

To: City Executive Board

Date: 3rd July 2014

Report of: The Scrutiny Committee

Title of Report: Community Engagement Policy Statement

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee on the Community Engagement Policy Statement.

Key decision: No

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Simmons

Executive Lead Member: Councillors Simm and Price

Policy Framework: Strong Active Communities

Recommendations:

- 1. To provide a clear statement in the principles on the ambition for engagement focusing on depth as well as breadth.**
- 2. To provide information on the engagement ambitions set for all consultations during the last year, what was achieved and how this fits with the principles set within the Policy Statement.**
- 3. To suggest to the Scrutiny Committee an up and coming engagement/empowerment exercise that can act as a pilot study to demonstrate the effectiveness of the principles within this report.**
- 4. To provide a table that shows how all comments received during the consultation on this Policy Statement have been handled.**

Introduction

1. The Scrutiny Committee considered the Community Engagement Policy Statement at their public meeting in June. They were supported in their debate by Sadie Paige and Val Johnson; the Committee would like to thank them for their time and advice.
2. The Committee considered this Policy during its consultation period and made a number of recommendations to the City Executive Board that were agreed. These recommendations included comments on the “principles” and also levels of engagement. The Committee wishes to comment further on these.

Conclusions and Recommendation

3. The Committee welcomed the statement of principles but was not convinced that these were strong enough to support the empowerment of communities that is needed to deliver excellent engagement. The document as it stands seems to be more about breadth rather than depth.
4. Members commented that the level of engagement by communities and groups in the development of this Policy Statement was very low and heard from officers that this was so with most engagement exercises. The Committee expressed the view that communities will, and can only be, expected to engage when they perceive they have some power to make a change and this needs to be demonstrated more actively and regularly.
5. It was not obvious to the Committee how the views expressed by respondents to this Policy Statement had been incorporated or otherwise into the final document. The Committee wants to see this information.
6. Officers outlined processes in place to support good outcomes from consultation/engagement. The Committee welcomed a more robust approach and asked to see information on the ambition set for engagement within consultations during the last year and what was achieved. In addition, the Committee would like to see a pilot project set to demonstrate the levels of good quality engagement that can be produced by the application of the principles in the Policy Statement.

Recommendation 1

To provide a clear statement in the principles on the ambition for engagement focusing on depth as well as breadth.

Recommendation 2

To provide information on the engagement ambitions set for all consultations during the last year, what was achieved and how this fits with the principles set within the Policy Statement.

Recommendation 3

To suggest to the Scrutiny Committee an up and coming engagement/empowerment exercise that can act as a pilot study to demonstrate the effectiveness of the principles within this report.

Recommendation 4

To provide a table that shows how all comments received during the consultation on this Policy Statement have been handled.

Comments from the Head of Service and Board Member

7. Comments at the meeting.

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List of background papers: None

Version number: 1

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