

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12 August 2019

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting? **Yes**

Public Engagement and Consultation Task and Finish Group Update

Final Decision-Maker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Lead Member(s)	Councillors Bruneau, Hayward, Pound and Reilly
Lead Officer/Author	Councillor Pound and Mark O'Callaghan, Scrutiny and Engagement Officer
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That Councillor Hayward be appointed Chairman of the Task and Finish Group;
3. That the Task and Finish Group objective to draft a Public Engagement and Consultation Policy be agreed

Explain how this report relates to the Corporate Priorities in the Five Year Plan:

- Our people – Alongside operating as a sustainable business, councillors and staff need to be equipped to lead and manage the services of the future. This will need effective leadership, relevant skills and high levels of wellbeing.
- Our services – The Council needs to operate in a sustainable way, delivering services that enhance the quality of life for our residents and customers.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Task and Finish Working Group	11 July 2019
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 August 2019

Public Engagement and Consultation Task and Finish Group Update

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report sets out the main findings from the Task and Finish Group (TFG) meeting held on 11 July and set out proposals from the TFG on how to proceed.
 - 1.2 Engagement and consultation are both important elements in the democratic process and it is felt by the TFG that the Council will benefit from a policy and standard in respect of both.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The TFG was established at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 10 June 2019 and consisted of Councillors Bruneau, Hayward, Pound and Reilly.
 - 2.2 The initiative for the TFG came from comments made by newly elected members at the New Member Induction Day based on their experience prior to the election.
 - 2.3 On 11 July 2019, Councillors Bruneau, Hayward and Pound met to scope out initial thoughts on the direction of the TFG. The following notes were subsequently agreed by the TFG.
 - 2.4 Engagement is the social and cultural process of facilitating access to information so that stakeholders have an appreciation of planned developments and changes and thereby have the opportunity to shape and/or be shaped by the ensuing consultation process.
 - 2.5 Consultation is the formalised process of ensuring that those with valid and discrete views on developments and changes are able to have their voices heard in an open, accessible and respectful manner and that, through consultation, those views will be considered in the decision-making process.
 - 2.6 The need for engagement and consultation permeates much of the Council's work. The TFG identified a range of different stakeholder relationships where more formalised processes are required - from officers to members, officers to the public, members to residents, members to partner organisations and so on.
 - 2.7 It is suggested that this TFG focuses only on public engagement and consultation, i.e. the manner in which the Council (Officers and Members and those organisations contracted to the Council) engages with residents across the Borough on developments and/or changes which may impact upon them.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The TFG proposes to bring forward to OSC a draft public engagement and consultation policy appended with draft performance standards against which to gauge current and future performance by the end of 2019. In order to achieve this goal, the TFG propose to take evidence from such persons and organisations which it feels would be relevant and suggests that any resulting policy should itself be subject to public consultation.
- 3.2 The TFG nominates Councillor Hayward as the chairman of the TFG.
- 3.3 The OSC is at liberty to disregard these recommendations and take no further action or to instruct the TFG to pursue an alternative course.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To support the recommendation of the TFG. Perceived lack of engagement and consultation was a strong, reoccurring theme of the election. Newly elected members have the unique perspective of the uninitiated and could be expected to have a more direct experience of public expectation.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 This report is potentially the first step in a process and sets out the initial thoughts of the members of the TFG. The report itself has not been subject to outside consultation but could lead to a policy which would be subject to consultation.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Subject to approval by OSC, the TFG will identify stakeholders it wishes to approach for evidence and commence work on a draft report.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal including Human Rights Act	<i>This report does not propose any policy changes and therefore there are no specific implications at this time.</i>	Mark O'Callaghan, Scrutiny and Engagement Officer 08/08/19
Finance and other resources		
Staffing establishment		
Risk		

Management		
Data Protection		
Environment and Sustainability		
Community Safety		
Health and Safety		
Health and Wellbeing		
Equalities		

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with, and form part of, the report:

- None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None