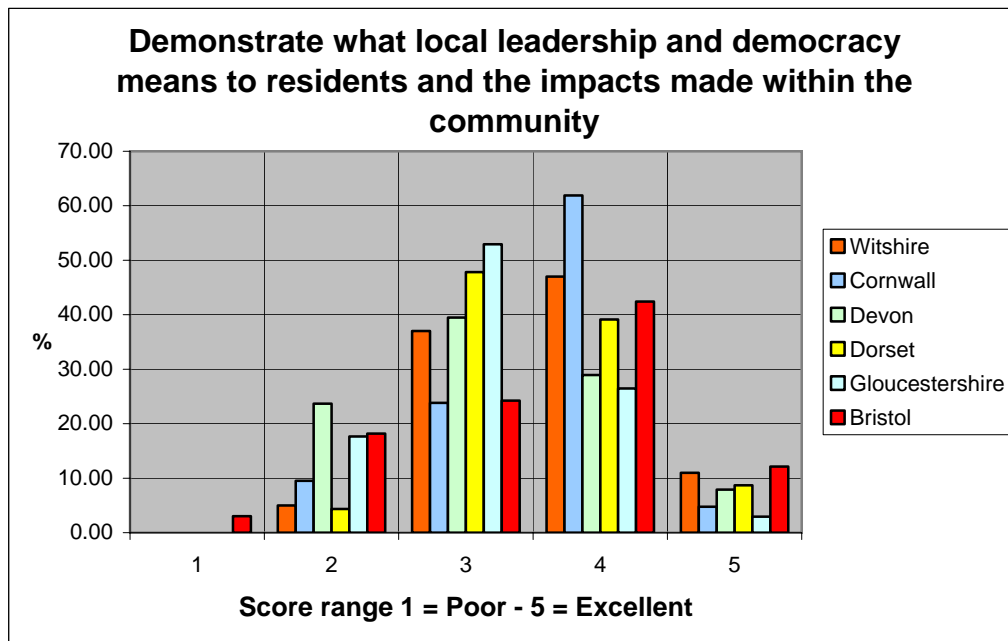
Julian also took time to talk about the Community Counts Neighbourhood Management project and the Gloucester Urban Regeneration Company and the work community champions do in the area.

Bristol

Our final Roadshow took place at the Arnolfini in Bristol on 4 December and was opened by **Councillor Helen Holland, Leader of Bristol City Council**. Councillor Holland gave a presentation on the priorities of Bristol City Council and initiatives to better engage with residents. Initiatives such as e-democracy using webcasts, e-petitions and discussion forums. Councillor Holland then focused on successes – such as UK Youth Parliament, Going Places, Things to Do and Parks Improvement.

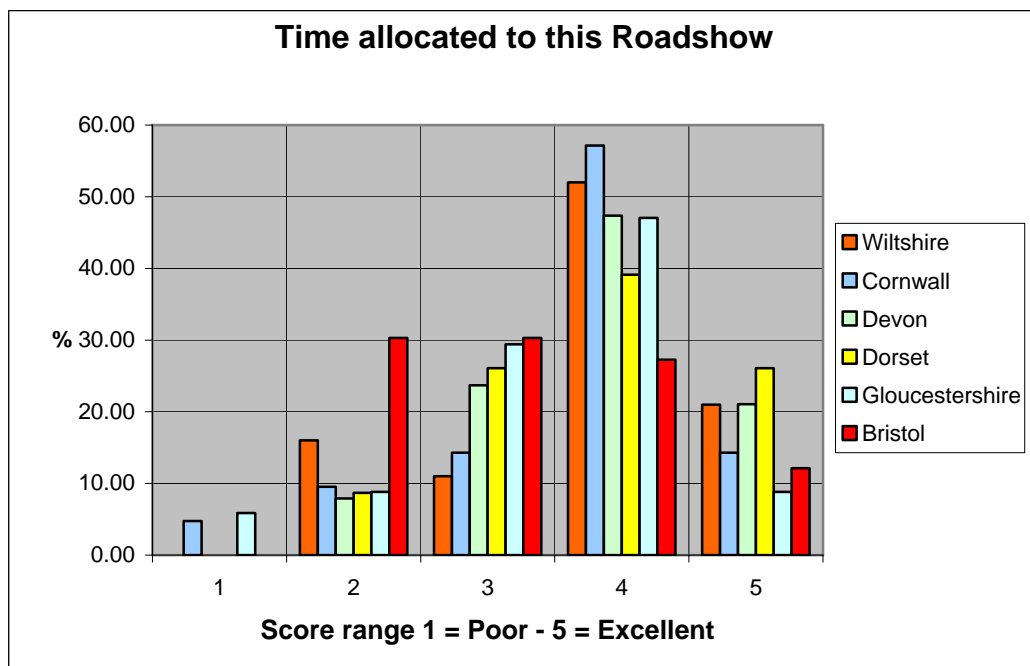
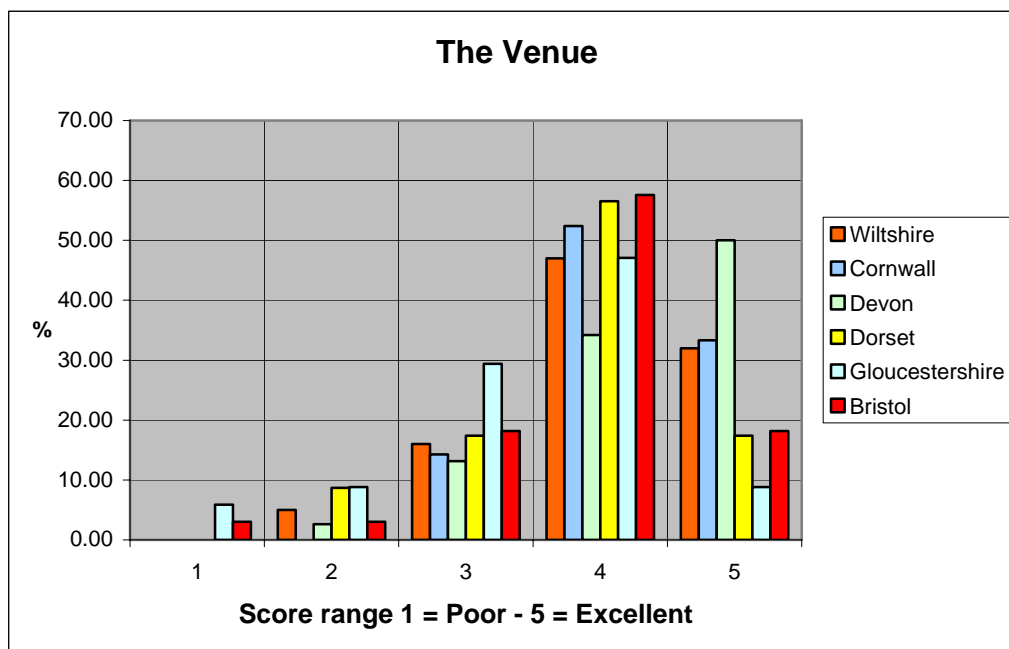
Finally, challenges faced were detailed along with possible solutions.

