

Executive

3 July 2017

<p>Consultation & Engagement Strategy – Cherwell District Council</p>
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Report of Director - Strategy And Commissioning

This report is public

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the joint Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the changes following the benefits realisation review of the performance & insight team (now Strategic Intelligence & Insight Team ('SIIT')).
- 1.2 Note the changes within the action plan for 2017/18.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This report presents the changes to the current consultation and engagement strategy. The current 3-year rolling strategy outlines the principles for consultation and engagement for the council enabling us to continue to improve service delivery by collecting focused and meaningful feedback from residents, communities and customers. This strategy has been reviewed in line with the changes resulting in the creation of the Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team (formally Performance & Insight), whose purpose is to gather and analyse intelligence and insight from customers so the organisation can continually improve to meet corporate and business objectives.
- 2.2 The joint strategy is used as the basis for the annual action plans to guide the specific consultation and engagement events that Cherwell District Council will be undertaking and as such will be owned by the SIIT.
- 2.3 The creation of the SIIT will enable us to take a new approach to strategic direction through consultation and engagement with customers and stakeholders to generate insight and robust evidence and information to review and commission new or improved services. The SIIT will work with the Community Services team to engage face to face with a wide range of stakeholders and customer segments as well as

gaining insight from more significant use of other channels such as online surveys, social media, online data sources and evaluation of events.

3.0 Report Details

3.1 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey

The annual residents' satisfaction survey asks residents of each district questions about how satisfied they are with the general delivery of services by each council. Traditionally this has been the sole major source of insight and the results of this review are used in the annual business planning process.

The survey is intended as a high level overview of general satisfaction and traditionally explored one or two service areas such as environmental services in a little more depth. It was felt however that this did not dive deeply enough into these services to get meaningful insight into how we can improve service delivery or what outcomes customers wanted, and that many services were not covered. It was further felt that trying to do this in an all-encompassing survey would turn people off from responding as it would be very long and time-consuming.

Therefore in order to reach out to as many people as possible and get as many responses as possible, which will give us more confidence in our satisfaction rates, current survey questions are limited to high level satisfaction and do not explore what residents and business expect and want to see in specific service delivery areas.

Instead, in order to gain the insight into these services that is required to make service improvement and meet customer outcome expectations, the SIIT will be conducting a series of deep dive consultations into all services, where targeted service users will be asked a more insightful range of questions.

3.2 Service Deep Dives

The 'service specific' deep dives will, as their name suggests, explore in detail all aspects of service delivery to understand what customer expectations are, gauge whether they are meeting those expectations and where we can make improvements or efficiencies. Working closely with the service teams to design appropriate questions and challenge areas for improvement, the responses will be used to review and build comprehensive service delivery plans that improve on customer satisfaction by delivering the outcomes customers want. These service plans will be used in the corporate business planning process to promote corporate priorities and to drive staff objectives.

The deeper dive approach will consist of a variety of consultation methods:

- Surveys through the online corporate consultation software
- Face to face Q&A/feedback sessions
- Focus groups
- Forums
- Evaluation from events/engagement events

The most effective method will be chosen for each service area and will be relevant to the customer segment and the deeper dives will be scheduled to be repeated at

least once a year for both internal and external customers to ensure we capture the changing market and the commercialisation drive of the council. Lessons learnt from complaints and results from previous surveys will start to produce an evidence base of improving services' relationships with customers and continuing to strive for service improvement and efficiencies across the council.

3.3 Engagement Events

The SIIT will work closely with the Community Services team which manages the council's external engagement events.

A series of Connecting Community events will be delivered across the district, focused on strategic priorities and key issues raised from consultation such as Health & Wellbeing or Rural Isolation communities. These events will encourage a multi-agency approach inviting key voluntary organisations, groups and stakeholders to bring together a depth and wealth of knowledge, support and guidance for local communities.

