



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE LEADER

TOPIC – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONSULTATION INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed request, the Leader may require the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

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SUMMARY

The Scrutiny ISG reported the outcome of their review to The Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2014 (Report OS90 refers). The minute extract from that meeting is attached as Appendix 1 to this notice.

The recommendations of the ISG were considered by the previous Leader Cllr Keith Wood and have been finalised by Cllr Rob Humby since becoming Leader.

DECISION

Having considered the recommendations of the Localism ISG and also comments made at Cabinet, the final recommendations of the Localism ISG are agreed, subject to the following set of principles to ensure consultation is effective and proportional:

- The consultation guidance shall be applied to major projects (i.e. any external projects on the Project Register).

- Before any consultation is planned, officers will discuss the scale, aims and methodology of the consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- Consideration should be given to whether there will be multiple requirements for consultation during a project and whether the timing of these can be combined.
- Officers will carefully consider what is being consulted on, and what impact the results of the consultation will have on the subject's outcome, having regard to what might be deliverable so as to not raise undue concern with consultees.
- Where possible consultation should be on specific set of proposals or options. Where the consultation is to be on a more general subject (e.g. satisfaction with your local area etc.), the consultation should make clear how the information will be used to influence the Council's work.
- Members will be advised during the planning stage of any consultation which will take place in their ward.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

All of the alternative options were considered by the original ISG who have recommended the actions within this PHD.

The set of additional principles for consultation have been developed to ensure that any consultation undertaken is of an appropriate scale, involves the right people and Members and is only performed when the results can have an impact on the Council's work.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resource implications for each of the recommendations are mainly staff time and are met in the following ways:

Prior to the commencement of a project, officers consider the appropriateness of a consultation and how the results can feed in to the work. The Projects Team produce a Stakeholder and Communications plan for major projects which establishes timescales and the most appropriate methods of communication for each stakeholder depending on the scale and nature of the project. Training on the principles of project management is planned for the coming year, which will pick up on the issue of appropriate consultation for projects not managed by the Project Team.

The Engage website is due for a refresh and this will take place during 2014/15.

Members are often involved in the preliminary stages of a consultation process and feed back to relevant participants should be a priority. However the level of feedback from consultations is not consistent across the Council and the Policy Team will be promoting the use of the Engage website, and developing a consultation training package for staff.

If the recommendations of the ISG are approved, the recommendations can be met through existing staff resources.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

Members of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee through consideration of Report OS90.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

None

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

N/A

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 04.09.14

Councillor Rob Humby – Leader

**APPENDIX – MINUTE EXTRACT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD 20 JANUARY 2013**

FINAL REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP
(Report OS90 refers)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Power (Chairman of the Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG)) introduced the Report. In summary, Councillor Power explained that consultation was a key part of all projects, where it had been concluded that it was appropriate to be undertaken.

Councillor Wood welcomed the Report and reminded Members that not all projects required extensive consultation and a careful balance should be achieved with the process designed to be appropriate to the nature of the project. Consultation should be carefully worded, so as not to raise public expectations on potential outcomes that were unlikely to be achievable.

During further discussion, Councillor Power recognised the importance of consulting with hard-to-reach-groups wherever possible, including those unable to access electronic methods. However, a balance had to be made with regard to associated additional costs and appropriateness of the specific project.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Councillor Power and the members of the ISG for their work in producing the Group's recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That following recommendations of the Consultation Informal Scrutiny Group be supported by The Overview and Scrutiny Committee for referral to Cabinet for implementation:

1. Prior to the commencement of a project, officers should establish the degree to which consultation is likely to contribute to a successful outcome.
2. All projects should include a consultation plan at inception to:
 - establish timescales, techniques, costings etc;
 - to determine the most appropriate forms of consultation;
 - involve local members to ensure the scale and nature of the consultation will be the most effective and reach the relevant audiences.
3. Refresh the Engage web pages to include:
 - consider renaming Engage to more accurately reflect its purpose;
 - promote the toolkit to both officers and members so that it is used more regularly and consistently across the organisation;
 - incorporate relevant parts of the Statement of Community Involvement, that add value to this on-line resource as it covers all aspects of what, where, when, who, why and how;
 - ensure that the Engage calendar is updated regularly, or the calendar deleted. At present the existence of the calendar sets an expectation that all consultations are shown and this is not the case;

- create a simple checklist for use by members and officers to include the matters covered by 'Engage' to ensure a consistent approach.

4. To involve local Members:

- in advance of a consultation exercise, use members expertise to plan the consultation, particularly with regard to local groups to engage with, and events or venues to use;
- during the consultation to promote the project and the opportunity to comment;
- provide feedback to the local community.

5. To instigate a training session for staff and members on the principles and concepts of consultation to including the use of Survey Monkey and other best practice techniques.