

Committee: Planning Policy Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 29 September 2015

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Title: Engagement Strategy

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Summary

1. An Engagement Strategy has been prepared in order that the proposed approach to consultation and wider issues of engagement with the community and key stakeholders can be understood.
2. The report seeks to formalise existing arrangements around the Duty-to-Co-Operate.
3. It also sets out the details of the consultation activities proposed as part of the Local Plan consultation to be held between Thursday 22 October and Friday 4 December.

Recommendations

4. That the Engagement Strategy contained at Appendix A be supported
5. That the draft poster and leaflet contained at Appendices B and C, be supported for printing
6. That the dates for the start and close of the consultation be agreed

Financial Implications

7. The costs associated with the approach set out in the report, including the proposed consultation, can be met from existing budgets.

Background Papers

8. None

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Formal consultation as the Local Plan develops will be carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	The Local Plan impacts on all sectors of the community.

Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	Appraisal of alternatives to the emerging plan will be undertaken.
Ward-specific impacts	All.
Workforce/Workplace	Planning Policy Team and other officers as appropriate.

Situation

9. The Executive Summary of the Planning Advisory Service review of the Submission Local Plan (Scrutiny Committee, 10 September 2015) included the following comments in respect of the previous Uttlesford Local Plan and Duty to Co-Operate processes:

“The key message emerging from the review is that a range of significant documents do not appear within the materials available. It would have been of advantage to have provided a consultation strategy for the development of the ULP and its required stages. It would also have been of benefit to provide consultation delivery plan to help inform the inspector of the approach taken to engage with the public and key stakeholders for each of the required stages.”

“With regard to the Duty to Cooperate much the same can be said for the documentation that appeared to be lacking. A stakeholder management strategy and a respective plan for fulfilling the duty to cooperate would have been of significant benefit to the Inspector when reviewing this element of the Local Plan production.”

10. The Engagement Strategy at Appendix A sets out guidelines and principles through which the Council can address these issues as work progresses in relation to the new Local Plan. It supplements the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement and directly addresses matters related to the Local Plan and Duty to Co-Operate specifically. It also draws on the Work Plan and Risk Assessment (PPWG) which seeks to ensure that the activities undertaken can be managed effectively within the Council’s resources.
11. It is recommended that the Council should take steps to increase the clarity of the Council’s procedures in relation to the Duty to Co-Operate. There are two main aspects which can be addressed relatively straightforwardly.
12. The first of these relates to the Council’s participation in the group of Local Planning Authorities known as the ‘Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Group’, known as the ‘Co-Op Board’, the Terms of Reference of which are presented at **Appendix B**. To date the Executive Member for Environmental

Services, whose portfolio includes the Local Plan, has attended these meetings, and it should be noted that Cabinet at its meeting on 17 September 2015 added this role to the Council's official List of Representatives on Outside Bodies.

13. Secondly, the Executive Member for Environmental Services has to date undertaken liaison activity with Portfolio holders from neighbouring Local Planning Authorities. It is proposed that the postholder should be formalised in this role and that the agreed notes of these meetings should be published on the Council's website at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/dtc.
14. At the Working Group Meeting on 27 July, Officers were asked to consider the implications of introducing an additional consultation, making four in total. As set out in the Engagement Strategy, it is recommended that the Council adheres to the original proposal for three consultations, given the need to focus consultation on the most important decision-making parts of the process, the implications for the work programme, and the legal and technical requirements. The Engagement Strategy highlights the importance of the Planning Policy Working Group in terms of careful scrutiny and leadership of the emerging plan through the technical stages leading up to Draft Plan stage, when the next consultation is proposed.

Autumn Local Plan Consultation

15. It is proposed that there should be a 6-week consultation on the Consultation Questionnaire (Agenda item X), starting on Thursday 22nd October and finishing on Friday 4th December.
16. A range of activities are proposed to support this consultation as follows:
 - Media Briefing/press release (w/c 19 October)
 - Email/letter to all past consultees on the Planning Policy database (22 October)
 - Leaflet and poster distribution to all Town and Parish Councils and public libraries (w/c 19 October)
 - Twitter, Facebook, Council website homepage
 - Distribution of Uttlesford Life feature/cover (w/c 2 November)
 - Public meetings in Saffron Walden (10 November), Great Dunmow (17 November), and Stansted Mountfitchet (18 November)
 - Citizens Panel
17. For reference, the artwork for the poster and leaflet are attached at **Appendices C and D** prior to printing.
18. Finally, it is proposed that the Powerpoint presentation to be used for the three public meetings set out above should be emailed to all District Councillors,

who may use it to make additional presentations to local groups, should they wish to do so.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Without adequate engagement the Local Plan could be found unsound.	1. Can be addressed and managed through the Working Group discussion forum.	3. The Options stage helps to ensure that the Local Plan is justified when considered against the reasonable alternatives.	Discussion at the Working Group to ensure understanding of the methodology and propose refinements if necessary.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.