

## **CABINET**

**DATE OF MEETING: 1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

**TITLE OF REPORT: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

**Report of: Executive Director for Communities**

**Cabinet Portfolio: Strategic Direction and Partnerships**

**Key Decision: No**

**Confidentiality: Non Exempt**

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides Cabinet with an update addressing an area of concern originally raised on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022, when agreeing the Odiham Common Management Plan.

This report aims to set out a positive plan for engagement with parish councils, to be discussed and agreed at Cabinet.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Cabinet approves the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. At Cabinet on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2022, a recommendation was agreed that a suitable engagement plan would be prepared to ensure that Parish Councils' and local residents' views were accommodated, to help deliver the Odiham Common Management Plan.
2. The importance of establishing strong links with the local communities and Parish Councils was also included in the minutes.
3. In response to this, a plan has been written, to be used as a standard across all our Countryside Sites.
4. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan is set out in Appendix 1.

## **MAIN ISSUES**

5. Cabinet requested a revision of the current engagement plan within the Odiham Common Management Plan, to clearly define a strategy for engagement and communication with the local parish council and residents.
6. This has created an opportunity to standardise stakeholder engagement across all parish's where we have influence, and to standardise our process. The engagement plan will set out our communications with parishes and local communities in a wider context, using the concerns over the Odiham Common Management Plan as a catalyst. This will give the Countryside Service a set method of engagement across the district, so that communication is effective, achievable, and consistent, whilst being deliverable within our existing resources.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

7. The original report was considered by O&S on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2022, where issues were first raised. The committee required further information regarding 'making additional links, 'a contact group' between residents and Parish Councils regarding the Common'. The current recommendations seek to address this.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

8. Continuing with current level of engagement with stakeholder groups – it has already been noted that cabinet would like to see an improved plan on this. Currently this is not consistent across all our open spaces and there is an opportunity for it to be standardised.
9. Increase levels of engagement by directly consulting with all local residents on all management decisions and actions – we do not feel that this is achievable across the whole of the district within our current resource and is not an effective use of staff time. An increase of this level in our current communications would require additional staffing resources to undertake.
10. Do not engage with parishes or local residents – this would not be good practice, would damage our relationship with local people, parishes and may damage the council's reputation.

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040**

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan will support the delivery of the following themes within the Hart 2040 Vision:

Theme 3: Enhance the environment to live in, work in and enjoy.

Specifically, by our open spaces delivering improved facilities and promotion of culture and heritage, through positive engagement with parish councils and local people.

Theme 4: Develop the organisation which can deliver working in partnership.

Specifically using its own staff asset to build the skills and space for partnerships to flourish, in order to deliver on the Vision 2040.

### **Service Plan**

- Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan? NO
- Is the proposal being funded from current budgets? Yes
- Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?  
Yes

### **Legal and Constitutional Issues**

11. We are not aware of any issues.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

12. We do not envisage there to be any financial implications.
13. Staff resource will be directed in a more effective and efficient manner to build strong positive relationships with parish councils, for the benefit of both organisations. We believe that this reflects and makes the best use of existing resources. If there was to be a further increase in the level of communications

and engagement, above what the strategy lays out, then cabinet would need to consider additional resources to allow this.

### **Risk Management**

14. Without a clear and agreed plan, there may be a reputational risk to the council, due to ineffective communications to parishes and local communities. This plan aims to significantly reduce this risk.
15. Delivery of services may not be efficient and effective without an agreed plan.
16. Some local community groups may lobby for increased levels of direct communication, however this will be unachievable without increased resource and may prejudice the view of the wider community.

### **EQUALITIES**

17. No equality issues arising from approval of this report's recommendation have been identified.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

18. There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

### **ACTION**

19. That Cabinet approve the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

**Contact Details: Adam Green**

### **Appendices**

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

### **Background Papers:**

Cabinet Minutes – September 2022