

Agenda

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Date: Monday 15 November 2010

Time: 9.30 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Aylesbury Town Council

Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 APOLOGIES / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP	9:30am	
2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2010		1 - 4
4 INTRODUCTION OF THE REVIEW Contributor: Avril Davies, Chairman of the Public Engagement & Consultation Task and Finish Group Purpose: The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group will outline the reasons for the review. Papers: Public Engagement and Consultation Scoping Document	9:35am	5 - 6
5 INTRODUCTION TO BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT Contributor: Kim Parfitt, Corporate Consultation Officer, Buckinghamshire County Council Purpose: The County Council's Corporate Consultation Officer will brief Members on how the Council engages and consults with	9:40am	



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residents, partners and stakeholders. This briefing will include information on the Corporate Consultation guidelines, the 'Have Your Say' online consultation tool and the Parish Consultation portal. Members will have the opportunity to ask questions throughout the briefing.

6 NHS BUCKINGHAMSHIRE 10:10am

Contributors:

- Helen Peggs, Director of Communications & Engagement, NHS Buckinghamshire
- Clare Blakeway-Phillips, Assistant director, partnership development, NHS Buckinghamshire

Purpose:

Representatives from NHS Buckinghamshire will provide an overview of how they undertake both consultation and engagement exercises in the county. Members will then have the opportunity to ask detailed question on the topic.

7 THAMES VALLEY POLICE 11:00am

Contributor:

Superintendent Richard List, Local Police Area Commander for Aylesbury Vale, Thames Valley Police

Purpose:

The Task and Finish Group will receive a brief overview highlighting how Thames Valley Police engages and consult with the residents of Buckinghamshire. Members will then have the opportunity to question the Local Police Area Commander for Aylesbury Vale.

12:00PM - LUNCH

8 BMG RESEARCH 12:45pm

Contributor:

Dawn Hands, Research Director, BMG Research

Purpose:

The Research Director for BMG Research will provide an expert view on how engagement and consultation exercises are carried out by a non public sector organisation. BMG has over 20 years' experience of delivering high quality research and consultancy to both the private and public sectors.

9 SOUTH CENTRAL AMBULANCE SERVICE 1:45pm

Contributor:

Gill Hodgetts, Head of Communications, South Central Ambulance Service

Purpose:

This is an opportunity for Members to question the Head of Communications on how South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) undertakes its engagement and consultation exercises.

Contributors:

Whole Committee

Purpose:

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group will lead a discussion on the key findings from the day's evidence gathering.

3PM - CLOSE OF MEETING

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

*For further information please contact: Helen Wailling on 01296 383614
Fax No 01296 382538, email: hwailing@buckscc.gov.uk*

Members

Mr B Allen
Mrs B Jennings
Mr D Anson MBE
Mr P Cartwright
Mrs A Davies

Ms R Vigor-Hedderly
Mr H Cadd
Mr P Rogerson
Mrs M Baldwin
Mr R Reed

Co-opted Members

Minutes

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION TASK AND FINISH GROUP
HELD ON FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2010, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL,
AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 11.27 AM.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr B Allen, Mrs M Baldwin, Mr P Cartwright, Mrs A Davies and Mr R Reed

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr M Chard, Policy Officer - Overview and Scrutiny
Ms H Wailing, Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Anson MBE, Mr H Cadd, Mrs B Jennings, Mr P Rogerson and Mrs R Vigor-Hedderly.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3 INTRODUCTION OF THE REVIEW

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

Members then discussed the format for the review, and who should be invited to provide information and evidence.

The following points were made:

- The Council Consultation Policy should be looked at, including the Council's definition of a Consultation. Kim Parfitt (Senior Communications Officer) and Sarah Ashmead (Head of Policy, Performance and Communications) should be invited to speak to members about this. The Deputy Leader could also be invited to give information on the process for consultations.
- Current and past consultations should be looked at, as well as the process used for consultations (who decides that a consultation is needed? Where is the democratic,



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member-led process? Is a consultation always needed? How do you ensure that a consultation is representative? For consultations which affected most/all residents, e.g. changes to libraries or buses, how were residents being targeted for consultation?)

- Consultations looked at could include the Bucks Debate, Waste Disposal (energy from waste), changes to bus routes (although this had already been discussed in some detail by the Overview and Scrutiny Commissioning Committee), changes in library hours and changes to Day Care services. The Cabinet Member and officer should be invited to speak about each of these.
- A Parish Council should be questioned about their view of Council consultations. It was suggested that this be a Parish Council from South Bucks (e.g. Gerrards Cross, Denham or Iver).
- A questionnaire (four questions) could also be sent through the Bucks Association of Local Councils (BALC) by e-mail to Parish Councils. This could include asking them if they would like to attend to give evidence.
- A Notice of motion which had been passed at full Council some years previously, to change 'consultations' to 'public engagement,' should be looked at.
- Officers who led on consultations within services did not seem to take a consistent approach.
- A consultation portal existed. All consultations should be included on the consultation portal and in theory the results from these consultations should feed into Cabinet and Cabinet Member decisions.
- Campaigners' interests were not always the same as patients'/clients' interests.
- A question needed to be asked about whether outcomes from consultations were deliverable – do consultations raise false expectations?
- A countywide e-mail service should exist to contact residents for consultations, although it was also noted that 'one size does not fit all.'
- The Consultation Institute could be contacted as part of the Review. Ben Page, Chief Executive of Ipsos Mori, could also be contacted.
- Members of the Residents' Panel could also be contacted to find out if they felt that their input to consultations had been worthwhile.
- The Transport for London website listed upcoming consultations, and could be looked at as a model.
- A previous waste disposal consultation had been carried out through professionally-facilitated events, which had been effective.
- Elected members should be consulted separately to residents.
- Public engagement did not always mean that anyone needed to respond.
- When constraints (e.g. budget) meant that no choice was available, residents should be provided with information, rather than a consultation. However allowing an option not to consult could be open to abuse.
- Would it be possible to contact previous consultees? This would be checked, as there could be an issue with data protection.
- Bucks County Show – why was this always held in the Aylesbury Vale? Also, why was the Council so involved in the show? Were there other ways of consulting and informing residents?

