

For publication

Community Engagement Briefing

Meeting: Community, customer and organisational scrutiny committee

Date: 21 November 2017

Cabinet portfolio: Governance

Report by: Assistant Director Policy and Communications

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To update scrutiny members on community engagement service improvements following the 2015 findings of the Queen's Park Sports Centre project group and other related community engagement and consultation scrutiny discussions.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Council's Community Engagement Strategy was approved by full Council on 15th October 2014.

2.2 The strategy brings together Chesterfield Borough Council's community engagement activities into one overarching framework for the Borough to better coordinate how we engage with our customers and communities.

2.3 The Strategy incorporates our community engagement standards including guidance on consultation subjects, timing, accessibility, transparency, and other practical considerations such as choosing the appropriate type of engagement and tools.

3.0 Community engagement standards and legal considerations

- 3.1 The community engagement strategy includes a set of guiding principles that inform the way we carry out community engagement activities. These standards are based on the Government's Consultation Principles Guidance (2013) which replaced the Code of Practice on Consultation (2008) and also draw upon the knowledge and experience of the Consultation Institute. The standards are attached at Appendix A.
- 3.2 The community engagement group which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Governance and has representatives from all relevant service areas is the custodian of these standards for Chesterfield Borough Council. The group has received bespoke training on community engagement standards and consultation law and meet regularly to:
- To maintain and deliver the Council's Community Engagement Strategy, providing direction for how we engage with the public, businesses, employees and elected members
 - To provide a focus on the corporate standards within the Community Engagement Strategy, and to support and advise services accordingly
 - To encourage and support the co-ordination of community engagement activity thereby reducing duplication and improving service delivery, including maintaining a corporate community engagement schedule
 - To prioritise the resources available for community engagement activity and to identify and minimise any risks
 - To provide a forum for developing engagement activities, raising issues and solving problems around community engagement, including research and consultation
 - To facilitate and disseminate best practice with the Council's services and external partners
 - To increase good practice in engagement processes by sharing expertise, information and resources
 - To embed a culture of engagement comprehensively across the organisation
- 3.3 By ensuring that we adhere to the community engagement standards and that we engage all service areas, we can effectively support the Council's commitment to achieving high-level equalities standards.

4.0 Stakeholder analysis and developing engagement and communication plans

- 4.1 For each community engagement project stakeholder analysis takes place. This developed with the service and is bespoke for each project. The key considerations are:
- Who could potentially be affected by our policies, proposals and services etc.?
 - Which organisations and people have an interest in its successful or unsuccessful conclusion?
 - Which people or organisations have influence, power or can assist us with policies, proposals and services?
- 4.2 Once stakeholder analysis is complete a community engagement methodology and communication plan can be developed. These can vary in length and detail, depending on the size and complexity of the issue. A good example is the engagement and communication plan for Sheffield City Region devolution consultation. Because of the complexity of the issue and the large range of stakeholders involved an intensive mixed methodology engagement and communication plan was developed which included:
- Extensive coverage of the consultation in Your Chesterfield, Links Line e-bulletin, posters and leaflets
 - Extensive social media campaign including Facebook, Twitter and the use of video key messages
 - Display at the Customer Services Centre and mini-displays at key public buildings
 - A number of public events at a variety of locations and times across the Borough
 - Online surveys which could be completed using different device types including desktop, laptop, tablets or smart phones
 - Paper surveys and freepost return available at a variety of public buildings
 - Talks with Q&A for a variety of key stakeholders for example equality and diversity forum, over 50s groups etc.
 - Extensive engagement with the business community including Destination Chesterfield business breakfasts, Chamber of Commerce events and key client arrangements
 - Engagement with elected members including group meetings and scrutiny. There were also engagement activities with Staveley Town Council and Brimington Parish Council






- 4.3 For large scale consultation and engagement activity for example the Tenancy agreement changes for housing tenants we use pre-consultation dialogue with key stakeholders. This helps us to develop a better understanding of stakeholder engagement requirements, key issues and can help shape engagement and communication plans.
- 4.4 Similar engagement and communication plans are developed for policies, proposals and activities that impact on employees. Where possible pre-consultation dialogue with trade unions is used to develop plans.


5.0 Techniques and technology

- 5.1 In order to improve the quality of community engagement within the Borough, we recognise different ways by which people can influence decision making. There are a number of types of community engagement, including:
- Information giving: Communities are provided with information on public services, including how to access them, their performance, future changes, and progress on issues affecting them. Input from the community only occurs if an individual chooses to contact the organisation.
 - Community consultation: A process of dialogue that leads to a decision where the views of a community should be taken into account. Decision makers ensure they have taken into account all views and information before reaching a decision.
 - Community involvement: People are involved in the design and development of community activities and services in cooperation with organisations. People who use services have a say in decisions about the purchasing, provision and monitoring of services. This requires more input from the community as people will need to play an active role within the decision-making process.
 - Devolved responsibility: Like community involvement but also includes a responsibility for the community to deliver the

activities, actions and services agreed by the decision-makers. This requires the greatest amount of community input.

5.2 To support these engagement types we use a variety of tools, techniques and technology. The table below shows some of these which we can mix and match from to develop our methodologies.

<p>1. Activote</p> 	<p>Activote is an electronic voting system. There are a number of ways in which we use this voting software including public meetings, local democracy activity with children and young people, team meetings, away days, staff training, focus groups, budget and priority setting meetings etc.</p> <p>When Activote is used, attendees are asked questions via an electronic presentation. Each attendee is given a hand-held voting device to respond to the questions, and feedback is given instantly. Responses can be anonymous.</p>
<p>2. Electronic Surveys</p> 	<p>We have invested in the highly efficient survey data, data capture and analysis tool, SNAP. This software can be used to produce online questionnaires suitable for a variety of stakeholders. Web surveys are hosted on an external server and can be developed for use with PCs, laptops, tablets and Smart phones. These can also be used for the basis for telephone and text surveys.</p>
<p>3. Paper Surveys</p> 	<p>SNAP is also used to create paper surveys which can then be scanned for automatic data capture. The same survey can be produced in a number of different formats (eg, paper, web) with all of the responses collated together for analysis.</p>
<p>4. Focus Group and Informal Meetings</p> 	<p>Representatives from a range of services are trained in focus group facilitation. Focus groups, workshops and informal meetings are used with employees, partners and the wider public where qualitative information is gathered in an interactive session.</p>
<p>5. Mobile Housing Office</p> 	<p>The mobile office is used to engage with tenants and residents locally. The mobile office enables us to consult flexibly and can be quickly deployed to speak to people about current issues on estates.</p>

<p>6. Other 2 way communications</p> 	<p>There are a range of other ways that the public can take part in two-way communication and engagement with the Council, including: the CBC website, online petitions, using the Council's CCCs system (Comments, Complaints, Compliments and Enquiries), via social media and other apps.</p>
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6.0 Next steps

- 6.1 During the life of the current Community Engagement Strategy we have learned the importance of aligning community engagement activity and internal and external communications. Following the merger of Policy, Communications and Democratic teams as part during 2016/17 we have been making significant improvements using a more collaborative and flexible resource approach. This will be further improved as our teams co-locate following the completion of the town hall restack.
- 6.2 For 2018/19 we have an opportunity to further embed this activity as both the Community Engagement and Internal/External Communications strategies are due for review. We are aiming to combine these strategies into one overarching strategy for this area of activity so that we can continue to improve our combined engagement and communication offer.