

Community Engagement Commission: Beacon Lough and Wrekenton Pride in Place Programme

1. Purpose of the Commission

We are seeking proposals from grassroots organisations, community groups, and locally rooted charities to lead high-quality, inclusive community engagement in Beacon Lough and Wrekenton on behalf of the Neighbourhood Board, as part of the Pride in Place Programme.

The purpose of this commission is to ensure that residents genuinely shape future planning and investment in their neighbourhoods. This is not a traditional consultation exercise. It is a co-design process, where residents help decide what issues matter most, what questions should be explored, and what priorities should guide future investment.

We are particularly committed to hearing from people who are often excluded from decision-making. The engagement should build trust, strengthen local connections, and leave communities better placed to continue shaping change beyond the life of this commission.

2. What We Mean by Co-Design

For the purposes of this commission, co-design means more than gathering views. It means sharing influence with residents throughout the process.

As a minimum, proposals must show how residents will help shape the questions and priorities being explored; be involved in making sense of what is heard, not just providing input; validate emerging findings before they are finalised; and see clearly how their contributions have influenced recommendations.

Bidders must identify at least two clear points in the process where community input will directly shape the direction or outputs of the work. Approaches should be adapted to ensure inclusion of people who may need more time, support, or trust-building to participate.

3. Objectives

Objective 1: Understand and map what is already strong in the community

Work with residents to identify and build a shared picture of the strengths and assets in Beacon Lough and Wrekenton, including people's skills and talents, community groups and networks, schools and services, local businesses, community buildings and outdoor spaces, and economic opportunities.

This work should recognise the distinct identity and strengths of each neighbourhood, while also identifying assets that could support joint working or shared priorities.

Objective 2: Understand what matters most to residents

Gather in-depth insight into the issues that affect people's day-to-day lives and future wellbeing. Engagement must reflect a genuinely broad range of voices, proactively address barriers to participation, and explore where priorities differ or align between Beacon Lough and Wrekenton.

Objective 3: Co-design a vision and priorities for the future

Work alongside residents to explore what they want their neighbourhoods to look and feel like in the coming years and what changes would make the biggest difference. This should include identifying priorities for community-led improvement, opportunities for collaboration, and what is achievable within the Pride in Place Programme.

4. Engagement Methods

Proposals should demonstrate a thoughtful and inclusive approach to reaching different people in different ways.

Bidders are expected to use a range of engagement methods tailored to local context and different groups. This will normally include around 6–8 approaches, but proposals using fewer methods will be considered where this is clearly justified by depth, trust-building, or accessibility.

What matters most is the quality and appropriateness of methods, not the number used.

These could include:

- Pop-up and mobile engagement: Digital pop-ups in high-footfall locations (shopping areas, community centres, sports facilities); roving engagement teams at school gates, bus stops, GP surgeries, food banks, and places where residents naturally gather
- Digital and hybrid approaches: Online workshops with simultaneous in-person options; social media micro-engagement via WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok; accessible online platforms that remain "always open"
- Creative and arts-based methods: Forum theatre, storytelling workshops, visual engagement tools (mapping exercises, photo documentation, Talking Mats for those with communication needs), creative workshops
- Youth-specific engagement: Gaming and gamification, integration with schools and youth clubs, youth-led research approaches
- Place-based participatory methods: Participatory budgeting elements giving residents decision-making power; community champions network; people's panels; walking audits
- Targeted approaches for seldom-heard groups: Faith and cultural setting engagement, language interpretation, BSL interpreters, accessible venues with hearing loops, childcare provision during events, teleconferencing for isolated residents
- Traditional methods where appropriate: Face-to-face conversations, focus groups, household surveys, community events, postal surveys for digitally excluded residents

5. Community Connectors and Local Relationships

Strong local relationships are central to the success of this commission. Proposals must show how the work will be rooted in trusted local networks in Beacon Lough and Wrekenton.

This should include the involvement of community connectors – local residents or trusted individuals who can bridge formal engagement activity and everyday community life.

Proposals should explain how connectors will be identified, supported, and where appropriate paid, and the role they will play beyond outreach.

6. Reach, Representativeness, and Quality

Proposals must set clear engagement targets across different demographic groups and show how residents from both neighbourhoods will be engaged proportionately.

We recognise that meaningful engagement with some groups may involve smaller numbers and more intensive support. Bidders should explain how they will balance breadth of reach with depth of engagement. Success will be judged on quality, not just numbers.

7. Feedback, Learning, and Trust

Proposals must include clear plans for sharing what is being heard with residents during the engagement period, using accessible formats and language. This should include a 'You Said, We Heard, We Did' approach.

Residents should have opportunities to challenge, refine, and validate emerging findings before they are finalised.

Organisations are encouraged to keep the Board informed regarding engagement events to enable, where appropriate, attendance by Board members.

8. Accessibility and Inclusion

Engagement must be welcoming and accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Proposals should explain how barriers to participation will be reduced, including venue accessibility, flexible timings, childcare or carer support, translation and interpretation, support for digital exclusion, and recognition of people's time.

9. Using What We Learn

The final report should clearly show how residents' views have shaped priorities and recommendations for the Pride in Place Programme.

Qualitative insights should be analysed, tested, and prioritised with residents, and translated into clear, actionable recommendations. Differences of opinion should be presented transparently.

10. Supporting Grassroots Participation

We are committed to making this commission accessible to small, grassroots, and community-led organisations. Partnership bids are encouraged where they support community-led organisations to play a leading role while sharing delivery or reporting capacity. Monitoring and reporting requirements will be kept proportionate and focused on learning and impact.

11. Timescales

- Call for proposals issued: 26th May 2026
- Deadline for bids: 5pm Tuesday 23rd June
- Commission awarded: 1st July 2026
- Engagement period: 1st July to 28th August 2026
- Final report due: 16th September 2026

12. Budget

Organisations may apply for up to £10,000 to deliver this work.

Proposals must include a clear breakdown of all costs.

13. Eligibility

The opportunity is open to Gateshead based VCSE organisations

14. How to Apply

Applicants should provide a short proposal (approx. 3–5 pages) including:

1. Your organisation and its local experience
2. Proposed engagement approach and methods
3. Plan for reaching diverse and underrepresented groups
4. Timeline for delivery
5. Budget breakdown
6. Any partners involved
7. Examples of previous community-based work (if applicable)

Proposals should be submitted by email to The External Funding Team:

Kate Price/Kerry McGlynn – externalfundingteam@gateshead.gov.uk

For informal enquiries or site visits to Beacon Lough and Wrekenton, please contact:

Kate Price/Kerry McGlynn - externalfundingteam@gateshead.gov.uk