

AGENDA



For a meeting of the
ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
to be held on
THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2013
at
2.30 PM
In the
WITHAM ROOM, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM NG31 6PZ
Beverly Agass, Chief Executive

Group Members:	Councillor Ray Auger, Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing, Councillor Ibis Channell, Councillor Michael Cook (Chairman), Councillor Jock Kerr, Councillor Nick Robins and Councillor Rosemary H Woolley (Vice-Chairman)
Portfolio Holders:	Councillor Paul Carpenter (Governance & Communication Portfolio)
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 6TH JUNE 2013

(Enclosure)

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

7. TENANT ENGAGEMENT

The Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods to give an update.

8. MEANS OF ENGAGEMENT

- Customer Feedback presentation by the Head of People, Projects and Performance.

(Enclosure)

- Citizens Panel - Report PPP05 by the Head of People, Projects and Performance.

(Enclosure)

9. WORK PROGRAMME

The Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer to update the Group.

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

MEETING OF THE ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

THURSDAY, 6 JUNE 2013 10.30 AM



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Ibis Channell
Councillor Michael Cook (Chairman)

Councillor Jock Kerr
Councillor Nick Robins

OFFICERS

Service Manager Human Resources and
Organisational Development (Joyce
Slater)
Community Engagement and Policy
Development Officer (Carol Drury)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Mrs Linda Neal (Leader)

As this was the first meeting of the Group that the Chairman had chaired he welcomed everyone and said that he expected all Members to read the paperwork that they were sent for each meeting in order that they could make relevant and informed comments and that he would have no political "grandstanding".

1. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None received.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ray Auger and Councillor Rosemary Woolley.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None disclosed.

4. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST MARCH 2013

The action notes from the meeting held on 21st March 2013 were agreed as a correct record of the decisions taken.

5. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Reference was made to the dog fouling issue that had been raised at the last meeting, one Member wished to know what the current position was. Councillor Robins briefly updated the Group and a short discussion then followed about how dog fouling was currently dealt with and whose responsibility it was. It was suggested that the Communities PDG was asked when they would be looking at the issue.

➤ **Action Note**

Check the Communities PDG's working programme for Dog Fouling

The Member then referred to tenant scrutiny and tenant involvement and the current tenant compacts and asked about how the selection process had been carried out. Ms Drury replied that she would invite Mr Richardson and Mr Hutchinson to attend the next meeting to explain the process.

➤ **Action Note**

Invite Mr Richardson (Head of Housing and Neighbourhoods) and Mr Hutchinson (Team Leader Resident Involvement) to the next meeting of the PDG.

6. QUESTION WITHOUT DISCUSSION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL 18TH APRIL 2013

Councillor Mrs Neal had been invited to the PDG following the question referred from Council in April from Councillor Selby. Councillor Selby had also been invited to attend, but was not present. Councillor Mrs Neal informed the group that to date the District Council had not spoken about having a statue of Margaret Thatcher, certainly not whilst she was alive. If a referendum was to be held for the borough of Grantham the money would have to come from the Grantham Special Expense Area (SEA) fund and no money was available. A referendum for the whole of the district would cost approximately £100,000 in these current financial times, was this a necessary expense?

A discussion followed with Members putting their personal views forward:

- What Baroness Thatcher achieved was history
- She had stated that she did not want a statue erected in Grantham

- during her lifetime
- A statue and a memorial were entirely different
- It was not for the public to decide

Reference was then made to having a poll for Grantham, Councillor Mrs Neal reiterated that a poll would require the same work as a referendum and there was no money available in the SEA to pay for a poll.

She informed the group that for a number of year's proposals had been discussed in the event of Baroness Thatcher's passing but it was an issue with a sensitive nature. Thought had been given to perhaps the addition of a water feature of some kind in Abbey Gardens not an interactive feature, more the flow of water within the area in recognition that Baroness Thatcher was a daughter of Grantham, who became the country's first women prime minister. However, this was a sensitive matter and permission would have to be sought from the family and a period of mourning had to be respected. It was agreed that a letter be drafted with the Chairman and Cllr Mrs Neal and forwarded to Councillor Selby informing him of the costs of a referendum and that the matter had been discussed by the PDG.

➤ **Action Note**

A letter to be sent to Councillor Selby.

