

Topic: Meeting community needs

Lesson: What can councils do to meet community needs?	KS or Year Group: Year 9
Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resource 1 – Ten issues2. Resource 2 – Ten issues answers3. Resource 3 – Community groups' needs4. Resource 4 – Information available5. Internet access for each student	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can understand what some of the needs of local communities are.• Students can understand how council websites meet the needs of local communities.

National Curriculum

Key Concepts: 1.2a, 1.3d

Key Processes: 2.1b

Range and Content: 3e, 3g

Curriculum Opportunities: 4b, 4c, 4i

Lesson overview

Students explore how rights and obligations are linked to local councils. They then find out how local council websites meet the needs of communities. They also discuss ways in which such websites can influence decision-making in communities.

Starter

- Share the lesson objectives with students.
- Ask students to explain what a local council does.
- Examples of good answers:
 - ▶ 'The local council is a group of people who are voted in by the public during local elections. The council makes sure that people can access important things in their community. For instance, it helps to run schools and hospitals, it works with the police, and it organises public transport.'

How do councils meet community needs?

- ▶ ‘Local councils are useful because they give us the chance to meet politicians who actually live in our area. Local councils give citizens advice about all sorts of issues, such as parenting, recycling and benefits.’
- Explain to students that community groups have the right to access certain information and services through their local councils (local councils are obliged to provide the community with certain information and services).
- Encourage students to volunteer some examples of how this works in practice.
- Examples of good answers:
 - ▶ ‘Local councils have to provide refuse collection for people in their area. Citizens have a right to have their bins emptied because they pay council tax.’
 - ▶ ‘Local councils have to tell people how they can get in touch with councillors. Members of the community have a right to ask their councillors questions and to make suggestions to them.’
- Ask students to look at the ten speech bubbles on **Resource 1 – Ten issues**. Explain that these contain examples of issues that councils have to inform local communities about.
- Next, refer students to the 25 words/terms in the middle of the sheet and point out that the council offers advice about nearly all of these things. Ask students to write two of these words/terms into each of the ten speech bubbles. Point out that five of the words/terms are ‘booby traps’ (i.e. local councils do not tend to provide this kind of information)!
- See **Resource 2 – Ten issues answers** for the answers.

Main activity

Activity 1:

- Show students **Resource 3 – Community groups’ needs**. Explain that this gives information about six different community groups, all of which have different needs.
- Ask students to try to meet the needs of the six community groups by exploring the six relevant council websites. Explain to students that they need to go on www.direct.gov.uk and then search for the ‘A to Z of local councils’ page (the address for this page and the specific website addresses are also provided in the ‘Check the web’ section below).
- Encourage students to work in pairs if they wish to do so (students could research three questions each).
- Tell students to jot down their answers on scrap paper.

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Activity 2:

- Invite students to feed back their suggestions.
- Examples of good feedback*:
 - ▶ ‘For the one about the immigrants in Bem’s community, I found a massive list of housing associations on the Tower Hamlets council website. Some examples of these are Mitali Housing Association, Look Ahead and Metropolitan Housing Trust.’
 - ▶ ‘Anu and her colleagues have got loads of options if they want to get fit. The website gives information about a leisure centre called Greenvale. It also tells the public that there is ladies’ keep fit, badminton and circuit training in the local area.’
 - ▶ ‘Shani’s neighbours have a lot of choices about how they can go green in Glasgow. The council website gives information about the ‘Clean Glasgow’ campaign and it also gives the addresses of city centre recycling banks. There’s a survey on the site about climate change too. Maybe the neighbours could take part in that.’
 - ▶ * Note: as council websites are regularly updated, answers will depend upon when the lesson takes place.
- Praise those who fed back.
- Ask students how their computer research provides evidence that council websites meet citizens’ needs. Elicit the following points:
 - ▶ through providing links to voluntary organisations, charities and community groups
 - ▶ through encouraging citizens to change their lives for the better
 - ▶ through giving citizens the feeling that their local community is cohesive.

Plenary

- Ask students to read through **Resource 4 – Information available** in small groups. Point out that it shows just some of the types of information that are available on local council websites.
- Invite each student to find out one thing that really interests him/her from the local council’s website (using the worksheet for ideas if necessary).
- Invite spokespersons to feed back about a) what they found out and b) why they chose to research that particular issue.

