



AGENDA

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| For a meeting of the |
| ENGAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL |
| to be held on |
| THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2006 |
| at |
| 2.30 PM |
| in |
| COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST. PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM |
| Duncan Kerr, Chief Executive |

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|---------------------------|--|
| Panel Members: | Councillor Robert Conboy, Councillor Nick Craft, Councillor John Hurst, Councillor Albert Victor Kerr, Councillor Mano Nadarajah (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Norman Radley, Councillor Michael Taylor (Chairman), Councillor John Wilks and Councillor Mike Williams |
| Scrutiny Officer: | Paul Morrison 01476 406512 p.morrison@southkesteven.gov.uk |
| Scrutiny Support Officer: | Rebecca Chadwick 01476 406297 r.chadwick@southkesteven.gov.uk |

Members of the Panel are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed below.

- 1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**
To receive comments or views from members of the public at the Panel's discretion.
- 2. MEMBERSHIP**
The Panel to be notified of any substitute members.
- 3. APOLOGIES**
- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Members are asked to declare any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 5. ACTION NOTES**
The notes of the meeting held on 17th November 2005 are attached for information.

(Enclosure)

6. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

CATEGORY A PRIORITY ISSUES:

7. E-GOVERNMENT

The notes from the meeting of the working group on 5th December 2005 are attached.
(Enclosure)

8. BROADBAND FOR MEMBERS

The notes from the meeting of the working group on 13th December are attached. A further update to be provided at the meeting.
(Enclosure)

9. DEMOCRATIC REVIEW WORKING GROUP

Councillor Shorrocks to report on progress with the working group.

10. CITIZENS' JURY

Report DLS58 by the Scrutiny Support Officer.
(Enclosure)

OTHER ISSUES:

11. ANNUAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The Panel to consider improving the scheduling of meetings.

12. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(Enclosure)

13. WORK PROGRAMME

(Enclosure)

14. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Representatives on outside bodies to give update reports.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, which the Chairman, by reasons of special circumstances, decides is urgent.



MEETING OF THE ENGAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2005 2.30
PM

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Robert Conboy
Councillor Nick Craft
Councillor John Hurst
Councillor Albert Victor Kerr
Councillor Mano Nadarajah (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Shorrock
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Michael Taylor (Chairman)
Councillor John Wilks

OFFICERS

Chief Executive
Scrutiny Officer
Director of Operational Services
Communications Manager
Elections Officer
Assets and Facilities Manager
Scrutiny Support Officer

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Brailsford

29. MEMBERSHIP

The panel was informed that Councillor Stokes was replacing Councillor Radley for this meeting only.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared.

31. ACTION NOTES

These were noted, subject to the inclusion of an invite to BT to discuss Council information points at payphones with the conclusions for note number 20.

32. FEEDBACK FROM THE EXECUTIVE

At its meeting on 7th November 2005, Cabinet had referred 'smartcards' and broadband for members to the DSP. These were covered by subsequent agenda items.

33. E-GOVERNMENT

Customer Services Centre Update

The Director of Operational Services explained that the development of the customer services centre covered the priority areas of access and communications. The introduction of this centralised service point, which would be based in Grantham and then rolled out to area offices, had also required a review of all service areas and office accommodation to ensure that back office systems would enhance the frontline service.

The Assets and Facilities Manager gave a presentation on the design proposals for the centre. Tenders for extension works to the Abbey Gardens entrance area had been received and so costs could be better calculated. Planning permission had now been granted and once a non-key decision had been made on the tenders, works could commence mid January with completion projected for July. The presentation showed proposed internal designs based on a specification provided by the Council. It included a reception desk, corporate visitor waiting area, customer waiting area, ten customer service booths, display areas, children's' play area, plan viewing area and three interview rooms. Transitional arrangements for current customer service areas were explained.

The panel discussed the proposal with the officers, and members were very supportive of the design. It was suggested that the work on the public toilets at Abbey Gardens could be combined with the works on the customer services centre to limit disruption. This was noted. Members raised a few queries about the design, which were answered accordingly. Other comments included: the need to retain an attractive exterior to the building; whether the Council's address would need changing on corporate stationery if corporate visitors would be using the Abbey Gardens entrance on Avenue Road rather than St. Peter's Hill; the need for a water-cooler as a minimum provision of customer refreshments; the need to consider theatre access and deliveries; and the need to fully engage with the public on the new centre with visual communication including design displays at the works site.

