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| REPORT TO: | FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE | AGENDA ITEM: 9 |
| DATE OF MEETING: | 23RD JUNE 2011 | CATEGORY: DELEGATED |
| REPORT FROM: | CHIEF EXECUTIVE | OPEN |
| MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT: | HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES Kevin.Stackhouse@south-derbys.gov.uk | DOC: |
| SUBJECT: | CONSULTATION STRATEGY ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11 AND ACTION PLAN 2011/12 | REF: |
| WARD (S) AFFECTED: | All | TERMS OF REFERENCE:FM05 |

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That Members:

- Note the key consultation achievements for the year ending 31st March 2011, shown in Appendix A.
- Approve the refreshed Action Plan, attached at Appendix B, which will guide the work of the Council in undertaking consultation with its service users, residents, partners and staff.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present the annual Consultation Strategy Report for 2011/12 that details how consultation activities will support the delivery of key priorities set down in the Corporate Plan 2009/14.
- 2.2 To detail the achievements made during 2010/11, attached at Appendix A and their contribution to Council priorities for the year.
- 2.3 In addition, to present the refreshed 2011/12 Action Plan attached at Appendix B.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The importance of effective consultation with services users, community groups and members of the public remains a high priority both locally and nationally. This is reflected in our Corporate Plan where having robust systems and processes to consult, assess and use feedback will ensure that resources are directed to the priorities of our local community.
- 3.2 The agenda of the Government continues to assert new rights for citizens to have more information and influence over the local decisions and, where they choose, more opportunity to get directly involved in managing and shaping how local services are delivered. This will continue through emerging legislation such as the

Localism Bill 2010 which will continue to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils.

- 3.3 The report includes the updated Action Plan - 2011/12, which has been refreshed to incorporate the significant change in the approach for seeking the public's views, from 'consultation' towards 'engagement'.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 We are required to deliver high quality and value for money services that the residents of South Derbyshire need and want. This is a fundamental part of the Council's vision, 'Making South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit'. Consultation is, therefore, a permanent and valued part of our approach to continuously improving the quality and cost effectiveness of the services that we provide.
- 4.2 This is the fourth annual report outlining the progress made in consultation activity over the past twelve months to 31 March 2011.

5.0 Key achievements 2010/11

- 5.1 There have been a number of key outcomes achieved during 2010/11, these are outlined below:

5.2 Employee consultation and engagement

- 5.2.1 **Best Companies employee survey** – we sent out an internal survey sent out to all employees asking for their views on their workplace. The response rate to the survey was 42.5% that represents an increase of around 10% since the 2008 survey. This indicates that our communications campaign to promote the survey including posters around the building and articles in 'better' magazine continues to be successful.
- 5.2.2 The results were used to evaluate our performance as an employer and to identify the specific areas in the workplace that employees felt the need to be improved. Overall, the survey results illustrate an improving picture for the Council with positive points emerging in most areas.
- 5.2.3 Our overall submission to Best Companies, combined with the results of the survey, enabled the Council to receive national as well as local recognition as we were published in the prestigious Sunday Times List as one of the top 100 best places to work in the public/third sector. The Council was placed 59th in the survey and was the third highest ranked local authority in the UK list. The Council's high ranking came just days after we achieved a 'first class' status in the Best Companies Accreditation 2011 for demonstrating high levels of employee engagement. Only a small number of organisations have achieved the status this year and this builds on our 'One to watch' status in the Best Companies Accreditation in 2010.
- 5.3 **Citizens Panel Surveys** – two surveys were sent out to Panel Members in September 2010 and February 2011. This was part of the new arrangements with Derbyshire County Council where panels are shared. Surveys were sent out to a thousand Panel Members and covered a range of topics, which included

Community Safety, local decision-making and helping out and Physical Activity. Response rates for each panel survey was around 50% and response rates had remained at similar levels to the previous year.

- 5.4 Petitions/E-Petitions** – We recognise the importance of petitions as a means of engaging more meaningfully with local communities, enabling the public to let us know about their concerns and as a mechanism for generating service improvements. A protocol exists which sets out how the public can submit a petition, how it will be dealt with and what the Council can do to respond to the issues raised. To further improve this service, we rolled out e-petitions across the district on the 15th December 2010. E-petitions allow residents to raise issues with us through our website. The council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns.

6.0 Looking Ahead

- 6.1 To meet the challenges we are continuing to focus on embedding a culture of engagement across all of the Council's functions. Furthermore, we will continue to work closely with the Communications Team to promote our decision-making processes and how people can 'have their say' that is just as important as communicating the results of the consultation. Summaries of some of the key actions that need to take place in 2010/2011 are covered below.

6.2 Priorities Consultation

- 6.2.1 We will undertake research identifying the future priorities for the people of South Derbyshire. We will use current information to help us to understand what are the priorities for the residents of the district. This will be supported through outreach sessions working with our partners to engage the wider community to get a picture of the main priorities going forward.

6.3 Review of consultation arrangements

- 6.3.1 To continue to improve our approach to consultation we will review the current methods used looking in particular at the Citizens Panel. The review will enable us to investigate and explore new options so that we can continue to improve how we engage and involve local people.

6.4 Employee engagement and consultation

- 6.4.1 Following on from the last year's employee survey, a survey will be undertaken with employees to find out what they think about working for the Council. It is envisaged that we will do this through the Best Council's process again, to enable comparison to be made with last year's results and for trends to be identified.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There will be some costs associated with Consultation over the next 12 months. Any costs will be found from existing budgets.

