

**SHAPING PLACES, SHAPING SERVICES CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY  
COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:  
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT  
(Report by Heads Of Democratic & Central Services,  
Environmental & Community Health Services and  
People, Performance & Partnership Services)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to acquaint Members with those elements of Cambridgeshire County Council's proposed approach to Community Engagement that may impact on the residents of Huntingdonshire and/or Huntingdonshire District Council and to afford the opportunity for Members to feedback any views to the County Council.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The proposed engagement strategy and action plan is currently being circulated to attract consultation responses. However, the document is due to be considered by Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet on 16 December 2009. The relevant County Council Officers have been advised that this report will be considered by this Cabinet the next day and alerted to the possibility of late feedback.
- 2.2 The aim of the community engagement strategy is to increase the potential for local people influence the development of their communities and the services provided; in line with the 2008 White Paper: Communities in Control.
- 2.3 Attached to this report, at Appendix 'A', is the 'Shaping places, Shaping services' consultation-draft document and, at Appendix 'B', the Community Engagement Strategy Draft Action Plan, which sets out the objectives, activities, timeframe and tasks that will be required to implement the strategy.
- 2.4 The 'Shaping places, Shaping services' consultation draft document is expounds general principles which officers consider are unlikely to conflict with current or future practice. However some of the proposals contained within the proposed action plan would be contrary to the district council's current policies and procedures and could have a financial impact on this authority.

**3. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE CONSULTATION EVENTS**

- 3.1 Officers consider that a number of activities and tasks outlined in the action plan lack clarity and fail identify fully the actions and resources needed, from organisations other than the County Council, to address the objectives set out in the action plan. There are six specific areas that may need detailed consideration by this authority. These are set out below and the numbering is linked to that set out in Appendix 'B':-

(Note: the numbering in this table reflects the numbering in the action plan)

1.2 Comment :	Point 4: "Focus on Fenland given the place survey results" - This proposal has the potential to see a reduction in County Council resources for Huntingdonshire residents.
3.1 Comment :	Point 1: "Establish Parish Charter between three tiers of local government" It is not clear within the action plan how these charters will be established so there is no direct obligation on HDC stated however not all parishes are affiliated to CPALC so there may be potential implications for HDC who might be expected to undertake development of the charter locally.
3.2 Comment:	Point 1: "Hard data – informing members of ward, District and County information" There is a potential for inequality of access to information between Members of Huntingdonshire District Council; between those who are also County Council Members and those who are not.
4.1 Comment:	Roll out Participatory Budgeting across the county (subject to the review of pilot projects undertaken in Huntingdonshire) Point 3: Implement roll-out across the county It is not clear within the action plan how this roll-out will be achieved or who will provide the funding. There may be an expectation that District council's, including Huntingdonshire, will financially support the roll out of PB. [Huntingdonshire District Council's Cabinet has not yet had the opportunity to debate the issue of their preferred role in any Participatory Budgeting in Huntingdonshire, a report goes to Cabinet 17 December 2009]
4.3 Comment:	It is proposed to "deliver a pilot project in East Cambridgeshire focusing on developing Neighbourhood Panels (Forums in Huntingdonshire) through linking them to Parish Planning and Participatory Budgeting" If this approach was to be adopted it would be contrary to the current terms of reference only recently agreed for Neighbourhood Forums are operated in Huntingdonshire. Participatory Budgeting by its nature is a decision-making process and the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire are currently open forums for the public to offer comment, to a range of representatives from public services, on both their neighbourhoods and the services offered – they are not currently designed as decision-making bodies.
4.5 Comment:	Point 1: All locality managers (OCYPS) to establish mechanisms to enable young people to be involved/influence decisions at Neighbourhood Panels (Forums) The mechanisms envisaged are not detailed in the plan. There may be a potential for a conflicting approach. In Huntingdonshire we are beginning to explore parallel consultation methods for children and young people as we are advised, by experts in the subject, that the Neighbourhood Forums may be too daunting to allow proper engagement by children or young people in that setting.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Members are requested to note the comments on the consultation document set out in section 3 of this report and comment on any matters that they would wish to have fed back to Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to their proposed engagement strategy and action plan.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

2000 Government White Paper- Communities in Control; real people, real power.

(9 July 2008) [www.communities.gov](http://www.communities.gov)

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