Conclusions:

- (1) To endorse the design proposal by Paragon Interiors to Cabinet.**
- (2) That Cabinet be recommended that any promotional screens in the customer services centre include information on forthcoming council meetings.**
- (3) To request that a presentation be made to the DSP at a future meeting on the style of interaction between customers and the advisors and the training that will be provided.**

Moving Towards a Cashless Office

Alongside the development of the customer services centre, the E-government working group had scrutinised cash collection. The group's report, as appended

to the agenda, was considered by the panel; Councillor Nadarajah, a member of the group, gave further details. The working group's latest action notes were appended to the report. Councillor Nadarajah highlighted the significant amount of cash handled by all area offices and the need to investigate methods of collection. The main proposal was to introduce a service such as 'allpay,' whereby payments could be made at a number of outlets throughout the district using the service, rather than at the Council's area offices. Advantages and disadvantages of this service were highlighted in the report. Most significantly, there will be year on year savings, a greater number of locations where council bills can be paid and an increased use of local shops and post offices. Car park income had also been scrutinised as a separate issue and the results of a recent payments survey were circulated.

The working group had also made a recommendation to increase the number of direct debit payment dates for council tax payers. Options were set out in the report. The Vice-Chairman stressed that even though additional dates would decrease the interest received, this had been accounted for in the cost/benefit analysis.

Councillor Nadarajah was thanked for the report and particular interest was noted in the 'allpay' style service because it would enhance rural economy. It was suggested that this be given a high priority. It was also noted that public engagement was a key factor in the success of any change in cash collection. The Vice-Chairman assured the panel that the working was paying close attention to requirements for public engagement and communication. This was discussed further by the panel. Members asked whether or not discounts could be offered for taxpayers using direct debit. It was understood that there was no provision for this within the law, but members were keen that this be looked into and confirmed.

Conclusion:

To support the recommendations of the working group:

- (1) Cash payments stop before the opening of the customer services centre;**
- (2) An 'allpay' type service be introduced, as a matter of priority, and direct debit payment dates be increased;**
- (3) A full Council decision be made on this by mid-December 2005.**

34. MEMBERS' USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Members had before them notes from the meetings of the Members' IT Working Group on 22nd September and 20th October 2005. Notes from the meeting held on 8th November 2005 were circulated at the meeting. Councillor Nadarajah, the lead member of the working group, highlighted the recommendations contained within the notes, which were discussed by the panel.

The new system being rolled out on members' laptops was highly praised as a

simple interface for members. Councillor Nadarajah commented on the high standard of the IT helpdesk but members considered that there should be an evening provision, to which Councillor Nadarajah stated that he would look into this. The recommendation concerning training prompted some discussion on what members thought would be the best training solution. It was agreed that those in the recommendation were sufficient. It was suggested that members should only be sent the frontsheet but this was not possible as members were allowed to request full paper copies. The recommendation concerning broadband was also supported as this would provide a comprehensive desktop support for members, facilitate a better service for constituents through their ward member, reduce printing costs for agendas and assist in the expediting of information.

Conclusions:

(1) That the following be recommended to the Access and Engagement Portfolio Holder:

- (a) To support the implementation of the new menu style interface for members' laptops;**
- (b) To recognise that individual councillors have their own problems with using their laptops and therefore need addressing individually;**
- (c) To encourage members to write out or print error messages to assist in the communication to ICT of problems with laptops;**
- (d) To approve that members of the Members' IT Working Group contact those members who did not respond to the 2005 Laptop Survey and approach them individually by setting up a meeting with the members and an appointed mentor from the working group.**
- (e) That training for members on the use of ICT be provided through a structured portfolio of training options to cater for the variety of training needs. This to include:**
 - One on one training**
 - Small groups**
 - Self study CDROMS with video demonstrations**
 - IT Buddies (with support)**
 - Supported learning playdays**
 - An integrated learning approach to training e.g. 'laptop month'**

[Priority be given to those members with most difficulties in using their laptop and new users. Level of previous training will not affect the prioritisation of future training.]

Training to be provided, where possible and suitable, on days when committee meetings are scheduled to enable members to attend both in one visit to the council offices].

