

**Report to: Finance and Performance  
Management Scrutiny Panel**



**Date of Meeting: 16 June 2009**

**Portfolio:** Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services

**Subject:** Consultation Plan 2009/10 and Register 2008/09

**Officer contact for further information:** Valerie Loftis (Ext 4471)

**Democratic Services Officer:** Adrian Hendry

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**Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Consultation Plan for 2009/10, setting out those issues on which public consultation is planned to be undertaken during the municipal year, and detailing those consultation exercises completed during 2008/09, be noted.**

**Background**

1. During the latter part of 2005, the Audit Commission undertook a User Focus Assessment across Essex, looking at how effectively Councils engaged with local communities, the results of which have previously been reported to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel.
2. As a result of the User Focus Assessment, the need to develop robust consultation proposals in relation to the Council Plan for 2006-2010 and future Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the Council's Consultation Strategy was adopted in April 2006. All consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by and on behalf of the council are required to comply with the provisions of the Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy and a revised consultation guide was produced in order to standardise consultation approaches and methodologies wherever possible.
3. The Community Empowerment White Paper relating to NI 4 (the percentage of people who feel they are influencing decision making) currently aims to increase empowerment and participation in decision making and governance. Local Authorities therefore are finding ways to monitor and evaluate community empowerment work and mechanisms and approaches used to measure the success of community empowerment activity. This report goes some way to identifying what the Council is doing in relation to NI 4.

**Consultation Plan**

4. As part of the Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy a Consultation Plan was developed and included in the Council's annual business planning process from 2006/07 onwards, in order to focus consultation and engagement on priorities and operational issues to be faced in the coming year.

5. The Consultation Plan for 2009/10 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and sets out the issues on which individual services will be consulting or engaging residents or customers during the year. The Consultation Plan sets out the overall objective for each consultation exercise, how each exercise will be undertaken and the methods and target groups consulted. In establishing this approach, it has been recognised that the need for some consultation exercises will arise subsequent to the publication of the Plan. It should also be noted that regular on-going satisfaction surveys such as housing report cards, or consultation carried out in relation to planning applications, will not be included within the Consultation Plan. A list of planned consultation exercises will also be published on the Council's website.

### **Consultation Register**

6. The Consultation Register incorporates the results of consultation exercises undertaken during the preceding 12 months and gives detail as to the purpose, the start and finish dates, the service area carrying out the surveys, where the results were published and some key findings.

### **Community Engagement and Involvement**

7. The Council carries out a wide range of community engagement and involvement activity. Amongst the larger surveys carried out by the Council in 2008 were the Gypsy and Traveller Options for Development Survey, The Big Youth Debate Survey, the Waste and Recycling Survey 2008 and The Broadway Regeneration Survey. Smaller consultation exercises were targeted at specific groups and projects such as the Taxi Licensing Survey and Housing Strategy Survey. A full list of these surveys can be seen in Appendices 1 and 2 and can also be found on the Council's website along with the start and finish dates and reports on their findings, where possible.

### **National Indicator Place Survey (bi-annual)**

8. The National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships, include a 'Place Survey', which is to be carried out every two years to collect data for 20 citizen perspective indicators. This survey replaced the Best Value User Satisfaction Surveys. In September 2008, the first Place Survey was undertaken as part of an Essex-wide consortium. The Place Survey asked the opinion from residents about their satisfaction levels with local services, the place they live in and local facilities, the results of which will be published by Central Government. The Place Survey results will be presented to Members on 9 June 2009 in the Council Chamber.

### **Online Consultation**

9. In order to reach a wider audience or a specific targeted group, a new initiative using online consultation software is being used to carry out some of the 40 public consultation exercises undertaken by the Council in 2008/09. A wide range of issues covered using interactive technology were: Weekend Voting, The Forester Consultation; Gypsy and Traveller Options for Development Survey; The Big Youth Debate and Taxi Licensing Survey. There will also be capacity for using a one question voting facility (straw poll), i.e. to ask website respondents to reply yes or no to a specific current topic. This facility is expected to be available shortly through the Consultation Officer, Public Relations Office.

