

AGENDA



For a meeting of the
ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
to be held on
THURSDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2012
at
2.30 PM
In the
WITHAM ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM NG31 6PZ
Beverly Agass, Chief Executive

Group Members:	Councillor Bob Adams (Chairman), Councillor Ray Auger, Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing, Councillor Ibis Channell, Councillor Jock Kerr, Councillor Nick Robins and Councillor Rosemary H Woolley (Vice-Chairman)
Portfolio Holders:	Councillor Paul Carpenter (Governance and Communication)
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. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.

5. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH JULY 2012

(Enclosure)

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

7. CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES - UPDATE

Report RCC05 by the Head of People, Projects and Performance.

(Enclosure)

8. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY ACT UPDATE

The Service Manager, Legal and Democratic Services to update the Group.

9. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT

MEETING OF THE ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 26 JULY 2012 2.30 PM



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Bob Adams (Chairman)
Councillor Ray Auger
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Ibis Channell

Councillor Jock Kerr
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Rosemary H Woolley (Vice-Chairman)

OFFICERS

Head of People, Projects and Performance (Sue Griffiths)
Head of Finance (Richard Wyles)
Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer (Carol Drury)
Democratic Officer (Lucy Bonshor)

68. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None disclosed.

69. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 24TH MAY 2012

The notes taken on 24th May 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

70. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman referred to the Members Code of Conduct which had been discussed at the last meeting and the recommendation made from the Group to include a paragraph on Respect within the code, however, at the Council meeting this had not been included in the Code that was adopted. He said that this would be taken up with the Monitoring Officer once she was back at work.

At the last meeting an update on Broadband had been requested. This topic had been discussed at the recent Communities PDG on Thursday 19th July and the Chairman advised those Members who were interested in the topic to read the minutes from the meeting.

71. HATE CRIME - PRESENTATION

Recommendation

That Jane Crane attends Council in September to give her presentation on Hate Crime.

The Chairman informed the Group that Jane Crane had sent her apologies. He had already seen the presentation at a recent Community Focus Forum meeting and he felt that if the Group were agreeable that Jane be asked to give her presentation to the Council in September before a wider audience.

Members agreed and it was recommended that Jane Crane be asked to give her presentation to Council in September.

72. QUESTION WITHOUT DISCUSSION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL 12TH JULY 2012

The Group had nothing to add to the previous letter that had been circulated to Councillor Shorrocks. It was agreed that a letter be sent referring Councillor Shorrocks to the previous letter circulated.

➤ **Action Note**

Councillor Shorrocks be referred to the previous letter sent by the Group

73. CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY - UPDATE

The Head of People, Projects and Performance, Sue Griffiths updated the PDG following the last meeting of the Group. She referred to good customer service and what this meant to people. Managers within the authority had been asked what they saw as good customer service in their everyday lives. Responses included having a "relationship" with the organisations, being listened to by someone who seemed to care, promises being kept, a choice of methods either phone or online query. Research into the quality of current customer service was undertaken which included mystery shopping and online transactions. A customer access strategy would be created in line with the findings, best practice and these would be linked with South Kesteven's other initiatives.

The Head of People, Projects and Performance then highlighted the current contact through Customer Services which was as follows:

- Telephone calls to CSC = 47894 (2011/12)
- Emails handled by CSC = 4620 (2011/12)
- Face to face customers = 26357 (2011/12)
 - Grantham 54% (14235)
 - Bourne 24% (6427)

- Deeping 9% (2348)
- Stamford 13% (3347)

The face to face information reflects most contacts made in this way with the council. However customers phoning or emailing directly to services are not routinely counted by all services.

Members felt that voice mail should be used to the absolute minimum and that phones should not be left ringing. The Head of People, Projects and Performance said that the use of “Hunt Groups” should be more widely used to enable a ringing telephone to be picked up by someone, even if they were not in that section so that a message could be taken.

The mystery shopping findings were helpful as they identified what worked well and what didn't work so well. Following this some quick wins were put in place to help give a better service to our customers and these included a reduced number of published telephone numbers, more resources being put in to web chat and commissioning customer focus training together with customer standards behaviours “putting ourselves in a customer's shoes” All this information was also being used to help develop the Bourne Community Access Point.