(2) That the following response be made to Cabinet on its Broadband for Members proposals:

| Cabinet Proposal | Scrutiny Response |
|---|---|
| 1. The Cabinet supports in principle the introduction of Broadband to all Members in order to improve the utilisation and effectiveness of their home working arrangements; | Supported |
| 2. A strategy be developed to eliminate the existing duplication of costs in printing and postage of reports as members adopt new working practices; | Supported |
| 3. Funding to be provided for a start up programme of Broadband connectivity. These costs will reduce over time but, initially, estimates indicate between £15,000 and £25,000 in year one, reducing to an ongoing annual cost, in the future, of around £10,000, depending on negotiations with suppliers; | Supported – The Members’ IT Working Group to scrutinise procurement for broadband, recommend a specification and invite the Procurement Officer and Portfolio Holder to assist. |
| 4. Plans to deliver the equivalent savings of approximately £10,000 per annum be drawn up to fund the additional investment; | Supported – It is suggested that cost savings would be established from less printing. The Members’ IT Working Group to scrutinise this with assistance from Accountancy and the Corporate Director |

| Alternative Option | Scrutiny Response |
|---|---|
| A – Improve the e-mail delivery access problems by ensuring file sizes being delivered are below a certain size. This should already be in place but restricts functionality. | Not supported - this would be very restrictive. It is difficult to know where to pitch the restriction level. It is dependent on too many different factors. It would be very difficult to implement. |
| B – Produce CD Roms with the Members mail and documents. These would be posted to the Member’s address. This option could be utilised for those not on Broadband links. | Not supported – a CD Rom would only be as good as the time it is burnt. Additional information that would be instantaneously published on modern.gov would not be up to date on the CD Rom thereby limiting communication. CD Roms would duplicate work already done on producing |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>committee papers on modern.gov. CD Roms would take the focus completely away from what we are trying to achieve in encouraging the comprehensive use of electronic communications, which is evolving at the present time.</p> <p>CD Roms for those members who cannot receive broadband, may be a suitable alternative to paper agendas.</p> |
| <p>C – Let Members introduce Broadband as they see fit with an allowance being paid as they adopt its use. The Council would negotiate with and recommend a supplier.</p> | <p>Not supported - it will be cumbersome to monitor and to negotiate individual broadband deals. A cheaper deal can be achieved via one negotiation with suppliers. Members' IT should be uniform, consistent and seamless to improve usability for members as well as supporting staff.</p> |
| <p>D – Introduce more docking stations at Council Offices e.g. Stamford, Bourne and the Deepings for quick updates on files.</p> | <p>Supported – This could be an enhancement to the introduction of broadband, especially for those members who are unable to receive broadband at home.</p> |

35. STAKEHOLDERS' CONFERENCE

The Chief Executive presented his report number CEX309, which set out the proposals for the Stakeholders' Conference on 8th December 2005. This would take the form of a citizens' jury "judging" the council on its value for money in delivering certain priority services. The Chief Executive spoke about the proposed process for the day and how Nic Streatfield, from Rutland-on-Line would effectively compère the events in his role as the "judge". He suggested that the proposal to consider four services areas may have been ambitious and that, with the Chairman's agreement, this may be reduced on the day. So far, the proposals had prompted significant interest from the public and the event may be repeated in the future is successful.

Members suggested that the citizens' jury concept could be extended further in the future and possibly include a youth jury. Juries could be established to look at one particular service area over a longer period of time as part of a wider stakeholder conference. Various other issues were discussed and clarified where appropriate. The Chairman stated that he expected to see members present at the event.

Conclusion:

To support the proposals for the Stakeholder Conference on 8th December 2005.

36. LOCAL AREA ASSEMBLIES

The Scrutiny Officer and Chairman reported on their visits to two Local Area Forums at Spelthorne Borough Council. These had been established longer than this authority's Local Area Assemblies (LAAs) and were therefore interesting to see in operation. From observation, there were several new practices that could be adopted at this Council. They would also be visiting South Ribble Borough Council, who were also interested in making a presentation to all South Kesteven members on their area meetings. A report will then be made to the DSP, which could make recommendations to Council not before the next annual general meeting.

Councillor Shorrocks then presented his report on LAAs, making a number of recommendations on their format to help encourage public attendance and engagement. This report had previously been submitted to the Grantham LAA. Given that recommendations would not be going to Council until its AGM, Councillor Shorrocks asked that his recommendations be considered as part of the DSP's review of LAAs and in its forming of recommendations to Council.

The proposals were discussed briefly by the panel. No objection was made to the recommendations, although there was some concern that they would require additional staff resources and that this should not be provided by the Council.

Conclusion:

To receive a report at a future meeting on Local Area Assemblies and make recommendations to Council at its AGM if appropriate.

