

<b>BODY:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>30 OCTOBER 2003</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CONSULTATION STRATEGY 2003 - 2006</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose:</b>	To seek approval for a revised Council Consultation Strategy 2003 - 2006
<b>Decision type:</b>	Key decision – amendment of strategy
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<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Cabinet approve the Consultation Strategy 2003 – 2006 at appendix 1
<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Background</u></b>
1.1	Consultation has always been an important element of council planning and the representative role of councillors. This was reinforced through the local government acts of 1999 and 2000 which place upon councils a duty to consult particularly in strategic and service planning.
1.2	The Council's first consultation strategy was developed by a member/officer task group and approved by Council on 18 July 2000. It was based on the requirements of best value, the Corporate Plan and the findings from stakeholder consultation.

1.3	The Council's consultation requirements have since developed and now need to meet the needs of the new Community Strategy. It is also proper that the Council reviews and updates its core strategies on a regular basis.
2.0	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Consultation Strategy 2000</h2>
2.1	<p>Many elements of the 2000 Consultation Strategy have been implemented including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Practical guide to consultation methods produced</li> <li>· A proactive approach to consultation is now common</li> <li>· Engagement of stakeholders, partners staff and public in best value review has been good</li> <li>· Public have been consulted on new political structure</li> <li>· Councillors and council officers now engage better with stakeholders on their terms</li> <li>· Working with key partners has improved and is progressing through the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership and subpartnerships</li> <li>· An annual consultation and research program was produced for the first time in 2003/4</li> <li>· Appropriate, efficient and effective means of consultation are used</li> </ul> <p>These need to continue and other specific elements need to be taken forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Developing community engagement in general and specifically for some themes of the Community Strategy such as Environment and Inclusive Community</li> <li>· Dissemination of results to the public and stakeholders</li> <li>· Maintaining a contemporary database of stakeholders</li> <li>· Appropriate, efficient and effective means of consultation can be developed further</li> <li>· Evaluation following consultation assessing links to decision making</li> </ul>

3.0	<b>Consultation Strategy 2003 - 2006</b>
3.1	The revised strategy is at appendix 1. It has been developed during a very busy year with some 20 separate consultation projects. This has highlighted the need to plan consultation and consider a range of effective systems for consultation including permanent arrangements such as a citizen's panel, delivery partnerships and theme or neighbourhood fora.
3.2	The strategy includes development actions the outcomes of which are necessarily uncertain and may be dependant on the options chosen, resources available and future changes including legislative change.
4.0	<b><u>Consultations</u></b>
4.1	The strategy is based on experience of consultation and the comments of consultees have been considered. Key Council officers have been involved in its development. The strategy was considered by the Inclusive Community sub-group of the ESP on the 7 <sup>th</sup> October.
5.0	<b><u>Resource Implications</u></b>
5.1	The strategy action plan details the resource implications of each action. Where development is proposed the resource implications are not yet known and a development that may have resource implications is the consultation requirements of new Local Development Plan legislation due summer 2004. The implications will be assessed when details are available.
6.0	<b><u>Equalities Implications</u></b>

6.1	This strategy forms part of the Council's Equality Action Plan and as such contains specific relevant actions such as; to improve consultation with hard to reach groups, develop a local ethnic forum and include equalities questions in Council questionnaires.
<b>8.0</b>	<b><u>Conclusion</u></b>
8.1	The Council's first Consultation Strategy is now 3 years old. Developments indicate that a review of that strategy is timely these include; the new Community Strategy which identified a need to improve community engagement, expanding legislative requirements for consultation, a wish to root Council decisions in an understanding of public opinion.
8.2	The attached strategy contains a range of specific actions and development plans intended to provide a modern sustainable consultation service.
<b>Louisa de Prey</b>  <b>Consultation Officer</b>	
<b>Background Papers:</b>  The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:  Eastbourne Borough Council Consultation Strategy 2000  To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.	