

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Gedling Conversation 2018

Date: 2 August 2018

Author: Director of Organisational Development and Democratic Services

Wards Affected

Borough wide.

Purpose

To seek agreement for the programme of activities for the Gedling Conversation 2018.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Background

1.1 In June 2017 we began the fifth annual Gedling Conversation. Gedling Conversation represents a set of consultations aiming to seek the views of local residents, businesses and partner organisations about how our performance has been over the previous years and what our priorities should be over the coming year.

A combined consultation exercise was organised, using the following methods:

- Residents' Satisfaction Survey
- Ward visits by Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers accompanied by Ward Members who were available to attend

1.2 The biennial corporate Satisfaction Survey was conducted at the same time. A paper survey was delivered to each household in the borough and it could also be completed online. The survey generated a positive response rate of 3,422 responses, representing 6.7% of households. By comparison, in 2015 we received 2,271 replies which represented 4.5% of all households.

- 1.3 As a part of the Gedling Conversation programme, all 19 wards were visited by Senior Leadership Team, Service Managers and Ward Members who were available to attend.

Detailed feedback was provided to Cabinet in December 2017 and members will recall that the main topic for the conversation with residents during those visits was 'Life in Gedling' in general and in their local area.

Members will recall that the most common feedback from the ward visits is that our residents are satisfied with the Council, its services and the Borough as a place to live.

1.4

There were several benefits relating to the ward visits:

- Organisational development element – the ward walks enabled Service Managers and Senior Leadership Team to talk to residents and find out what residents think about the Council, what their likes and dislikes were. Their conversation with residents helped Service Managers to design their Service Plans using more of the customer centric approach.
- Some findings during the ward visits prompted Service Managers to do further and more in-depth research relating to the problems reported at a ward level (e.g. reported anti –social behaviour).
- The ward visits also encouraged pair or team work as they were organised in a way that two officers were visiting one ward. It also gave the opportunity to Service Managers to work with Members that they hadn't worked with previously.
- Ward visits also allowed Service Managers to approach people and talk to them, rather than wait to be approached by residents which was the case previously when this work was focused in front of the branded tents placed at the main points across the Borough.
- Although the ward visits reveal relatively small local issues, they gave the opportunity to Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers to prevent those issues from becoming bigger.
- Residents could meet officers who work for the council and talk to them. In this way the Council is made 'visible' to residents.

Proposal

2.1 The Satisfaction survey is conducted every 2 years and will take place in 2019. It is proposed that the next wave of Gedling Conversation to be themed 'Life in Gedling Borough' and to include three main parts:

- Ward visits
- Online focus groups using Facebook
- Vlog – 'Our achievements and our plans'

2.2 Ward visits

It is proposed that the conversation with the local residents during the ward visits will include whether people think that their local area has got better or worse to live in over the past two years; how satisfied they are with the local services and amenities in their local area; whether there is enough suitable housing in the borough; how easy it is to find out about jobs available locally etc.

A detailed action plan for roadshows and short guidance, together with statistical data for each ward, for SLT members and Service Managers will be provided.

It is proposed that the roadshows are held during September 2018. This will enable any information gathered to feed into service planning for 2019/20.

2.3 Online focus groups using Facebook

The topics for the online focus group should be the same as for the ward visits – 'Life in Gedling'

This method will enable us to reach middle aged groups (25 to 55 years old) that might be too busy to engage in other consultative events that we have organised so far.

This can be organised as an invitation to local residents to register for a closed Facebook group live debate. In order to achieve a balanced sample residents might be asked to complete a short registration form providing their age group and the area where they live. This will allow us to monitor if we are reaching most age groups and/or different areas within the Borough. The Facebook group will be managed and coordinated by Communications and Service Managers should be available to directly take

part in conversation and answer queries.

It is proposed that the online conversation will take place in the evening, to enable the Council to reach those residents who are unavailable during normal working hours.

2.4 **Vlog - 'Our achievements and our plans'**

It is proposed that the vlog will include two parts:

- A short video about the Council, the Borough and achievements so far; and
- A word from the Leader and Deputy Leader about the future plans

Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Council could decide not to carry out a further Gedling Conversation but, given the importance residents clearly attach to the Council listening to their concerns, such an approach would not fit with residents' expectations.
- 3.2 Various techniques and initiatives could be included in the Conversation programme but on balance it is felt that the proposals set out above represent the best balance between need and available resource at the present time.

Financial Implications

- 4.1 The cost of the activities outlined above can be accommodated from existing agreed budgets.

Appendices

- 5.1 None.

Background Papers

- 6.1 None.

Recommendation

THAT the programme of activities for the Gedling Conversation 2018 be approved.

Reasons for Recommendations

To enable the Council to continue important and effective communication with, and seek the views of, the residents of the Borough.