



CABINET – 9TH APRIL 2013

SUBJECT: DRAFT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND S151

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report, seeking views and in principle endorsement of the draft strategy, was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 5th March 2013.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The following concerns/questions were raised:
- 2.2 How will the Authority ensure that there is engagement with a cross section of diverse social economic groups?
- 2.3 How will the Authority ensure that full engagement was achieved and measured?
- 2.4 Whether communication across the Authority was sufficient to ensure all Directorates fully met the proposed strategy's aims?

3. THE REPORT

3.1 How will the Authority ensure that there is engagement with a cross section of diverse social economic groups?

Four of the outcomes within the strategy (and associated National Principles) are in place to ensure that a cross section of people who live, work and visit Caerphilly County Borough are engaged when appropriate:

Outcome 2 - Those affected by an issue or change are encouraged and enabled to be involved, if they so choose

Outcome 5 - People have easy access to relevant information that is tailored to meet their needs

Outcome 6 - People find it easy to take part if they so choose

Outcome 7 - People have the skills knowledge and confidence to get involved if they so choose

There are key tasks in the action plan linked to outcomes 2 and 7. The action plan will be reviewed by the cross directorate working group to ensure that outcomes 5 and 6 are covered more explicitly.

3.2 How will the Authority ensure that full engagement is achieved and measured?

The draft strategy is closely aligned to the National Principled for Public Engagement in

Wales. Recent development of "The Evaluation Toolkit" is intended to guide organisations in evaluating what "successful engagement" looks like. A key action within the draft strategy is to "Audit and evaluate specific engagement activities against the national principles for Public Engagement" and to this end, an initial training course for officers on "Evaluation of Engagement" has been arranged for 20th June 2013.

3.3 Whether communication across the Authority was sufficient to ensure all Directorates fully met the proposed strategy's aims?

The new internal communication strategy will ensure effective liaison takes place. Specifically, the action plan within the draft Engagement Strategy refers to:

- Internal Communications (Raising awareness of the co-ordinating role of the engagement officer) and
- Ensuring that Officers at all levels are made aware of a) this strategy b) the benefits of engagement to their roles.

Heads of Service will be asked to nominate the appropriate Officers to sit on the cross directorate working group to take this strategy forward.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Strategy aims to ensure that all citizens of Caerphilly are able to effectively engage with the Council. There is a commitment within the strategy to providing an equal opportunity for all our citizens to be involved and will ensure that we meet the duties of the Council Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee considered the report and in principle endorsed the draft Citizen Engagement Strategy. For the reasons contained within the report, the Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that the Communications Unit lead a working group with cross directorate representation in taking forward the Action Plan.
- 5.2 Members are asked to consider the recommendation.

6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The strategy needs direction and coordination at a corporate level but this will be ineffective unless directorates take responsibility, engagement is well supported by the organisation at every level and given the right resources to be effective.

7. STATUTORY POWER

- 7.1 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

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Attendees at the Engagement Strategy Workshop November 2012

Appendices:
Appendix 1 of 1: