



Discussion paper on the proposed Council Consultation Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 Committee members are asked for their comments about this proposed strategy.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2** The attached discussion paper is a response to a review of the 2002 Consultation Strategy. It provides an overview of current consultation activities, proposes a number key strategic objectives and key actions required to deliver a new corporate consultation strategy.

The Strategy is to go to Cabinet in June 2006. Comments and suggestions made to this discussion paper will be considered before the final version is presented to Cabinet.

The revised strategy is not very different from the previous one that was the subject of much consultation. The main change is to suggest that the strategy is brought 'in-house' to the council while retaining close working links with Derby City Partnership. Other changes cover reporting structures, embracing new technologies, enhanced supporting of participation and alignment with the Communications and Consultation Strategy.

- 3** The strategy has five key aims, these are listed below along with bullet points under each to show how the advisory committee members could be affected.

The strategy aims to:

1. strengthen strategic planning and co-ordination of consultation activities and demonstrate how consultation fits into the Council's decision-making processes.
 - planned consultation will make up a council consultation annual plan. This will make it easier to note forthcoming consultation and to co-ordinate similar activities and will help shape the work programme for the advisory committees.
 - the results of consultation will be reported and made public.
2. ensure the effective use of consultation to improve services and policy by supporting officers and members to help them make informed choices on

appropriate consultation methods and delivery.

- the central Consultation Support Team will continue to provide advice on planning, running and evaluating consultation to quality standards.
 - Performance indicators will be developed to monitor how well the council does consultation
3. improve equality of opportunity in consultation using a wide range of methods and technologies to enable participation in consultation especially from 'harder to engage' groups.
- the Consultation Support Team will investigate new methods of consultation for people who are reluctant or unable to take part in more 'usual' methods. The team will advise on consulting with people who are 'harder to reach' in order to maximise a response from these groups.
 - The Advisory Committees will be modernised and more thought given to consultation with the target groups they represent. The Advisory Committees will provide a quality check on the effectiveness of consultation with their interest group.
4. make our consultation processes more meaningful for stakeholders and citizens through better communication about the purpose, topics and outcomes of consultation.
- Information about consultation will be made available on the Council's website. This will show planned, running and closed consultation projects. Results and how these are to be used will also be available.
 - Consultation projects will be properly explained and feedback offered to participants
5. support the management of collected data and results to avoid repetition and build an 'information bank' by area and population group.
- information will be collected ethically and in ways which make it possible compare and collate findings.
- 4 Members of the Advisory Committee are asked to consider and comment on these aims and the way that they affect consultation. The full discussion document, including proposed quality standards is attached.

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Background papers:	Discussion Document		
Appendix	Discussion document		

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 No new financial implications in the report. However, in performance management the cost of consultation would be tracked.

Legal

- 2.1 The council has a statutory duty to consult and consultation is measured in the Corporate Performance Assessment which evaluates the level at which the council is operating.

Personnel

- 3.1 None in this report

Equalities impact

- 4.1 The report proposes improvements to the way that hard to engage people are consulted. The proposals include modernisation of the Advisory Committees that has been the subject of separate consultation and reporting.

Corporate priorities

- 5.1 The proposal is key to working with local people to better understand their concerns and aspirations, it comes directly under the Council's objectives of **healthy, safe and independent communities, a diverse, attractive and healthy environment, a prosperous, vibrant and successful economy and a shared commitment to regenerating our communities.**
- 5.2 Consultation, a facility for capturing local expertise, is key to delivering all the council's priorities