

Committee: Strategic Development Advisory Group
Date: 22 March 2005
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Community Engagement
Authors: Roger Harborough and Sarah Nicholas (01799) 510457/ 454

Summary

- 1 This report reviews techniques that have been used by the Council and assess what has succeeded and what has not.
- 2 It is intended as a starting point for discussion as to how to achieve more effective engagement.

Background

- 3 The Corporate Action Plan includes as a specific objective enabling the general public, including Hard-to-Reach groups, to play a greater role in the development of key Council policies and plans including the Housing Strategy, Community Plan and development plan. It proposes to do this by carrying out a review of existing public involvement and develop an action plan to introduce wider public involvement to meet the required standard for development plan documents by 31 December 2005.
- 4 The first priority in the Local Development Framework agreed by the Environment Committee is to prepare and consult on a Statement of Community Involvement.

Analysis

- 5 The following schedule reviews methods of engagement deployed, their potential applications and resource implications, and on the second sheet some of the key messages from officers across all services of their experience.

FOR DISCUSSION

Background Papers: None

Method	This is useful for:	Resource implications
Media Publicity in local newspapers; Article in Parish Magazines; Housing newsletter; Talking Newspaper; Uttlesford Life	Raising awareness Reaching wide audience Publicising how to get involved	Low. Staff time to prepare material
Internet Uttlesford Website and e-mailshot	Up to date information about progress and how to get involved Access to documents	Low . Posting information online is low cost once established
Leaflets & posters	Raising awareness Reaching wide audience Publicising how to get involved	Medium. Production of material can involve significant costs. Staff time to prepare material
Letters to statutory bodies		Low. Staff time to write and administer posting
Mailing list of persons and companies wishing to be notified	Keeping people up to date and advising them how to get involved	Low. Staff time to write and administrate posting
Documents available for inspection at principal offices, CICs & Libraries	Allowing everyone the opportunity to comment on draft documents	Low. Staff time may be needed to answer questions
Questionnaires - Paper and electronic format	Focus consultation on key questions Can target specific groups	High: Specialist skills required for questionnaire design. Time to collate responses Prize as incentive to reply
Parish/Town Council meetings	Reaching community groups through existing meetings. Gain understanding of views regarding a specific area	Low: Staff time to attend meetings and prepare any material
Public Exhibition	Providing information and allowing community to air views. Accessible to broad audience	High: Preparation of display material, venue costs and additional staff time to man exhibition
Town and Parish Council quarterly meetings	Active involvement of local councils	Low/Medium: Staff time to attend and prepare material

Uttlesford Futures meetings	Active involvement of the Local Strategic Partnership	Low/ Medium: Staff time to attend and prepare material
Stakeholder Forums	Disseminate information, engage involvement and gain understanding of forums concerns	Low/ Medium: Staff time to attend and prepare material
Participation Workshops	Bringing together representatives from different sectors to be actively involved	Medium/ High: Time is needed for preparation. Specialist skills may be required.

What are the barriers to consultation?

Consultation overload – residents are ‘turned off’

Apathy ‘what is the point’

‘Bee in bonnet’ syndrome – always one issue that throws everything out of context/proportion!

Questionnaires aimed at youngsters being filled in by parent

Relying on others (eg teachers) to hand out leaflets, questionnaires etc

What forms of consultation work?

Short face to face interviews

Something to hang it on/theme/point of interest

Focus groups – preferably paid – but need to overcome problem of membership appearing to be fixed.

Partners/businesses – tap into expertise

Share consultation

Use consultants (paid per response!)

Use well known/used publications – Uttlesford Life?

Need to know your audience to pitch it right

Schools – need at least a terms advance notice

Prizes, gift voucher for replying/attending

Selling it – language – no jargon, no acronyms

Consultations which didn’t work

Meetings BV Challenge events – very poorly attended

Manning Mobile police office – no response

Manning Mobile Library – doesn’t stop in villages long enough.

Committee: SDAG
Date: 22 March 2005
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: Towards a Vision for 2021 (2)
Author: John Mitchell (01799) 510450

Summary

- 1 At the last meeting it was resolved to ask Officers to draft out a few pointers to guide discussion towards setting a vision for Uttlesford in line with the parameters set out the report (copy attached)
- 2 Officers consider that a selection from the following bullet points may give members a few hints in forming a vision

Background

- A predominantly rural area which makes a proportionate and sustainable contribution to the social, economic and environmental well being of the Nation
- An airport that people are only aware of from outside its boundaries by the sound of the air on the wings of the aircraft
- A rural hinterland to the urban areas of Cambridge and Harlow
- A place for people to grow up, learn, work and retire
- A place that meets the housing needs of its people today and in the future
- A place where visitors want to come back to
- A thriving rural economy
- An island of calm amid a sea of changes
- A place where you don't need a car to get around
- A healthy place
- A sophisticated, well-educated, informed, inclusive and active community
- Uttlesford – a place people can identify with and have heard of.

RECOMMENDED that Members consider the points raised above, in conjunction with the issues raised in the last report.

Background Papers: None.

Committee: Strategic Development Advisory Group

Date: 26 January 2005

Agenda Item No: 5

Title: Towards a Vision for 2021

Author: John Mitchell (01799) 510450

Summary

- 1 This report suggests means of achieving a vision for the future of Uttlesford that can be owned by the whole of the District and that will underpin and guide all of the Council's work
- 2 The progress towards a vision will be long and the vision itself needs to be easily understood and simply expressed. There is no recommendation as this item is for discussion at this stage

Background

- 3 Without doubt there is a need to express a vision for the future of the District. A vision may be defined as a statement of what the community wants Uttlesford to be like in terms of its appearance, character and social/economic status by 2021. It is needed so that SDAG has a firm and agreed point of reference against which to make judgements against the significant and controversial issues about which it will advise Policy Committees
- 4 It is not the purpose of this report to express a vision but rather to instigate a discussion about how to go about agreeing a vision. The vision will need to encapsulate a variety of ingredients that need to be brought together around the theme that this is a mixed rural area with small towns and a diverse and thriving economy but at the same time forms part of a growth area and contains Stansted Airport.
- 5 The vision will need to be inspiring, aspirational and encompass the strategic issues. It will need to stress that there is a positive side to new development, emphasise the collective role of various key players. Reference will need to be made to the Government's assessment of sustainable development as set out elsewhere on this agenda

Towards a vision

- 6 SDAG needs to consider and agree how it is to go about engaging the community in agreeing a vision. This will require engagement at strategic (ECC, EERA) levels, local (district and parish council, LSP, LA21) levels and hard to reach groups. All must be able to sign up to a common vision.
- 7 SDAG will need to consider the following points, amongst others
 - How should this be done?
 - Should it fall under the LSP umbrella?
 - Is there a hierarchy of visions? (e.g. a strategic vision underpinned by more local visions) – if so, is a term other than “vision” more appropriate?
 - What will the vision look like – will it be a short pithy statement or something longer?
 - When is it needed by?
 - Who should do it?
 - Should SDAG produce a preliminary vision?
 - How will the vision feed into the Council’s policy direction?

At this stage therefore SDAG will need to consider the best way forward and to devise a programme for community engagement

Background Papers: None