

AGENDA



For a meeting of the
ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
to be held on
THURSDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2009
at
2.00 PM
In the
WITHAM ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM NG31 6PZ
Beverly Agass, Chief Executive

Group Members:	Councillor Michael Cook, Councillor Mike Exton (Chairman), Councillor Jock Kerr, Councillor Stuart McBride, Councillor Bob Russell, Councillor Ian Selby and Councillor Tom Webster (Vice-Chairman)
Portfolio Holders:	Access and Engagement - Councillor Ray Auger
Support Officer:	Lucy Bonshor 01476 40 61 20 l.bonshor@southkesteven.gov.uk

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

- 1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**
- 2. MEMBERSHIP**

The Group to be notified of any substitute members.
- 3. APOLOGIES**
- 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare an interest in matters for consideration at the meeting.



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- 5. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH JULY 2009**
(Enclosure)
- 6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**
- 7. EQUALITIES MONITORING FORM AND INFORMATION LEAFLET**
Report No.CHSC0018 Corporate Head Sustainable Communities, Teena Twelves
(Enclosure)
- 8. EMERGENCY PLANNING**
Council preparations for dealing with Swine Flu - presentation by the Corporate Head Finance and Customer Services, Richard Wyles and Service Manager Partnerships and Community Safety, Mark Jones.
- 9. IT - MEMBER PAGES**
Developing Member pages on modern.gov for the new website and maximizing use of laptops – discussion with Service Manager Business Transformation and Information, Andy Nix
- 10. LOCAL FORUMS REVIEW**
Discussion with Corporate Head Partnerships and Improvements, Robert Moreland
- 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT**

WORKING STYLE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

The Role of Policy Development

- To reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Members should take the lead and own the policy development process on behalf of the public
- Policy development should make an impact on the delivery of public services

Remember...

- Scrutiny and policy development should be member led
- Any conclusions must be backed up by evidence
- Meetings should adopt an inquisitorial rather than adversarial style of traditional local government committees

MEETING OF THE ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2009 2.00 PM



PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Michael Cook
Councillor Mike Exton (Chairman)

Councillor Reginald Howard
Councillor Ian Selby

OFFICERS

Corporate Head Finance and Customer Services (Richard Wyles)
Corporate Head Partnerships and Improvements (Robert Moreland)
Democratic Officer (Lucy Bonshor)

9. MEMBERSHIP

The Group were notified that Councillor Howard was substituting for Councillor McBride for this meeting only.

10. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jock Kerr, Councillor Bob Russell and Councillor Tom Webster.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

12. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH MAY 2009

The notes from the meeting held on 7th May were agreed as a correct record of the meeting subject to "there" last sentence page 4 being changed to their.

13. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Corporate Head Partnerships and Improvements referred to the A5 telephone directory and indicated that a copy had been e-mailed to Members and a hard copy would be available soon.

14. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL - CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

The Corporate Head of Finance and Customer Services told the group of the new challenges a head that had significant implications for the future of the



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travel concessionary scheme. He gave a brief background to the changes that had taken place to the scheme since 2001 to the present. The District Council was a nominated Travel Concessionary Authority (TCA) and although a rise in funding of the scheme had been made over this period the administration of the scheme had remained the same. The Department for Transport (DfT) was looking to review the current arrangements and were currently consulting solely on the future administration arrangements for the travel concessionary scheme. The new national scheme had now been in place for 14 months and the DfT wanted to know how the scheme was working. The Corporate Head of Finance and Customer Services (CHFCS) said that there were local concerns with the scheme, it was not ideal and there was a complicated national picture with different authorities offering different discretions and there was no consistency across the country. There was a lot of disquiet amongst authorities on how the scheme operated given the different variables in place. The CHFCS indicated that the DfT's preference would be to move the administration to County with satellite offices situated within the county which in principal seemed a good idea, however, the CHFCS strongly felt that the administration and finance should be looked at together as a single issue not separately.

