

Report To:	CABINET	Date:	21 JULY 2020
Heading:	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY		
Portfolio Holder:	PORTFOLIO HOLDER HEALTH AND LEISURE, CLLR KIER BARSBY		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	YES		
Subject to Call-In:	YES		

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to share the progress made on the draft Community Engagement Strategy and agree timescales for completion.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is recommended to approve:

- 1) Draft Community Engagement Strategy
- 2) Further consultation (internal and external) be undertaken to finalise the strategy and delegate the decision to finalise the strategy to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Leisure and Deputy Leader (INWARD FOCUS)
- 3) A toolkit for staff be developed, alongside a training module to ensure competency when implementing the strategy across the whole Council.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Community Engagement Strategy is an outstanding action on the audit list and a priority within the Health and Happiness section of the Corporate Plan. It also has a fundamental role to play in ensuring we can demonstrate our values.

The recommendations will enable the Council to produce and implement an effective community engagement strategy in a timely fashion, ensuring that staff and key stakeholders are consulted and involved in its development, and that appropriate training is given so staff are able to maximise community engagement within their work, at an appropriate level to the task at hand.

Alternative Options Considered

To bring in an external consultant to complete the strategy – not taken forward due to financial cost to the council. **Not recommended.**

Detailed Information

A review of community engagement took place by Cabinet in January 2017. It was agreed that an independent review of community engagement methodologies, to include Member Surgeries and Area Committees should take place and to bring a report to a future Cabinet meeting setting out recommendations for revised engagement methods.

The newly developed Community Engagement Strategy has been to Scrutiny Panel A twice, Leadership and CLT. During discussion, members of each took part in a discussion and the principles that were agreed were that the focus of the community engagement review should shift more towards considering the Corporate Plan priority of *'Putting people at the heart of what we do'* and *'Being honest with people in an open and professional way'* to ensure that the Council communicates with residents and local communities in the best and most consistent way possible.

- **Purpose of the strategy**

The purpose of developing an engagement strategy is to be able to plan and deliver an appropriate community engagement process that will allow us to achieve our values of being people focussed, honest, ambitious and proud.

- **The process to monitor the use of the strategy across the Council**

In order to embed the principles of the Community Engagement Strategy, all those managing projects that directly impact on the residents of Ashfield will receive mandatory training that enables them to understand when and how to use community engagement in the delivery of their projects. This along with the impact of the community engagement will be monitored through Pentana.

- **Measures that will be put in place so that we are able to demonstrate its effectiveness**

The following three measures are recommended:

- % of staff trained in community engagement who deliver services directly impacting on residents
- Number of projects where the strategy has been utilised to help engage with the community at an appropriate level for the piece of work/service
- % of residents who agree that Ashfield District Council puts people at the heart of what we do
- Amount of social value that has been generated through community engagement activities

- **Tools to be used during implementation and use of the strategy**

The following tools will need to be developed:

- Training Module
- Project Management template to include community engagement
- Flow charts to help officers decide appropriate levels of community engagement
- Examples and scenarios of how and when to use the different types of community engagement (e.g. surveys, open questions, interview techniques, guide to set up focus groups, social value policy)

- **Next steps and timescales**

The timescales for the development and implementation of the Community Engagement strategy, training and toolkit are as follows:

- 01 July – 30 August 2020 Engagement with staff and stakeholders
- 01 July - 30 September 2020 Develop training and toolkit
- 01 October – 31 March 2021 Roll out training and use of strategy

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The development of the Community Engagement Strategy and toolkit are prioritised in the Corporate Plan under Health and Happiness.

Legal:

There are no legal issues associated with the recommendations contained in the report.

Finance:

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
General Fund – Capital Programme	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Not applicable

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Community Engagement Strategy is not completed and implemented on time.	Clear timescales in place.

Human Resources: No implications for this report

Environmental/Sustainability

Projects focussed on environmental issues and sustainability will be able to use the community engagement strategy, which may lead to positive impacts.

Equalities:

The implementation and effective use of the strategy will ensure we better engage with residents, including those that can be more difficult to engage or don't have a history of engaging with the council.

Other Implications:

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Urgency

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Exemption

(if applicable)

Background Papers

Cabinet - Community Engagement review January 2017

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