

# Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

**7 March 2016**

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)  
Councillors J Allan, A Austin, B Burdis, S Day,  
P Earley, M Hall, Janet Hunter, C Johnson,  
D McGarr, J O'Shea and M Rankin

School Governor Representatives  
Mrs M Ord

Church Representative  
Rev M Vine

Others in attendance  
Councillor C Burdis - Cabinet Member for Community  
Engagement

## **OV52/03/16 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A McMullen and P McIntyre  
Mrs J Little - School Governor Representative  
Mr G O'Hanlon - Church Representative

## **OV53/03/16 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute members.

## **OV54/03/16 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest reported.

## **OV55/03/16 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minute of the meetings held on 1 February 2016 be confirmed.

## **OV56/03/16 Community Conversations update**

An update presentation to the position of the Community Conversations was delivered to the Committee by Jacqueline Laughton - Head of Corporate Strategy and Councillor Carole Burdis - Cabinet Member for Community Engagement.

The Committee heard that consultation would be taking place on the development of a draft framework for the Engagement Strategy. The framework would consist of the 4 levels designed for effective engagement that included:

Inform - Know who the intended people to be reached and how they are most likely to access and understand the information. Ensuring information provided is high quality, consistent, timely, appropriately targeted and clear/easily understood.

Consult - Ensure the purpose of consultation is clear, including what is being consulted on and how collected information would be used.

Involve - Ensure all relevant people are given the opportunity to be involved.

Collaborate/Co-production - ensuring people who use services work together to create decisions/service which works for all.

Further work would be undertaken to shape engagement activities whilst working to the general principles and standards.

The presentation then looked at the actions undertaken following the accepted recommendations made by the Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee in 2015.

It was the intention that the Community Conversations be branded to ensure that all participants understood that engagements did not only mean the establishment of formal meetings. Engagement takes a place a number of ways and could include street walkabouts, housing & family events as examples.

It was the aim that by the end of September 2016 all wards within the borough would have undertaken two Community Conversation activities. An Engagement Forward Plan was being developed that would detail all engagement activities in all wards. It was realised that as in the ever changing world that methods of engagement would take place through the further use of social media platforms etc and the authority would adapt its engagement to ensure it provided new environments and requirements.

An engagement hub was being developed that would provide a Community Conversations toolkit. The use of the toolkit would provide and promote a common approach for activities to anyone who needed to carry out engagement. The methods to provide feedback through the use of existing communication mechanisms such as the Our North Tyneside magazine would continue.

Through the effective use of the engagement forward plan, Ward Members would be alerted to any engagement activity in the ward they represent. The development of an engagement database that would enable the management of any work request to support members in their involvement in activities was progressing. The Committee was informed that all members would be informed of activities in their represented wards through the circulation of a quarterly report.

With reference to the increased use of social media, a member asked if the Authority had the appropriate strategy in place to manage its use in the engagement with the public.

The Committee heard that the Communications and Engagement Team had a dedicated officer Kevin Harrison whose role is to place items on the Authority's social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and youtube), monitor and post appropriate responses to public statement and comments.

A Member raised concerns at inconsistent and possibly false statements being placed on local social media sites. It was asked that if instances occurred that erroneous information/statements/comments were placed on sites of this kind, what action could be taken..

The Head of Corporate Strategy stated that occurrences of this nature should be notified to the Communications and Engagement Team who would seek to ensure the correct information was posted on the social media sites that the authority has a presence.

A Member enquired how Ward Members would be contacted when information arose about issues with the Ward they represent. It was stated that this was an area that was being investigated to ensure that a consistent process could be established.

The Cabinet Member - Community Engagement highlighted that all Council/Cabinet reports include a section on compliance with principles of decision making where it is detailed the engagement taken place for that particular item. She raised the importance that all Council Members should be regularly checking this section to be confident that full consultation and community engagement has been under taken.

**Agreed** that Community Conversations update be noted.

### **OV57/03/16 Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group - Cabinets Response**

The Committee received the response from Cabinet to the recommendations submitted by the sub group of the Children's Education and Skills Sub Committee in relation to its work on into Child Sexual Exploitation.

Appended to the report were details to the actions to be taken for each of the sub groups recommendations.

**Agreed** that the recommendation responses from Cabinet in relation to the work of the Child Sexual Exploitation Sub group be noted.