The delivery of Connecting Community activities is a new approach for 2017/18. This will be managed throughout the year using key district events as platforms to engage targeted audiences to share information and signpost residents to local services and opportunities. These will include the successful town Play Days, electric blanket testing roadshows, health bus events and job fairs focusing on themes around health and wellbeing, older people and isolated communities and young people & families.

3.4 Knowing our Communities

The "knowing our communities" events will be used as a mechanism to share information with staff. A programme of new topics and themes will be provided linking to our voluntary sector partners, statutory groups and key stakeholders and driven by our equalities action plan to deliver events and talks with relevant themes to have an impact within the authority. Staff attendance can be used as part of personal development plans and a way to encourage staff uptake of events and a source of consultation feedback.

3.5 New Residential Developments

As part of the Connecting Communities programme, new developments across the district are engaged and consulted with to make sure new residents are involved in building a strong community moving forward and are aware of District council services as new customers. Connecting Community packs will be made available during 2017/18 to all new residents to signpost individuals to services and opportunities in the district and locally to them.

3.6 Strategic Intelligence and Insight Team ('SIIT')

The SIIT will be the central point and key data controller for all customer insight, understanding who our customers are and what they want from the council. By having ownership across all teams, it will enable the organisation to take a step back and look at an holistic view of the customer to enable better outcomes.

The SIIT and all services will work closely to share information to develop action/service plans that act on insight to improve service delivery.

Key trends and results from the analysis will be shared regularly with senior officers in order to take a more strategic look at the organisation's direction, review performance of service and corporate business plans and budget priorities with evidence based results from our residents/customers. The SIIT will be sensitive to ensure 'consultation overload' is avoided as part of the timetable and prioritisation of deeper dive into services is reviewed.

4.0 Action Plan

- 4.1 The consultation and engagement strategy for 2017-2020 is attached as appendix 1. It sets out the types and methods of engagement and consultation that will be used which will be proportionate and appropriate to the nature of the subject matter and has a much greater emphasis on partnership working.
- 4.2 The action plan for 2017/2018 is attached as appendix 2 and contains local opportunities to consult and engage with the local community and the district as a whole. It sets out the topics to be covered and the audience for which the event/consultation is targeted.

5.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The council has undertaken regular consultations and engagement events since 2009 and the new strategy will build on this foundation. The strategy is supported by meaningful and relevant action plans to provide the detail for how this work will be carried out.
- 5.2 The 2017-18 action plan demonstrates how the council will continue to deliver consultations and public engagement and thereby support the stated equalities objectives over the coming year. Progress will be reported via the performance management framework on a quarterly basis. The equalities objectives are:
- Fair Access and Customer Satisfaction
 - Tackling Inequality and Deprivation
 - Building Strong and Cohesive Communities
 - Positive Engagement and Understanding
 - Demonstrating Our Commitment to Equality

6.0 Consultation

No specific consultation on this report is required.

7.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 7.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To note the report

Option 2: To request additional information on items within this report

8.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications

Comments checked by:

Paul Sutton – Chief Finance Officer 03000 030106

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Legal Implications

8.2 The Council can be under a mandatory legal duty to consult on certain proposed decisions (such as budget setting) and an implied duty to ensure fair decision taking processes in other areas. When consultation takes place due regard must be had to the responses and, where a different approach is taken to the prevailing view arising from the consultation this needs to be expressly justified. In short, proper and effective consultation adds to the robustness and legality of the Council's decision making. It also enables the Council to comply with the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Comments checked by:

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Risk Implications

8.3 All Community Engagement Events require a risk assessment to be conducted and insurance is checked for validity with copies provided to the external venue if required.

Consultation and engagement is managed as part of the services' (Strategic Intelligence & Insight & Community Services) operational risk register and escalated to the corporate risk register as and when necessary.

Comments checked by:

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9.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

Corporate Plan and Equality Framework for local Government

Lead Councillor

Councillor Richard Mould, Lead Member for Performance Management.

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Consultation & Engagement Strategy 2017-2020
Appendix 2	Consultation & Engagement Action Plan 2017/18
Background Papers	
None	
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