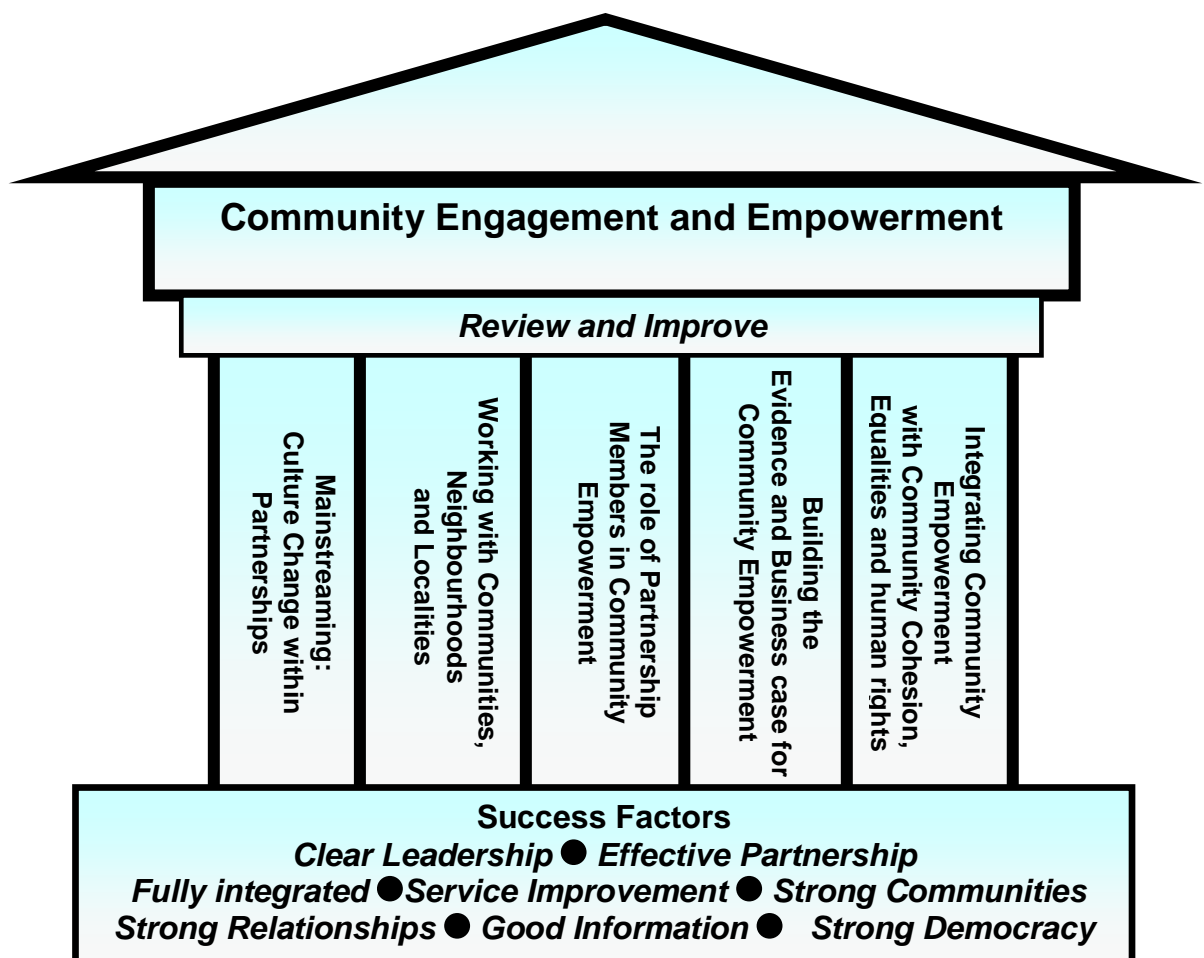




**THE MORAY COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP  
FRAMEWORK FOR  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EMPOWERMENT**



## Why community engagement / empowerment?

There are a number of current national drivers to encourage councils and partnerships to empower their communities, including the National Standards for Community Engagement.

Regardless of drivers, Community Engagement and Empowerment is important because it can help deliver:

**Stronger Communities** - resilient communities with strong social networks and active citizens who take responsibility for their own well-being.

**Better Services** – services informed and influenced by communities so that they meet needs effectively and efficiently

**Vibrant Democracy** – representative democracy improved through active participation.

## How to use this framework:

The framework provides a benchmark for an Ideal Authority – something to aspire to.

