

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**DATE 30 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Access and Communities – Lead Cabinet Member – Cllr. Coleman**  
**Regeneration and Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Cllr. Cook**

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

1. Summary

One of the recommendations within the EIT review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement (CCE) approved by Cabinet was to produce a community engagement strategy for The Council to provide a co-ordinated and strategic approach to community engagement and involvement. This report presents the strategy and explains the consultation process.

The strategy sets out The Council's commitment and approach to engaging with local communities.

The Community Engagement Strategy is one of a suite of documents that collectively will describe in detail the full range of ways that communities can engage with and be supported by The Council. It will include a revised Consultation Strategy, a Communications Strategy, and revisions to the Voluntary Sector Support Fund in line with the consultation conducted last year, a Community Asset Transfer policy and a refresh of the Compact, all of which will be submitted to a future Cabinet.

The EIT review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement also recommended the bringing together of a number of the engagement functions. Work is underway to achieve this.

2. Recommendations

1. Cabinet approve the Community Engagement Strategy (**Appendix 1**)
2. Cabinet approve the deletion of the Assistant Chief Executive post from the establishment
3. Cabinet approve the formalising of the current interim arrangements i.e., the policy function transfers to the Head of Performance and Partnerships and is subject to Hay evaluation.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

Completion of a recommendation from the Cabinet report on the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation of Communication, Consultation and Engagement.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**DATE 30 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**SUMMARY**

One of the recommendations within the EIT review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement (CCE) approved by Cabinet was to produce a community engagement strategy for The Council to provide a co-ordinated and strategic approach to community engagement and involvement. This report presents the strategy and explains the consultation process.

The strategy sets out The Council's commitment and approach to engaging with local communities.

The Community Engagement Strategy is one of a suite of documents that collectively will describe in detail the full range of ways that communities can engage with and be supported by The Council. It will include a revised Consultation Strategy, a Communications Strategy, and revisions to the Voluntary Sector Support Fund in line with the consultation conducted last year, a Community Asset Transfer policy and a refresh of the Compact, all of which will be submitted to a future Cabinet.

The EIT review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement also recommended the bringing together of a number of the engagement functions. Work is underway to achieve this.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Cabinet approve the Community Engagement Strategy (**Appendix 1**)
2. Cabinet approve the deletion of the Assistant Chief Executive post from the establishment.
3. Cabinet approve the formalising of the current interim arrangements, i.e., the policy function transfers to the Head of Performance and Partnerships and subject to Hay evaluation.

**DETAIL**

1. The EIT review of Communications, Consultation and Engagement, undertaken by the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee and approved by Members at Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2009 included recommendations to produce a Community Engagement Strategy and to bring the disparate engagement functions across the Council into a single team.
2. The Community Engagement Strategy has been produced following reviewing a variety of other Engagement Strategies, good practice guidelines and in discussion with:
  - A range of staff involved in engagement activity across the council;

- Key stakeholders including; Catalyst, Stockton Community Groups and Residents Association, Lead Cabinet Members
  - Corporate Management Team
  - The EIT review lead officer
3. The strategy sets out The Councils commitment and approach to engaging with local communities, whether those communities are based on geography, social groups, common interest or background and circumstances. It describes a set of underpinning principles for services to use in their engagement activity and against which they can be challenged. It details what has been achieved so far, what more we plan to do as well as providing information on the range of ways communities can currently engage with the council.
  4. It also sets out who the strategy is aimed at, describes what we mean in Stockton-on-Tees by community engagement and why we feel it is important to have a strategy.
  5. The Community Engagement Strategy is just one of a suite of documents that is aimed at being clear about how our communities can help influence and shape services and be supported to actively contribute to the solutions. The other documents, which will be presented to future Cabinets include:
    - A revised consultation strategy;
    - A new communications strategy;
    - A revised COMPACT;
    - A new asset transfer policy;
    - A reshaped voluntary and community sector support fund following the consultation last year
  6. A 'my community' section has been created on the councils website ([www.stockton.gov.uk/mycommunity](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/mycommunity)) which is currently in the process of being populated and will be further developed as part of the implementation of the strategy. A section of Stockton News is allocated to 'Stronger Communities' and will be used as part of our approach.
  7. Following the departure of the Assistant Chief Executive from the authority in March 2009, the policy functions within that portfolio have been with the Head of Performance and Partnerships on an interim basis. The communication function is now with the Head of Communications following successful recruitment to that post. The interim arrangements have worked well. As part of the reshaping of the team, this report seeks approval to formalise the interim arrangements and delete the Assistant Chief Executive post from the establishment.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposals within this report can be funded from existing budgets. Funding previously allocated against the Assistant Chief Executive post has been utilised to fund the staffing changes within the Communications Team including the establishment of a permanent Head of Communications post.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

This Community Engagement Strategy is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

This report supports all themes within the Sustainable Community Strategy and particularly the underpinning Stronger Communities theme which relates to tackling the core priorities in the Sustainable Communities Strategy in partnership with local communities, encouraging community participation in developments and promoting cohesive communities across the Borough.

There are no specific implications relating to Community Safety.

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

This report has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and has been judged to have a positive impact. No remedial actions are required.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

The strategy has been produced following discussion with the stakeholders identified in paragraph 3. A draft strategy was widely circulated for comment/views with a closing date of 24<sup>th</sup> September.

**Name of Contact Officer: Lesley King**  
**Post Title: Head of Performance and Partnerships**  
**Telephone No. 01642 527004**  
**Email Address: Lesley.king@stockton.gov.uk**

Education related? No

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet, 26 November 2009, EIT Review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

Not ward specific

Property

None