He then spoke about SKDC's financial position with regard to the travel concessionary scheme compared with other local authorities in Lincolnshire. SKDC was in a better financial position as they had only agreed to implement the statutory scheme, unlike other authorities in Lincolnshire who were now paying the price. He referred to the figures shown in the table on page 5 of the report and appendix A to report CHFCS52 which showed information provided by the CLG on the 4 options for calculating the redistribution of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) to take account of previous concessionary travel funding. This information was something that authorities had been asking the government about for numerous years and had previously been told that the formulae was too complicated to be able to calculate the specific grant for each authority, however it seems that they can now do that. The speculative options put forward would mean that in a worse case scenario SKDC's grant settlement for 2011/12 would be £1.2m less. He felt that it was very dangerous to look at the administration of the scheme in isolation from the financial side as this could impact strongly on the Council's future finances. In theory having a consistent scheme across the county was a good idea, but looking at the administration of the scheme separately from the financial side was in his view very wrong.

A long discussion between Members and the CHFCS followed about what the financial implications to the scheme could mean to the District Council, if the administration of travel concessions went to County and what this would mean to the RSG settlement that the District Council received in the future. Members were very concerned with the possibility that front line services would have to be cut to pay for the short fall in RSG. Although they agreed that a consistent service across the County was not a bad idea, the concern over how the financial aspect would impact the Council was of greater concern. The CHFCS said that the County would only take on the responsibility of the

administration of travel concession if it was cost neutral to them. Comments were then made about possible changes to the service once County were in charge of the administration to which the CHFCS replied that they could change the discretions in place to make it just the statutory service across the county or 24/7 travel it would be at their discretion and they had not declared a view one way or another. Most Members felt that it was very wrong and dangerous to look at the issue of administration and funding separately and agreed that this should be conveyed back in the consultation to the DfT. Members agreed to stay with the scheme that they currently had as they felt that there were too many unknowns with a change of scheme to the County also that on the response to the DfT reference should be made about Member's concern that the administration and funding were being looked at separately instead of together.

Recommendation:

That the administration of concessionary travel remains with the District Councils as it is at present and that the issue of funding of the scheme should be looked at with the administration of the scheme.

Once a response to the consultation was available a further report to be submitted to the Engagement PDG.

15. WEBSITE REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATE

The Corporate Head Partnerships and Improvements (CHPI) updated Members on the review of the Council's website. The current website was not user friendly, did not score highly on the rating system and was past it's sell by date. Currently any updates to the system had to be carried out by a skilled person in IT which caused delays and frustration within services. The new software that had been purchased enabled each section to update their own pages and released the IT person to pursue other issues and freed up jams within the system. The front page would be looked after and kept updated by the Communications Team, the idea of the new website that less is more with far less text and more pictures and graphics. He then showed Members mock up pages of what the new website would look like from the home page to landing pages for each area and highlighted additions to the system such as tag clouds and mapping software. Colours for each area would follow through the screens for that section. New software had also been found to offer accurate translations of the top 10 languages used in the area. It was hoped that the new website would be launched towards the end of September beginning of October. Members were happy with the new look of the website with one Member commenting that the contact details should be easily seen on the home page as per the mock up version and they all looked forward to its launch. It was suggested that once the new website was up and running that a report be submitted to the PDG on the number of hits, where people logged on from responses to e-mail etc. The CHPI said that in the IT section there was already software that currently carried out some of these functions and he invited any Member who was interested to view the programme in the IT

section but would bring a paper back to the Group in the autumn.

Members noted the presentation and the Chairman thanked those officers who had been involved in the work carried out to date on the website.

16. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 3.17pm.

A short discussion followed on possible issues to be discussed at the next meeting and the CHPI circulated members with a list of issues which came under the remit of the Group.

REPORT TO ENGAGEMENT P.D.G.

REPORT OF: Teena Twelves: Corporate Head, Sustainable Communities

REPORT NO: CHSC0018

DATE: Engagement PDG September 10

TITLE:	Equalities Monitoring Form + Information Leaflet	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	N/A	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Cllr Frances Cartwright Member Champion Equality & Diversity	
CONTACT OFFICER:	Elaine Claridge (Equalities Project Officer) 01476 406299 e.claridge@southkesteven.gov.uk	
INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below:	Full impact assessment Required:
Equality and Diversity	N/A	
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Corporate Equality Scheme 2009 – 2012 (adopted April 2009)	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Engagement PDG considers the use of the New Equalities Monitoring Form by all Council Services
2. That this form replaces the Original Equalities Monitoring Form in use since 2004
3. That Engagement PDG considers the Equalities Monitoring Information leaflet to accompany the monitoring form

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT/DECISION REQUIRED

Equalities Monitoring Form

Since the original equalities monitoring form was set up the Government has introduced the Equality Bill 2009. This bill is currently going through the committee stage and is expected to receive Royal Assent in the spring of 2010, with the majority of the bill coming into force in the Autumn 2010. This bill will place new statutory duties on public bodies in addition to those which already exist. The new duties will include the duty to promote equality in respect of Religion/belief, Sexual Orientation and towards people who are Transgender.