It was also proposed that the Police and Fire Authority could be contacted to obtain best practice on consultation process, but it was agreed to put this idea on hold due to capacity.

A member of the public, Richard Bates, was in attendance. He suggested that the Milton LiNK could be contacted to obtain best practice as it was very successful, with a lot of members, and was very good at consultations. He also recommended that contact be made with Community Impact Bucks, which was now a countywide organisation.

A member also suggested Age Concern as a VCS organisation which could be contacted.

Agreed:

- Guests should be invited to attend Committee meetings at County Hall, rather than members going to visit guests at outside venues.
- A press release could be prepared for the Review, although it was acknowledged that this was self-selecting. Twitter could also be used.
- A strapline would be put on the Consultation portal to inform people that the Review was being carried out and to invite people to come forward who had been a consultee in the last twelve months.
- Members would go out into the Market Square in Aylesbury to ask passers-by four pre-agreed questions.

Members could do the same in their local areas too. Examples of questions which could be asked: Have you ever taken part in a BCC Consultation? Which one? Did you understand the questions being asked? Did you get feedback on the outcome, and were you satisfied? Those who said they had not taken part in a consultation should be asked if it was because they were not interested or if they had not had information.

Those questioned could be asked for their postcode, to check they were a Buckinghamshire resident.

- Two days would be needed to question those people invited for the Review, plus a 'wash-up' day.

4 GROUP DISCUSSION

See agenda item 3

5 CLOSE OF MEETING

CHAIRMAN

Overview and Scrutiny Scoping Paper

Subject of the Review	Public Engagement and Consultation
Chairman	Avril Davies
Review members, including co-optees	Bruce Allen, Doug Anson, Hedley Cadd, Peter Cartwright, Brenda Jennings, Roger Reed, Paul Rogerson and Ruth Vigor-Hedderly, Mary Baldwin, Mike Appleyard
Officer contact	Michael Chard (x7728)
Purpose of the Review (Reasons for undertaking the review, including where the ideas have come from)	At a time when local authorities are feeling a squeeze on their budgets it is important that the right people are consulted at the right time. Residents are vital to shaping the services the County Council provides and at a time when difficult decisions will have to be made to change the way services are delivered it is vital that residents can influence these policy decisions. The review will seek to examine how the County Council, across all services, goes about consulting with residents and other stakeholders (such as Councillors), identify good practice, benchmark against other authorities and recommend areas of improvement to Cabinet.
Anticipated outcome(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a consistent approach to public engagement and consultation across the County Council • To improve opportunities for residents to influence decision making at the County Council • To improve the transparency of decision making across the Council • To improve the reporting of consultation results and how residents input has influenced the final decision
What is the potential impact of the review on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Equality issues, e.g. access to services, vulnerable groups • Health inequalities • Adding value to the organization • Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve opportunities for residents to influence decisions of the Council • To ensure that any decisions made by the Council are informed by residents and the needs they possess • To make the results of all consultations available to residents and partners • To highlight how resident and partner consultation responses alter decisions made by the Council
Link to Council Corporate Plan priority	Tailor Services to Meet Local Need
Consideration of Local Area Agreement targets	NI004- % of people who feel they can influence a decision in their locality
Link to Sustainable Community Strategies outcomes	None

Overview and Scrutiny Scoping Paper

Key Issues for the review to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does BCC currently consult? • Is there a consistent approach to consultation across each service within BCC? • How do the results of consultations influence decision making at BCC? • How does BCC report the results of consultations and the changes that have been made as a consequence of consultations? • How can the current BCC approach be improved? • What expectations do the public have when BCC engages/consults with them? • Are all consultations appropriate? If there are no options to consult upon, then engaging with the public about service changes should be considered • The involvement of local members in consultation and decision making
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk based research- including analysis of consultations over the previous 12 months • Benchmarking with other local authorities, public sector bodies and the private sector, e.g. Oxfordshire rural bus route consultation • Evidence gathering meetings
Press & Publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release advertising the start of the review • Press release highlighting the outcomes and recommendations from the review
Key background papers	Corporate Consultation Guidelines- BCC
Use of demographics/ needs data	
Written evidence to be provided by:	TBC
Oral evidence to be provided by:	Kim Parfitt- Corporate Consultation Officer- BCC
Potential partners	None
Resources required	Policy Officer Democratic Services Officer Support
Timetable	September- December 2010 Evidence gathering meetings to be held on 17 th and 24 th September
Reporting mechanism	Overview and Scrutiny Commissioning Committee- December 2010 (provisional) Cabinet- January 2011 (provisional)