



**Rochford District
Council**

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 March 2024

REPORT TITLE:	Consider Scoping Request to Review Consultation and Engagement
REPORT OF:	Greg Campbell, Director of Policy and Delivery

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Overview & Scrutiny Committee with a scoping document that outlines the work intended in a review of the authority's engagement arrangements with its stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1.** That the Committee determines whether to endorse the review and its scope in order for the review on engagement methodology at Rochford District Council to be undertaken.
- R2.** That the Committee makes any recommendations to the Executive for consideration.

SUPPORT ING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1** So that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can confirm that this is a piece of work they wish to endorse being carried out as part of the future work plan.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1** The Committee can decide to refuse this scoping document and request to put this onto the forward work plan of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In doing so accept the present arrangements and that those going to be put into place through the consultation and engagement strategy will be adequate.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 A request has been received to undertake a piece of work to consider how to get the best out of consultations that the Council undertake. As part of this request a scoping document has been produced (See Appendix 1) and is before members to consider the approach and the work it will undertake.
- 3.2 Rochford District Council consult with its stakeholders on various issues including the budget and issues such as skate parks. Through consultation the Council seek views from the community and wider stakeholders which it will take into consideration when undertaking decisions.
- 3.3 Until recently the authority has not had a consistent approach nor platform to produce or develop consultations in which to engage with its stakeholders. This has changed since the introduction of Engagement HQ under the product title 'Engage with US'. This is a product that has been introduced to assist with the consultation process and in order to develop a more consistent approach. However this is purely a platform to enable consultations to be made available in order to reach out to residents in different formats.
- 3.4 The Council therefore needs to develop a consistent method in which it approaches how it determines how it consults its various stakeholders. This approach would include a process to determine who is consulted and the best form of consultation depending on the topic being considered in order to gain the best response.
- 3.5 Due to the need to develop a consistent approach, the Council has been developing a consultation and engagement strategy and a draft has been created. The work of this draft strategy continues and it is now at a stage where it can be scrutinised and challenged.
- 3.6 The scoping document before Members as part of this report takes into account the development of the Draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy and that the main focus of this piece of work should be scrutiny of this strategy. In doing so, consider the aspects that have been raised in the said scoping document.
- 3.7 Members are asked to consider and review the scoping document and to suggest any additions or changes to it and further endorse this piece of work to the committees work plan.
- 3.8 It should also be noted that the Council is moving away from a Cabinet governance model to a Committee governance model. As such, if approved, this piece of work will be considered by the Strategy, Finance and Policy Committee in the new Council year.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications to the outcome to this report. Financial implications will be considered as part of any consultation planning by individual services.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No legal implications from this report. Any changes or impacts will be considered within individual service when consultations are considered or to the wider strategy if they apply.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Resources from the Communities, Communications, Projects & Programmes Team will be required along with other service officers to help scrutinise and respond to the emerging Engagement Strategy

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 If we do not develop a Consultation and Engagement Strategy, officers will continue to have an ad-hoc approach to the development and undertaking of consultations.
- 7.2 Will not demonstrate a fair and considered approach to consultation
- 7.3 Will not enable a consistent approach in order to engage with seldom herd groups.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consideration of this work was with the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, Transformation Team, Communities Team and the Communications Team

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of any service review that will affect or change the service being provided.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental implications from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Scoping Document

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None