

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

07 October 2019

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

Yes

## Consultation and Engagement Task and Finish Group Update

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

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

That the report be noted.

**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

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Task and Finish Working Group	05 September 2019
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	07 October 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 05 September 2019 and set out proposals from the TFG on how to proceed.
  - 1.2 This report follows on from the update on 12 August 2019.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following endorsement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) on 12 August 2019 of the proposed way forward. Councillors Bruneau, Hayward and Pound met on 05 September 2019 to continue with the work of the TFG. The following notes were subsequently agreed by the TFG.
- 2.2 There was a self-evident lack of a culture of genuine consultation and engagement which was highlighted, in part, by the following examples:
  - a) Ward members were not made aware of meetings between officers and retailers affected by the Calverley Square development on 4 September;
  - b) Press releases were issued before members were advised
- 2.3 A formal policy was needed to define how to consult and measures by which compliance with the policy could be monitored. The policy would focus on:
  - a) Internal communications (between officers and members (o2m) and between members and members (m2m))
  - b) Public consultation and engagement (between the council and public (c2p))
- 2.4 Several examples of good practice had been investigated by members. The TFG discussed which could be emulated and agreed to look further into:
  - a) 'Citizens' Space': operated by London Borough of Hackney
  - b) 'We Ask, You Say, We Do': operated by Winchester City Council
- 2.5 In addition to the above investigations, members discussed developing the following ideas:
  - a) Citizens' Space style platform for c2p
  - b) Intranet / web based platform for o2m where officers post information affecting wards that members can access
    - Central resource to reduce duplication
    - Categorisable by ward so members can easily access/filter relevant information
    - Informal and easy to use

- Need to be used genuinely so members have advance notice of information
  - Weekly planning notices could go through such a system (for example)
- c) Searchable web based platform where public can submit questions to be answered (authoritatively, i.e. not by other members of the public) and not just the questions the Council wants to answer.
- d) Whether any of these can be linked to the single customer account?
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### 3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The TFG seeks the endorsement of the OSC to continue with its work and welcomes any comments.
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### 4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To support the recommendation of the TFG. A 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 The report is an update as to the work of the TFG and has not been subject to outside consultation. However, the work of the TFG could ultimately 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 continue with its work.
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### 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Legal</b> 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 27 September 2019
<b>Finance</b> and other resources		
<b>Staffing</b> establishment		
<b>Risk</b>		

<b>Management</b>		
<b>Data Protection</b>		
<b>Environment and Sustainability</b>		
<b>Community Safety</b>		
<b>Health and Safety</b>		
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		
<b>Equalities</b>		

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- None

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## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None