

'Going Local'

Andrew Pitts (Calderdale MBC)

Area forums overview from the pilot programme this summer

This summer's programme has been reviewed through consultation. People expected councils to have a forum, so they could give opinions. The Place Survey rated Calderdale as being in the bottom quarter in terms of people being able to influence decisions through engagement.

Calderdale has many people wanting to give opinions. Issues/points raised were seen as

- People are cynical or unaware of the routes
- People wanted control over the agenda
- People wanted councillors and public service staff to listen

Response- the full Council meeting endorsed a programme in 3 parts

- Listening, responding, and providing access to services. The Audit Commission inspection has accelerated this process.
- Role out of Customer First models, and Community Hubs, to make services local.
- Meetings will have operational responses at their disposal

In terms of listening, ward forums are to take place quarterly, and will be chaired by councillors. Head of Service from within the Council will be allocated to each ward.

Police and Communities Together meetings (approx every 4-6 weeks) will link in with the Council, to become part of the Ward Forums.

Ward Forums are the core activity, but need wrap around services to bolster.

The use of technology (e.g. online forums) is being looked at to promote engagement.

Going Local is a marker in the cultural shift towards the Local Authority recognising that engagement and involvement is very serious.