Most councils and partnerships will only meet some of the success factors, and can use the framework as a tool to support further development.

It consists of 5 inter-linked pillars and 8 high-level success factors that between them describe a high performing empowering authority.

The 5 pillars are themes for implementation, providing an approach to development and change, and each one is designed to stand alone as well as to be part of the whole framework.

The key success factors cut across the pillars, and are described in more detail in the main table.

## Pillars for Community Empowerment

### Pillar 1 - Mainstreaming: culture change within partnerships

Changing the way organisations work and are structured in order to make them responsive to communities

### Pillar 2 - Working with communities, neighbourhoods and localities

How agencies and communities can work together to identify priority outcomes and address them.

### Pillar 3 - The role of partnership members in community empowerment

Elected members and partners as community leaders, helping communities and agencies to work together and strengthening democratic accountability.

### Pillar 4- Building the evidence and business case for community empowerment

Evidencing that community empowerment delivers efficient and effective services and stronger, more democratic communities.

### Pillar 5 - Integrating community empowerment with community cohesion, equalities and human rights

Community empowerment delivers cohesive and inclusive communities and addresses inequalities.

## Key Success Factors:

**Clear Leadership.** There is strong leadership for Community Empowerment from the CPP.

**Effective Partnership.** Partners are working together to empower communities.

**Fully integrated.** The Council and key partners have put Community Empowerment and community influence at the heart of their organisation.

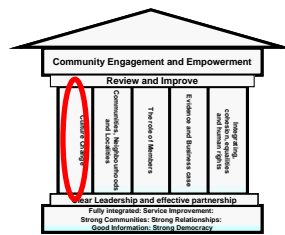
**Service improvement.** Empowered communities are driving service improvement.

**Strong communities.** There are strong, active, cohesive, co-operative and engaged communities and a strong and supported Voluntary and Community Sector.

**Strong relationships.** Communities are working together with agencies through strong relationships based on trust.

**Good Information.** There is excellent shared knowledge and communication.

**Strong Democracy.** There is a clear central role for Elected Members and Partners as Community Leaders and strong local democracy.



**Pillar 1**  
**Mainstreaming: *culture change in councils and partnerships.***  
**Changing the way organisations work and are structured in order to make them responsive to communities**

**Clear Leadership**

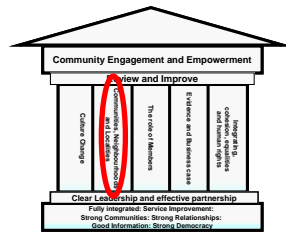
- there is strong visible political and senior management leadership and a clear community empowerment vision, to make it happen
- the CPP is driving the agenda and is involving the community to develop the Sustainable Community Strategy and deliver local priority outcomes
- there is an agreed common understanding of what Community Empowerment is and why it is important

**Effective Partnership**

- the CP partners use and share good up-to-date information from and about local communities, to inform strategic planning
- the CP partners join together to share learning and to work in a coordinated way with their communities, silo-working is minimised, and there is little duplication
- partners work together to deliver efficiencies in Community Empowerment activity (e.g. joint engagement database, pooled or aligned budgets, common performance management information or systems etc)
- there is strong community and Third Sector involvement at all levels of partnership working, facilitated by well-supported and effective infrastructure organisation/s

**Fully Integrated**

- there is a culture of empowering communities throughout agencies
- the CP partners have changed their work practices across their organisation in order to engage effectively with communities, and new working patterns and behaviours are embedded
- community empowerment is at the heart of decision-making, informing strategies, policies, delivery plans and commissioning processes with clear and understood definitions of what it means
- communities are involved in defining priority outcomes, and the needs and aspirations of citizens are known and acted on
- Community Empowerment policies and strategies are known and understood by all partnership staff
- staff and councillors are valued, and supported to develop relevant competencies for empowerment, and encouraged to work with communities
- frontline staff are empowered to take action to deliver community defined outcomes, and have channels to feed back information into their organisation and there are dedicated staff with appropriate skills to support the delivery of community empowerment
- the council and partners manage risks and change (including structural change) in relation to community empowerment whilst encouraging learning and innovation to flourish



**Pillar 2**  
**Working with communities, neighbourhoods and localities**  
 How agencies and communities can work together to identify priority outcomes and address them.