She then spoke about the direction of travel from the current position to what the customer access aspired to. The proposed approach to reach this had the following key points:

- Virtual customer service “centre” to help customers gain a resolution first time
- Ability to see customer as a whole rather than by service
- Capable customers/easy queries –electronic
- Vulnerable customers/complex queries – phone or face to face
- Seamless service for customers even on the most complex queries
- Support improved approach with good quality training
- Head of People, Performance and Projects to be the overall customer champion
- Customer Service Manager will manage the customer standards element
- Heads of Service will manage the technical/professional element

This approach would need to be done in deployment phases the first phase being to establish standards and consistency within the Council which could take between six to nine months. The next phase was to consolidate and improve and could take about 18months to embed within the Council. The third phase was to lead and excel and offer services on behalf of other partners such as universal credit work. An opportunity to do this was offered with the library service in the Bourne CAP project.

She then gave examples of customer journeys from those that can be done

directly on line and therefore have no impact of customer services advisors to those that require someone to listen and care about what the customer is saying and have a direct impact on the customer services advisor.

The next steps were to use the strategy as a management tool and an improvement plan was being adopted. She then referred to work that was being done in exploring the use of a citizen's panel to help with consultation and projects where customer insight was needed. This panel would be made up of people who were more informed about how the council worked and therefore could provide information on how to make changes to improve services.

Various comments were then made about issues that Members had encountered to which the Head of People, Projects and Performance replied.

The Chairman thanked the Head of People, Projects and Performance for attending the meeting.

74. BOURNE COMMUNITY ACCESS POINT - UPDATE

The Head of Finance, Richard Wyles updated Members on the current position with the Bourne Community Access Point (Bourne CAP). He briefly referred to the background and purpose behind the Access Point. The Community Access Point had been spoken about for a number of years but due to the cut in grants it had become more urgent for the Lincolnshire County Council due to the threat to the services such as the library. The Access Point would incorporate the three tiers of local government as well as other partners who have expressed an interest in having a presence in the town such as the CAB and the police. The Registrar will also have a presence thanks to the CAP project.

Work on the Bourne Corn Exchange began in April 2012 and it was expected to be complete in February 2013. The ground floor would be changed into a community hub incorporating district and library services. An improved customer experience would be in place which included self-service, dedicated officer support and specialist advice to improve the offer for customers in the south of the district. There would be a culture shift with officers being based at Bourne rather than Grantham. Key benefits included giving customers the ability to access a wide range of council services from a single point of access. The building and resources would have the best use made of them without compromising service quality and a central location would be created in the heart of the town. The Head of Finance then explained the proposed layout to Members although the space would be flexible with the ground floor having the library and customer access points and the first floor being used by District and Town Council employees.

He went on further to speak about how the areas would be used and the booking system that would be in place. The Function Room was being kept

open whilst the works were being carried out and disruption was being kept to a minimum. The Bourne Community were in the main supportive of the change with organisations that had previously used the first floor being accommodated elsewhere in the town.

There would be staffing implications as the library staff were being commissioned under a TUPE proposal and some staff would be based at Bourne rather than Grantham. The opening hours would also be extended with the CAP being opened Monday to Friday between 9am – 5pm and between 10am and 1pm on Saturdays.

Members asked various questions about the costs of the project, leases to Bourne Town Hall and the funding to which Mr Wyles replied.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wyles for his presentation and the Group awaited the next chapter.

75. COMMUNITY FOCUS FORUM - UPDATE

The Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer gave a presentation to Members on the Community Focus Forum. She apologised for not circulating the presentation but it had been put together in the short time before the meeting, following Jane Crane sending her apologies.

The Community Focus Forum had been established in 2010 as a critical friend and was used as a consultation body in terms of equality analysis it met once a month. It covered a cross section of the community and helped assist the Council in fulfilling and monitoring its statutory requirements with regard to its Equality Duty. The three aims were:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The people who attended covered a diverse range of minority groups including people with disabilities, mental health, black and minority ethnic groups, the transgender community, people from the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual communities, faith groups and carers. The protected characteristics covered were:

- Age
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Disability

- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

Originally there were only six strands of protected characteristics some of which only covered people in terms of employment law but more were added with the introduction of the Equality Act 2010. The CFF were always looking for further members with adverts being placed in SKYLINE and SK Today. Members of the CFF brought a wealth of insight into the group. Officers who attended the meetings included the Chairman of the Engagement PDG and the Portfolio Holder for Grow the Economy and Economic Development. Carol chaired the meetings and Elaine Claridge, Research and information Officer Housing Solutions who had instigated the Group also attended.