7. MEMBER TRAINING UPDATE

Members had been circulated with a table which detailed the training that Members had undertaken in respect of the quasi judicial Committees (Development Control Committee, Licensing Committee and Governance and Audit Committee) since 2011. The Service Manager Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD) Mrs Joyce Slater, referred to one Member who had undertaken some Development Control training but was not ticked on the sheet. It was recognised that not all Members could attend the first set of training in May 2001 and one to one training with officers had been set up for those Members who could not attend that training session..

Recent training had been undertaken with the Development Control Committee (DCC) as the landscape of development control was changing quickly and Members needed to be kept on up to date with changes on guidance and legislation.

One Member referred to substitutes and the need for them to have training before they can sit on DCC as often external trainers were used and they were expensive, only DCC Members attended. Mrs Slater assured Members that if either of the DCC training had been undertaken in May or June 2011 then that Member could sit as a substitute on the Development Control Committee. However, those Members who had had training prior to 2011 needed to attend more recent training as planning guidance and legislation had changed since

2006.

Mrs Slater then spoke about the need for training on individual topics for Planning Members and how these could be delivered in a flexible way whether in small groups or on a one to one basis by in house officers or external specialists. Pat Reid, the Service Manager for Development Management Services had recently held training/workshops before a DCC.

A short discussion then followed about what was core training and what was mandatory training.

In the past funding for county wide training had been accessed from LEAP as part of East Midlands Councils. It was hoped that a similar county wide training programme would emerge but to date this had not happened.

Further discussion followed about being a substitute member on planning and the training required. A question was asked about Parish/Town Councils being able to attend training put on by the District to help with costs. Mrs Slater replied that there may be a conflict of interest and she would have to get clarification from the Monitoring Officer.

➤ **Action Note**

Clarification required from the Monitoring Officer as to whether Parish/Town Council's could be invited to attend District Council training on planning matters. Would this present a conflict of interest.

The majority of training that was required was in relation to the quasi judicial committees such as DCC and Licensing due to changes in legislation. Changes in financial legislation affected the Governance and Audit Committee and it was clear within the Constitution what training substitutes required to attend this committee.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Slater for attending the meeting.

8. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairman hoped that all Members had read the documents that had been circulated especially the Musical Chairs¹ publication. As this was the first meeting that he had chaired his initial thought was for a small working group to be set up to work through the scoping exercise and report their findings back to the PDG at alternative meetings. From looking at the issues numbered on the scoping checklist he thought that some of the issues should be in a different order and proposed that item 4 should become item 2 and item 5 should become item 3, he was looking for volunteers for the Working Group. Both Councillor Robins and Councillor Bisnauthsing volunteered; Councillor Cook was volunteered as the third member of the Group.

A discussion then followed with views being expressed about representation of the electorate by Ward Members.

The question was asked that if a committee system was reintroduced would Members feel more informed and representative of their electorate if they only sat on one committee and made decisions on that committee. If a new committee system was introduced it would not be like the old system where the minutes of the meetings would all go to Council for ratification. A committee would be delegated with decision making powers and the decision would stay with them.

Further discussion followed on member involvement. The work that Ward Members did 'on the ground' was vital as it helped the electorate's voices be heard when shaping policies and strategies, making a decision was not the same as representing the people. It was suggested that the opportunities were there for Members to be involved as much or as little as they wished to be, just attending meetings did not make them 'good councillors' there was no set formula which made a Member a fantastic Ward councillor they were there to assist and support their electorate wherever they could and it was a poor councillor who did little ward work.

It was agreed that items 1, 4 and 5 on the scoping sheet be looked at first by the Working Group and possibly 10. A date and time would be arranged and Members notified accordingly.

➤ **Action Note**

Items 1, 4, 5 and possibly 10 of the scoping checklist to be looked at by the Working Group at their first meeting. Councillors Bisnauthsing, Cook and Robins to be notified of the date, time and place of the first meeting.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

Ms Drury (Community Engagement and Policy Development Officer) gave a verbal overview of what the PDG had looked at over the year; a hard copy had been circulated with the agenda which showed the issues discussed and the recommendations made. Although the Engagement PDG had only made one recommendation it had looked at various policies, strategies and schemes and had made recommendations to Officers to help shape those documents. Between all three PDG's there had been 43 substantive items and 32 recommendations made. In order to help Members make informed decisions reports and presentations had been circulated to Members with the agenda packs wherever possible.

