

Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 March 2019

Consultations - Task and Finish Group

1. **Contacts**

Sarah Parker, PR Manager

Tel: 01243 534537 Email: sparker@chichester.gov.uk

Laurence Foord, Divisional Manager

Communications, Licensing & Events

Tel: 01243 534742 Email: lfoord@chichester.gov.uk

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 The OSC Committee are asked to note the report relating to the review carried out by the Task and Finish Group.

2.2 The OSC Committee to confirm that they are satisfied with the progress made to date and are in agreement with the proposed future improvements.

3. **Background**

3.1 At the first Task and Finish Group meeting during September 2018, members confirmed they were satisfied with the way in which the council's communications were currently delivered and were of the opinion that the focus of the group needed to be on consultations.

3.2 The initial meeting focused on providing members of the group with an update on the changes that had been made since the council's consultation function had moved to the Communications Team. This included reviewing the results from the research and benchmarking that had been carried out, as well as considering future improvements. Members were also asked for their feedback on consultation delivery and associated communications.

3.3 A number of concerns were raised around how the council consults on planning issues. It was explained that planning consultations are managed by Development Management, within a specific legislative framework. The service has its own software system, which meets its specific needs. However, the communications team supports them on specific projects. A meeting is due to be arranged for the Task and Finish Group to discuss their specific concerns with planning.

3.4 During a second meeting in January 2019, members were asked to review the improvements made to the consultation web area. They were also asked if they were in agreement with the changes that had been made to date and for their feedback on proposed future improvements.

4. Outcomes

- 4.1 A consultation toolkit has been created to help staff plan and deliver successful consultations. Please see appendix 3.
- 4.2 The 'Let's Talk' brand has been launched and promoted to encourage more residents and businesses to have their say on council services and projects.
- 4.3 Each consultation now has its own bespoke communication plan, with regular review points that enable us to try alternative communication methods if we feel that the response rate can be improved.
- 4.4 The monitoring and benchmarking reports show an improvement in response rates. They also show that in similar consultations we are achieving higher response rates than our neighbouring authorities. Please see appendix 1.
- 4.5 Since the launch of the 'Let's Talk Panel' more than 350 people have signed up. The majority of these are communicated with by email, but those without computers receive paper copies.
- 4.6 A communications plan has been created for the 'Let's Talk Panel'. The first stage of this has been delivered, but the second stage will be delivered throughout 2019 and will focus on hard to reach target groups, including sixth form, college and university students.
- 4.6 With the input of the task and finish group, the web area has been restructured and rewritten to make it easier for customers to navigate. Further improvements have been identified and these are currently being implemented or investigated – including a direct link from the home page.
- 4.7 The council's magazine 'initiatives' now has a dedicated area allocated to 'Let's Talk'. This can be used to update people covering – 'we asked, you said, we did' – as well as running surveys through the magazine.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 To continue to make the web improvements identified by the task and finish group and to test these with a 'resident focus group'.
- 5.2 To deliver the second stage of the communications plan, focusing on hard to reach groups.
- 5.3 To continue to promote and encourage people to join the 'Let's Talk Panel'. Future plans also include organising coffee mornings where we can gather feedback from our customers and creating key forums for significant reviews or projects.
- 5.4 To identify key events in the district where we can promote the 'Let's Talk Panel' and key consultations.

- 5.6 To continue to explore new ways of increasing participation in consultations and response rates.
- 5.7 To encourage our members to work with us in promoting consultations in their communities.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1 The group discussed a wide range of approaches and were happy with the proposals put forward.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no resource and/or legal implications raised by this report.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The council’s magazine, ‘initiatives’, now has a dedicated area allocated to ‘Let’s Talk’. This is being used to run surveys and update residents on how the council is responding to their feedback.
- 8.3 The Communications Team is also identifying community events that it can attend to further promote the ‘Let’s Talk Panel’ and current consultations.
- 8.4 The team is also actively using social media to promote its consultations.
- 8.5 The team intends to form a ‘focus group’ to review the consultation web area.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 There are no community impact and/or corporate risks raised by this report.

10. Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following?	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		X
Climate Change and Biodiversity		X
Human Rights and Equality Impact		X
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) There are no significant implications for processing data likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. Advice has been obtained from CDC Legal Services in relation to those participating in the ‘Let’s Talk’ initiative.	X	
Health and Wellbeing		X
Other (please specify)		X

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Benchmarking results

Appendix 2 – Monitoring results

Appendix 3 – Consultation Toolkit

Appendix 4 -- Let's talk branding and sample materials

12. Background Papers

12.1 Task and Finish group final report