



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 5TH MARCH 2013

SUBJECT: DRAFT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present a draft Citizen Engagement Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- 1.2 To seek views and, in principle, endorsement of this draft strategy and proposals for future actions by Policy and Resources Committee before consideration by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Engagement means anything that we do that *informs* citizens about what we do or *involves* citizens in the Council's decision making process. A draft citizen engagement strategy has been developed to enable Caerphilly County Borough Council to effectively inform, engage and involve our citizens.
- 2.2 At times, engagement may simply mean information provision but at other times will involve a combination of information provision and gathering, consultation, feedback and evaluation and will feed into the decision making process at an appropriate stage. The draft strategy aims to consolidate previous work and put in place the mechanisms that will enable the authority to achieve effective engagement. (**Appendix 1: Caerphilly County Borough Council Draft Citizen Engagement Strategy**)

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 A number of key related strategies are listed below. A comprehensive list of related strategies can be found in the appendices of the attached draft strategy document.
- 3.2 The Council's Improvement Plan 2009/2012
Caerphilly Local Service Board's Citizen Engagement Strategy (January 2013)
50+ Engagement Strategy
Participation Strategy for Children and Young People/Local Partnership Action Plan
Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014
The Council's Constitution
Internal Communications Strategy (2012)
Strategic Equality Plan (2011) Objective 5

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The draft Citizen Engagement Strategy builds upon developments within Caerphilly County Borough Council since adoption of our first Consultation Strategy in 2001 and outlines the direction and scope of Caerphilly County Borough Council's engagement activities. A key objective for the Authority being to

*“Ensure the citizens of Caerphilly County Borough understand why, when and how to engage with us and the impact their engagement will have in helping us to improve services”
(Improvement Objective for 2012/13)*

- 4.2 Development of this recent strategy has also considered the increased emphasis on citizen engagement nationally, specifically, embracing citizen engagement in the decision making process. This strategy has been developed alongside the Caerphilly Local Service Board's (LSB's) draft Engagement Strategy (January 2013) to ensure alignment of the Council's engagement objectives with that of our partners across the County Borough.
- 4.3 The 10 outcomes of this strategy are derived from the 10 National Principles of Engagement. Whilst reflecting the national direction, these outcomes have been identified within the local context to help Caerphilly County Borough Council to provide better services that more closely match the needs and expectations of residents, businesses and visitors whilst ensuring that these needs are met in the most efficient way.
- 4.4 The strategy identifies the success factors associated with each of these outcomes and outlines a detailed action plan that gives further details on what we need to do to achieve these outcomes. The action plan including timescales, resource implications and identifies who will be responsible for taking the various elements of the strategy forward.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications to the report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications at present but this will be kept under review.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 A cross directorate strategy development group met to discuss an early draft of the Caerphilly County Borough Council strategy on 21st November 2012. That same week, a longer workshop was held, which aimed to facilitate the participation of appropriate officers representing key LSB partners in the development of an LSB engagement strategy. The workshop was attended by 32 officers of whom 22 were Caerphilly County Borough Council officers from across the directorates. Attendees were led through a structured discussion leading towards the development of an LSB strategy. These discussions also informed a redrafting of the Caerphilly County Borough Council Strategy.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that:

- The views of Policy and Resources Committee and in principle endorsement of this draft strategy are sought before consideration of the report by Cabinet
- The Communications Unit lead a working group with cross directorate representation in taking forward this Action Plan

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 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.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

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Appendices:
Appendix 1 Draft Citizen Engagement Strategy