She referred to the recent Cabinet and PDG Liaison Group which had looked at a draft list of items to come forward to the PDG. One Member asked about the

ICT provision for Members and Ms Drury replied that the ICT Strategy was perhaps an issue to look at collectively between the Resources and the Engagement PDGs.

Reference was made to Customer Feedback and Ms Drury informed the Group that this issue was coming back to the next meeting. Councillor Robins referred to the tour that he had previously taken around the CSC and comments that had been made; he wondered if any of these had been implemented, would it be possible to take a further tour. Councillor Bisnauthsing asked if he could also have a tour. Ms Drury said that she would get Kirsty Callacher from the CSC to contact both Councillors.


10. TIME MEETING CLOSED

The meeting closed at 12.10am.

ⁱ Centre for Public Scrutiny document published April 2013


Customer Feedback

South Kesteven District Council
Sue Griffiths
Head of people, projects and performance




What was starting point?

- No overall consistent approach
- Approach not underpinned by detailed guidance
- Ethos of how to deal with customer feedback not explicit
- Compliments not being always added into system
- Requirements for Covalent (our performance management system) not fully understood by all
- Cross service complaints sometimes not being owned by a particular manager
- Standards different – some excellent but not shared



What have we done?

- Looked at all feedback in detail weekly
- Feed issues back to managers (said what was good too)
- Met with all the team to understand what they did currently and how they could improve
- Researched practice in other councils
- Commissioned some training – some for all staff and specific skills
- Developed letter templates
- Developed area on intranet
- Set up a customer focus group



Outcomes

- Ensured complaints are handled more swiftly
- Produced letters less likely to escalate the complaint
- Been clearer about what is a complaint – not just that someone does not like a proper decision
- Collected better data in Covalent so we can start using lessons learnt
- Captured compliments better and now thank customers for them
- Customer feedback process being reviewed

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure

- Based on best practice and research
- Clear definition of complaints, comments and compliments
- Linked to values and behaviours *"We listen and respond to our customers"*
- What is not a complaint e.g where there are separate appeals procedures
- Details of process – any method of contact
- Set timescales for dealing with complaints
- Acknowledgement of compliments

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure - complaints

- How will it work?
 - Stage One – up to Service Manager with Head of Service reviewing all letters
 - Stage Two - Independent Head of Service to review (within 3 months of initial complaint)
 - Stage Three – Independent Director – thorough review prior to LG Ombudsman
 - Housing Panel for housing tenants

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure - complaints

- What will it improve?
 - More independence at an earlier stage
 - Management can changes procedure or policies that cause problems
 - Length wait for different stages –clearer deadlines
 - Ad hoc Members Panel frustrating for all met infrequently, takes time to convene, is a very adversarial experience, limited powers to make amends, does not feel independent to many
 - Quicker route to Ombudsman for those who feel they have a serious grievance

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure – role of Members

- Cabinet and Scrutiny will receive an annual report, together with Ombudsman letter
- Clear procedure for Members to communicate to their residents and help them
- More focus on learning lessons – Members can make recommendations from range of feedback
- Knowledge that SK is operating best practice

 Your council working for you

REPORT TO ENGAGEMENT P.D.G.

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

REPORT NO: PPP05

DATE: 18th July 2013

TITLE:	Citizens Panel update	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	N/A	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Paul Carpenter – Governance and Communications Portfolio Holder	
CONTACT OFFICER:	Deborah Wyles and Siobhan Reilly Consultation and Engagement Officers d.wyles@southkesteven.gov.uk siobhanreilly@southkesteven.gov.uk	
INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: Equality and Diversity	Referred to in paragraph (7) below	Full impact assessment Required:
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		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Engagement PDG is asked to

- a. Note the demographics of the citizens' panel**
- b. Note the feedback received as part of the recruitment process**
- c. Endorse the topics identified for consultation**

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to update Engagement PDG with the status of the citizens' panel, our planned contact and the way forward for the next twelve months.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

3.1 Introduction

3.2 The consultation officers were tasked with overseeing the recruitment of a citizens' panel for South Kesteven with the following characteristics:

- 1000 members
- Membership that is demographically representative of our area
- One third of the panel to be refreshed annually
- A reserves list holding the details of those wishing to join at a later date
- Collection of information on how members prefer to be contacted

3.3 Whilst this part of the process was carried out by a specialist organisation, commissioned specifically for this purpose, the subsequent contact and consultations with the citizens' panel is to be undertaken in house.