The CFF had helped in the development and implementation of Service Area Impact Assessments, consultations, insights into issues and experiences, information sharing and developing links into “hard to reach” communities. The meetings were informal but dealt with formal issues. Moving Forward the CFF would be assisting with the delivery of our Corporate Equality Scheme, further consultation, improving links and scrutiny.

Questions were asked about policies they had helped with to which Carol replied. Two Members from the PDG were keen to become Members of the Forum, Councillor Bisnauthsing and Councillor Robins and Carol said they would be welcome to attend the meetings.

76. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

Members were circulated with a draft work programme which listed issues for consideration by the Group. The dates shown on the programme were not set in stone but a guide of when decisions would be made after speaking to Head of Service and the Forward Plan. Issues would be added and “greyed” out as and when the Group discussed the issue or decision had been made. Each item was briefly discussed and the Chairman asked if Members of the Group could be circulated with a current copy of the Complaints Procedure and the Consultation Strategy.

>Action Note

E-mail Group Members a copy of the current Complaints Procedure and the Consultation Strategy.

The Community Engagement and policy Development Officer said that meetings between the Cabinet, the PDG Chairman and Vice Chairman would be reinstated shortly.

The work programme would be a standing item on the agenda.

The meeting closed at 4.25pm.

REPORT TO ENGAGEMENT P.D.G.

REPORT OF: Sue Griffiths- Head of People Projects & Performance

REPORT NO: RCC 05

DATE: 20th September 2012

TITLE:	Consultation activities - update	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	N/A	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Paul Carpenter – Governance and Communication Portfolio Holder	
CONTACT OFFICER:	Deborah Wyles Consultation and Engagement Officer d.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk	
INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:	See paragraph 7	Full impact assessment Required: N/A
Equality and Diversity		
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Issues log from drop in sessions	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Engagement PDG is asked to note the contents of this report.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is twofold. To update Engagement PDG on:

- the consultation activities undertaken by the Reputation, consultation and communication team as part of a refreshed approach to community engagement
- the consultation activities/events planned for the next few months

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

Consultation activities undertaken

3.1 Consultation undertaken by the team includes:

- Two sets of "drop in" community events during the year
- Production and distribution of two issues of Parish Update – the newsletter for town and parish councils
- Attendance at other events as requested –details below
- Supporting service areas within the council with their consultation requirements

3.2 Two sets of "drop in" sessions have been held during 2012.

3.3 The outcomes and lessons learnt from the first set of drop in sessions were reported to Engagement PDG in May.

3.4 The second set of "drop in" sessions were held during June, July and August in various locations. These events, promoting the services provided by the council, were themed around quality of life with an Olympic flavour, and service representatives were on hand to advise members of the public on various topics linked to this including healthy eating/healthy walks and healthy environment. Various activities were provided for children including making badges, key rings and cardboard Olympic torches. Free fair trade fruit was also available. The events included:

- One coinciding with the run through of the Olympic torch on the 28th June on St Peters Hill, Grantham. This was very well attended despite torrential rain.
- One coinciding with the run through of the Olympic Torch on the 3rd July on Ironmonger Street, Stamford. This was also very well attended.
- One on Bourne market on the 19th July. We also used the opportunity to update passers- by on the progress of the Community Access Point and Wherry's lane development projects.
- One event at Deepings Leisure Centre on the 7th August. This replaced an event planned for The Deepings Carnival on the 7th July which was cancelled because of extreme weather.

3.5 Any issues that could not be resolved immediately were logged and were followed up in the following weeks.

3.6 The events were promoted through various different media, including the parish newsletter, the website, and members' news. Significant numbers of people attended the events in both Grantham and Stamford, despite the weather. Given the informality of the events, heads of service were not required to attend.

Production and distribution of the parish newsletter – Parish Update

3.7 Two editions of the parish newsletter – Parish Update - have been sent to town and parish councils this year. The first edition was sent out to all town and parish councils during the second week of May. It contained a number of articles designed to be of interest to parishes including:

- Feedback from the first set of drop in sessions and the dates of the next ones
- The promotion of heads of services as a contact point for each cluster
- Dates of council meetings for the next 6 months
- Standards
- Neighbourhood planning

3.8 This was sent out via email to those parishes on email (around 77%) with hard copies being posted to the remainder. Information was also sent at the same time on which parishes were in which cluster, so that parish clerks would know who they needed to contact if required.

