
REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	18 JUNE 2015	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN STACKHOUSE (Ext. 5811)	DOC REF:
SUBJECT:	CONSULTATION ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM07

1.0 **Recommendations**

- 1.1 To note key consultation achievements for 2014/15 as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

2.0 **Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To present the annual consultation report for 2014/15, detailing how consultation activities supported the delivery of key priorities. The report also considers what is on the horizon for 2015/16.

3.0 **Executive Summary**

- 3.1 The importance of effective consultation with residents, service users, businesses and voluntary groups remains a priority. Robust systems and processes ensure that resources are directed to the priorities of our communities.
- 3.2 The Government's agenda continues to assert rights for residents 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.

4.0 **Detail**

- 4.1 Consultation and engagement are a key part of our approach to 'making South Derbyshire a better place to live, work and visit'.

Key achievements 2014/15

- 4.2 The key outcomes achieved during 2014/15 are outlined below:

March/April 2014 – The District Council consulted upon its Pre Submission Local Plan Part 1 and supporting documents.

October 2014 – Through an online survey and use of social media, the Council asked about people's experiences in accessing NHS dental treatment, with a view to building up a clearer picture of what the existing situation is.

October 2014 – Supplier Cycle Projects took disability cycles to Rosliston Forestry Centre to gauge the opinions of groups or individuals interested in accessing the bikes to help in the final decision making on which models should be purchased.

November/December 2014 – Views were sought on the scoping report as part of the first stage of the sustainability appraisal process in part two of the Local Plan.

February 2015 – The South Derbyshire Partnership rolled out a survey to develop the services provided to companies. All feedback will be used to build a picture of needs and to understand current issues.

February 2015 – A major consultation exercise was undertaken to gain feedback on the Swadlincote Townscape Heritage Scheme. This included a special event at Swadlincote Town Hall on February 10 to allow people to view the proposals and come forward with ideas.

April 2015 - Sports surveys were launched to give young people across the district the opportunity to help shape physical activity provision in the district.

April 2015 - The Swadlincote Town Team 'Visioning' event allowed the public and influential bodies to work in partnership to set a list of priorities for the town centre.

The usual channels – press releases, Area Forums 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 conversations being held with those wishing to offer their opinion or make suggestions.

Other consultations that took place during year include:

- **National Forest Walking Festival Evaluation (June 2014)** – All comments help the festival to build year on year. Each entry is entered into a prize draw to win a family admission voucher to the National Trust.
- **Environmental Protection Customer Satisfaction Survey (December 2014)** – Customers were asked to provide feedback on the speed, professionalism and helpfulness received. Results were used to review the quality of the service that officers provide and to identify what improvements need to be made.
- **Financial Plans (Jan – Feb 2015)** - Overviews were provided at the Area Forums. We also sought the views of the Business and Voluntary Sector.

Consultation exercises have been undertaken at health and wellbeing events, such as Healthier South Derbyshire Day, school holiday activities and the Festival of Leisure at Maurice Lea Memorial Park.

As part of an annual tradition, Members and Officers visited secondary schools to raise awareness of how councils operate, encouraging students to get involved in decision making. This formed part of Local Democracy Week 2014.

Looking ahead to 2015/16

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

- focus on embedding a culture of engagement across our functions
- work with Northgate Public Services' Communications team in highlighting our decision making processes
- promote how people can 'have their say', which is just as important as communicating the results of the consultation

4.4 A detailed report of consultation activities planned for 2015/16 will go before the committee later this year, once the new look Corporate Plan has been finalised. This includes statutory requirements, such as seeking views on budget proposals and the Medium Term Financial Plan. A satisfaction survey is set for December 2015 to gauge opinion on functions delivered by Northgate Public Services.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 Any associated consultation costs during 2015/16 will be contained within existing budgets and resources.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 This report is linked to our 'value for money' theme, in particular the 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 the District.

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 Our consultation and engagement programme continues to involve its citizens and stakeholders in the decision making process. This ensures their views are taken into account in improving our services and informs the development of our policies.

9.0 Background Papers

None