

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) Consultation Processes Working Group – 29th April 2014
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) 10th June 2014
Cabinet – 19th June 2014

Executive Portfolio: Councillor J D Ablewhite

Report by: Corporate Project Officer (Policy & Performance)

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the updated Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy, action plan and appendices. This strategy updates the previous Consultation & Engagement Strategy approved in 2008.

An Overview & Scrutiny (Social Well-Being) Working Group has supported the development on this strategy. The review has taken into account the recommendations made by the Working Group, particularly that we need to be better at providing feedback and to involve Members more in the process.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is invited to adopt the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy and note the action plan and guidance appendices.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 The purpose of this strategy is to provide a more realistic and proportionate approach to consultation and engagement whilst also ensuring that, where appropriate, the views and needs of local residents and other stakeholders are used to inform and shape the delivery of services

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The previous Consultation and Engagement Strategy was approved in 2008, and an update was overdue.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The Strategy has been reviewed to take into consideration that as a publicly funded organisation, local people need to continue be involved in shaping the services that the council provides, which is particularly important as more challenging decisions need to be made in light of considerable pressure on finances.
- 3.2 The Strategy also recognises that a more representative and proportionate approach should be adopted and the focus should be on consulting and engaging on issues that really matter to people, and those that they can influence.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)

- 4.1 On 29th April 2014, the Consultation Processes Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) met to review the content of the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy. The Working Group is satisfied with its content, in particular the role that Members will have in the process and the adoption of pre and post consultation checklists. The Working Group discussed the success measures to be included within the annual consultation evaluation report, the need to design consultations in a way that reaches target audiences, the role of Members in communicating to their constituents when consultations are being undertaken and the various aspects of the accessibility guidance issued alongside the Strategy. The Working Group is satisfied that all previous recommendations arising from its former study undertaken in 2011 have been incorporated into the new Strategy and associated guidance.
- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) recommends that the Strategy is adopted subject to reference being made to the Council also consulting with public sector partners on matters which could potentially have an impact upon their services. The action plan and guidance appendices have been noted by the Panel.

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

- 5.1 The key impact from this Strategy will be that:
- a more representative and proportionate approach is taken with regards to consultation and engagement.
 - the council is clearer about how views have been taken into account.
 - the focus will be consulting and engaging on issues that really matter to people, and that they can influence.

- elected Members are more aware of consultation and engagement activities

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The Strategy will be implemented as soon as it is approved. An action plan will measure delivery of the objectives and actions

7. LINK TO THE LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

- 7.1 The council's vision is:
To continue to improve the quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire and work towards sustainable economic growth whilst providing value for money services

It will do this by:

- Empowering local communities
- Ensuring that we engage with customers when deciding how services are delivered and improved

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 This Strategy has been developed in consultation with an Overview & Scrutiny (Social Well-Being) Consultation Processes Working Group.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

(Comments from the Head of Legal & Democratic Services)

- 9.1 The Council has a legal obligation to consult in certain circumstances and will consider it beneficial to do so in other cases. The Strategy sets out the guidelines and parameters for such consultations.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 It is anticipated that there will be no additional resource implications associated with the implementation of this Strategy.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed, and has been appended as Appendix 5

12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 12.1 The Strategy adopts a more realistic and proportionate approach to consultation and engagement. In addition, it proposes a pre and post consultation check list, which will encourage
- better use of the consultation and engagement Forward Plan, calendar and database
 - better awareness raising among elected Members regarding consultation and engagement activities
 - better feedback to those involved in the consultation & engagement activity on how their views and opinions have been used.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

- Appendix 1 - Action Plan 2014/15
- Appendix 2 - Consultation checklists
- Appendix 3 – [Guidance on methods and techniques](#)
- Appendix 4 – [Guidance on accessibility](#)
- Appendix 5 - [Equality Impact Assessment](#)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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