
REPORT TO:	Finance & Management Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 15
DATE OF MEETING:	21 st June 2007	CATEGORY: DELEGATED/ RECOMMENDED OPEN/EXEMPT PARAGRAPH NO:
REPORT FROM:	Deputy Chief Executive	
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Sasha Ryan (01283 595726)	DOC:
SUBJECT:	CORPORATE CONSULTATION STRATEGY	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM14

THIS REPORT WAS WITHDRAWN FROM THE MEETING

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Consultation Strategy as set out in the appendix be adopted and guide the work of the council in undertaking consultation with its service users, residents, partners and staff. Please note that the Consultation Toolkit is attached for information but is a supplementary annex to the Consultation Strategy.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present to the Committee a Consultation Strategy for approval and formal adoption.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Councils have long had statutory duties to consult the public on a range of issues and with the introduction of the best value regime many public sector bodies now have a much broader and more extensive duty to consult local people on the way that services are delivered. More recently, the 2006 White Paper '*Strong and Prosperous Communities*' sets out new responsibilities for local authorities to give local citizens and communities a greater say over their lives and the running of local services.
- 3.2 As consultation is becoming ever more important, and new legislation gives authorities additional and more comprehensive duties to consult it is crucial to ensure that there is a joined-up, coordinated approach to consultation at South Derbyshire District Council.
- 3.3 Developing a Corporate Consultation Strategy is a key action in South Derbyshire's Corporate Plan for 2006/09. The strategy will provide a framework for all consultation carried out by the council as well as establishing the processes by which it will be managed and evaluated.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The Council already consults in a range of different ways i.e. using the citizens' panel, the Internet etc. This proposed Consultation Strategy will further strengthen this activity within South Derbyshire. The strategy has also been designed to improve the Council's ability to consult and to ensure the better coordination of consultation between the services within the Council and with key partners; in order to improve methodology, avoid duplication and the risk of consultation fatigue that may develop when the same people are consulted time and time again and to secure value for money i.e. ensure that the outcomes of consultation are used to inform policy and decision-making.
- 4.2 The Consultation Toolkit is an annex of the Council's Consultation Strategy. Whilst the strategy, sets out its key aims and principles in relation to its consultation activities, the toolkit effectively translates those principles into reality. The toolkit, therefore, draws on information, such as best practice and standards and is a working document that will assist the Council and its partners in the planning and undertaking of consultation exercises and activities. This will be updated as new methods of consultation are developed.
- 4.3 In the initial development of the Consultation Strategy and Toolkit, meetings were organised with key partners and Council service areas to discuss consultation and involvement to ensure that the strategy and toolkit were developed in-line with stakeholder aspirations. Furthermore, the practical experiences of planning, designing and running recent service area consultation exercises and the outcomes of these activities have been included in the development of the strategy and the toolkit. Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service had an opportunity to comment on the Consultation Strategy before it was finalised and their comments have been incorporated into the final document.
- 4.4 The Consultation Strategy once adopted, will be published widely and be available in both hard copy document and electronic document download formats.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with the proposed strategy and toolkit. However, individual consultation exercises will need to be resourced appropriately and may have financial implications, which will need to be considered by the appropriate individual committees as they arise.

6.0 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 The Consultation Strategy supports the council's vision for the District, and our strategic priorities, as set out in our corporate plan.

7.0 Community Implications

- 7.1 Adopting a Consultation Strategy should result in more and a better involvement of the public in the council's decision making processes, rejuvenating the local democratic process.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 While this strategy provides the basic framework, putting it into action will require effort and commitment from all Council Directorates and Officers.

9.0 Background Papers

- 9.1 The proposed Consultation Strategy and Toolkit (for information) is appended with this document.