
TITLE: Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2023 and Action Plan

Committee: Community Services Committee.

Date: Tuesday 15th January 2019

Author: Lewis Bage, Communities and Partnerships Manager

[T178]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To note and approve the Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2023 and Action Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) To approve the Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2023 and Action Plan.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Community Engagement Strategy (Appendix i) has been developed to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to engage with the Council and have their say regarding the services and resources that they need.

3.2 The Strategy aims to ensure that effective engagement mechanisms are in place to develop and support strong, active and inclusive communities, who are informed and involved in decision-making and enable the Council to provide services that meet the needs and enhance the quality of life of communities across East Cambridgeshire.

3.3 The Strategy outlines what community engagement is, the various forms it can take and the benefits of it. It also identifies the key drivers that require the council to engage with our communities effectively, including the development of new communities, growing population size, aging population and the way that people access information and engage with the Council.

3.4 The Strategy explains its context, with links made to national and local policies, and identifies that in order to ensure that Corporate Plan 2017-19 priorities are achieved such as making East Cambridgeshire 'a fantastic place to live, work and visit' it is essential to understand the needs of communities.

3.5 The Strategy has been synergised with the Council's Consultation Policy ensuring that all general information relating to consultation is included within the Strategy. Further specific information on consultation (such techniques and methods) will be captured in the Community Engagement Toolkit (an action within the Draft Community Engagement Action Plan (Appendix ii).

3.6 Consultation has been carried out with all Council Service Leads and some external partners to inform this Strategy and Action Plan.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/OPTIONS

4.1 In response to the key drivers identified in the Strategy, it is essential that we are committed to engaging with our communities and partners and how we plan to engage now and in the future. The strategy seeks to embed community engagement into everyday working practices and recognises that engagement should not be a one-off activity, but provide the fundamental basis of everything the Council does.

4.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Ensure appropriate and accessible methods of engagement are in place and utilised to maximise participation
- Raise the profile of community engagement and the council's responsibilities in relation to it
- Provide timely and quality feedback to consultees so that they know how their views have made a difference
- Maximise equality of community engagement practices and ensure that the views of harder to reach groups are heard
- Ensure the views and knowledge of partners, stakeholders and communities are considered in relation to services that relate to them
- Develop the Council's ability to effectively utilise community engagement practices
- Provide a user friendly point of reference for all staff to use

4.3 An Action Plan (Appendix ii) has been formulated which sets out how the Council will ensure that effective engagement is in place.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 A new Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan will ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to engage with the Council and have their say regarding the services and resources that they need.

5.2 This Strategy will complement existing Council policies and strategies including the Corporate Plan 2017-19.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 No financial implications.

7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix i – Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2023

Appendix ii – Draft Community Engagement Action Plan
Appendix iii – EIA
Appendix iv – EIA - Full Assessment

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
Draft Community Engagement Strategy 2018-2023	Room F008, The Grange	Lewis Bage Communities and Partnerships Manager (01353) 665555 E-mail: lewis.bage@eastCambridgeshire.gov.uk