37. EQUALITIES

Members considered the notes from the final meeting of the Equalities Working Group, which had now been disbanded. There was some discussion on the setting of performance indicators relating to equalities and diversity but as this was not within the remit of the panel, it was taken no further.

Conclusion:

To receive minutes of the meetings of the Multi-Cultural Consultation Forum.

38. ELECTION TURNOUT

The Elections Manager had been invited to the panel to assist in the scrutiny of declining voter turnout. The Chairman stated that turnout at the last two local by-elections had been abysmal and that this reflected the steady decrease in turnout at all elections. He hoped that the panel could propose a solution to this problem.

The Elections Manager confirmed the decreasing turnout by referring to statistics from 1991. He stated that his role, along with other officers, was to facilitate elections and that politicians should be encouraging voting. He admitted that timing of elections may not always be convenient for voters and that there were various initiatives being considered to increase the ease of voting such as changing the timetable to allow a more up-to-date electoral register for elections, time for replacing ballot papers etc. Work had been done to engage with schools but this had been met with a poor response. The Electoral Commission (EC) had concluded that it was not just voting-apathy that was the problem but a general low interest and disaffection with politics as evidenced by the fact that one third of wards at the last election were not contested. The following factors affecting voter behaviour had been identified by the EC:

- How close the contest is
- Identity with the party
- Voter habit
- Sense of civic duty
- Distinction between the parties
- Relevance of the public institution
- Voter awareness
- Convenience of voting methods
- Attitude to individual politicians

Members added that there was an alienation from the political process, especially as politics did not seem representative of the population in terms of sex, age, race etc. and that administrative arrangements at elections played little part in voter turnout. Many people were excluded from politics as meetings were often held in the daytime. One member added that he had read that there was an apparent direct correlation between members' expenses, tax levels and voter turnout.

Members suggested that the number of polling stations should be increased but it was commented that this played a small part in the problem and that the underlying issues needed addressing.

It was proposed that a group be established comprising local stakeholders to scrutinise this issue and that council continues to work to engage with schools and their citizenship programme. The Scrutiny Officer reported that following the last DSP meeting, he had made contact with a local college and there was a possibility that students may be interested in some related work experience.

Conclusion:

That a working group, lead by Councillor Shorrocks and comprising representatives from the voluntary sector, youth service, business club, college students and other stakeholders, be established to scrutinise political disaffection and work on forming a questionnaire to be circulated with SKToday, the Council's newsletter, on the issue.

39. BT PAYPHONES

Noted.

40. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Noted.

41. WORK PROGRAMME

Noted. The Scrutiny Officer added that the Cabinet decision date for the item on Cash Collection was now 5th December 2005.

E-GOVERNMENT WORKING GROUP

Notes of Meeting – 5th December 2005

Members Present: Councillors Kirkman (chairman)
Nadarajah
Wilks
M Williams
Carpenter (observer)

Also Present: Ian Yates
Marion Fox
Ellen Bruer
Paul Morrison

There were no apologies for absence

1. Notes of last meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 12th October 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Communications

The Working Group welcomed Ellen Bruer, the new Communications Manager, to the meeting. She was in attendance principally to advise on how the decision re the move to a cashless collection system (subject to tenant consultation) should be communicated. Ms Bruer had attended the last meeting of Engagement DSP when this had been discussed.

Councillor Williams reported that he had heard positive things about Allpay elsewhere in Grantham, which was welcomed by the Group. Councillor Carpenter advised on the Cabinet decision on this matter that had been made that morning. The intention was not to save money but to give a better service to the customer. Small cash payments of up to £5 would still be taken, for example for photocopying charges.

Ms Bruer advised that a positive message should be put across sooner rather than later. There had been an article in the Grantham Journal which was considered positive, the accompanying cartoon perhaps less so.

Concern was expressed that the Council would be consulting tenants on this issue at roughly the same time as LSVT, a lot of the same people would be affected. Councillor Kirkman observed that the Council must know who the bulk of its cash payers were, the Council should concentrate on selling the new system to these people. There were also doubts internally as to whether or not the new system could be delivered by 1st April 2006. However, concern was expressed on printing rent cards for April and then these becoming obsolete after Allpay was launched. The

possibility of an interim solution was discussed given that the new customer service centre should be open by July 2006.

Councillor Kirkman suggested that the new system was bound to lead to some people forgetting to pay, a polite reminder should therefore be sent before a demand for payment.