The Feedback Sheets asked delegates to rate the above speakers against:

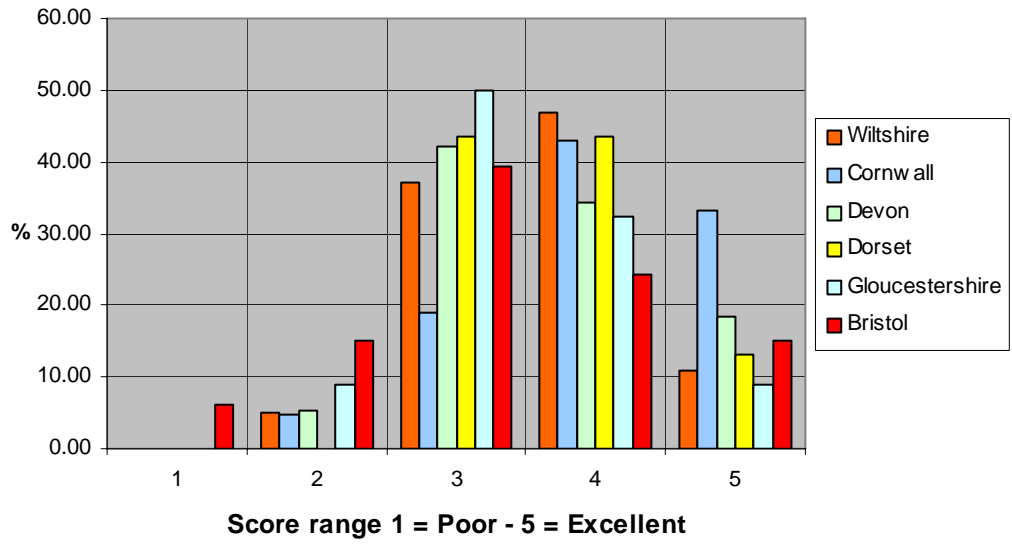


Additional Information

The following charts provide statistics on other feedback sought.



Overall assessment of the standard of this Roadshow



General Overview on Feedback Received and Comments Made by Delegates

Swindon

- Would have liked to have seen examples of community engagement.
- Well timed, but would have liked a break in between.
- Not enough information about the South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

“Gave a useful background to Government progress on this issue. Specific examples of involvement and direct experience of implementation would have been useful.”

Deb Bignell, Non-exec Director, Swindon PCT

“Interesting subject / topics – good range of speakers. Link to websites would be useful – especially for presentations.”

Janet Beattie, Partnership Support Officer, Swindon Borough Council

“Very informative and interesting workshop. Would love to receive copies of the powerpoint slides.”

Marianna Dodd, Project Manager, Wiltshire County Council

Cornwall

- Too much emphasis on ‘urban neighbourhoods’ – need to look at the subject from a sparsely populated rural county.
- Good mix of local practitioners and government agencies, highlighted the importance of empowering communities.
- Too many speakers back to back.

“Thank you for the opportunity to put a resident’s point of view across.”