3.4 The purpose of this report is to update Engagement PDG with the

- recruitment of the new citizens' panel
- demographics that have been achieved
- feedback that has been received as a result of three taster questions asked as part of the recruitment process
- potential topics for consultation

Detail

The recruitment of the new citizens' panel

3.5 The recruitment of the citizens' panel has now been completed. 1001 members were recruited by SMSR (the company chosen to recruit the panel) using a combination of telephone and face to face recruitment techniques. This took place during March and April 2013. Press releases to inform the public that recruitment was underway were sent to all local papers with small articles appearing in both the Grantham Journal and Stamford Mercury newspapers.

Respondents were provided with contact numbers for consultation officers should they require reassurance that the recruitment was genuine and a handful of calls were received. A copy of the script used as part of the recruitment process is attached at appendix one for your information.

The demographic characteristics that have been achieved

- 3.6 Using information from the 2011 Census, SMSR were given the following demographics on gender, age, disability and geography. The figures they achieved for each of these categories at the end of the recruitment process are shown in the last column of each of the tables

Gender

Gender	Number	%	Achieved by SMSR
Male	64,656	48.3	47.7
Female	69,132	51.7	52.3
Total	133,788	100.0	100.0

Age

Age band	Number	%	Excluding under 18's	%	Achieved by SMSR
Under 18	28,212	21.1			
18 to 24	9,030	6.8	9,030	8.6	7.0
25 to 44	32,452	24.2	32,452	30.7	30.8
45 to 64	38,534	28.8	38,534	36.5	37.5
65 and over	25,560	19.1	25,560	24.2	24.8
Total	133,788	100.0	105,576	100.0	100.0

Ethnic Group

Ethnic group	No	%	Achieved by SMSR
White British	125,261	93.6	97.1
White Other	5,133	3.8	1.7
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	1,142	0.9	0.3
Asian or Asian British	1,580	1.2	0.7
Black or Black British	509	0.4	0.2
Other ethnic group	163	0.1	0.0
Total	133,788	100.0	100.0

Long term health problems or disability

Health status	No	%	Achieved by SMSR
Day to day activities limited a lot	10,219	7.6	4.1
Day to day activities limited a little	12,910	9.7	8.9
Day to day activities not limited	110,659	82.7	86.9
Refused to answer			0.1
Total	133,788	100.0	100.0