It was key that those tenants who paid by direct debit should not think they are going to have to change to Allpay. Ms Bruer advised that in addition to a press release, something such as a leaflet should be prepared, however she did not think that a media briefing would be necessary. She also emphasised the importance of communicating the change to the staff so that they could act as ambassadors for the change.

Allpay would need to know in early January what the timescale was. Other authorities had stated that payment rates had gone up after the change was made, after an initial fall in the level of payments. It was confirmed that there would be a charge for the replacement of lost cards after the first had been issued.

AGREED

- (i) A further meeting is needed with the Revenues Manager to discuss timetable for issue of Allpay cards and implementation of the new scheme (subject to consultation).
- (ii) Jackie Pantling also to attend the next meeting.
- (iii) The possibility of an interim scheme be examined.

3. IEG Statement

Copies of the IEG for December 2005 were circulated. The deadline to report to the ODPM was December 19th, it was noted that Councillor Carpenter now had delegated authority to sign this off. We were now running at 96% and will achieve 99.51% by the end of 2005.

Targets that were still showing amber were discussed and explained. It was noted that there was a bottleneck at the IT stage and that IT was considered to be under resourced.

Councillor Nadarajah suggested that the Group could focus on IT staffing. Mr Morrison reminded the Group that it was sub group of Engagement DSP and staffing was within the remit of Resources DSP. However since no new resources were being proposed the Group would continue with its work. Councillor Kirkman was Vice Chairman of Resources DSP and Mr Morrison would inform The Chairman of Resources DSP (Councillor Lovelock) of what the Group was proposing to do.

It was suggested that other authorities may have set themselves less demanding targets on BVP1157 which was why they had achieved 100%

compliance as against our 99.51% to date. However the ODPM would be looking at the ways in which authorities achieved their targets.

The Group expressed satisfaction and pleasure with the report and congratulated the officers on their achievements.

4. Project Update – Accommodation, Cash Payments, Project Milestones

An updated progress report was circulated. The Group discussed the report and progress, including HR implications and trade union involvement. Ian Yates observed that the issue of change management was critical. In respect of Planning, the impending departure of the Development Control Services Manager would have serious implications for the service. The Group shared this concern and **AGREED** that Mr Yates should raise this issue at CMT.

In respect of the new Customer Service centre it was considered prudent not to advertise the proposed launch date of July in case of slippage.

The group noted the resources issues, which were being addressed.

5. Any other Business

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 4.10pm.

MEMBERS' IT WORKING GROUP

Meeting date: Tuesday 13th December 2005 3.00p.m.

Members present: Councillor Howard
Councillor Nadarajah
Councillor Pease

Officers present: Ian Yates
Joyce Slater
Julie Cant
Rebecca Chadwick

Apologies: Councillor Moore
Councillor Kerr
Councillor Mrs Woods
Ian Pick

1. NOTES FROM LAST MEETING

These were accepted. It was noted that the working group's recommendations made at the last Engagement DSP had been accepted.

2. BROADBAND FOR MEMBERS

Julie Cant, Procurement Officer, introduced herself and gave a brief overview of the potential impact of providing broadband for members. This could also affect home working and upgrading machines. Her preliminary investigations into providing broadband had involved ESPO and Centre of Excellence. There had been positive feedback but because it seemed that not many authorities provided their members with broadband, there were no formal arrangements, procedures or contract formats established.

One of the initial stages in the rollout of Broadband would be to identify a preferred supplier. This was essential because different suppliers had different levels of compatibility with the council's existing equipment and systems. Another issue was to identify how broadband would be best financed. Members could either be reimbursed for providing their own broadband or the council could receive the bill. It was suggested that those members with their own broadband could be asked to change to the preferred supplier. If they did not want to change, then they could be reimbursed. It was considered that it would be better, to avoid hassle and confusion for members, that the council received the bill for broadband. There were potential tax implications, however, and this needed further investigation.

ICT Services had sent out a questionnaire to all members to determine their current position with broadband and other aspects of IT. Only 16 responses had been received. Although the questionnaire had not long been sent out, officers were asked to try to encourage responses so that the broadband project could move ahead. It was suggested that members with broadband already should have been asked when their current contract expired.

It was suggested that if broadband was going to be provided to members, a usage policy would need to be established.

It was suggested that as the price of broadband was reducing, it may not be cost effective to enter into a twelve-month deal with a supplier for broadband as within that time, a cheaper deal may be achieved. This was another issue that needed further consideration.

