

## Consultation

### Performance Select Committee, item 7

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Performance Select Committee</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9 August 2006</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Tracy Turner, Executive Manager (Strategy &amp; Performance), 01799 510402</b>	Item for decision

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### Summary

The document sets out in brief anticipated consultation activity during 2006/07.

### Recommendations

The Committee to agree the overall approach set out in the paper.

### Background Papers

None.

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	Consultation exercises will be tailored according to the planned audience.
Community Safety	There are no direct implications
Equalities	Consultation methods used will ensure appropriate considerations of sampling, equality and diversity, and hard to reach groups
Finance	The planned consultation strategy will need to take account of any revenue implications of future consultation exercises. Current planned consultation is contained within existing budgets.
Human Rights	Consultation will need to take account of any human rights implications.
Legal implications	There are no direct implications
Ward-specific impacts	All, though specific consultation exercises may take place in individual wards or area panels
Workforce/Workplace	Responsibility for consultation sits within the communication team which is expected to be at full strength by November.

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#### Situation

- 1 The document sets out the overall programme and approach to consultation to be carried out in 2006/07, in advance of a corporate consultation strategy being developed by the incoming Consultation Manager.
- 2 A comprehensive corporate consultation strategy is required to ensure:
  - Corporate and service consultation is coordinated wherever possible, and with other external agencies or public sector partners
  - Planned consultation addresses diversity issues and ensures the views of hard to reach groups are captured
  - Consultation drives service improvement
- 3 Appendix A sets out the current programmed consultation during 2006/07. In brief this comprises:
  - BVPI General Survey
  - BVPI special surveys – planning, benefits, tenants
  - Parish questionnaire
  - LDF/strategic vision
  - Budget consultation
  - Corporate plan indicator consultation
  - ICM, customer and complaints consultation
  - Other service related consultation.
- 4 The BVPI General Survey and special surveys for planning, benefits and tenants are nationally set satisfaction surveys which the council has to carry out every three years. Resources are built into the budget to take account of this requirement. The PAE have put in place a framework agreement for Essex authorities to use to select contractors to undertake this work. Budget consultation has also been built into the agreement.
- 5 Coordination of consultation, both in house, and with other partners, is still at an early stage, and this work will be developed further with the capacity of the new Communication Manager post. The advent of the regular quarterly district magazine Uttlesford Life has enabled greater opportunities to reach all parts of the district and a number of services have used, or plan to use this medium in the future. The opportunity for focused consultation via the area panels is also starting to be recognised. During 2006/07 it is planned to redesign, restructure and relaunch the corporate website, and it is envisaged that in future more imaginative opportunities to consult and engage with sections of the community will be pursued in line with the Stansted explained microsite ([www.stanstedexplained.info](http://www.stanstedexplained.info)).

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- 6 In addition, the Procurement Hub Manager is currently carrying out an exercise to procure a number of licences for consultation software which will enable questionnaires to be professionally designed in house and returned paper or electronic questionnaires to be scanned and analysed by the software. Significant reduction in cost may be possible by joining with other authorities to procure the relevant licences. A centre of excellence will be established within the communications team, with a comprehensive consultation toolkit and database available to ensure quality consultation is planned, analysed, fed back, and results used to drive service improvement.

### Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
<b>Consultation is not carried out in accordance with best practice</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Consultation needs to be coordinated in order that the organisation can plan, learn from and evaluate consultation practice</b>
<b>Consultation fatigue</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>There is a danger that numerous consultation activities carried out in house, or by other public sector partners, all take place within a similar time span. Coordinating consultation can reduce cost and minimise fatigue by jointly consulting in a smart format.</b>
<b>Results of consultation are not acted upon or fed back to consultees</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Results of consultation exercises are fed back upon in Uttlesford Life or via other appropriate channels. Maintaining a consultation database will provide a corporate knowledge base to improve services and inform future consultation activities.</b>