

Community Governance Review

Consultation Plan – DRAFT

Consultation Overview

Background/situation

A Borough-wide Review, in respect of the governance arrangements of all of the Borough's town and parish councils is to be undertaken, commencing as soon as reasonably practicable after the 2019 all-out elections, and concluding well in advance of the May 2023 elections.

A Community Governance Review in respect of town and parish councils in the Borough will provide the opportunity for Cheshire East Council to review and make appropriate changes to town and parish council community governance. This Review will require the Council to consult with local people and other bodies, and to take account of representations received in connection with the Review. Although the Review would cover the whole Borough, it is anticipated that changes to governance arrangements would not be requested or required in the majority of cases in our town and parish councils. However the Review would help to address governance issues raised within some parishes, including concerns about the impact of new housing developments on some parish boundaries; some of which arise from allocations within Cheshire East Local Plan.

Desired outcomes

To obtain high level feedback / views on any current issues and potential changes to current town and parish council community governance.

Consultation Plan

Target audience

- Residents of Cheshire East
- Cheshire East Council Members/ Councillors
- Town and Parish Councils in Cheshire East
- Resident Associations / Local Community Groups

Consultation Methods

- Hard copy survey
 - Paper questionnaire to be available at all libraries and key contact centres
 - Optional: available at all Town and Parish Councils
- Online survey
 - Cheshire East website – link
 - Email to all Parish/Town Councils in CEC area
 - Local press – weblink
 - Social media pages – Twitter & Facebook page link
 - Send to members of the Digital Influence Panel members via an e-mail campaign – est. 1,300 members.

Equality Impact Assessment

- Democratic Services to undertake and own the Equality Impact Assessment which will be published alongside this consultation.

Timescales

		Date – Week beginning														
Phase 2 - Activity																
	25th Feb	4th Mar	11th Mar	18th Mar	25th Mar	1st Apr	8th Apr	14th Apr	22nd Apr	29th Apr	6th May	13th May				
Draft questionnaire / materials																
Finalise questionnaire																
	20th May	27th May	3rd Jun	10th Jun	17th Jun	24th Jun	1st Jul	8th Jul	15th Jul	22nd Jul	29th Jul	5th Aug	12th Aug	19th Aug	26th Aug	
Finalise questionnaire																
Print paper questionnaire																
Distribute questionnaire																
Consultation period																
Input paper questionnaire																
Q/A checks																
Analyse data																
Draft report																

		Date – Week beginning													
Phase 3 - Activity															
	9th Sept	16th Sept	23rd Sept	30th Sept	7th Oct	14th Oct	21st Oct	28th Oct	4th Nov	11th Nov					
Draft questionnaire / materials															
Finalise questionnaire															
Print paper questionnaire															
Distribute questionnaire															
	18th Nov	25 th Nov	2nd Dec	9th Dec	16th Dec	23rd Dec	30th Dec	6th Jan	13th Jan	20th Jan	27th Jan	3rd Feb	10th Feb	17th Feb	24th Feb
Consultation period	Live 20th														End 26th

Input paper questionnaire															
	2nd Mar	9th Mar	16th Mar	23rd Mar	30th Mar	6th Apr	13th Apr								
Q/A checks															
Analyse data															
Draft report															

Resources

(Note: There will be costs associated with the resources identified below.)

Phase 2

Staffing

Staff estimates are as follows but will vary depending on response achieved.

Low Response – Estimate approx... 500 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received / 3 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 5 days coding/ 7 days report writing = 26 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 18 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 8 days support

Medium Response – Estimate approx... 1,500 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received / 4 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 7 days coding/ 9 days report writing = 31 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 21 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 10 days support

High response... Estimate approx.... 3,000 responses

Set up and support 10 days + Est: 1 full day input per 100 paper responses received/ 5 days cleaning & quantitative analysis/ 10 days coding/ 11 days report writing = 37 full days

- 1 x Senior Research Officer required – costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 24 days support
- 1 x Research Support Officer required - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 13 weeks support
- 1 x External Admin Support - costs to be re-charged to Democratic Services
 - 4 weeks support

Postage

2nd Class postage to Libraries & key contact centres (large letter)

Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

OFFICIAL

(Optional) 2nd class postage to all Town & Parish Councils
Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

Printing

Sending to all libraries and key contact centres:

200 x Paper Questionnaires & Return Envelopes
18 x supporting information (Based on 10 pages in B&W)

(Optional) Sending to all Town & Parish Councils

(20 per town/parish council) 3,000 x paper questionnaires (based on 3 pages in b&w) & return envelopes
145 x supporting information

Phase 3

Staffing

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Postage

2nd Class postage to Libraries & key contact centres (large letter)

Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

(Optional) 2nd class postage to Town & Parish Councils that are effected by change

Return Postage of questionnaires (based on 50% response rate)

Printing

Sending to all libraries and key contact centres:

200 x paper questionnaires (based on 3 pages in b&w) & return envelopes

18 x supporting information (based on 10 pages in b&w)

(Optional) Sending to Town & Parish Councils that are affected by change

Unknown until after phase 2

(?? per town/parish council) ?? x paper questionnaires (based on 3 pages in b&w) & return envelopes

?? x supporting information

Reporting, feedback and evaluation

Analysis Tools

- SPSS – quantitative analysis
- Excel – qualitative and quantitative analysis
- Nvivo – qualitative analysis

Report

- Full Report Recommended

Public communication Recommendations

- Full length report promoted on CE Consultation web page
- Media release of key points and promoting link to the full results

Risk Assessment

RISK: Unrepresented sample/results

- Due to low response from more deprived populations, young people and people living in rural areas
- Due to campaign groups who may skew results

MITIGATION:

- Reach out to broadest possible range of age groups, demographics and partners.

RISK: Legal challenge

MITIGATION:

- Follow Gunning Principles regarding consultation that have been challenged in many judicial reviews as detailed below
- **Formative Stage** - Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at an influential stage. You cannot consult on a decision that has already been made otherwise consultation is not only unfair but also pointless and a waste of time/resources. A council does not have to consult on all the options they have considered and can consult on one preferred option, however, have to inform respondents as such and inform of the reasoning's behind the decision.
- **Sufficient reasons** – Those being consulted should be made aware of the basis on which a proposal for consultation has been considered. It is important that you provide all relevant information that could influence the nature of the responses to

allow for intelligent consideration. Areas where participants' views cannot influence the situation should be disclosed at the outset.

- **Timing** - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Formal consultation should be open for a minimum of 12 weeks and ideally should not be undertaken over holiday periods e.g. Christmas - you should not consult during election periods. Other survey work which is not statutory in nature (such as this consultation on supported bus services) should be open for between 4-12 weeks dependent on the topic and target audience.
- **The findings of the consultation must be thoroughly taken into account** - The decision maker must thoroughly consider the findings of the consultation otherwise they can be accused of already having made up their mind or failing to take into account a relevant consideration of the results. An officer can summarise consultee responses as long as it is a fair representation and they note all relevant points of importance.