**Strong relationships**

- councils and CP partners use common structures, processes and boundaries through which communities can engage at local, area and strategic level, about things that matter and in ways that make sense to them
- there are plenty of relevant and accessible events and a range of engagement activities where people can influence decisions or become actively involved in shaping and improving their area
- there is trust between communities, third sector organisations and agencies, because they have built relationships, they understand each other’s perspectives and differences, they have agreed acceptable behaviours, and their expectations are managed
- agencies understand that communities have different needs, that one-size does not fit all, and some communities will require more development support than others
- agencies and communities work together to address problems and make decisions; these processes are timely, dynamic, creative and inclusive, and not just passive responses to consultation
- the council, partners and communities are learning from good and bad experiences of community empowerment and through trying out new approaches

**Strong communities**

- the community drive bottom-up community empowerment, authorities get involved with community concerns and actions, as well as the other way round – there is mutual engagement
- communities are strong, active, co-operative and engaged, people work together to improve their area, there are strong social networks and neighbourly contact is valued
- an increasing and diverse number of residents, including older people and children & young people, are increasing their skills, knowledge and confidence to actively participate and volunteer in their community; they feel that their views matter and are listened to
- there is proactive community capacity building, based on community development practice that builds skills, community organisations and networks, involvement and equality
- there is a thriving and well-supported Voluntary and Community Sector, including infrastructure and anchor organisations, and social enterprises, that empowers communities

## **Pillar 2 (continued)**

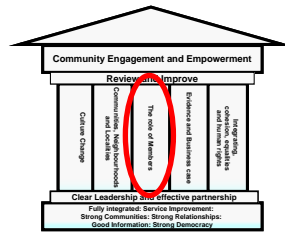
### **Working with communities, neighbourhoods and localities** **How agencies and communities can work together to identify priority outcomes and address them.**

#### **Good information**

- there is a good understanding of local communities, based on detailed community profiles that measure gaps in outcomes, and informed by residents, members and frontline staff
- local information collection and giving is co-ordinated between partners
- there is excellent, clear communication between communities and agencies, using a range of mechanisms including IT
- people know about the range of opportunities to engage and are encouraged to take them up
- communities receive feedback on the impact of their involvement and know what has changed as a result and what hasn't changed and why

#### **Fully integrated**

- community information and community involvement is improving services
- neighbourhood management principles are embedded and address deprivation and gaps in outcomes, with services bending to meet local needs
- communities actively participate in producing and delivering local area, community or neighbourhood plans
- based on their priorities or community-led, communities are assessing whether priority outcomes for the area have been delivered
- communities co-design policies and services, are involved in budget decisions and co-produce aspects of services, there is community ownership of assets



**Pillar 3**  
**The role of key partners in community empowerment**  
**Partners as community leaders, helping communities and agencies to work together,**  
**and strengthening democratic accountability.**

**Clear Leadership**

- Partners are involved in developing and implementing the community empowerment vision
- there is cross-party support for community empowerment, ensuring sustainability
- Partners are actively involved in scrutinising community engagement and empowerment initiatives and governance arrangements, with input from communities, to drive improvement
- Partners work with other community leaders across the range of tiers to engage with communities in each area

**Strong Democracy**

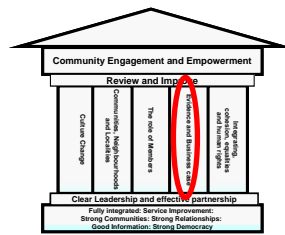
- Partnership Members' Community Empowerment role is clearly defined and understood, there is clear understanding that participative democracy can strengthen representative democracy
- Elected Members are actively involved in local engagement structures and activities, facilitate dialogue between residents, the council and partners, and make use of the 'call for action'
- there is some devolution of decisions and budgets to enable Members to play an active role in local decisions, with strong accountability to local residents
- there is a more vibrant local democracy with communities keen to discuss issues with Elected Members and other partners
- community involvement encourages more people to take on governance roles and stand for office, Members and Officers proactively promote democracy, raising understanding and awareness amongst citizens and young people

**Strong relationships**

- Partnership Members work with the community sector to build strong working relationships.
- Citizens know who their local councillors are
- Elected Members are adequately resourced to undertake their community empowerment role and have time to engage with their communities, because the balance of council work is manageable
- Officers help broker relationships between elected Members and communities

**Fully integrated**

- a large proportion of Partners have a high level of community engagement skills
- Elected Members carry into the council the views of the public and explain the decisions of the council to the public. Their knowledge of their area is positively valued by the council, partners and communities
- Partnership Member induction and ongoing development programmes have a strong community empowerment theme and are accredited.