In order to ensure that the Council is delivering appropriate and fully accessible services to all groups of people within our diverse communities it is necessary for us to understand the demographic makeup of our customers and to be able to measure how different groups experience service delivery and what their level of satisfaction with our services is. The information we gather using equalities monitoring will

- help us improve service delivery by ensuring services are needs led
- help us to conduct robust Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)
- identify any unmet needs or gaps within our services e.g accessibility for people with learning difficulties.

The results of EIAs will also be used to inform our policies, procedures, service and budget planning.

SKDC, together with all the other councils in Lincolnshire, is working towards the “achieving” level of the new Equality Framework for local government. In order to reach this level it is necessary that we know the makeup of our communities and that we can demonstrate how we are actively consulting with “hard to reach” communities to ensure that everyone has a voice in local government.

Equalities Monitoring Information Leaflet

Some of the information we are requesting is often seen as sensitive by some people therefore, the Equalities Monitoring Information Leaflet has been designed to inform our customers why we are asking them to complete the monitoring form and how we intend to use the information from them. For example, the information that we collect will be analysed to see how our services are used and who by. It is essential to help us check that our policies, services and culture are meeting the needs of the community. Monitoring our services will help us to understand which groups are using our services and see if levels of satisfaction are the same for all groups. It also tells us if we are reaching under-represented groups and if the services we provide are relevant to their needs and provided fairly.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT (SUMMARY – USE APPENDICES FOR DETAILED INFORMATION)

The Lincolnshire councils are working together on the equalities agenda and towards Comprehensive Area Assessment. The proposed comprehensive Equalities monitoring form will bring SKDC’s monitoring in line with all the other local authorities in Lincolnshire and the County Council and will help us to share information, understand how service delivery is similar to or different from those of other Councils in the area, and also enable us to share some of the costs of meeting statutory requirements e.g. by providing and arranging joint training on equalities.

If enacted, the provisions of the current Equality Bill 2009 will place significant extra statutory duties on public bodies to promote equality for 8 groups of people, therefore unless we begin to gather the necessary data on strands such as religion/belief and sexual orientation we will not be able to carry out robust and meaningful Equality Impact Assessments which are a statutory requirement and take into account all community groups.

The results of the monitoring will enable us to identify issues such as under/over use of services and if/ where accessibility is a problem for certain sections of the SKDCs

diverse communities. Knowing who our customers are and what their needs are will provide specific evidence for Service Managers to develop their service plans, write policies and plan their budgets more effectively by targeting resources where they are most needed.

A recent survey which has been carried out by all Councils in Lincolnshire to obtain information on equalities and diversity has shown that people are prepared to answer questions such as those on the proposed monitoring form. It will be important to handle the matter with sensitivity, and staff will be given training and support to enable them to collect the information. Also, it should be noted that providing equalities information is never obligatory – it is always a matter for the discretion of the individual whether to answer any or all of the questions put to them.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Continuing with the original monitoring form:

This option has been rejected as the original monitoring form is not comprehensive and does not take into account the new equalities legislation or provide SKDC with a uniform approach to equalities monitoring in line with the other Lincolnshire District Councils and Lincolnshire County Council.

Not producing an information leaflet:

This option has been rejected. By providing residents with information about why we conduct equalities monitoring and how we use the information we can hopefully allay any fears/reservations that people have as to why we are asking for these details and promote a better and more meaningful response.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Monitoring Form: As this will be replacing the form currently in use, there will be no additional resource implications that are not already covered in service budgets.

Information Leaflet: This leaflet will be produced in house and so costs will be kept to a minimum. It is estimated that costs would be 20p per copy (for a colour version). Each service area would be able to order copies in appropriate batches as and when needed.

6. RISK AND MITIGATION (INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND DATA QUALITY)

If the Council does not make sure our equalities monitoring is comprehensive and uniform across all services we will be unable to determine the effect of our service delivery on all community groups and whether there are any unmet needs. By knowing where and who our diverse communities are we will be able to target our increasingly scarce resources more appropriately and effectively.

In order to work together with the other public authorities for Comprehensive Area Assessment it is helpful that we adopt an approach to equalities monitoring which is

consistent with the other local authorities in Lincolnshire.

