
REPORT TO:	FINANCE and MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	19th JUNE 2014	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE and CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
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SUBJECT:	CONSULTATION ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 and ACTION PLAN 2014/15	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM 07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the key consultation achievements for the year ending 31 March 2014 as detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 To agree the refreshed Consultation Action Plan 2014/15, as detailed in **Appendix 2**.
- 1.3 To note the planned consultation activity to be undertaken by the Council in 2014/15, as detailed in **Appendix 3**.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present the annual consultation report for 2013/14 that details how consultation activities supported the delivery of the key priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2009/14
- 2.2 To detail the achievements made during 2013/14 and their contribution to Council priorities for the year

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The importance of effective consultation with service users, community groups and residents remains a high priority both locally and nationally. This is reflected in our Corporate Plan where robust systems and processes to consult assess and use feedback will ensure that resources are directed to the priorities of our local communities.
- 3.2 The Government's agenda continues to assert rights for citizens to have more information and have an influence over local decision making. This provides an opportunity to get involved in managing and shaping how services are delivered.

3.3 This report includes an updated action plan for 2014/15, which has taken into account the approach for moving from 'consultation' to 'engagement'.

4.0 **Detail**

4.1 To ensure the Council realises its vision of 'making South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit', consultation is an integral part of our approach to improve the quality and effectiveness of the services we provide.

Key achievements 2013/14

4.2 The key outcomes achieved during 2013/14 are outlined below:

Delivering the Consultation Action Plan 2013/14 (See Appendix 2)

Allocations / Tenancy Policy – consultation on revised policies and procedures was undertaken.

Citizen Panel survey - This Derbyshire County Council survey took place in February 2014, covering community safety issues. The survey was sent to 1,000 panelists. The response rate was 58.4%, which is comparable to last year.

Safer Neighbourhood meetings / Community Safety road shows – Meetings have taken place on a regular basis across the district, offering residents the opportunity to share issues, provide feedback on suggested solutions and help set priorities for their local areas. Road shows have been held to promote various schemes and initiatives, such as the fitting of number plate security screws and property marking.

Local Plan – the process of formulating a Local Plan for South Derbyshire has floated in and out of the public eye since 2008. Since consultation started on the Local Plan (Part 1), it has been vital to spread the right messages far and wide.

The usual channels – press releases, road shows and the website have offered a useful foundation on which to build.

Social media, including Twitter, has been used to signpost people to documents. In some cases this has led to two, three and four way conversations being held with groups and individuals wishing to offer their opinion or make suggestions.

Council Budget / Corporate Plan- consultation events were held with residents, businesses and the voluntary sector to explain the impact of the Government's spending reductions on South Derbyshire and how this would impact on the Council's budget. A focus on changes to the Welfare System and the new system for distributing business rates was also provided.

Other consultations that took place during year include:

- Dog Control Orders
- Environmental education events
- Business events
- Area Forums

- Health and wellbeing events, such as Healthier South Derbyshire Day, school holiday activities and the Festival of Leisure
- Supported housing improvement services to elderly and vulnerable people
- Tenancy services
- A Twitter Parliament, set up with the Pingle School to debate the minimum voting age as part of Local Democracy Week

Looking ahead to 2014/15

4.3 To meet the challenges the Council faces, we will continue to:

- Focus on embedding a culture of engagement across all our functions
- Promote how people can 'have their say', which is just as important as communicating the results of the consultation.

4.4 A number of consultation activities are planned for 2014/15 and these are detailed in **Appendix 3**.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 Any associated consultation costs during 2014/15 will be contained within existing budgets and resources.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 This report is linked to the 'value for money' theme in the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular the priority action on '*meeting community needs in delivering effective consultation and communication with the community, businesses and other organisations.*' A key outcome will be an increase in residents who feel they can influence decisions in South Derbyshire.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 This report is linked to the 'vibrant communities' theme within the South Derbyshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy. A key outcome will be to improve public involvement in the Council's decision making processes, thus rejuvenating the local democratic process.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The Council's consultation and engagement programme continues to involve its citizens and stakeholders in the decision making process. This ensures that their views are taken into account in improving our services and inform the development of our policies.

9.0 Background Papers

9.1 None