

FRAMEWORK FOR A CITY-WIDE CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Report of Director of Policy

SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress on the development of the city-wide consultation strategy and to seek formal approval of the framework by the Council.
- 1.2 The Council began to develop a consultation strategy in response to the requirements of local government modernisation. Multi-agency steering groups have developed Older and Young People's Forums.
Paragraph 5.1.
- 1.3 The City of Opportunity Partnership endorsed a partnership approach to the development of the city-wide consultation strategy in June and between September and December last year, a cross-council and partner group developed the Strategy further. This group recommended that the Strategy be 'owned' by the emerging Local Strategic Partnership - LSP. A seminar for Chief Officers, Derby City Partnership Board Members and members of the DCP Strategic Regeneration Group took place on 12 June to explore the implications for joint working arrangements.
Paragraphs 5.2, 5.3, and 5.5.
- 1.4 We propose to introduce the strategy as soon as possible within the Council. Resources have been re-designated within the Policy Directorate and a cross-departmental Implementation Group, with partner representatives, will be charged with the task of implementing the Strategy by creating an annual plan. The Strategy will be ready for phased introduction in April 2003.
Paragraphs 5.7 and 5.9.
- 1.5 The development of the consultation strategy is included in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2002-03.
Paragraph 5.8.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2. None in relation to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To endorse the framework of the consultation strategy and, as this forms part of the Policy framework, to refer it to the Regeneration and Social Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Commission for their comment.
- 3.2 To develop a cross-departmental Implementation Group, with partner representatives, to introduce the Strategy within the Council.
- 3.3 To work with Derby City Partnership to adopt the Strategy.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The Council has a duty to lead community planning and to consult on a wide range of Policy Framework topics. These recommendations will endorse an approach designed to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 5.1 The Council began to develop a consultation strategy in response to the requirements of local government modernisation. In 2001, the Council led on implementation of consultation programmes for older and younger people. Both programmes were developed by multi-agency steering groups.
- 5.2 In June 2001, the City of Opportunity Partnership endorsed a partnership approach to the development of the city-wide consultation strategy to recognise:
 - the successful multi-agency approaches already under way with older and younger people
 - the Council's new duty to lead on community planning within a local strategic partnership
 - efficiency savings made possible by a joint approach.
- 5.3 Between September and December last year, a cross-council and partner group developed the Strategy further. This group strongly recommended that the Strategy be 'owned' by the emerging Local Strategic Partnership - LSP - and adopted as its principal model for joint working on consultation.
- 5.4 A copy of the draft Strategy is attached. The document is a 'work in progress' and will change in the light of experience and discussions within the implementation group. The Council has a duty to lead community planning under the Local Government Act 2000. This duty includes leading on developing a vision shared and jointly implemented by the LSP. The strategy suggests joint planning and resourcing of consultation projects to maximise effective use of resources, contacts with the community and collected information.

- 5.5 The draft Consultation Strategy was discussed at the DCP Board Meeting on 31 January 2002 and the Board agreed that it would like the opportunity to discuss the implications of the strategy in more depth. A half day seminar for Chief Officers, DCP Board Members and members of the DCP Strategic Regeneration Group took place on 12 June 2002 to explore the implications of the Strategy and to move towards the acceptance of the consultation strategy as the principal consultation mechanism for community planning by DCP. At this meeting, partners stated their approval of the strategy and their wish to be included in developing a shared process.
- 5.6 If this Strategy is adopted, the DCP will implement it by:
- agreeing formal arrangements for strategic, financial, managerial and operational co-operation
 - participating in consultation planning to agree an annual programme
 - sharing resources to implement consultation projects
 - adopting quality standards
 - using the 'mainstreaming tool' to develop systematic social inclusion
 - adding findings to a shared data bank
 - evaluation of process and findings.
- 5.7 In the meantime, the Strategy will be introduced by the Council. A cross-departmental Implementation Group will be charged with the task of implementing the Strategy. Partner organisations will be invited to join this group in advance of formal partnership agreements. The Group will create an annual plan, co-operate with resource sharing and introduce quality indicators, develop a shared data-management and introduce 'mainstreaming' as the tool to ensure social inclusion. Following acceptance by the DCP, this Implementation Group would become a formal Partnership Group.
- 5.8 The development of the Consultation Strategy is included in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2002-03. Appendix 1 is a diagram to illustrate the annual cycle of agreeing a Annual Plan, carrying out consultation, reporting findings and decision making. The Strategy will be ready for a phased introduction in April 2003.
- 5.9 In order to support the implementation of the strategy within the Council, resources have been reallocated in the Policy Unit to carry out the following tasks:
- develop annual plans
 - develop shared data management
 - design and analyse consultation
 - prepare advise on quality indicators and mainstreaming
 - make links with complementary corporate initiatives, eg Quality and Best Value, Communications, e-government, Equalities and Advisory Committees, Area Panels and Community Development.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The strategy can be implemented internally by the Council within the constraints of existing resources.
- 6.2 As the strategy develops, the Implementation Group will report back to the Council and the Derby City Partnership identifying the need for additional resources and making recommendations in relation to the full delivery of the strategy. It is envisaged that any additional resources needed to implement the strategy will be found through contributions from partners, and from external funding sources.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 requires all Councils to prepare a community strategy for promoting or improving the economic social and environmental well-being of their area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development . In preparing this strategy, authorities must consult and seek the participation of such people as they consider appropriate and have regard to any advice issued by the Secretary of State.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8. The re-allocation of resources within the Policy Unit can be achieved without additional resources. A Principal Officer post will be redesignated as a Principal Consultation Officer and a vacant Policy Officer post redesignated as Consultation Support Officer. The two existing part-time posts of Older and Young People's Consultation Officer will be part of this team.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9. None.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10. A critical component of the Strategy is a tool to manage and implement social inclusion in consultation. The work with young and older people supports inclusion work and this needs to be linked to existing support for women, disabled people and minority ethnic communities through Advisory Committees.

Background Papers:

On file in Room 155A