

Chichester District Council
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 November 2019

Consultations - Task and Finish Group

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendations

2.1 The OSC Committee are asked to note the report relating to the review on planning consultations 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 Between September 2018 and March 2019, the Task and Finish Group met to review the improvements made to the consultation process and identify any areas of concern. While the group were happy with the progress made on general consultations, a number of concerns were raised around how the council consults on planning issues. It was explained that planning consultations associated with applications are managed by the Development Management Division (Development Management) with policy formation being overseen by the Planning Policy, Conservation and Design Division (Planning Policy) and that both operate within specific legislative frameworks.

It was explained that both services have their own software system, which met their specific needs, however, the Communications Team provided support on certain projects. In 2018 online consultation software for planning policy consultations had been introduced following a procurement process, further to member concerns about the accessibility of the previous system. The new software was used for the Local Plan Review Preferred Approach consultation between December 2018 and February 2019.

- 3.4 A report was taken to this Committee to update members on the improvements that had been made to the consultation process and to inform them that a meeting had been arranged between the Task and Finish group and the appropriate officers from Planning to further review concerns relating to the way the council consult on planning matters. The Committee agreed that they were happy with the improvements that had been made to general consultations, but that they would like a further update following the meeting with the planning. Officer undertook to arrangement a specific session on this matter.
- 3.5 The Task and Finish Group met with the Divisional Managers ('DM') for Development Management, Planning Policy and Communications, Events and Licensing along with Public Relations Manager and at that time the Consultation & Information Officer. Both DM for Development Management and DM for Planning Policy gave presentations explaining the statutory rules that have to be followed and the procedures and processes that the Council have in place for planning consultations, including the added ability for the public to track the progress of planning applications through the Council's My Alerts system. The new online consultation system for planning policy consultations was referred to with an offer to demonstrate how the system worked.

4. Outcomes

- 4.1 Members were able to thoroughly question all officers involved in the planning consultations and the promotion of these.
- 4.2 Officers were able to reassure the Task and Finish Group of the policies and procedures in place and the parameters worked within. With regard to Development Management this involved publicising applications in accordance with the Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Council's 'Publicity for Planning Applications - Code of Practice'. With regard to Planning Policy officers referred to the extensive publicity that was undertaken by the Communications Team for the Local Plan review consultation, in addition to direct communications to all Parish Councils, statutory consultees and any other person that had asked to be notified about the Local Plan consultations.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 A number of proposals were agreed by the Task and Finish Group for officers to deliver. These were;
- I. For representatives of the Development Team and Planning Policy Team to provide an update at a future All Parishes Meeting or similar forum(s) on their work and the statutory guidelines..
 - II. To promote the 'My Alert' service to district councillors and parish clerks and to encourage parish councils to work with us to help promote consultations.
 - III. To explain what pre-planning applications advice is and what it entails as part of future Members' induction process.
 - IV. To encourage Members to act as consultation 'champions' and to encourage their local residents to participate.
 - V. To feature the relevant planning team(s) and their role(s) more heavily within the Council's magazine, social media pages and other communication channels.

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 planning teams have to follow statutory guidelines when consulting with the public.
- 8.2 These activities are then promoted and supported by the Public Relations and Consultation team.

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 any consultation	X	
Health and Wellbeing		X
Other (please specify)		X

12. Background Papers

12.1 None