

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader's Portfolio Meeting

15 July 2010

AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Corporate Manager (Community and Customer Services)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Purpose

1. To introduce the Community Engagement Toolkit and agree to its adoption for use within the Council.

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations and Reasons

2. That the Leader agrees to adopt the Community Engagement Toolkit for use within the Council.

Background

3. Cabinet agreed the development of a Community Engagement Toolkit for South Cambridgeshire District Council when it adopted the Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan on 2 July 2009.
4. Engagement toolkits have been produced by various public sector organisations to assist their staff in engaging communities. Toolkits offer advice and guidance on engagement methods.

Considerations

5. The South Cambridgeshire Community Engagement Toolkit (Appendix A – A5 booklet) has been developed following consideration of various engagement toolkits developed throughout the country. Most toolkits reviewed were very lengthy, however, officers at the Council felt that a more concise toolkit would likely gain more usage.
6. The toolkit builds upon the experience and good practice already in place within the Council, but will hopefully provide greater consistency.
7. The tools included within the toolkit are those considered most likely to be used by staff and are separated into the same engagement categories as agreed for the Community Engagement Strategy.
8. Following adoption of the Toolkit it will be necessary to ensure that staff and elected members are aware of it. This will hopefully be implemented through:
 - (a) inclusion on the Insite homepage,
 - (b) a mention in the Chief Executive's weekly message to staff,
 - (c) the new Policy Briefing document, and
 - (d) a feature in the internal *SCene* magazine.

Options

9. The Leader could:
- (a) adopt the Community Engagement Toolkit for use within the Council; or
 - (b) adopt the Community Engagement Toolkit subject to amendments made at the meeting or requested following the meeting; or
 - (c) reject the Community Engagement Toolkit at this time to allow for substantial changes to be made.

Implications

10.

Financial	The financial implications of delivering the Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan are included within Service Plans. The toolkit encourages staff to consider the cost implications of engagement prior to commencement.
Legal	The Duty to Involve was in force from 1 April 2009.
Staffing	The toolkit will assist staff to consider appropriate engagement activities and therefore reduce the likelihood of time being wasted on inappropriate activities.
Risk Management	Through providing guidance, the toolkit should reduce any risks associated with engaging communities.
Equal Opportunities	Community engagement encourages equality by providing the means for all residents to participate in decisions about the services that are being developed and provided for them. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the Community Engagement Strategy and is on the Council's website http://www.scambs.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/Equality/equalityimpactassessments.htm An Initial Assessment found no adverse impacts.
Climate Change	None.

Consultations

11. Many officers were consulted throughout the early development stage of the toolkit.
12. The Executive Management Team was consulted from 14 - 25 June 2010. All responses were positive, with one query about the amount of work the toolkit could place on communications and graphics officers. Following further consultation with managers covering both teams they are looking forward to the adoption and roll-out of the toolkit because it will assist them by suggesting that staff ask for advice and ensure that their teams are involved as appropriate.

Effect on Strategic Aims

13. The toolkit will assist staff in taking forward the Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan, which in turn helps to achieve all of the Council's strategic aims.

Conclusions / Summary

14. The Community Engagement Toolkit, which builds upon much of what we already do as a Council, provides some simple guidance for officers and elected members to

consider when developing policies and strategies and working to improve the services that we already provide. It should also help us engage appropriately and therefore efficiently.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan

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