3.9 A number of compliments were received from various sources- including the chair of Long Bennington Parish Council, Steven Pearson who said

"Thank you for this-I think it is a very good idea and should help improve communications between Parishes and SKDC"

and Rosemary Woolley, clerk to Baston Parish Council, who said

"This is excellent, congratulations to all your team."

3.10 The second edition of the newsletter was sent out during the second week in August. The articles were again designed to be appropriate and relevant to parishes and included:

- How to register support for superfast broadband
- An update on the events held to celebrate the run through of the Olympic torch
- Help for First time home buyers
- Neighbourhood watch Lincolnshire Alert service
- The promotion of the heads of services as a contact point for each cluster
- Promotion of the Gravity Fields Festival

Attendance at community events

3.11 The events attended vary year to year. In the past few years we have attended Grantham Carnival, the Stamford River Care Day, Bourne Music Festival, and Christmas markets in both Grantham and Stamford, and have had a presence at various markets for various reasons in Grantham, Stamford and Bourne. Events attended during the last few months include a stall on Stamford Christmas Market on the 11th December 2011 and a stall at Stamford Market on the 7^h September 2012 to promote the Gravity Fields Festival.

3.12 A number of service areas within the council have been supported in the consultation activities they have undertaken. During the last few months these have included:

- The Grantham Area Action Plan- alongside Planning Policy. This included preparation of communication materials for displays and attendance at drop in sessions at Grantham Library

- The Wyndham Park survey – alongside the Grounds Maintenance section. This included the preparation, design and analysis of a survey from both face to face and web based sources.
- The location of the bar facilities at Stamford Arts Centre – alongside Stamford Arts Centre. This involved the preparation, design and analysis of a survey to capture the arts centre users views on the location of their bar facilities.
- The Southern Quadrant consultation – alongside Planning Policy. This included preparation of communication and display materials and attendance at drop in sessions at both Grantham Library and Witham Place sheltered housing complex in September 2011 and April 2012.
- The Community Access Point and Wherry's Lane development projects in Bourne – alongside assets and finance. This included the preparation of communication materials for display purposes, presence on a market stall and meetings to consult and inform on the main proposals.
- Staff briefing sessions – supporting the Unlocking our potential initiative. This included the preparation of presentations and display materials on projects, priorities and service plans. Analysis and reporting of responses was also undertaken.

3.13 The consultation events and activities planned for the next few months are as follows:

- To support the roll out of the Gravity Fields Festival programme of events. This involved, amongst other things, promotion of the various events at Stamford Market on the 7th September 2012.
- To promote the "Destination SK" project at BRM day in Bourne on the 7th October 2012
- To assist with the third phase of the southern quadrant consultation being undertaken by Planning Policy. This will involve the preparation of communication and display materials and attendance at drop in sessions at both Grantham Library and Witham Place sheltered housing complex during November 2012.
- To undertake a statutory consultation in respect of the council tax benefit scheme and its replacement Council Tax Support, alongside the Benefits manager. This involves the preparation,

design and distribution of a postal and web based survey to around 5000 affected individuals, the publication of a new scheme and the principles therein, attendance at various drop in sessions throughout September and October 2012 and analysis of the responses received .

3.14 The team have also been asked to carry out a scoping exercise to determine the corporate consultation requirements of the council as a whole. This will obviously have to include a consideration of the drop in sessions that have been held and the community events that have either been attended or are scheduled in, but will also consider:

- An estimation of the use we will get from a citizens panel
- Establishing our requirements
- Negotiation of an agreement with a citizens panel provider which reflects our requirements
- The citizens' panel will be recruited by an external provider but recruitment of a new member of staff (part time) will enable the surveys to be carried out "in house". Savings will be made as a result of this approach (as we will not be paying an external provider to undertake our surveys) and will vary according to the number of surveys that are carried out.
- The possibility of workshops on budget priorities/council tax (depending on the time of year undertaken) with participants drawn from the citizens panel
- The possibility of an annual residents' survey. The survey to measure satisfaction with services and likely to include questions identified by the Local Government Association (LGA) as being suitable for nationwide benchmarking

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None as the programme covers a wide range of consultation methods.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The additional workload identified as part of this exercise will be met by the recruitment of a temporary part time member of staff.

6. RISK AND MITIGATION

6.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

Category Risk	Action / Controls
N/A	N/A

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

9.1 All financial costs associated with the activities detailed in the report are met by existing revenue budgets for the service area.

10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

10.1 The report is for note relating to future and current activity.

11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

12. APPENDICES: None