

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Gedling Conversation 2014

Date: 7 August 2014

Author: Corporate Director – Stephen Bray

Wards Affected - All

Purpose

- To secure agreement for the 2014 Gedling Conversation programme of activities
- To feedback remaining results of 2013 Gedling Conversation

Key Decision

This is not a key decision

Background

1. The Council started a new programme of consultation activity in 2012, branded as the “Gedling Conversation”. The programme sought to take senior members and managers out into the community to find out first-hand about issues of concern and interest around the Borough. Ward members for the areas in question were also encouraged to be involved.
2. Events and activities developed for the “Conversation” include roadshow events in shopping centres and specific events for groups of stakeholders. Other existing consultations, such as the regular Satisfaction Surveys and budget consultation have been brought within the ambit of the “Conversation”.
3. Specific events around the “Conversation” have in both years taken place largely in the Autumn. However, the “Conversation” has increasingly been seen as an ongoing dialogue
4. Headline results from 2013 were reported back to members and to employees in February and March and fed into budget and service planning.

Results are also informing more detailed research into customer views in service areas. A fuller report on results has also now been completed and is available on the Council's website at

<http://www.gedling.gov.uk/community/haveyoursay/>

5. The 2013 Satisfaction Survey included a specific question asking residents to describe their ideal council. Responses to that have now been analysed and a report compiled, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix A**.

Proposal

6. It is proposed that a further round of consultation is carried out in 2014 under the "Gedling Conversation" banner. Reflecting feedback from 2013, the predominant theme of the 2014 activity should be around listening to local people's views and concerns.
7. The main element of the "Conversation" will be a series of roadshows in shopping centres around the Borough. In most areas, these have been successful and well-received in previous years and it is therefore proposed that they continue. As in 2013, it is therefore proposed that roadshow events are held in Arnold town centre; Mapperley shopping centre; Carlton Hill shopping centre; Netherfield (Victoria Park); Gedling (Westdale Lane/Main Road shops); Ravenshead and Calverton shopping centres. These should take place over a two/three week period in the early Autumn, generally on Thursdays, Fridays or Saturdays over the lunchtime period. Each will be attended by at least one member of SLT and at least one member of Cabinet. Support will be provided by the Communications Team and the Executive Support team as required.
8. No specific theme is proposed for this year's event – residents will be encouraged through publicity to come along to talk about any issue of local concern. Where appropriate, those issues will be forwarded to either the relevant council service or the relevant local organisation. Issues raised will be logged and where appropriate mapped.
9. It is clearly important that all areas of the Borough have a chance to put forward views, but experience of previous years is that roadshow events are less successful in smaller areas with little daytime footfall. While residents from outlying areas clearly make use of shopping facilities outside of their own village a number of further activities are therefore proposed to ensure that all areas and all groups in the Borough have the opportunity to be part of the "Conversation". These include:-
 - Meeting with key stakeholder and partner groups – It is proposed that main stakeholder and partner groups are approached with a view to

including agenda items around the Conversation on their regular meetings held in the Autumn. This would include the Employment and Skills Partnership; the Youth Council and Parish Councils. It is felt more appropriate to look to take part in regular meetings of these groups rather than seeking a special meeting for the purpose.

- Specific activities in localities areas, including Newstead, Killisick and Netherfield, drawing on experience of Locality Co-ordinators working in these areas
- Possible further and specific meetings with Older People, following on the success of last year's event, and a meeting with Faith Groups.

10. In addition, engagement with the "Conversation" will be promoted through social media, including Facebook and Twitter.

11. All aspects of the "Conversation", particularly the roadshows, will be widely publicised and promoted. In recent discussions with the "Nottingham Post" about joint and shared promotional activity, the possibility of the "Post" supporting promotion of the events was discussed – if the proposals are supported, this will be pursued further.

12. It is not proposed that a Satisfaction Survey is included with this year's Gedling Conversation. In the light of budget reductions, it is proposed in future that these surveys are carried out in alternate years, starting in 2015. Moreover, it is felt this will allow for fuller review and follow up of issues raised in these surveys. At this stage, it is also not envisaged that a budget consultation exercise will be required. The government has provided a two-year financial settlement and the extensive consultation carried out last year has helped to inform the Council's budgetary plans now in place.

Alternative Options

13. The Council could decide not to carry out a further Gedling Conversation exercise but, given the importance residents clearly attach to the Council listening to their concerns, such an approach would not fit with residents' expectations.

14. 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

15. The cost of the events and activities as outlined above can be accommodated from existing agreed budgets.

Appendices

Appendix A -Gedling Conversation 2013 – How would you describe your ideal Council? - Analysis summary

Background Papers

None

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is **recommended** to: -

- a. Agree the proposed programme of activities for the 2014 Gedling Conversation
- b. Note the results of the 2013 Gedling Conversation

Reasons for Recommendations

To allow for the 2014 Gedling Conversation programme to be progressed and enable the Council to continue important and effective communication with residents of the Borough.