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- Examples of good feedback:
 - ▶ ‘I looked up information about bereavement counselling. I found out that there’s a drop-in centre in town where you can go for free counselling if someone you love has died. They’re open on Saturdays and Sundays as well as in the week. The reasons that I looked it up is that my mum’s friend was killed in a car accident last month. I don’t know how to help my mum, but I’m sure that a counsellor would give her good advice.’
 - ▶ ‘I found out about what’s being planned in the new city square over the next few years. Apparently there’s going to be an ice rink there this Christmas and a temporary beach there every May. There’s also going to be a massive screen put up for the London Olympics. The reason that I’m interested in the city square is that I want to be a town planner when I’m older.’
 - ▶ ‘The stuff that I looked up was about the ILP. ILP stands for the Independent Living Project. It’s basically a collection of hostels that are set up for adults with learning difficulties. The hostels sound really good because they let adults with special needs have independence and they keep them safe too. I was really interested in the project because my big brother’s autistic and I often wonder where he’s going to live when we’re adults.’

Aim high

- Challenge students to explore their own council’s website and to find one piece of information that will influence them.

Assessment

For homework, ask students to write a list of suggested links for teenagers that would be useful on their local council’s website.

Level 5:

- Students can discuss the public’s right to access information through local councils.
- Students can discuss local councils’ obligation to provide information to the public.

Level 6:

- Students are aware that different community groups have different needs.
- Students can explore a variety of local council websites and identify some of the ways in which they meet community needs.

Level 7:

- Students can argue persuasively that council websites meet community needs.
- Students can evaluate the roles that citizens can take, through the use of council websites, in shaping community decisions.

How do councils meet community needs?

Level 8:

- Students can make connections between information from the council websites and their own experiences of council services to make perceptive observations.
- Students can ask challenging questions about how council websites can shape society.

Check the web

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/D11/Directories/Localcouncils/AToZOfLocalCouncils/DG_A-Z_LG

A to Z list of local councils

www.conwy.gov.uk

Conwy County Borough Council

www.dundee.gov.uk

Dundee City Council

www.glasgow.gov.uk

Glasgow City Council

www.leeds.gov.uk

Leeds City Council

www.magherafelt.gov.uk

Magherafelt District Council

www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Tower Hamlets Council

Summary of key learning

- Students can understand what some of the needs of local communities are.
- Students can understand how council websites meet the needs of local communities.

Resource 1 – Ten issues

education
e.g. adult learning

crime

community

health

employment

recipes anti-social behaviour **being a juror**
educational maintenance allowance **composting**
IQ tests **workplace stress** cheap flights
fire prevention resuscitation **greener packaging**
passport services **Neighbourhood Watch**
immunisation **virtual tours of parliament**
volunteering **self-employment** Highway Code
local history being a witness **planning permission**
adult learning **inheritance** local charities
minimum wage

tax

law

home

environment

travel

How do councils meet community needs?

Resource 2 – Ten issues answers

1. **Education** – educational maintenance allowance and adult learning
2. **Crime** – anti-social behaviour and Neighbourhood Watch
3. **Community** – volunteering and local charities
4. **Health** – resuscitation and immunisation
5. **Employment** – workplace stress and minimum wage
6. **Tax** – self-employment and inheritance
7. **Law** – being a juror and being a witness
8. **Home** – fire prevention and planning permission
9. **Environment** – composting and greener packaging
10. **Travel** – passport services and Highway Code
11. **Booby traps** – recipes, IQ tests, cheap flights, virtual tours of parliament and local history

How do councils meet community needs?

Resource 3 – Community groups' needs

Some of the governors at Cameron's school want to complain to their council about the school bus routes in Dundee. Can you find the names and phone numbers of some councillors from Cameron's local council's website?

In Bem's local community, dozens of immigrants are struggling to find safe housing. He lives in Tower Hamlets. Using Bem's local council's website, can you find some names of housing associations that might be able to offer guidance?

Anu and a large group of her colleagues want to do more exercise. They are keen to know which sporting activities and leisure facilities are available to them in Magherafelt. What does Anu's local council's website offer that will suit their needs?

Three members of Jason's close family have just been made redundant. They are looking for jobs in Conwy and are quite flexible about what kind of work they do. Can you find any job vacancies on Jason's local council's website?

A group of Shani's neighbours wants to get more involved in protecting the environment and generally living a greener lifestyle. They live in Glasgow. What does Shani's local council's website suggest that they could get involved in?

Disa's parents are trying to find out about schools in Leeds as they have just moved there. What can you find out about schools in Disa's area from her local council's website?

Resource 4 – Information available

Citizens and community groups can influence decisions in their local community by exploring their local council's website.

For instance, citizens and community groups can use their council's website to find out:

- the addresses of local charities
- which buildings are being planned nearby
- how to contact MPs
- when public meetings are (e.g. about parking or disability)
- how to complain about problems in their areas.

Local councils can influence decisions in their local community by providing citizens with local council websites.

For instance, they can provide citizens with information about how to:

- apply for environmental grants
- deal with illnesses such as swine flu
- safeguard against crime
- find out who's entitled to free school meals
- access bereavement counselling.