

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