

Hengelo



Cities of change
cooperation of cities
in the field of city development

Citizens involvement in local decision-making

**Annet Horstman, Advisor Public Affairs and Subsidies
Netwerkstad Twente**

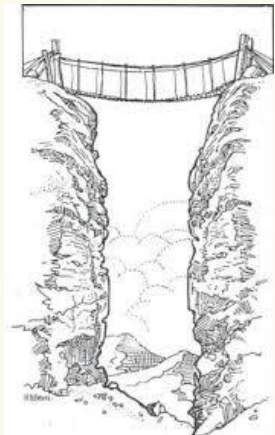
a.horstman@hengelo.nl 31(0)742459387





New meeting structure

- Evaluations in 2010 and 2013
- Introduction of a new meeting structure, that allowed for more citizens involvement (March 2014)
- Councillors meet **two-weekly** in so-called political markets
 - Citizens/stakeholders are invited to participate
 - Put forward expertise, needs, concerns and interests
 - Speak directly with the councillors and the executive about city developments
 - Reducing the distance between citizens and the political machine





New two-weekly meeting structure

Tuesday

- Informative meetings: of an exploratory nature, focusing on research and preparation
- Make early use of the knowledge inhabitants have of their living environment in the planning and decision-making proces.
- Other "tables": room for debate
- Tight agenda management: clarity and certainty on which topics are discussed.



Wednesday

- Final decision-making in Council



New formula provides a more inspiring environment for local inhabitants and other stakeholders!



Preparation

- The council secretariat organised meetings for councillors, members of the executive and civil servants to inform them of the new form of local decision-making
- Media attention



Objectives and results



- Bringing the municipal council closer to the citizens
- Improve the quality of local decision-making
- “Net time gain” that can be used by councillors for external contacts with citizens and stakeholders.
- Process of cultural change: stimulating more openness in the decision-making process.
- Councillors are better prepared: better and more efficient Council meetings
- Too early to evaluate in terms of quality of policies, increased – broad – citizens’ participation and real citizens’ influence on the political process.



Results

- Will it actually result in the increased participation of citizens and stakeholders, representing a cross-section of the electorate or will “the same suspects” bring forward their ideas and expertise during the political market sessions?
- Learning process

