

Agenda Item No 9

Scrutiny Board

19 June 2012

**Report of the
Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to
the Council**

**Consultation Detailed Scrutiny
Project**

1 Summary

- 1.1 The report seeks the Board's approval for a draft action plan following the Scrutiny Sub-Group's consideration of Consultation.

2 Recommendation to the Board

That the draft action plan detailed in the report be agreed.

3 Report

- 3.1 Members will recall that Consultation was one of the two detailed Scrutiny Projects identified by this Board last year. The Scrutiny Sub-Group met on 4 April 2012 following terms of reference that were agreed at the last meeting of this Board (Appendix 1).

- 3.2 The slides from that meeting are attached as Appendix 2. The meeting was well attended and there was a wide ranging discussion about the different aspects of 'consultation' (informative, participatory, consulting, engagement) and the reduction in staff resources now available to the Council to coordinate this activity corporately.

- 3.3 The links to other strategies, such as the ICT Strategy and Access Strategy were also discussed, together with the Council's statutory equalities duties. The difficulties in getting members of the public to attend formal meetings was also mentioned.

- 3.4 The overall steer from Members at that meeting was that they are broadly content with the current range of activities. The Council has recently endorsed revisions to the Strategies mentioned above, has introduced public speaking at the Planning and Development Board, will (through the Democratic Arrangements Task and Finish Group) shortly consider further steps to involve partners and the public in key decisions and the Council is committed to North Talk as a method of informing the public of the Council's activities. The general view of the meeting was that more effort should be expended on engaging residents on specific issues than on aiming to increase participation in the Council's formal meetings.

- 3.5 A number of areas were identified as actions to improve the Council's actions in this area or for further consideration.

3.6 The following draft action plan seeks to capture the points covered at the Sub-Group meeting and Members are asked to identify any other suggestions.

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES
'Place Survey' of the key issues for the residents of the Borough	Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council (ACE StC)	Staff Time Consultation budget	September-December 2012	Completed Place Survey
Detailed consultation on up to two actions per year from the Corporate Plan	ACE StC Extended Management Team	Staff Time Consultation Budget	Annually – from 2013	Two detailed consultation
Divisional Service Plans to detail other consultation work	Extended Management Team	Staff Time	Annually	Per actions in Service Plans
Producing 3 editions of North Talk per year	ACE StC	Staff Time North Talk Budget/Advertising revenue	Annually	3 editions of North Talk
Ensure compliance with the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty	ACE StC	Staff Time Potentially joint working with another authority on a compliance audit	Annually	Compliance Audit
Ensure main policies and actions comply with the Council's statutory equalities duties	ACE StC Extended Management Team	Staff Time	Each Board meeting	Monitoring by ACE StC and Policy Support Manager of Board reports Equality Impact Needs Assessments
Review the use of	ACE StC	Staff Time	March 2013	New

the citizens panel, including the use of email and text details held by the Council	Assistant Chief Executive (Community Services) Assistant Director (Corporate Services)			arrangements for use of the Citizens Panel
Review of Public Speaking at the Planning and Development Board	ACE StC Development Control Manager	Staff Time	December 2012	Report to the Planning and Development and Executive Boards
Review of Public Speaking/Questions	ACE StC	Staff Time	March 2013	Report to Executive Board
Review of the operation of the Area Fora (jointly with other partners)	ACE StCI	Staff Time	March 2013	Report to Executive Board

The Contact Officer for this report is Steve Maxey (719438).