Debbie Sims, Neighbourhood Involvement Trainee, Treneere Together Partnership

“Very informative and gave a good insight into how public bodies are engaging with the community.”

Vicky Wallens, Performance Manager, Cornwall County Fire Brigade

“Useful presentations and powerful examples of how community empowering can and does work. Useful information and website to support CD work.”

Bernie Hall, Head of Communities, PCDT

Devon

- Good selection of attendees – making for good networking opportunities. More ‘networking’ time needed.
- More showcasing of resident engagement projects that work well. Show benefits of developing engagement activities in terms of involving communities in decision making.
- Should have targeted more voluntary/community organisations.
- More city examples needed.

“Very slick – professional.”

Olive Eggleston, District Councillor, Caradon District Council

“Good range of speakers. Good opportunity to network.

Will Watts, Development Worker, Pembroke EMB Limited

Dorset

- More time allocated for speakers.
- Good spread of delegates for a variety of organisations.
- Good slides and presentations.
- Greater discussion on resources available to implement initiatives.

“Excellent conference, thank you.”

Sandi Stockdale, Neighbourhood Worker, Bournemouth Borough Council

Gloucestershire

- More grass roots perspective. More input from the voluntary sector required.
- More examples of rural good practice and ideas.

“Interesting, glad Community Counts was used as an example of good practice as I am a board member. Speakers were interesting. Would have been nice to see an ‘empowered citizen’ present the case study.”

Penny Liddicot, CEO, G L Communities

“Clear, brief focused presentations covering key topics. Good time keeping. Well organised.”

Dr C Mehta, 2gether NHS Trust

Bristol

- Group facilitation work should have been included.
- Deprivation in rural communities should have been addressed.
- What are the challenges faced in Bristol?

“Very much enjoyed the Roadshow event in Bristol. Lots of learning. Good contacts made. Very useful resources which I hope to use in the near future.”
Francesco Palma, Volunteer Steering Group, Bristol and South Glos Local Involvement Network

“The case studies were best, practical suggestions.”
Councillor Lesley Alexandra, Bristol City Council

“Informative and interesting. Very useful! More information on how asset transfer works in practice would have been helpful.”
Alan Tawse, Town Clerk, Yeovil Town Council

Areas Identified to Support Delegates

From the feedback received, we are able to build a picture of the types of training and support that is needed around the region. The South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre will be contacting all those who attended the Roadshows detailing the types of training we provide and whether our programmes can be adapted to suit individual client needs. We will also signpost to other agencies that may be able to provide support where requested.

Below is a matrix detailing the types of training and support requested from the feedback sheets received from each sub-region.

Training Requested	Wiltshire	Cornwall	Devon	Dorset	Glos	Bristol
Community Engagement and Empowerment for key workers (Councillors/Elected Members, LA Officers, Criminal Justice, H M Courts, Fire Service)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnership Development	✓		✓	✓		✓
Grant Bidding/Funding/Fundraising	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Working with Young People	✓	✓			✓	✓
Working with Vulnerable People	✓					
Involving Hard to Reach Groups	✓	✓			✓	
Participatory Budgeting	✓	✓				
Local Decision Making - Residents	✓				✓	
Setting Up Residents Group		✓				
Measuring Impacts of Engagement		✓				✓
Monitoring / Measuring on National Indicators		✓			✓	
Community Charter Development		✓				
Confidence Building for Residents		✓				
Empowering Town and Parish Councils			✓	✓		
Resident Capacity Building			✓		✓	✓
Engagement Strategy Development			✓			✓
NVQs for Development Workers			✓			✓
Community Cohesion					✓	
Restorative Approaches					✓	
Supporting the Voluntary Sector					✓	✓

Support Requested	Wiltshire	Cornwall	Devon	Dorset	Glos	Bristol
Case Studies / Good Practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resource Material (Funding/Policies/Private Sector Participation)	✓	✓				✓
Signposting Service	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Supporting Resident Management Companies		✓				
Toolkit – Empowering Actions		✓			✓	✓
Networks / Electronic Notice Board (hub of information)	✓	✓	✓			✓

Recommendations

Further detailed studies are recommended in each sub region to clearly identify specific training and support. Attention should be focused on the needs of those living, working and managing in both rural and urban communities around sustainable neighbourhood empowerment activities.

The South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre has placed on its website details of all the presentations given during these events and have already contacted delegates detailing the link : [South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre](#). We have also placed on the website links to all the government agencies we work in partnership with, including:

- Communities and Local Government
- GOSW
- RIEP SW
- Audit Commission
- The National Empowerment Partnership

As part of our Marketing Strategy, we will be following up all attendees who have asked for further contact to discuss their training and support needs. We are able to provide excellent proven training packages as well as designing and delivering packages tailored to individual organisational needs.

For further information about this Evaluation Report or any services provided by the South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre please contact:

Sue Stevens, Development Officer
South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre
Drove Road, Swindon.
SN1 3AH
Tel: 01793 464001
sstevens@swindon.gov.uk
www.swresourcecentre.org.uk



South West Neighbourhood Resource Centre

"For Excellence in Neighbourhoods"