The group also discussed potential additional costs for the provision of broadband, the procurement of routers for example. This would be dealt with by ICT Services who had included the provision of broadband in its service plan.

Ian Yates reminded the group that Cabinet had agreed that cost savings must be achieved in the rollout of broadband to members. A member suggested that the rollout of broadband was like a 'chicken and egg' situation because savings would only be achieved after broadband was rolled out and when members started to use modern.gov for committee papers. There would also be a large benefit to the community as members would be able to access information much quicker using the internet and would be able to use email thereby quickening response time to constituents' queries. The encouragement of the public to contact the council electronically needed supporting through the encouragement of members to embrace technology. Therefore, most benefits may not be quantifiable. Nevertheless, Gershon efficiency savings were required and so this would be looked into.

Ian Yates reported on behalf of Ian Pick those members who could have access to broadband. It was estimated that at least 85% members could receive broadband access at the moment.

Conclusions:

- (1) Julie Cant to investigate further the introduction of broadband to members at Lincolnshire County Council and to investigate tax implications of reimbursing members or providing an allowance for broadband.**
- (2) Ian Yates to investigate potential Gershon efficiency savings from the rollout of broadband for members and justification for the project.**
- (3) Joyce Slater and Ian Pick be asked to continue to investigate the current situation of members' access to broadband.**
- (4) That progress is reported at the Engagement DSP on 12th January 2006 on the three items above.**
- (5) Ian Pick be asked to investigate councillor email traffic and response times to emails. This information could be used to show the benefits of using email.**
- (6) It is recommended that if broadband is rolled out to members, all paper agenda despatches are withdrawn six months from the date of rollout unless broadband is not accessible at a members' home.**

3. COMMITTEE AGENDA DISTRIBUTION

As requested at the previous meeting, Rebecca Chadwick confirmed the position of the law regarding the posting to members of the summons to a meeting. It clearly stated that it should be *posted*. This had been confirmed with the Member Services Manager.

Members were still not satisfied with this and requested that the position be reviewed further as the law was archaic and did not reflect the government's e-government agenda.

Rebecca also reported on the cost of copying agendas on CDROM. Gary Andrew had researched this. A simple 50 CD Duplicator would cost about £1,600 and 50 CD-R disks would cost about £7. A 25 CD duplicators and printer connectable to a PC would cost about £1,750 and 50 CD-R disks would cost about £9. Given these costs, the working group confirmed their position against sending agendas to members on CD.

Members had been asked to review how many agendas they received in full in the post, now that modern.gov was well established. Responses had been positive and some members had indicated that they would be happy to receive less agendas in the post when broadband was rolled out.

Conclusion:

(7) Rebecca Chadwick to seek advice from the Local Government Association on its understanding of the law relating to the posting to members of summons to a meeting.

4. DATA STORAGE

Ian Yates reported on behalf of Ian Pick who had been asked to investigate further methods of data storage for members' laptops. The new archiving system is coming into place. It cannot back up to server directly but all emails in and out would be copied. This email archive would only work for mail, no other documents.

Members stressed that it was crucial documents could be backed as this would reduce the need to print documents. An ideal solution would be to zip up 'My Documents' and that this be emailed to yourself once a week automatically following the pressing of one button.

Conclusion:

(8) Progress needs to continue in finding a solution for backup for members' laptops.

5. ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO USE LAPTOPS

Joyce Slater reported that there were now only two members without laptops. Work was still needed to complete the conversion of laptops to the new system. This would encourage members to use their machines as it was an easier system to use. Members confirmed this.

Further training requirements were discussed.

It was suggested that the following stages be implemented in this order to encourage use.

- Laptop system updates
- Roll out broadband
- Training

REPORT TO ENGAGEMENT DSP

REPORT OF: Scrutiny Support Officer

REPORT NO. DLS 58

DATE: 12th January 2006

| | |
|--|--|
| TITLE: | Citizen's Jury - 8 th December 2005 |
| COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION: | Councillor Paul Carpenter |
| CORPORATE PRIORITY: | Communications |
| CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS: | Yes – subject of citizens' jury verdict |
| FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS: | None |
| BACKGROUND PAPERS: | CEX302 – Council 27 th October 2005 CEX309 – Engagement DSP 17 th November 2005 |

1. INTRODUCTION

On 27th October 2005, the Council approved the proposal that the 2005 Annual Stakeholders Conference take the format of a citizen's jury to enquire into whether the Council was offering value for money. The Engagement DSP was asked to finalise the arrangements for the event, which it did on 17th November 2005.

