

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **19 November 2020**
Title: **Community Consultation & Engagement –
Task and Finish Group Concluding Report**
Portfolio Area: **Communications – Cllr Hopwood**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **N**

Date next steps can be taken:
The recommendations arising from this report will be presented to the Executive meeting to be held on 3 December 2020

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- 1) Note the work of the Community Consultation & Engagement Task & Finish Group;**
- 2) Endorse the draft Community Consultation & Engagement Strategy; and**
- 3) RECOMMEND that Executive consider and adopt the draft Strategy.**

1 Executive summary

- 1.1 At Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 16th July 2020, it was resolved to form a Task and Finish Group to develop a Consultation and Engagement Strategy for the Council
- 1.2 A group was formed to develop the strategy with the agreed Terms of Reference set out in Appendix A to this report.
- 1.3 Members have met a number of times in order to consider the principles for consultation and engagement that the Council should adopt.
- 1.4 Having considered best practice and input from the Local Government Association, this report sets out the conclusions of the Task and Finish Group.

2 Background

- 2.1 At the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 16th of July 2020, the Chairman put forward a proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group to develop a Consultation and Engagement Strategy.
- 2.2 In discussion, Members were supportive of this suggestion and a Consultation and Engagement Strategy Task and Finish Group comprising of Cllrs Birch, Chown, Reeve, Rose (Group Chairman), Spencer and Thomas was established. The Councils Executive Lead for Communications, Cllr Hopwood was also invited to attend the meetings.
- 2.3 The Group was tasked with developing proposals for how the Council consult and engage and presenting its concluding report to the Panel meeting to be held on 19 November 2020.

3 Actions of the group

- 3.1 On the 16th of September 2020 the Task and Finish Group attended a workshop on best practise for community engagement, delivered by an LGA Specialist. This session included information on how and why Councils should consult and engage with our communities.
- 3.2 The Task and Finish Group then met on the 15th of October 2020 to agree its scope and terms of reference. The Members of the group then looked over Community Engagement Strategies from five other councils, preparing reports detailing the positive aspects of the strategies. The group Chairman worked with the Head of Strategy and Head of Communications to create an initial draft using the comments and ideas of the group as a starting point.
- 3.3 The group then met on the 29th of October 2020 to look over, contribute to, and edit the initial draft. After the meeting, the views of Members were integrated into the draft for further consideration by the members of the Task and Finish Group. Members of the group then had further opportunity to submit comments before we met on the 5th on November 2020 to finalise the draft.

- 3.4 Despite some difficulties at the beginning, due to lockdown disruptions and availability of Officers who were also supporting the Councils ongoing response, I am very happy with the work of the Task and Finish Group and the draft strategy that we have created.
- 3.5 The Councils Head of Strategy and Head of Communications were hugely supportive of the process and it was a pleasure to work with them. All of the input from members of the group was of a very high standard and I can safely say that we worked very well together.
- 3.6 I believe that community engagement is very important to the ongoing success of the council and I look forward to seeing the engagement strategy in its final form, and to see how it will be used to further build our relationship with the communities in South Hams.

4 Outcomes/outputs

- 4.1 Task and Finish Members have created a draft Community Engagement Strategy that they endorse (by majority, as there were 2 absent from the final meeting).
- 4.2 The draft Community Engagement Strategy is set out in Appendix B to this report. It should be noted that the document is not in a finished format and, after consideration by both this Panel and then the Executive, the Council’s Design Team will produce a final version to be published for circulation.
- 4.3 A delivery plan will also be required to support the Strategy. This should include specific actions and deliverables that set out how we achieve the aims of the strategy.

5 Options available and consideration of risk – future recommendations;

- 5.1 The Panel are asked to consider and endorse the draft strategy framework attached at Appendix B.
- 5.2 The Panel are further asked to recommend that Executive consider and adopt the draft strategy.

6 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	
Legal/Governance	Y	Effective Consultation and Engagement is a key aspect of good Governance.

Financial	Y	There may be financial implications as a result of the Strategy when the delivery plan is created but at this stage there are no financial implications.
Risk	Y	There is a risk that the Council overcommits to consult and engage through the strategy. It is important to say that the Strategy sets out a wide range of Consultation and Engagement methods. The key is that the Council is upfront on the level of engagement and influence participants can have.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	Developing a Consultation and Engagement Strategy is a positive step in ensuring that we reach out to a wide range of individuals and there are specific considerations of how we will take steps to overcome barriers to participation
Safeguarding	N	
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	
Other implications	N	

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A - Community Consultation & Engagement Task and Finish group – Terms of Reference; and
Appendix B - Community Consultation & Engagement draft strategy.