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REPORT TO:	FINANCE & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	20 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2013	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN STACKHOUSE <a href="mailto:Kevin.Stackhouse@south-derbys.gov.uk">Kevin.Stackhouse@south-derbys.gov.uk</a>	DOC:
SUBJECT:	CONSULTATION ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13 AND ACTION PLAN 2013/14	REF:
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

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## 1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the key consultation achievements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, detailed in **Appendix 1** are noted.
- 1.2 That the refreshed Consultation Action Plan 2013/14, detailed in **Appendix 2** is agreed.
- 1.3 That the refreshed Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2013/16 attached at **Appendix 3** is approved.
- 1.4 That the planned consultation activity to be undertaken by the Council in 2013/14, detailed in **Appendix 4** is noted.

## 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To present the annual consultation report for 2012/13 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 2012/13 and their contribution to Council priorities for the year.
- 2.3 In addition, to present the refreshed 2013/14 Action Plan and Consultation Engagement Strategy and planned consultation activity for the Council.

## 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 involved in managing and shaping how local services are delivered.
- 3.3 This report includes the updated Action Plan for 2013/14, 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.

#### **5.0 Key achievements 2012/13**

- 5.1 There have been a number of key outcomes achieved during 2012/13, these are outlined below:
- 5.2 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme** – Working with South Derbyshire CVS and other partners we carried out a 12 week consultation on proposals to change the Council Tax Scheme. This consultation included a survey which was available online and hard copy format which was supported by information on the options available. This included a number of drop in sessions around the district with residents. Meetings were held with key partners and other voluntary groups. Two focus groups were also held with 20 members of the citizen's panel. In total the consultation contacted over 4,000 people directly and sent out information through the press and social media across the district. This maximised the opportunity for local residents and community representatives to participate in this consultation.
- 5.3 **Citizen Panel Surveys** – A survey was sent out to Panel Members in February 2013. This survey was sent out to a thousand Panel Members and covered Community Safety. The response rate for this Derbyshire County Council survey has remained at a similar level to previous years.
- 5.4 **Local Development Framework Consultation**
  - 5.4.1 The process of formulating a Local Plan for South Derbyshire has floated in and out of the public eye since 2008. So, when consultation began on one of its key components, the Preferred Growth Strategy, it was imperative to spread the right messages far and wide. The usual channels – press releases, consultation roadshows and the website offered a useful foundation on which to build.
  - 5.4.2 Attendees were asked to provide their views, which were broadcast through social networking channels to stimulate healthy debate. During the course of 16

consultation events, over 600 Tweets, covering a diverse range of subjects, were sent out, with a quarter retweeted to 34,340 more followers. Most importantly, wave after wave of two, three and four way conversations were held with groups and individuals wanting to offer an opinion or suggestion.

5.5 **Budget/Corporate Priorities** – Extensive consultation took place with residents in the development of the Council’s budget and corporate priorities for 2013/14.

5.6 **Other Consultations that took place:**

- Dog Control Orders
- Environmental Forum
- Business Events
- Healthier South Derbyshire Day
- Festival of Leisure
- Liberation Day
- Homelessness Strategy

## 6.0 **Looking Ahead to 2013/14**

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.

6.2 In this section we highlight a number of the activities that will be happening during 2013/14, a full list of these are shown in Appendix D.

6.2.1 **Allocations/Tenancy Policy** – Consultation on revised policies.

6.2.2 **Supported Housing** - To consult on improvements to services to elderly and vulnerable people in South Derbyshire.

6.2.3 **Environmental Health** - To determine how the work of the Environmental Health service is valued by businesses within the context of maintaining a vibrant local business community.

6.2.4 **Community Safety Roadshows** - These are being piloted in 2013 with two planned for April. They will include partners having stalls, Police surgeries, and promotion of number plate security screws fitting and property marking scheme.

6.2.5 **Local Plan** – Further consultation is planned in late 2013 on Part 1 (Core Strategy) and initial consultation on Part 2 (Sites and Boundaries).

6.2.6 **Open Spaces** - Urban parks will be the subject of consultation to find out who attends them, their current recreational use, reasons why or why parks are not used by the public, what they would like to see at the parks.

- 6.2.7 **Community Planning/Parish Plans** - Consultation will be taking place through the development of parish/community plan to identify a vision for that community including both built environment and programme work.
- 6.2.8 **Business Events** - Consultation will take place with participants to find out whether they felt the event or activity was appropriate and valuable
- 6.2.9 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme** - To review the Council scheme and consult with key stakeholders on the development of the scheme for 2014.
- 6.2.10 **Budget Consultation/Corporate Priorities** - Consultation is scheduled across the district on the budget options and priorities for the Council for 2014/15.

## **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.

## **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**

- 11.1 Appendices 3 and 4 are available on request and as attachments contained on the CMIS page for the Committee.

## Appendix 1 – Consultation 2012-2013 Action Plan

Aim	Action	Outcomes	Lead	Delivered
1. To embed the new approach to consultation and engagement	Produce a new Engagement Strategy following the review undertaken.	Strategy produced and submitted to Council.  Attached to report for approval by Members.	Policy and Communications Manager	December 2012  June 2013
2. To undertake effective employee engagement.	Carry out research into the trends emerging from the latest employee survey.	Report prepared on Leadership for Strategic Coordination Group.  Presentation given to all unit managers by Chief Executive.	Policy and Communications Manager	January 2013  March 2013
3. To support service areas in engaging with service users and the wider community.	Supporting service areas to develop appropriate forms of consultation to engage with service users and the wider community. This has included detailed Equality Impact Assessments when appropriate.	Supported services to carry out planned consultations as per plan.  We have carried out a detailed Equality Impact Assessment on the changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	Web Editor	March 2013
	Providing support and advice to service areas to analyse the information coming out of consultations.	Advice and support given to services on how to engage and consult with residents.	Web Editor	March 2013
4. To effectively coordinate and disseminate the results of consultation activity.	From the Service plans 2012/13 put together a timetable for consultation.	Google Calendar updated on the Council's website with key consultation events as appropriate.	Web Editor	August 2012
	Work with service areas to continue to develop the consultation section on the website publishing the results and outcomes of all of our consultations.	Consultation section on the website has been kept up to date.	Web Editor	March 2013

## Appendix 2 - Consultation 2013 - 2014 Action Plan

Aim	Action	Lead	Scheduled Completion
1. To embed the new approach to consultation and engagement	Roll out the new approach through training and communication following approval of strategy to staff and Members.	Web Editor	December 2013
2. To undertake effective employee engagement	Undertake the Employee Engagement Survey through Best Companies and report back findings to Members.	Web Editor	February 2014
3. To support service areas in engaging with service users and the wider community.	Supporting service areas to develop appropriate forms of consultation to engage with service users and the wider community.	Web Editor	March 2014
	Providing support and advice to service areas to analyse the information coming out of consultations.	Web Editor	March 2014
4. To effectively coordinate and disseminate the results of consultation activity.	From the Service plans 2013/14 put together a timetable for consultation.	Web Editor	August 2013
	Work with service areas to continue to develop the consultation section on the website publishing the results and outcomes of all of our consultations.	Web Editor	March 2014