

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Policy & Resources Select Committee
<b>Date:</b>	18 April 2013
<b>Title:</b>	New Consultation Guidelines
<b>Reference:</b>	4843
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

**Contact name:** Peter Brown

**Tel:** 01962 846256

**Email:** peter.brown@hants.gov.uk

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report updates the Select Committee on matters presented in April 2012 concerning consultation processes at the County Council.
- 1.2. The Committee is requested to note the recent progress made in improving the County Council's processes and the implications arising from a consultation case study.

#### 2. Contextual Information

- 2.1 Committee Members will recall a presentation at their meeting on 17 April 2012 about the ongoing work in relation to customer interaction with the County Council and how the County Council consults.
- 2.2 Regarding consultation, it was reported that abiding by the relevant statutory or published standards on consultation was important as there had been recent national examples of successful legal challenges to local authority decisions due to inadequate consultation procedures. The Committee recognised that improved corporate consultation guidance could also help ensure an appropriate balance between allowing flexible approaches and meeting key standards. In turn, the guidance could help secure the County Council's Open for Business self-assessment standard that *"Services are adapted and designed in line with feedback from service users and local residents, using well-established procedures."*

#### 3. Recent progress and emerging proposals

- 3.1 Following investigations in 2012, the Hantsdirect & Customer Access Board endorsed a series of actions to improve the County Council's consultation practices. These are based on five principles derived from the

Cabinet Office's consultation guidance which indicate the County Council should consult;

- *on key issues and proposals;*
- *in good time;*
- *allowing everyone to take part;*
- *with clear, simple information; and*
- *tell respondents how their views influenced our decisions*

3.2 Officers have since developed and progressed an action plan so that the key components of a new approach are in place and operational during 2013/4. Guidance including a preparation checklist is being finalised so that the above principles can be adopted and monitored across the Council. This will be demonstrated to the Committee. A key aim is to provide longer prior notice of forthcoming consultation opportunities wherever practicable. This in turn may allow opportunities to 'road test' consultation documents ahead of publication; an issue to interest to the Select Committee in April 2012.

3.3 Changes have already been made to the ['Have your say'](#) Hantsweb page which have been re-ordered to outline opportunities to interact with the County Council's services on four levels.

- contact regarding day to day services
- comment on forthcoming recommendations and decisions
- respond to consultations and public notices
- influence the shaping of future services

Steps to ensure a consistent format of summarising and reporting on the feedback from consultation processes in Member reports have also been piloted with a view to including such information in future decision reports.

#### **4 Case study – District Transport Statements**

4.1 At the request of the Chair, a case study will be presented to the Select Committee of the consultation held in 2012 concerning the District Transport Statements. A summary of the consultation is attached as Appendix 1. The presentation will demonstrate how that consultation was conducted across the county, generating a good level of interest and response. Most of the consultation principles proposed were already inherent in that case. In terms of the emerging approach, analysis of the case study has highlighted issues which will help inform the future process, so that similar future consultations can benefit from improved quality of engagement with stakeholders.

#### **5 Conclusions**

That the emerging proposed improvements to consultation processes are noted and endorsed.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	Yes
Priority 2: Enhance community engagement and partnership working Priority 5: Develop new models of service provision, meeting the challenges of reduced resource and evolving national policies, whilst improving the quality of services for users Priority 6: Improve customer service	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	Yes
Priority 3: Support and enable sustainable economic	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	Yes
Priority 4: Enhance Hampshire's environment and promote sustainability	

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u> Voice of the Customer	<u>Reference</u> P&RSC	<u>Date</u> 2012-04-19
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u> Cabinet Office Consultation Principles		<u>Date</u> July 2012

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

- 1.1 Consulting and engaging with all sectors and characteristics of our communities is a key equalities issue built into the emerging guidance referred to in this report. This is specifically acknowledged in the requirement of the proposed new standard of *“allowing everyone to take part”*.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

- 2.1. This proposal will have minimal direct impact upon crime and disorder issues

### **3. Climate Change:**

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No impact identified

- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

No impact identified

## **Appendix 1: District/ Borough Transport Statements – information note on process**

### **1. Context**

District / Borough Transport Statements were developed for all districts and boroughs within Hampshire to:

- Ensure HCC have a consistent and relevant approach to forward planning for transport infrastructure for each of the districts/ boroughs in Hampshire.
- Ensure HCC maintain a consistent approach to securing/ planning for new funding streams, including at a district level (CIL, New Homes Bonus etc), County Level (LTP, LSTF), sub-regional/ national level (Growing Places Fund- LEP, Pinch Point Fund-HA)
- Bring together relevant transport and land-use policies at a local level, and give priorities for transport infrastructure in light of these
- Enable local political buy-in to transport infrastructure priorities
- Allow partners/ key stakeholders to understand the County position on transport infrastructure priorities
- Better understand and mitigate against the changing funding situation as regards transport infrastructure

### **2. Development Process**

The Statements were developed in a relatively short space of time (Sep 2011-Sep 2012) to ensure that they were fit for purpose in a changing policy climate. However, they drew heavily on existing and emerging policy, particularly Local Transport Plan 3, Town Access Plans and LDFs/ Local Plans. Existing transport improvement schemes identified in TAPs and Transport Contribution Lists were also used as the starting point for the schedules of transport improvements. The development of these documents often had extensive associated engagement with Councillors and stakeholders and public consultation exercises.

In summary, development of district/ borough statements included the following:

- Development of draft documents, including associated transport improvement lists- Autumn/ Winter 2011/12
- Engagement with relevant district/ borough officers on draft documents, March 2012

- Drafts presented to County Councillors and District/ Borough Representatives at the Highways and Transport Workshops in April 2012. Follow up correspondence and meetings held with Highway and Transport workshop attendees if requested- e.g. with Hart County Councillors
- Online public consultation carried out between 1st June and 16<sup>th</sup> of July, with County Councillors and District/Borough and Parish Councils contacted directly to ask for any comments
- Feedback from consultation summarised in table format, noting where and how comments taken into account in revised documents. This summary was made available as a background document to the Executive Member Decision Day on 11<sup>th</sup> September and is now on the District/ Borough Statement website
- Headline points also summarised in Executive Member report on 11<sup>th</sup> September, noting overall support for Transport Statements as outlined

In September 2012 Hampshire County Council adopted Transport Statements for each of the 11 districts and boroughs. These statements contain a transport strategy and schedule of proposed transport improvements.

Following this, information was feed into the Hampshire Strategic Infrastructure Statement considered and approved in outline by Cabinet on 17 December

### **3. Management and updating of current District/ Borough Transport Statements**

It is recognised that going forward, district/ borough statements are 'living documents,' and in particular the schedule of proposed transport improvements needs to be kept up to date to ensure that it takes account of on-going policy and other changes- e.g. delivery of particular schemes. To facilitate this, a Transport Statement management protocol has been put in place, which allows for updating on a regular basis. This includes a dedicated website, where Councillors, Stakeholders and members of the public can review and suggest relevant updates for consideration by those managing the lists in the strategic transport group.

It is acknowledged that many requests for changes would be in relation to potential additions to the schedule of proposed transport improvements and in summary these would be considered in line with the following criteria:

- Consistency with policy and priorities of LTP3 and Transport Statements;

- Consistency with existing and emerging local transport strategy and policy;
- Community, Member and/or district/borough support;
- Officer technical review of justification;
- Deliverability;
- Funding viability

It is expected that there is on-going liaison with County Councillors and the district/ boroughs on the Transport Statements, and any relevant changes to the schedule of proposed transport improvements as a result of these discussions undertaken on a draft basis as required. Each year County Councillors in each district/ borough will be sent via e-mail the latest version of each Transport Statement, 1 month prior to the autumn Highways and Transport workshops. Following any further changes resulting from Councillor requests as a result of this circulation, Councillors will then be requested to ratify any proposed changes at the workshops.

Following the Highways and Transport workshops, changes to the Transport Statements will be submitted to the Departmental Management Team/ Executive Member, 1:1 for review, prior to approval of changes by the Director of Environment, Economy and Transport (in line with approval's process agreed at Exec. Member Decision Day on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012).

*Weblink to District/ Borough Statement site:*

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/transport-schemes-index/transport-statements>