

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee – 17 April 2019

Policy and Framework for Delivery of Successful Engagement in Housing and Environment

Report by Depute Director (Housing & Environment) (Report No. 19/117)

The report sets out an integrated and refreshed approach to how Housing and Environment will inform, consult and engage with its customers and other stakeholders.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Housing and Environment is a very diverse, highly visible service, with many universal activities such as refuse collection, roads, and greenspace, which touch the lives of all parts of our community on a daily basis. In addition, other services in Housing & Environment have more defined customer/stakeholder groups such as local businesses, or council house tenants. The Service also manages and directs certain activities such as contractors and other specialists, who carry out activities on the Service's behalf, or through regulatory controls (such as licencing) where the Service can direct regulated organisations to take certain actions.
- 1.2 The Council's [Corporate Plan](#) recognises the evolving relationship with our service users and communities; from a historic position, where the Council directed services with little input for stakeholders, to the current situation where there is a much more open relationship, which values engagement and empowerment. This includes increased participation by customers and communities in the design, delivery and improvement of our services.
- 1.3 This evolving approach recognises the significant benefits of greater consultation and engagement, by better meeting the needs of our customers and communities, when we work with them in the design and delivery of our services. The Housing & Environment Business Management & Improvement Plan 2018-19 (Report No. 18/253 refers) committed the Service to improving ways to ensure that the needs of our service users are at the heart of service design and delivery. It also reflected the need to assess our customer consultation and engagement approach for each activity across the Service.
- 1.4 Many teams in Housing & Environment are recognised for their outstanding level of customer and stakeholder engagement. For example;
 - the tenant satisfaction feedback demonstrated Perth and Kinross is the top performing council in Scotland across a range of measures.
 - our tenants have been fully involved in the development of the new model of rent calculation through the Rent Restructure Tenant working group.
 - our Service Review and Evaluation (SURE) Team undertook a review of tenant participation activities in preparation for developing a new 3 year

strategy. A strategy for tenant involvement has been written by tenants themselves – a first for Perth and Kinross Council.

- the work of Community Greenspace in engaging with 51 local “In Bloom” groups has led to multiple awards at Scottish and UK level for community participation and environmental enhancement to our local areas.
- recent engagement by staff on the Perth Cycle Network Masterplan and the Local Development Plan which received recognition from elected members for the widespread engagement carried out.

1.5 It is recognised, however, that not all parts of Housing & Environment have the same level of experience, expertise and organisational culture in relation to consultation and engagement. This report seeks to address this issue.

1.6 The drivers behind the content and proposals contained in this report are:

- the merger of two former Services (Housing and Community Safety and The Environment Service) with the need to harmonise approaches to customer and community engagement.
- self-evaluation work, carried out within the Service including “How Good is Our Council” assessment, as well as feedback from customers, community councils and elected members, has identified an opportunity for developing our service to ensure a consistent and high standard of consultation and engagement across Housing & Environment.
- benchmarking our activities against high quality national guidance on consultation and engagement, such as the National Standards for Community Engagement, and the Planning Aid for Scotland (PAS) SP=EED “Practical Guide to Better Engagement in Planning”.
- ensuring we clearly set out our standards for consultation and engagement, and share with our staff the support and tools available to enable them to meet these standards.
- to deliver better services for our communities.

2. PROPOSAL

2.1 A working group of staff, representing the different parts of Housing & Environment, along with the corporate communities team developed the proposals detailed in this report. The approach is based on the following:

- a) **Policy statement** (Appendix 1) – this clearly sets out why proactive consultation and engagement is important to Housing & Environment, what our objective is and what is expected of everyone within the Service.
- b) **Framework document** (Appendix 2) – this acts as a tool for colleagues in Housing & Environment and for providers of services we commission and influence (such as contractors and partnerships). The framework document is an amalgamation of the national standards and guidance on engagement (mentioned in section 1.6 above), but adapted for our Service’s circumstances. The guidance is based on 3 levels of engagement.

- **Level 1** – Informing: the guidance in this part would be used where our options to engage are limited, for example as a result of regulatory constraints or where there are time pressures due to safety concerns.
 - **Level 2** – Consulting: this level of guidance relates to the two way process, where we listen and respond, to our communities in terms of a range of options and reach a conclusion based on communities' views.
 - **Level 3** – Engagement/Partnership: this guidance relates to situations where we work with communities to co-design joint solutions, such as charrettes, or place checks.
- c) **Action Plan** – although setting policy is important, it is the culture and behaviour of our people which will make the greatest difference in delivering the highest standards of consultation and engagement. The working group has been developing our approach to embed the Policy and Framework into Housing & Environment's everyday activities. A Housing & Environment Action Plan will be finalised and introduced across the Service (subject to approval of Appendix 1 and 2).
- 2.2 This new approach is not intended to replace statutory engagement mechanisms or well established good engagement practice (such as the examples in section 1.4 or the Council's Tenant Participation Strategy). It is available as a guide when other engagement mechanisms do not exist; where colleagues may need help considering what to do; or where sector specific guidance only provides for a minimal level of engagement.
- 2.3 It is proposed to review the effectiveness of this approach, including seeking elected member feedback, within one year of its implementation.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 High quality engagement is essential in the delivery of better services, making best use of Council resources, and building on the strength of local knowledge and community networks.
- 3.2 An essential aspect of effective engagement is managing public expectation. The activities dealt with by Housing & Environment can be complicated and emotive – often with legal requirements adding a further layer of complexity. Meaningful engagement needs to build and maintain a positive working relationship with stakeholders and local communities, as well as setting out a realistic understanding of what can be achieved and what time is available for the engagement.
- 3.3 This report and the appendices set out the approach to embed meaningful engagement in our service design and delivery, across all areas of Housing & Environment's activity. The approach will also act as a pilot for the whole of the Council.

3.4 It is recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:-

- i) approves the Policy and Framework for Successful Engagement in Housing & Environment (Appendix 1 and 2).
- ii) requests the Depute Director (Housing and Environment) to feedback on the effectiveness of this approach within one year of its implementation.

Author

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Approved

| Name | Designation | Date |
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| Barbara Renton | Executive Director (Housing & Environment) | 2 April 2019 |

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

| Strategic Implications | Yes / None |
|---|-------------------|
| Community Plan | Y |
| Corporate Plan | Y |
| Resource Implications | |
| Financial | N |
| Workforce | N |
| Asset Management (land, property, IST) | N |
| Assessments | |
| Equality Impact Assessment | N |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | N |
| Sustainability (community, economic, environmental) | Y |
| Legal and Governance | N |
| Risk | N |
| Consultation | |
| Internal | Y |
| External | N |
| Communication | |
| Communications Plan | Y |

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan

- 1.1 This report contributes to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan in terms of the following priorities:

- i) Giving every child the best start in life
- ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This report contributes to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 No direct resource implications.

Workforce

- 2.2 No direct implications.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 No direct implications.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Act and no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted on the proposals.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 This work has been carried out by a cross Service working group. The Executive Officer Team has also been consulted and has agreed that the

approach will be piloted by the Service as a potential approach for the whole Council.

5. Communication

- 5.1 Communications with staff will form part of the action plan for delivering on the policy and framework.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 None.

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – Policy for Successful Engagement.
- 3.2 Appendix 2 – A Framework for Delivering Successful Engagement in Housing and Environment.