## Pillar 4

### ***Building the evidence and business case for community empowerment***

**Evidencing that community empowerment delivers efficient and effective services and stronger, more democratic communities**

#### **Clear Leadership**

- all stakeholders are clear of the benefits of community empowerment and about what it can deliver
- leaders are using evidence to drive improvement

#### **Effective Partnership**

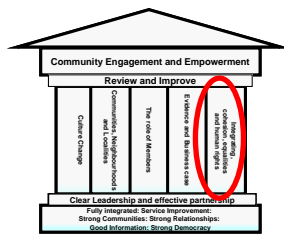
- partners work together to share indicator definitions, collect data in comparable ways, e.g. using the comparable boundaries, and then share it
- the council and partners can demonstrate service improvements that have resulted from engaging with communities, and can show how engagement is helping to deliver CPP priority outcomes and delivery plans
- communities and third sector organisations are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement processes and outcomes

#### **Fully integrated**

- there is a strong culture of evaluation and evidence is used to improve practice
- evaluation takes note of small changes and softer outcomes, as indicators of direction of travel
- cost benefit analysis of community engagement activity is undertaken where appropriate

#### **Good Information**

- there is good baseline of qualitative and quantitative data, including national indicators and bottom-up information, which is then tracked over time to evidence the impact of community involvement activity and whether outcomes are achieved
- there is an agreed basket of indicators to measure community empowerment activity e.g. levels of involvement and voter turnout



**Pillar 5**  
**Integrating community empowerment with community cohesion, equalities and human rights**  
**Community empowerment delivers cohesive and inclusive communities and addresses inequalities**

**Clear Leadership**

- there is strong leadership for the principles of cohesion, equality, ‘visible fairness’ and social justice

**Fully integrated**

- community cohesion, equalities and human rights form a ‘golden thread’ through all work with communities, from the sustainable community strategy right down to sub-ward level

**Strong relationships**

- there is a range of co-ordinated specific mechanisms for involving diverse communities, which complement neighbourhood or area-based mechanisms, there is a facilitative approach that does not overburden them
- there is increased involvement of, and influence by diverse communities, including new communities and vulnerable and marginalized groups, the partnership support a range of community events and activities which involve people who don’t normally come together, increasing awareness, understanding and positive interaction
- agencies are proactive in understanding and dealing constructively with community tensions and competing demands, and they challenge stereotyping within and between communities

**Strong Communities**

- the partnership invests in community development support and outreach to support voluntary and community groups that are led by or represent vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups; these groups are supported to influence decisions, and are confident to challenge and discuss difficult issues
- diverse communities are increasing their access to and take-up of services

**Good Information**

- there is good, up-to-date information about diverse communities, including new communities and differentiated data on their levels of involvement
- there is good targeted communication with diverse communities, including things such as welcome packs, service information and information on how to get involved



## Appendix 1

### Some useful definitions

**Communities** is a term used to describe communities of place, communities of identity and communities of interest

**Community cohesion** is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration, which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

**Community development** is the process of building people's skills and ability to act together on their common priorities usually through the development of independent community organisations and networks, and with the support of community development workers within statutory or third sector agencies.

**Community empowerment** is the outcome of engagement and other activities. Power, influence and responsibility is shifted away from existing centres of power and into the hands of communities and individual citizens.

**Community engagement** is the action that agencies take to enable them to consult, involve, listen and respond to communities through ongoing relationships.

**Consultation** is the process by which agencies seek advice, information and opinions about strategies, policies and services. The existing decision makers take this into account when they make decisions. This includes many familiar activities such as surveys, research projects, public meetings, user and resident forums.

**Involvement** is an over-arching term that covers providing information to, consulting with and involving citizens in active ways. This can include providing people with opportunities to influence or directly participate in decision making; to provide feedback on decisions, services, policies and outcomes; to co-design/work with authorities in designing policies and services; to co-produce/carry out some aspects of services themselves; and to work with the authority in assessing services.

**Neighbourhood management** is a process for addressing disadvantaged neighbourhoods by improving and joining up local services and making them more responsive to local needs. Usually a neighbourhood manager works with agencies and communities, using community information to improve neighbourhood services and reduce the gap in outcomes in deprived areas.

**Participation** is when citizens and communities are involved in issues that affect their lives. They play an active part in generating ideas as well as making the decisions alongside public sector partners. For instance: participative budgeting or participative planning.

**Co-production** is when communities or individual residents active participants rather than passive recipients. They are supported to use the skills, networks and experience they have to improve local outcomes, improve local services, or to help solve a problem. Many local problems can only be solved by supporting and using communities' own resources.