

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



CONSTITUTION ADVISORY GROUP
DATE: 1st June 2010

TITLE	Consultation Strategy
REPORT OF	Assistant Director of Communications / Consultation Manager

PURPOSE	To outline the current Council Strategies/ Polices which cover consultation requirements.
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ORIGIN OF PROPOSAL	The Council's Constitution Advisory Group have been considering the Council's Policy Framework. At the meeting on 1 st April 2010 the Constitution Advisory Group requested information about the Council's strategic approach to consultation.
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RECOMMENDATION:	
(1)	Consider the aspects of consultation which are already covered in the Council's <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication Strategy ▪ Community Engagement Strategy and ▪ Consultation Toolkit (to be developed in 2010) And consider what, if any, further issues need to be addressed.
(2)	Consider if the Constitution Advisory Group wish to recommend to the Executive to consider having a separate strategy as per the Policy Framework list.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The Council's approach to Consultation is detailed in two existing Council Strategies; Communications Strategy and Community Engagement Strategy.
2. The following aspects are covered in the Communication Strategy:
 - Corporate Consultation Team's role in providing training, advice and support to services in conducting consultation and
 - A forward plan of the corporate consultation and market research activity that will be carried out by the Consultation Team.
3. The corporate consultation work for the year ahead includes:
 - Maintaining the Council's consultation database
 - Establish a framework contract with research suppliers to ensure best value for money
 - Six monthly reputation tracker surveys
 - Bi-annual Place Survey (2010)
 - Annual budget consultation
 - Set up stakeholder database
 - Set up social media engagement tools
 - Run quarterly online polls
 - Member survey
 - Stakeholder survey
 - Internal satisfaction survey
 - Refresh employee engagement survey (2011)

The team will also support services in their consultation activities.
4. The following aspects of consultation are covered in the Community Engagement Strategy:
 - The Council's response to the Duty to Involve, including various mechanisms for the public to influence our decision making, officer and member guidance and training, coordination of consultation and engagement activities.
 - A set of agreed values for consultation and engagement activities to ensure a consistent approach, all engagement and consultation should be planned, timely, transparent, inclusive, proportionate, resourced, evaluated and published.
 - How Members will be supported in their role as community leaders.
 - How we will coordinate our engagement and consultation work with key partners.
 - How we will measure success through national indicators.

5. In 2010 the Consultation Team is developing a consultation toolkit. The toolkit will be a guidance document for officers in designing, managing and analysing consultation. The toolkit will cover:
- The Council's statutory requirements around consultation
 - When to consult
 - Who to consult (including the role of members)
 - How to consult (including the 12 week consultation period guidance)
 - Choosing and designing consultation methods
 - Evaluating consultation

The toolkit can also be used by Members to assist them in evaluating consultation results.

Contact Officer Details:	Key Background Papers:
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