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Not Applicable.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

9. COMMENTS OF SECTION 151 OFFICER

I have no specific financial comments to make in respect of this report. Any financial implications arising from the proposal will be met from existing resources.

10. COMMENTS OF MONITORING OFFICER

As noted in the report if enacted the provisions of the Equality Bill 2009 will place significant extra statutory duties on public bodies to promote equality across 8 equality groups. In preparation for the introduction of the Bill it is important that this authority puts measures in place to meet the needs of the Bill. It is appropriate that a uniform approach to equalities monitoring, in line with other Lincolnshire District Councils and Lincolnshire County Council in order to work together for comprehensive area assessment, is adopted.

The information sought will be sensitive personal data for the purposes of the Data Protection Act (DPA) and should be handled in line with the requirements of the DPA.

11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER

The monitoring form and leaflet have been put before and approved by the Corporate Equalities Steering Group i.e. Management Team.

12. APPENDICES:

EQUALITY MONITORING FORM

South Kesteven District Council wants to make sure that our services are provided to all customers fairly and equally. Also, the Council has a duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination. To do this we need to know how our policies and practices affect different groups of people. Please help us by completing the form below. This information will be treated as strictly confidential and will only be used for monitoring purposes.

Racial/ethnic origin:

A. White	B. Mixed	C. Asian or Asian British	D. Black or Black British	E. Chinese or Other Racial Group
British <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Racial Group <input type="checkbox"/>
Roma/Gypsy <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Black <input type="checkbox"/>	
Traveller of Irish heritage <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Asian <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other White <input type="checkbox"/>				

Nationality:

My nationality is:	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
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Gender

Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Transgender <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
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Age:

What was your age at your last Birthday? -----

Disability:

Do you consider yourself to be disabled? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer no to say <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any long-term illness, health problems or disability that, with or without the use of aids or medication, limits your daily activities? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer no to say <input type="checkbox"/>

Religion:

Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
If yes which one?			
*Christianity includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations			
*Christianity <input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhism <input type="checkbox"/>	Hinduism <input type="checkbox"/>	Judaism <input type="checkbox"/>
Islam <input type="checkbox"/>	Sikhism <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>

Sexual Orientation:

Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>
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Thank you for your time and support in completing this survey

What can we do?

With our customers and staffs' equality monitoring we can:

- Show how our policies are promoting equality
- Use this information to promote community cohesion
- Highlight any of our policies not complying with equality legislation
- Identify any of our policies adversely affecting people from different communities
- Show the numbers of particular communities using services and what outcomes they experience
- Compare results with targets
- Measure the effectiveness of service changes
- Identify the need for new or changed services

Remember the aim of equality monitoring is to show to what extent we provide a fair and equal service to **all** our customers

What is equality monitoring?



COMMUNITY FOCUS RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

Equality Monitoring

Everything you need to know

PHOTO

**Important information for
residents, contractors and
partners**

Contact details + Alternative formats string.

Equality monitoring is the process used to collect, store and analyse data about people's backgrounds, including race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion or belief and age.

Why are we monitoring?

The Equality Act 2006 made it illegal to discriminate on grounds of age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect and are committed to treating everyone equally. We believe in developing a workforce which broadly reflects the local community and will ensure that every job applicant is treated equally and fairly.

Equality monitoring will also help us to find out if our residents are accessing our services.

How will we collect the data?

We have produced a standard equality monitoring form, which will be used for all internal and external equality monitoring. This will allow us to collect the same information from across our different services, which will help us to see whether different services are meeting the needs of the community

What will we do with the information?

The information that we collect will be analysed to see how our services are used and who by. It is essential to help us check that our policies, services and culture are meeting the needs of the community. Monitoring our services will help us to understand which groups are using our services and see if levels of satisfaction are the same for all groups. It also tells us if we are reaching under-represented groups and if the services we provide are relevant to their needs and provided fairly.

Residents may not be accessing a service because:

- They don't know it exists
- They don't think it's a service that they want
- It's a service that they want but they don't like the way we provide it
- They've tried it and don't like it

By monitoring we can make sure that everyone who wants to access our services is able to do so.

We see monitoring as part of an ongoing process of asking questions, investigation and making changes to develop our services to continually improve the quality of life in South Kesteven.

All information that we collect is confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes. It is protected under the Data Protection Act.