# Reaching Diverse Communities

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION CONFERENCE

CLIVE SAUNDERS

# What will be covered

- Background
- Watford and Watford African Caribbean Association
- Reflection the notion of hard to reach
- Why it is important
- Some strategies
- Key to effective engagement

# Watford is a diverse area

- Total population of 79,726
- Ranked 44th out of a total of 408 British districts in terms of ethnic diversity
- 21% of residents classify themselves as non white compared with 12% nationally
- The Black/Black British population is at about 2.7% and is collectively the 4th largest non white British group in Watford.
- There has been a marked in crease the African population in recent times

# Watford African Caribbean Association

- Established 34 years ago
- Seek to focus on the interest of the African and Caribbean Communities
- Organise a range of activities including
  - Supplementary School
  - Elderly project Carers initiative
  - Health and well being
  - Social and cultural activities
- Has challenge of reaching an increasingly diverse community
- Looking to complete a community needs analysis

# Hard to Reach

- Most communities are reachable
- Issue is more about not having a voice which is being heard
- Some communities have lost confidence in system
- Trust needs to be re-established

# Why is this important

- Britain has an increasingly diverse society
- This diversity is likely to increase
- Large section of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are becoming marginalised
- The economic success of the nation depends on making best use of all its people

# Views of most engagement

- It is not real consultation/engagement
- Our views are not taken seriously
- Nothing will change as a result of our contribution
- We never hear anything after we have expressed our views

# Strategies for reaching diverse groups

- Define the rationale is for engagement
- Understand the demographics
- Be sensitive to worries about formal authority
- Use a range of mechanisms
  - Schools
  - Churches/religious groups
  - Identify respected leaders of groups
  - Use community newsletters, radio etc
  - Engage in inclusive ways
- Work with existing groups

# Key to effective engagement

- Don't continue to re-invent the wheel
- Ensure that there is feedback
- Where appropriate act on results and inform stakeholders what you have done
- Collate contact information for future reference
- Share information

# In conclusion

- Communities do want to engage but only if they are going to be taken seriously and not to tick some boxes
- Authorities should have little to fear from open and honest and open engagement with any community.