8.0 Corporate Implications

- 8.1 This report is linked with the theme 'Value for Money' in the Council's Corporate Plan and the priority action 'meeting community needs in delivering effective consultation and communication with the community, businesses and other organisations'. A key outcome will be an increase in the number of residents who feel that they can influence decisions in South Derbyshire.
- 8.2 We will be working closely with the Communications Team to promote our consultation and engagement activities and to feedback the key messages to residents and to manage any media interest in our consultation and engagement activity.

9.0 Community Implications

- 9.1 This report is linked to the theme 'Vibrant Communities' in the South Derbyshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy. A key outcome will be public involvement in the Council's decision making processes, thus, rejuvenating the local democratic process.

10.0 Conclusions

- 10.1 The Council's consultation and engagement programme continues to involve its citizen's and stakeholders in decision-making, ensuring that their views are used to improve our services and inform the development of our policies. The annual report is an essential tool for raising awareness of our progress.

11.0 Background Papers

E-petitions report
Best Companies Survey

Appendix A - Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2010-2011 Action Plan

| Aim | Action | Key measures of success | Lead | Progress | Deadline |
|---|--|--|--|---|------------------------------------|
| To effectively coordinate and disseminate the results of consultation activity. | From the Service plans 2011/12 put together a timetable for consultation. | Update the Google Calendar on the Council's website. | Policy Officer (Consultation) | Information being pulled together and will be available in July 2011. | July 2011 |
| | Continue to develop the consultation sections on the website publishing the results and outcomes of all of our consultations. | Up-to-date consultation section on the website. | Policy Officer (Consultation) Web Editor | Website updated on a regular basis with the latest sets of results of recent consultation and community conversations. | Ongoing |
| | Review whether the Citizens' Panel is 'fit for purpose' to meet the Sustainable Communities Act and make the necessary arrangements to meet the requirements of the Act. | Adjustments have been made to the Citizens' Panel so that it meets the requirements of the Act. | Policy Officer (Consultation) Policy and Communications Manager | Citizens Panel is fit for purpose for Sustainable Communities Act. Engagement Review has commenced which will report in 2011 looking at the future approach for consultation including the Citizens Panel. | December 2010 December 2011 |
| | Work with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to undertake a residents survey in place of the postponed 2010 Place Survey. | Hotspots of resident dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with particular aspects of services are identified. | Policy Officer (Consultation) | No countywide survey undertaken by DCC. Work now underway looking at resident priorities for the district. A report will be produced for July 2011. | December 2010 July 2011 |

| Aim | Action | Key measures of success | Lead | Progress | Deadline |
|---|--|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| To undertake effective employee engagement. | Project manage the Times Best Council to Work For Process. | The survey is undertaken with all employees. | Policy Officer (Consultation) | Complete | Between October 2010 and March 2011 |
| Petitions scheme set up online through the website. | Work jointly to develop an e-petitioning solution on our website. | E-petitioning solution in place. Petitions used to inform decision-making. | Policy Officer (Consultation) Head of IT/ Democratic Services Manager | Complete | Between August and December 2010 |
| Ensure communication and consultation is joined up across the Council | Work with the Communications Team to promote our decision-making processes and how people can 'have their say' as well as communicating the results of the consultation. | There is an increase in the number of residents who feel that they can influence decisions in South Derbyshire. | Policy Officer (Consultation) Communications Officer | Work undertaken to promote our decision-making processes through our Better Council Campaign. This focussed on encouraging people to get involved and encouraging people to participate in local democracy. | March 2011 |
| | Support the delivery of internal and external campaigns through the design of effective means of consulting target audiences. | The target audience received and understood the key messages from the campaign. | Communications Officer Policy Officer (Consultation) | All eight campaigns successfully supported and delivered. | March 2011 |
| | Review the Council's Engagement Strategy annually. | The Council's Engagement Strategy is current and up-to-date. | Policy Officer (Consultation) | Strategy refreshed in 2010. Engagement Review has commenced which will report in 2011 | December 2011 |

Appendix B - Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2011-2012 Action Plan

| Aim | Action | Key measures of success | Lead | Deadline |
|---|--|---|--|---------------|
| To shape the new approach to resident engagement | To undertake research with partners to establish the key priorities for the residents of the district. | Report produced. | Policy and Communications Manager | July 2011 |
| | Undertake a review of our approach to consultation looking at the Citizens Panel and exploring alternative options as to how we engage and involve local people. | Report produced and action plan in place to deliver new approach. | Policy and Communications Manager | December 2011 |
| | Produce a new Engagement Strategy following the review undertaken. | The Council's Engagement Strategy reflects the new approach. | Policy Officer (Consultation) | March 2012 |
| To undertake effective employee engagement. | Project manages the Best Companies survey. | 40% return for the Best Companies survey. | Organisational Development Officer - Trainee | March 2012 |
| To effectively coordinate and disseminate the results of consultation activity. | From the Service plans 2011/12 put together a timetable for consultation. | Update the Google Calendar on the Council's website. | Web Editor | August 2011 |
| | Continue to develop the consultation sections on the website publishing the results and outcomes of all of our consultations. | Up-to-date consultation section on the website. | Web Editor | Ongoing |