
CONSULTATION METHODS TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor John Williams, Leader

Responsible Director(s) – Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Purpose of Report

1. To report the Resources Scrutiny Committee's recommendations in relation to both internal and external consultation methods used by this Authority.

Information and Analysis

2. The Resources Scrutiny Committee have undertaken a task and finish review, involving all Members of that Scrutiny Committee, to look into both internal and external consultation methods used by the Authority.
3. At the first meeting of the Group which was held on 10th February, 2004, the way in which the Authority consults externally was considered and, following a detailed discussion and debate with the Head of Policy and her Team, the Group were satisfied with the work being undertaken in relation to this. The Group was however, concerned that further work needed to be undertaken into the internal forms of consultation and a further meeting, to which all Members of the Council were invited, was held on 1st April, 2004.
4. Following the meeting on 1st April, 2004, the Group formulated the following recommendations, which were subsequently accepted and endorsed by the Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 15th April, 2004 :-
 - (a) that this Task and Finish Review Group supports the external consultation work being done by this Authority and the way it is undertaken;
 - (b) that the membership of this Council's consultation forms be revisited to try and recruit new members;
 - (c) that the Officers advise Ward Councillors when a consultation exercise is being undertaken in their Wards and give them information on when and how they intend to undertake the consultation;
 - (d) that a training session on the roles of Members/Officers on the internal consultation processes be held;
 - (e) that Members be consulted at an early stage on major issues which affect the Borough;

- (f) that the proposal to include a standard paragraph entitled 'Outcome of Consultation' on Cabinet and Council reports be supported; and
- (g) that the above recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for information and comment.

5. Director's Comments

In line with good Corporate Governance practices, I support the recommendations of the Resources Scrutiny Committee and recommend their implementation.

Legal Implications

- 6. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- 7. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

- 8. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

- 9. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

Recommendation

- 10. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) the membership of this Council's consultation forums be revisited to try and recruit new Members;
 - (b) the Officers advise Ward Councillors when a consultation exercise is being undertaken in their Wards and give them information on when and how they intend to undertake the consultation;
 - (c) a training session on the roles of Members/Officers on the internal consultation processes be held;

- (d) Members be consulted at an early stage on major issues which affect the Borough; and
- (e) a standard paragraph entitled 'Outcome of Consultation' on Cabinet and Council reports be supported.

Reasons

11. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) to recruit new external members on this Council's consultation forums;
- (b) to comply with this Council's Constitution;
- (c) to ensure all Members/Officers are aware of the internal consultation processes; and
- (d) to promote good corporate governance practice.

Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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