It was decided that the citizens' jury consider:

- Refuse and litter
- Anti-social behaviour
- Economic Development
- Engagement with the public

These reflected the priorities of the council.

Nic Streatfeild from Rutland-on-Line was appointed the judge for the day as it was considered that this role needed to be filled by someone impartial and with the necessary skills.

2. THE JURY

The local press was used to advertise the event and invite volunteers from the community to be on the jury. Local schools were also contacted and the Council's website used to promote the event. This was reasonably successful as most volunteers read about the event in the local press or contacted the Council after hearing local radio coverage.

On the day we had a jury of ten members out of twelve appointed by the judge (one having cancelled due to illness and the other due to business commitments). The jury was reasonably well representative in terms of age with three local school students on the jury. There were, however, only two women on the jury and very few members from hard to reach groups.

A briefing was held for the jury in the week before the event but this was poorly attended. It was believed that this may have been because not enough notice was given and that the time of day (5pm) may have been inconvenient for most.

3. WITNESSES

Shortly after the jury was selected, members of the public were invited to act as witnesses for the event, to give evidence about their experience of the council's services. This was perhaps the least successful element of the event and this is likely to have been because not enough time was given to advertise this aspect of the event. Again, local media was used, posters were displayed and people who had recently contacted the council about one of the services to be considered by the jury were invited to give evidence at the event. Only three members of the public came forward and gave evidence.

Although this aspect was very challenging and not as successful as it could have been, two of the witnesses did put in a lot of work to produce some very interesting evidence. This shows that there is still potential here to develop the idea of the public acting as witnesses.

Council officers also gave evidence on each of the services by giving a presentation on their service area. The jury gave feedback on these as summarised below.

Members had little involvement in giving evidence and this can certainly be something developed at a future citizens' jury event. External partners also had a limited role.

4. CONCLUSION

For the first citizens' jury organised by the council, the event was reasonably successful. The jury worked very hard and their contributions on the day were very admirable. The judge Nic Streatfeild was very competent in his role and facilitated the event successfully. However, a lot of lessons have been learned. Most importantly, too many services were considered in the day for the jury to make an informed verdict and this is something that should certainly be changed for a future event. Nic Streatfeild, Duncan Kerr and Rebecca Chadwick are meeting on 11th January 2006 to discuss ideas for the further development of a citizens' jury and the outcome from this meeting will be reported to the Engagement DSP.

5. JURY FEEDBACK

The jury did not feel they could answer the question put to them:

"Does South Kesteven District Council deliver a good standard of service for the money it charges?"

Instead, the jury gave feedback about the day.

They first considered the following questions:

1. Was it a quality process?
2. Does the Council offer good value for money services?
3. How do we define value for money?

The jury reached a consensus that there had been a good job in the officers' presentations but disappointed that there were no real measures included in them from which to make a verdict on value for money. The jury considered that there had been positive progress in the first three areas but there was a communication issue. The jury also felt that because the presentations were all in different formats, it did not lend itself very well to reaching an overall verdict.

Specific comments for each presentation were:

Refuse and litter - there were no measures in the presentation to make a verdict.

Anti-social behaviour - not enough information to make a conclusion at this stage and the service had not really been in place long enough.

Economic Development - Good potential here but no measures to decide on its value for money.

Engagement with the public - not sure what the service was we were judging.

General feedback about that day was as follows.

Likes:

- The fact that the citizens' jury exists
- SKDC taking seriously the views of the public
- Public involved (open)
- Impressed with witness presentation and effort
- Some presentations contained deliverables
- Good Councillor turnout – nice to see the support from members
- Excellent facilitation
- Lunch
- All impressed with Nic Streatfeild as the judge
- Pretty well-balanced jury
- Good jury participation

Dislikes:

- Possible inadequate publicity
- Minimal press coverage
- Council accountability not clear – what is council going to do with a verdict from a citizens' jury?
- Too much in too little time
- Lack of deliverables (performance indicators) in some presentations
- Councillors did not always listen
- Would have liked handouts prior to meeting
- Lack of opportunity for juror to prepare
- Presenters didn't know what to tell us
- Presentations and all evidence should have been in a standard format
- Couldn't tell who were members of the council and who were members of the public

6. RECOMMENDATION

That members consider this report and make suggestions for further improvements for a future citizens' jury event.

