

## **Northampton Borough Council**

### **Public Engagement and Communications Strategy Task and Finish Group**

4 November 2005

#### **Present:**

Councillor Brandon Eldred  
Councillor Michael Hill  
Councillor Christopher Malpas  
Councillor Anjona Roy  
Councillor Andrew Simpson

#### **Also In Attendance**

Margaret Martin (Consortium)	Facilitator
Thomas Hall	
John McDermott	
Tracy Feltham	

#### **Observing**

Councillor Brendan Glynane	Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Trini Crake	
Councillor Tony Woods	

### **1 Welcome and Introductions**

M Martin welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Public Engagement and Communications Strategy Task and Finish Group. The meeting had been arranged for the Group to set its scope for its review. Officers with the relevant expertise had been asked to attend to provide an input.

### **2 Public Engagement and Communications Strategy**

Two documents (Engagement for Communications and Consultation) and the Communications Strategy were circulated. The draft Strategy had been approved by the Executive.

It was emphasised that public engagement and the Authority's Communications Strategy were key to the Council's Recovery Plan.

The Group was advised that it needed to decide whether its role would be guiding policy development or scrutinising implementation. Councillor Glynane emphasised the importance of Councillor training in scoping reviews.

John McDermott then referred to the Communications Strategy that he had helped devise for an NHS Trust. The consultation - '1,000 good ideas campaign' had asked the general public for its views on the Trust. 3,500 comments had been received back which had been published and responded to by stating how the Trust would reply to their comments. The document was published four times a year.

In response to a query, Thomas Hall confirmed that he was in consultation with NCC about receiving copies of any appropriate documents that it might have which would assist the Group. Peter Gould, Chief Executive, NCC, was keen for joint working.

The Group was referred to the Key Targets in the document and asked to look at how they impacted on citizens: -

- To develop a programme for the citizens' panel by October 2005
- To have a dedicated consultation resource in post by December 2005
- To have all services contributing to the consultation database by December 2005
- To undertake at least three surveys with the Citizen's Panel each year from 1 April 2006
- To increase to 55% residents who are satisfied/very satisfied with us by April 2006
- To have, by July 2006, more than 50% of residents feeling we consult and involve them
- To establish, by February 2006, a baseline for measurable targets for consultation

It was suggested that members of the Task and Finish Group each be assigned a key target, set objectives around that area of work and set objectives of what the Group wanted to achieve. The details of which would be presented to the next meeting. The Task and Finish Group would then decide which of the key targets it would be scrutinising as part of its review.

The Group would then scope its review, for example, deciding who to call as witnesses, experts, portfolio holders, arrange visits etc.

**AGREED:** (1) That Councillors be assigned the following key targets; to set objects around that area of work and set objectives of what the Group wanted to achieve:

**Councillor Malpas** - To undertake at least three surveys with the Citizen's Panel each year from 1 April 2006

**Councillor Roy** - To increase to 55% residents who are satisfied/very satisfied with us by April 2006

**Councillor Simpson** - To have, by July 2006, more than 50% of residents feeling we consult and involve them

**Councillor Eldred** - To establish, by February 2006, a baseline for measurable targets for consultation

(2) A copy of the scoping document would be emailed to members of the Task and Finish Group.

### **3           Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was set for Wednesday 16 November at 6pm in the Jeffery Room, at the Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm