

Report to Council Leader

Subject: Consultation and Engagement Strategy

Date: 6th February 2025

Author: Director of Transformation

Wards Affected

Borough-wide

Purpose

To seek approval to consult on the Council's draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

That the Council Leader:

- a) Approves the commencement of consultation on the Council's draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy, noting the proposed timescales and approach below.

Background

- 1.1 The Council does not currently have a Consultation Strategy in place, however, regularly consults and engages with its communities to seek their input ahead of decisions being made.
- 1.2 While much of the consultation that is currently undertaken relates to statutory requirements, there is an opportunity, as part of transformation, to ensure our communities are effectively engaged in the re-design of Council services where it is meaningful and appropriate for them to do so
- 1.3 Currently there is no strategic framework in place to enable this, so by creating a Consultation and Engagement Strategy, the Council seeks to make clear its intention to improve engagement where possible, and to frame expectations around Consultation and Engagement within the constraints of wider operating context, including financial and resourcing considerations.

- 1.4 The Strategy has been created with input from employees within the Council including the Council's Customer and Communities Programme Board (which has representation from all public facing services), and from the Senior Leadership Team, with all feedback provided to date being considered and changes made to inform the final draft version.

Proposal for consultation

- 2.1 It is proposed that the consultation on the draft Strategy will run from 10th February 2025 – 2nd May 2025.
- 2.2 Consultation will be invited from all residents and businesses within the borough, using the following mechanisms:
- Publication on the Council's website, with signposting to the website from social media and via direct email to registered partners, residents and businesses signed up the Council's subject specific online mailshots.
 - Email to all members asking for direct feedback and with the offer to engage as required.
 - Direct engagement with existing groups, including but not limited to:
 - Gedling Senior's Council
 - Gedling Youth Council
 - Gedling Community Hubs and Partnerships
 - Parish Clerks
 - Communication via the Council's management structure with employees in all services (most employees being residents of the Borough).

Alternative Options

- 3.1 Alternative options include not creating a Consultation and Engagement Strategy and / or not consulting on it. Given the current lack of a Strategy and the desire to engage communities as part of transformation, it is not considered appropriate that no framework is in place. Similarly, it would undermine the creation of the Strategy, which is intended to enable meaningful consultation and engagement if it was not consulted on.

Financial Implications

- 4.1 The effort associated with creating, and then consulting on this Strategy is estimated at up to 10 days of officer time in total, split across various roles.
- 4.2 There are no other financial implications for the Council.

Legal Implications

- 5.1 The legal requirements for Consultation are set out within the draft Strategy. The strategy has been reviewed by the Assistant Director for Governance and Democracy with no amendments required ahead of consultation.

Equalities Implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed ahead of consultation commencing to ensure diverse inputs to the consultation process and will be updated after the consultation to consider any potential differential impacts before the Strategy is amended and approval on its final content sought.

Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 No Carbon Reduction or Environmental sustainability implications have been considered directly within this proposal for consultation approval, however environmental impacts are referenced in the Consultation approach as a strategic consideration for all consultation types.

Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy

Background Papers

- 9.1. None

Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To ensure that the Council has a robust and consistent framework in place for consultation and engagement.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by: SLT
Date: 5th February 2025
On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by: SLT
Date: 5th February 2025
On behalf of the Monitoring Officer