

REPORT TO THE SCRUTINY PANEL for
3rd March 2011

Status: Draft
Title: Consultation Strategy
Originator: *Rachael Abbott, Communication & Consultation Manager*
Where from: Scrutiny People November 2010
Where to next: Staff Consultation then to Executive

Objective:

To review the Council's new Consultation Strategy and ensure it is fit for purpose.

1. Outcome sought from Panel

1.1 To support the new strategy to ensure it is fit for purpose and the new help 'guide or toolkit' for staff and Members.

1.2 Recognise consultation techniques and make recommendations for preferred methods

2 Background

2.1 The Council's mission as noted in the strategy of 2006 was to prove through partnership and consultation innovative, accessible and responsive services that ensured the district of Harborough was a healthy and happy place to live, work and visit.

Community engagement in Harborough district was driven by the Harborough District 2010 Vision, our core values and the priorities in the council's business plan. Our core values underpin the services we provided and how we consulted and communicated with the public and all our partners.

The existing Communication and Consultation Strategy was to demonstrate how our corporate values would be translated into clear principles and standards for effective communication and consultation to support our commitment to community engagement.

3 Points for discussion

- 3.1 Consultation is all about listening, responding to and working with residents, local business and visitors to make sure they receive high quality services. With the far greater duty to involve local people in what we do, therefore a separate Consultation Strategy that is at the heart of the councils planning and decision making process has been produced. This new Consultation Strategy will help staff and members who carry out consultation by including a 'toolkit' to consultation which will ensure consultation is of a high quality and meets the needs of our residents.
- 3.2 Our role as a Council is not just to deliver services to the highest possible standard but also to ensure that our residents can:
- Find out the information they need
 - Find out about changes in existing services and influence new services
 - Provide comment(s) on the services they receive

The new Consultation Strategy will ensure our residents receive information in a clear and targeted way which would be accessible to all. In this new Strategy it will cover areas such as:

- Our aims
 - What is consultation?
 - What are the benefits of consultation?
 - The council's commitment to consultation.
 - Principles & Objectives
 - The role of members
 - Methods to co-ordinate consultation
- 3.3 The strategy also addresses the use of the Council's website and intranet by developing this service further and by offering on-line consultations which will ensure more cost efficient consultation by reducing paper, postage and the cost of capturing of data. It will also be more accessible to young people and those with a disability or access concerns.

4 Equality Impact Assessment Implications/Outcomes (attach completed EIA)

- 4.1 A draft EIA has been drafted and will be completed as part of the adoption of this Strategy.

5 Impact on Communities

- 5.1 The revised consultation strategy will assist the council in targeting the needs of its residents through the business planning process and other forms of consultation. This will lead to improved services in the areas identified by the service users.

6 Legal Issues

- 6.1 Local Government White Paper (Strong and Prosperous Communities). The aim of this White Paper is to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. It is about creating strong,

prosperous communities and delivering better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people. Since the launch of the White Paper the Government has produced

Strong and prosperous communities - The Local Government White Paper: Final implementation plan 2009. This final implementation plan gives further information on how the Government is playing its part in implementing key proposals in Strong and Prosperous Communities - the Local Government White Paper. It focuses in particular on the performance and governance and empowerment workstreams.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 - seeks to introduce a range of devolutionary and deregulatory measures to ensure a local government system in England that:

- gives local people more influence over the services and decisions that affect their communities;
- provides effective and accountable strategic leadership;
- Operates in a performance framework – for local authorities working alone or in partnership – which supports citizen empowerment and secures better outcomes for all; and
- leads local partnerships to provide better services for citizens.

Strong and Prosperous Communities - The Local Government White Paper Implementation Plan: One Year On - Published: 1 November 2007

Strong and Prosperous Communities - The Local Government White Paper Making it Happen: The Implementation Plan Published: 22 January 2007

7 Resource Issues

- 7.1 The Consultation and Communications Manager will manage and monitor this strategy to ensure that unnecessary duplication of time and resources by allowing consultation exercises are co-ordinated and to be combined where appropriate. This is will avoid consultation fatigue with the community and ensure value for money.
- 7.2 The production of an annual consultation calendar will set out our proposals for consultation and will ensure staff, members and partners are informed about fourth coming consultation and avoid unnecessary duplication.

8 Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 There are no relevant community safety issues in writing these strategies. If/where they may arise they will be implemented in line with the councils Community safety policy.

9 Carbon Management Implications

9.1 Electronic consultation and better use of the website/intranet will reduce the excessive production of paper and postage.

10 Risk Management Implications

10.1 Failure to ensure a truly representative cross section of the community are engaged with.

10.2 The staff and members do not commit to the implementation of this strategy could result in an uncoordinated approach to consultation which could result in inefficiencies in the cost of undertaking consultation.

10.3 By not feeding back to those involved in the consultation process and also how people's views have impacted on decisions made by the council, could result in apathy towards consultation.

11 Consultation

11.1 This draft strategy will be sent to the Citizens' Panel for comment, to check for use of plain language and demonstrate an understanding / acknowledgement of the strategy. It will also be shared internally with Management Board and Tired Tier Managers and staff.

12 Background Papers

None

Previous report(s): Y – Scrutiny Report (People) – November 2010

Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: N

Appendices:

A. TEN Performance Management Data (Compulsory) - attached

B. Summary Budget Information (Compulsory) - attached

C. Consultation Strategy – draft attached

D. Equality Impact Assessment – draft attached

APPENDIX A

2010-11 Performance and Risk Management System - CCE 01 Review the strategies for Communications - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://lms-publicweb.burweb.dftcodeh3.com/89034FA4E-030-4BF-9078-447E23CE2F20%7D%5256b2c1%3001%34416%28bpe%3008FW3E

Priority 2010-11

Incomplete Portfolio active from 2009/10

CCE 01 Review the strategies for Communications and Consultation

Corporate Issue

Owner Rachel Abbott | **Head of Service** Peter Rowbotham | **Director** Sue Smith | **Portfolio Holder(s)** Cllr Paul Dann | **Scrutiny Panel**

Start		Completion		% complete	Current Status
Predicted	Actual	Predicted	Actual		
Wed-1-Apr-09	Mon-1-Jun-09	Sun-30-Jan-11	(not specified)	75%	Sep 10 - On Track ... Deficient

Progress

Preparation is ongoing to review this strategy. The Communications Team are in the process of reviewing their relevant strategies & protocols (which include the Media Protocol, Style & Branding guide). These documents will help inform the communication and consultation strategy. Work is also underway this autumn with the Citizens' Panel to establish their preferred way of communication and consultation methods and these results will be used to inform the Communication & Consultation Strategy.

Related Performance Indicators

Related LAA Outcome LAA 2.1 Stronger commun...

Update 1
2009/10 carried forward

Log Out

Next
CCE 02 Develop a new plan...

Previous
AA 00 Develop agreements...

APPENDIX B

Budgets for consultation methods:

Account Name	Budget
Community Forums	5,500.00
Advice to Parishes	800.00
Citizens Panel	Annual fee £3k, cost per consultation £3k (approx) Total Budget - £24k