Geography –by ward

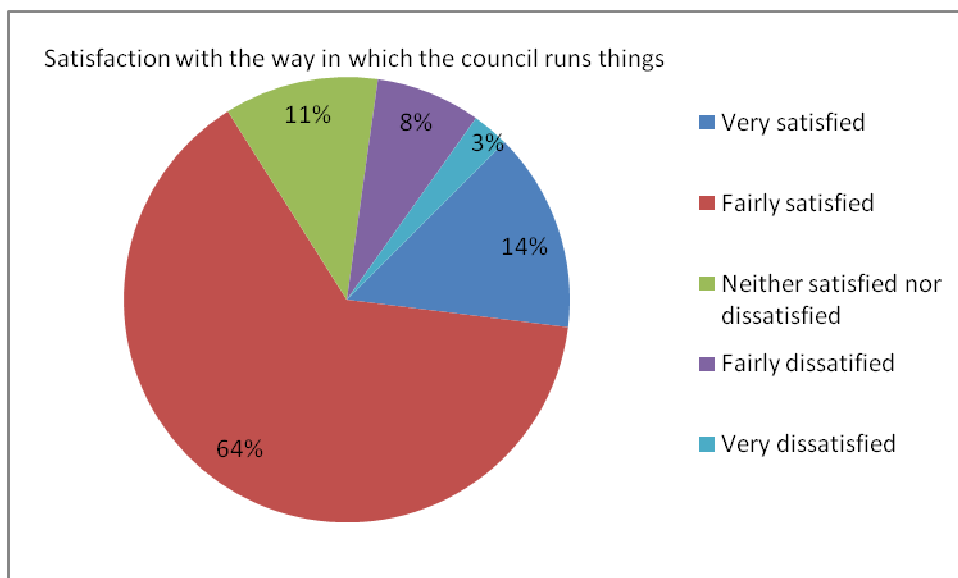
Area	No	%	Achieved by SMSR
Heath	1887	1.4	1.5
Loveden	2522	1.9	1.6
Saxonwell	2383	1.8	1.6
Witham Valley	2309	1.7	1.4
Barrowby	1952	1.5	1.9
Peascliffe	2200	1.6	1.6
Ermine	2830	2.1	2.0
Greyfriars	4084	3.0	3.6
St Wulframs	4056	3.0	3.2
Harrowby	5852	4.4	4.9
St Annes	4887	3.7	3.4
Grantham St Johns	6076	4.5	4.1
Earlesfield	7332	5.5	6.0
Green hill	4193	3.1	3.0
Forest	2084	1.6	1.6
Belmont	5133	3.8	3.9
Lincrest	2224	1.7	1.5
Isaac Newton	2424	1.8	1.7
Glen Eden	2417	1.8	1.5
Morkery	2444	1.8	1.6
Toller	2633	2.0	1.7
Aveland	2258	1.7	1.3
Ringstone	2938	2.2	2.4
Bourne West	6055	4.5	4.6
Bourne East	8401	6.3	6.5
Thurlby	2153	1.6	1.6
Hillsides	2235	1.7	1.7
Truesdale	4811	3.6	3.9
Market and West Deeping	6263	4.7	4.7
Deeping St James	7051	5.3	5.3
Stamford St Johns	5909	4.4	4.5
All Saints	5113	3.8	3.8
St Georges	4019	3.0	3.1
St Marys	4660	3.5	3.4
Total	133,788	100	100.0

- 3.7 This comparison shows that SMSR have, on the whole, managed to reflect the demographic characteristics of the area's population. Other demographic information was also collected – on religion and belief, employment status, household composition and home ownership which will probably be useful at some point in the future.
- 3.8 The information for each of the panel members has been supplied in a spreadsheet so it is possible to drill down to different areas or any of the other demographic information, should this be required.

Feedback that has been received

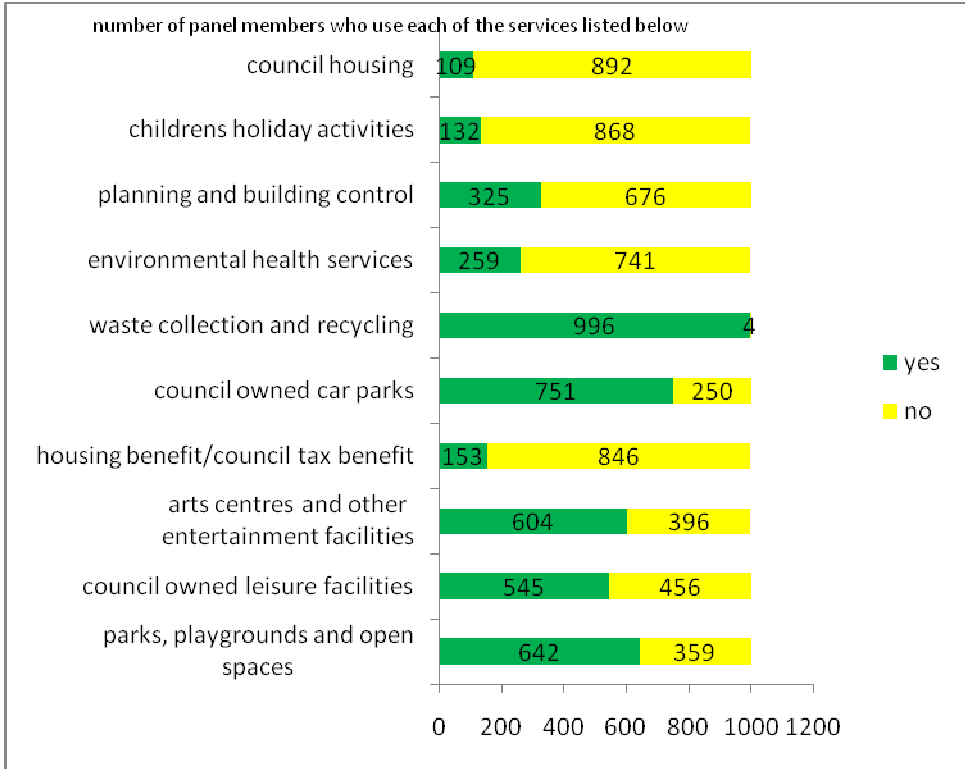
- 3.9 As part of the recruitment process, citizen panel members were asked three taster questions. These were included to give people a feel for the types of questions they are likely to be asked when on the panel. These were chosen from a bank of questions recommended as first tier questions by the Local Government Association back in 2011, and have also been asked by other authorities when they recruited their citizens' panels. The questions were:
- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live? (Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from your home)
 - Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way in which South Kesteven District Council runs things?
 - Do you or members of your household, use any of the following council services?
- 3.10 An overwhelming majority of panel respondents (92.3%) were either very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live (where the local area is defined as the area within 15 to 20 minutes walking distance from their home). 3.2% of respondents were dissatisfied, with the remainder choosing neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Just over three quarters of them (78.6%) were either very or fairly satisfied with the way the council runs things. This is shown in pie chart below.



