

People Select Committee
Review of Public Consultation
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Councillor Jean O Donnell	Contact details: jean.odonnell@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Judy Trainer	Contact details: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk
Departmental Link Officer: Margie Stewart-Piercy	Contact details: margie.stewart-piercy@stockton.gov.uk
Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?	
<p>The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2019-22 themes and objectives:</p> <p><u>Stronger Communities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver effective consultation and engagement <p><u>Our Council</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver effective communication 	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?	
<p>Effective consultation with the public is an essential part of ensuring that the Council is able to serve the people of the borough to the best of its abilities. Effective consultation on policy changes, service delivery and issues of importance to the people of the borough is critical to the development and delivery of all aspects of the Council Plan. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the way we consult with the public is subject to regular review and scrutiny to ensure that it is working well. In addition, this is a period of great change, both in technology and service delivery, and the review would provide a timely opportunity to ensure that all innovations and developments in consultation platforms and channels are being considered and where appropriate adopted.</p> <p>The ongoing challenge of handling the financial cuts faced by the Council means that it is likely that the programme of service reviews will continue for the foreseeable future. Changes to policies and service delivery are therefore likely and an effective consultation mechanism is essential to ensure that these changes are informed by the views of residents, partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>It is recognised that individual departments/service areas in the Council decide on what they wish to consult on. This review will consider the various options that are available to them when undertaking consultations and seek to ensure that the effectiveness of these various options is maximised. The Council is also increasingly using a range of Social Media platforms for consultation activity. The review would explore best practice in this area and inform future policy and strategy.</p>	

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- What are the principles of good consultation? (Including an outline of SBC's approach to consultation)
- Are all innovations and developments in consultation platforms and channels being considered and where appropriate adopted?
- Are changes to policies and service delivery (including financial cuts) being informed by the views of residents, partners and stakeholders?
- What best practice and industry developments exist?
- Do we evaluate the effectiveness of our public consultation?
- How do we ensure that Council consultations are representative and meaningful? What steps are taken to engage with hard to reach groups?
- Are services equipped to run consultations? What support and guidance is provided?
- Scrutiny of the membership and operation of The Viewpoint Panel
- Scrutiny of the "My Views" on-line consultation platform (due for review in 2019) and input to the specification of the new/upgraded system
- How will the results of the Four yearly Residents' Survey be shared and used?
- Consideration of "Bright Minds Big Future" and what lessons can be learned for other consultation activity
- Scrutiny of the Planning Portal – is it an effective platform?
- What can we learn from the approaches of other Councils?
- How can feedback from previous and ongoing consultations inform our approach to future consultations?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, Service Departments

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

5 months:

Approve scope and project plan – February 2020

Receive evidence – 16 March 2020 /27 April 2020/ 1 June 2020

Draft recommendations – June 2020

Final report – 27 July 2020

Report to Cabinet – 17 September 2020

<p>What information do we need?</p> <p>Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):</p> <p>CCE strategy, Objective consultation portal overview, Viewpoint Panel - demographic information and how and what they are used for, BMBF</p>	
<p>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</p>	<p>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p>
<p>Consultation Officer</p>	<p>Context setting. Is the consultation portal fit for purpose?</p>
<p>Viewpoint Panel</p>	<p>Do we consult enough with the public before changes are made?</p>
<p>BMBF</p>	<p>Methods of consultation – do we use appropriate methods?</p>
<p>IPSOS MORI</p>	<p>Four yearly survey – relevance/ value for money? Best practice and Industry developments</p>
<p>Another Council</p>	<p>What can we learn from other Councils and their approaches to consultation?</p>
<p>Representative from market research group – eg Bluegrass</p>	<p>Additional information on market research and methods which could be used in future consultations</p>
<p>Super-users</p>	<p>What can we learn from them?</p>
<p>Communications Officer SBC</p>	<p>How are consultations publicised on social media? How do the public engage with the consultation process online?</p>
<p>How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</p> <p>Committee meetings, desk top research, visits to other Councils, methods of public consultation CCE strategy, Viewpoint Panel, BMBF</p>	
<p>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</p> <p>As above.</p>	
<p>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics (including – but not limited to – age, gender, disability, ethnicity), and advance equality of opportunity for those with Protected Characteristics. Public bodies must have due regard to the need to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in</p>	

other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

The Council carries out consultation activity for all Council Services and therefore the impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area is broad.

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

Scrutiny of the Council's approach to consultation could lead to improved performance of the consultation activity itself and also of all Council activities that use the results of the consultations. There is potential for making savings or meeting growing demand from existing resources through the introduction of new approaches.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	January 2020	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	3 February 2020	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	17 February 2020	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBD	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Background presentation Presentation of best practice from IPSOS MORI rep Focus on various platforms Focus on previous/ongoing SBC consultations Presentation from another council Evidence from super-users	16 March 2020 27 April 2020 1 June 2020	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	29 June 2020	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	July 2020	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	7 July 2020	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	27 July 2020	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	15 September 2020	Executive Scrutiny Committee

Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	17 September 2020	Cabinet / Approving Body