
Future Council Scrutiny Committee – 7th September, 2022

Report of the Chair of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee Working Group

Feedback from the Future Council Scrutiny Committee Working Group – Consultation Process Review Across the Authority

Purpose

1. To provide feedback from the Future Council Scrutiny Committee Working Group meeting held on 27th July, 2022 to consider the consultation process review across the Authority.

Recommendation

2. That the Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the report.
3. That the Scrutiny Committee considers the following recommendations:-
 - That the Chief Executives Office to lead a review of consultation processes across all directorates, to collate information and identify best practice areas to inform a consistent corporate approach.
 - That the Scrutiny Committee support the continued use of a multi-channel approach to communicating with the wider public and key stakeholders to raise awareness of consultations and encourage participation.

Background

4. At its meeting on 8th June, 2022, the Future Council Scrutiny Committee agreed that the Future Council Scrutiny Committee

Working Group would consider the consultation process review across the authority on Wednesday 27th July, 2022.

5. The meeting on 27th July, 2022 was attended by the Director of Regeneration and Enterprise, Head of Planning and Head of Communications and Public Affairs. During the meeting the different types of consultation/engagement with the public that was required to be undertaken as part of the planning process, and other long-term projects, all of which were heavily regulated through the Town and Country Planning Act were discussed.
6. During the meeting Members made comments and asked questions and responses were provided accordingly. A copy of the action notes from the meeting have been circulated to Members of the Working Group and are available from Democratic Services.
7. In light of deliberations at the Working Group, it was apparent that existing resources should be used more effectively to promote/support consultation engagements with the public, suggestions of which included publications within the existing Your Borough Your Home magazine, Council Tax publications and through Elected Members who were considered to be a prime asset within the Community. It was also considered vital that the Equality and Diversity Inclusion Strategy was adopted and instilled in all aspects of a consultation process to ensure all communities were aware and provided with an opportunity to engage in any process.
8. Whilst the overall approach to consultations is recognised to be satisfactory, it is considered that more needs to be done in relation to working together as one Council and sharing information across directorates to provide a centralised and consistent approach.
9. Following discussion, Members agreed to formulate the recommendations as set out in paragraph 3 above for consideration.

Finance

10. The costs of operating the scrutiny arrangements will be contained within existing budgetary allocations.



Law

11. Scrutiny Committees are established in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the requirements of the Council's Constitution, which was adopted under the Local Government Act 2000, subsequent legislation and associated Regulations and Guidance.
12. Working Groups are not Committees as defined by Section 101 of the Local Government Act, 1972 and can only make recommendations.

Risk Management

13. There are no risks identified arising from this report. The Council is committed to adopting best practice in its management of risk. It aims to ensure risk is maintained at an acceptable level in order to maximise opportunities and demonstrate that it has given full consideration of the implications of risk to the delivery and achievement of its outcomes, strategic aims and priorities.

Equality Impact

14. Provision exists within the Council's scrutiny arrangements for overview and scrutiny to be undertaken of the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

Human Resources / Organisational Development

15. The issues referred to in this report are administered within the resources available to the Democratic Services Team with support from Directorates and other Officers as required.

Commercial/Procurement

16. This report has no impact on the Council's potential to commercially trade.

Council Priorities and Projects

17. In order to deliver the aims and objectives of the Council Plan and contribute to the wider borough vision it is imperative the authority has a sound and robust process in place to consult with its key stakeholders on activity across the authority.



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Councillor E Lawrence
Chair of the Future Council Scrutiny Committee Working Group

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List of Background Papers

The Council's Constitution
Action Notes of the Scrutiny Working Group – 27th July, 2022