

**ANGUS COUNCIL
POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
29 OCTOBER 2002
CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION
Report by the Chief Executive**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to bring to the Committee's attention the progress being made in implementing the Council's Consultation/Involvement Strategy

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) notes the progress made in implementing the Consultation/Involvement Strategy;
- (b) notes the increasing departmental contributions to the corporate Consultation/Involvement system;
- (c) agrees to the development of partnership working on consultation and involvement under the Community Planning arrangements;
- (d) agrees to the enhanced service to be provided on the Angus Council internet site.

2. BACKGROUND

Reference is made to Report 1220/01 considered by the Committee on 23 October 2001. The Report described the arrangements made to implement the Council's Consultation/Involvement Strategy.

3. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Following approval of the Consultation/involvement strategy, the strategy report was made widely available to service departments, other public sector, private and voluntary sector organisations, and the public. Measures were also taken during the six-months following the approval of the strategy to implement all of the measures detailed in the action-plan contained within the report. The implementation process included extensive consultation with a range of interested parties culminating in a series of seminars held in January 2002. A draft corporate customer feedback form is also in the process of development.

The seminars presented the practical implementation of the strategy via a section on the council intranet, and sought feedback from those most affected by this area of work on the practicality of the arrangements. Subsequently, following minor revisions, the consultation/involvement intranet site was launched on 1 March 2002.

The site delivers improved communication and co-ordination of consultation activities across the authority and provides a platform for co-ordinating efforts with partners. In addition, guidance has aided officers to identify objectives and evaluate the success of consultation exercises.

4. INVOLVEMENT

While the strategy and its implementation drew attention to exercises designed to address specific issues identified by the council, it also encompassed the ongoing involvement of a range of stakeholders in the work of the council. This is an area of work in which the council has particular strengths. While all departments could be mentioned, examples include decentralisation, and the work of Area Forums, the community education service and their work with young people and hard to reach groups, customer feedback systems such as those used by the Social Work department, and standing consultative groups such as those operated by Leisure Services/Contract Services.

The implementation of the action plan contained within the Consultation/Involvement strategy provides a firm foundation for improved communication of this existing good practice. Increasing levels of departmental contribution to the corporate system will further improve the effectiveness of the service by enhancing public access, and the quality of our work with citizens and consumers of services.

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Community Planning Steering Group has been regularly informed of the development of Angus Council's innovative arrangements in this area. This has culminated in the agreement of a partnership development plan on consultation and involvement,

Partnership working on specific exercises is common practice within the council, with, for example, agencies including Scottish Enterprise Tayside and Angus College, amongst others, involved in areas of work such as the development of eight local Community Learning Plans. The use of the Angus Citizens' Panel to undertake a survey on health, and public involvement in health, in partnership with NHS Tayside further enhances this trend.

Partnership working has resulted in the introduction of arrangements to share and coordinate information relating to exercises, with the introduction of the Tayside Business Survey Protocol, and the continuing development of the NHS Public Involvement Strategy.

6. INTERNET PROVISION

The development of the A-Z of services on the council internet site provides an opportunity for improved access to consultation and involvement exercises in future. The development of internet content will require careful consideration and potential revision to the arrangements currently in place. In the medium term the opportunity for undertaking on-line exercises will be explored, in addition to existing printed documents, and face-to-face work eg public meetings.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

There are no Human Rights issues arising from this report.

9. CONSULTATION

All Chief Officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

A B Watson
Chief Executive

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this paper.