7. CONTACT OFFICER

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Engagement DSP - Performance Monitoring 2005/06

Those indicators with a number in the PI column are from the Government's Best Value Performance Indicators suite used by many Councils. The remaining indicators are local to SKDC and may be relatively simple measures/indicators only. The reader is asked therefore to exercise an element of caution when interpreting any data attached to them.

Key: C=cumulative; A=average; N=number; %=percentage; CA=cumulative average; Q=quarterly; blank=monthly

| PI | SKDC Priority Area and PI Description | IND Type | Reporting | 2004/05 SKDC Outturn | 2003/04 Upper Quartile | 2005/06 SKDC Target | April | May | June | July | August | Sept | October | November | Are We Improving Yr on Yr? | 2006/07 SKDC Targets | 2007/08 SKDC Targets | Apr | May | Jun | July | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov |
|-------|--|----------|-----------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | ACCESS Priority A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 157 | Types of interactions delivered electronically | C | Q | 71% | 72% | 100% | | | | | | 83% | | | Y | 100% | 100% | | | | | | | | |
| Local | No. of hits on SKDC website | C | | | | 300,000 | 26,200 | 53,756 | 79,991 | 109,182 | 141,764 | 176,626 | 216,597 | 255,219 | N/A | 330,000 | 363,000 | | | | | | | | |
| Local | No. of complaints regarding DDA | C | Q | | | 6 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | N/A | 4 | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Local | % of customer calls dealt with at first point of contact through CRM | A | | | | 20% | | | | | | N/A | N/A | 10%* | N/A | 40% | 80% | | | | | | | | |
| Local | % increase in self service transactions from 0405 base | % | Q | | | 10% | | | 262% | | | 175% | | | N/A | 15% | 20% | | | | | | | | |
| | COMMUNICATIONS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local | No. of copies of Districtline issued | C | Q | | | 4 | | | 1 | | | 2 | | | N/A | 4 | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| Local | % of PR outputs to media actually published | % | | | | 60% | 83.33% | 75% | 67.39% | 81.36% | 81.82% | 100% | 63% | 83% | N/A | 70% | 80% | | | | | | | | |

DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANELS (DSPs) WORK PROGRAMME 2005/6

INTRODUCTION

This Work Programme is partly derived from the Cabinet's Forward Plan, but also contains items that have been brought forward by the DSPs themselves. Such items are in *italics*.

Where the item has appeared on the Forward Plan, the anticipated date of the key decision is listed in the second column. The third column shows the last available date that the full DSP can consider this item before the key decision is due to be taken (unless a special meeting is called). This does NOT necessarily mean that the item will appear on the DSP agenda, this will only happen if this is requested by the Chairman or members of the DSP. There will also be instances where there is no DSP meeting before a decision is due to be taken; in these cases the next meeting date after the decision date is shown.

As Cabinet meets monthly and the DSPs meet bi-monthly it is not possible within the current timetable of meetings for the DSPs to consider every single Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision. Scrutiny members are therefore encouraged to read this Work Programme and bring forward items for consideration where they think that an item should be considered by the DSP.

ENGAGEMENT DSP

| <u>ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION</u> | <u>DATE OF KEY DECISION</u> (IF APPROPRIATE) | <u>DSP MEETING</u> |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|

| | | |
|---|-----|--|
| BT Telephone Boxes –possible removal or conversion to cashless facility | N/a | |
|---|-----|--|

**DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANELS (DSPs)
WORK PROGRAMME 2005/6**

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| Cash collection – review of cash payments in council offices | 05.12.06 | 12.01.06 |
| <i>Local Area Assemblies – future choices</i> | <i>N/a</i> | <i>Visits have taken place to Spelthorne BC on 4th and 18th October</i> |
| <i>Members IT</i> | <i>N/a</i> | <i>Visit to South Ribble BC to take place on 20th December</i> |
| <i>E Government and Customer Services</i> | <i>N/a</i> | <i>Working Group is meeting</i> |
| <i>Equalities</i> | <i>N/a</i> | <i>Working Group is meeting</i> |
| <i>Election Turnout</i> | <i>N/a</i> | <i>To receive minutes of Multi Cultural Consultation Forum</i> |
| <i>Council's timetable of meetings</i> | <i>N/a</i> | <i>To investigate reasons for low election turnout. Working Group established, Cllr Shorrocks to lead</i> |
| <i>Local Development Framework (SCI items only)</i> | <i>Not before March 2006</i> | <i>Identified as an issue for consideration on 12.01.05 by Scrutiny Co-ordination Group 09.03.06</i> |