- 3.11 When asked which council services they use, they answered as follows:
- Almost all of them(99.6%) use our waste collection and recycling service
 - Three quarters of them use council owned car parks
 - Just under two thirds of them (64%) use parks, playgrounds and open spaces, with around the same proportion (60.4%) saying that they use council owned arts centres and other entertainment facilities
 - Just over half (54%) use council owned leisure facilities
 - Just under a third of people have used our planning or building control services
 - A quarter of people have used environmental health services
 - Around 15% of people have used the housing benefit and council tax benefit service
 - Just over 10% are in council housing

The number of panel members using each of the services is shown in graph format below.



3.12 These figures provide a useful yardstick to gauge participation in and interaction with the services provided by the council and make sense. For example, there are about 6000 council homes in our area out of around 60,000 domestic properties (around 10%) and 10.8% of the panel say that they use the council housing service.

Content of the first newsletter

3.13 To help establish a two way dialogue with the members of the panel, we think it is important to contact them and welcome them. We believe a newsletter is the best way of doing this as it is suitably informal, and something that can be built on and used going forward. The first edition has already been dispatched and included information on:

- How the panel is going to work
- What's coming up
- What has been said so far (feedback on the questions that were asked as part of the recruitment process)
- How to contact us

Content of the webpage dedicated to the citizens' panel

3.14 To facilitate the day to day running of the citizens' panel, and to enable members to contact us easily, it is important to have an area dedicated to the citizens' panel on the council's website. This includes information on the citizens' panel, how to join, how to contact us, newsletters and other reports and is available by following the link www.southkesteven.gov.uk/citizenspanel

Potential topics for consultation

3.15 Work has been undertaken to identify topics that would be suitable for consideration by the citizens' panel. Service plans for each of the corporate areas:

- Community Assets
- Housing and Neighbourhoods
- Environmental Services
- Development and Growth
- Legal and Democratic
- People, Projects and Performance
- Finance and Risk
- Property Development

have been studied and the consultations planned by each have been identified. A judgement has then been made as to whether the citizens' panel is a suitable vehicle to use to consult. As a result of this work, three areas where the citizens' panel could potentially be used have been identified. These are:

- Customer access to council – experience, satisfaction and potential for channel shift (particularly from telephone and face to face to other mediums)
- Customer/resident satisfaction with waste and recycling, leisure and cultural services, housing and environmental health services and others – a mini residents survey
- Setting the budget and council tax levels

3.16 Our proposal is to use three of the opportunities the citizens' panel provides to consult on the above topics in June/July 2013, September 2013 and December 2013.

Conclusion

3.17 The citizens’ panel should provide us with an effective and focused means of undertaking consultation with our residents. Using the service plans to inform the topics that will be selected ensures the citizens’ panel is being utilised in the most appropriate way. This in turn enables the organisation to progress knowing it has been informed by the views of a representative sample of our residents.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 N/A

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. RISK AND MITIGATION

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

Category Risk	Action / Controls

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 N/A

9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the Panel has been established to respond to the consultation as described.

10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

10.1 The terms of the recruitment must be clearly articulated to those recruited and understood by officers of the Council to ensure there are no legal implications on recruitment.

11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

11.1 None

12. APPENDICES:

12.1 None