**Reason for Decision:**

10. That the Consultation Plan for 2009/10, setting out those issues on which public consultation is planned to be undertaken during the municipal year (Appendix 1) and those consultation exercises completed during 2008/09 (Appendix 2), be noted.

**Resource Implications:** None

**Budget/Personnel/Land:** None

**Council Plan/Best Value Performance Plan Reference:** Council Plan 2006-2010  
Section 8 – ‘How We Measure Achievements’

**Relevant Statutory Powers:** None

**Background papers:** None

**Environment/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** None

**Key Decision Reference: (if required)** None

## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT PUBLIC CONSULTATION PLAN 2009/10

Ref	Subject Matter/Issues	Who Commissioned Survey	Dates	Objectives	Target Groups	Method
2092	National Indicator 17 Perceptions of Anti-social Behaviour Local Indicator 7.2 Feeling Safe	Management Development Programme 2008/09	February 2009 – March 2009	To create a comparative to the results of existing data in order to improve indicator scores	Random population sample	On-line, face-to-face canvassing
3091	Homelessness Strategy 2009/10 - 2011/12	Housing Options Manager	March 2009 to April 2009	Homelessness Strategy 2009/10 - 2011/12	All groups involved in providing services to homeless households	Postal
3092	Caravan Site Licences - Conditions to be attached to permanent residential caravan site licences	Private Sector Housing, Housing Directorate	1 to 31 March 2009	Conditions to be attached to permanent residential caravan site licences	Park home owners, site owners, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, The Environment Agency, The Health and Safety Executive EFDC Planning Officers	Postal
4091	Development Plan Provision for Gypsies and Travellers Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environment	A 'Planning' statutory requirement	20 April 2009 for six weeks	To seek the local community's opinion of the independently produced SA/SEA. Also a statutory requirement	All who responded to the Consultation on Options	Online, postal, documents to be made available in Council offices, libraries
4092	Shelley Open Space	Area Housing Manager	9 April 2009 to 27 April 2009	To obtain the views of residents about a change in use of this land proposed by Ongar Town Council	Residents living in the vicinity of the land in question	Postal survey
4093	Statement of Community Involvement	A 'Planning' statutory requirement	Not yet decided	Statutory requirement to consult on the preparation of this document	Not yet fully decided	Not yet decided

## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT PUBLIC CONSULTATION PLAN 2009/10

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5091	Debden Community Consultation Event	Community Services Business Plan 2009/11 Supported by Assistant Director	Proposed date Thursday 14 May 2009	Local needs and aspirations	Local Debden residents and general members of the public who work, regularly visit or are educated in the area	Events will be held in Sheering, Roydon, Waltham Abbey and North Weald
9091	Submission Development Plan Document for Gypsies and Travellers	A 'Planning' statutory requirement	End September 2009 for six weeks	Statutory requirement to consult to receive representations on a Submission DPD	All on the LDF consultation database	Online, postal, documents to be made available in Council offices, libraries
9092	Equality	Performance Improvement Officer	Summer 2009	To ascertain staff perception and experience of equality of EFDC as an employer	All Staff	Focus groups and online
31001	Core Strategy Issues and Options	A 'Planning' statutory requirement	Spring 2010 for six weeks minimum	Statutory requirement to consult on Issues and Options for any Development Plan Document	All on the LDF consultation database	On-line, postal, documents to be made available in Council offices, libraries

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGISTER 2008/2009**

Ref	Title Subject	Start Date	End Date	Commissioned By	Carried Out By	Purpose	Results Reported To	Method and Cost	Comments/Key Results
1081	Demolition of communal drying areas on Oakwood Hill Estate, Loughton	Jan 08	Feb 08	Area Housing Manager South	Assistant Area Housing Manager South	To find out the views of all residents in the estate	Strategic Assessment Working Group for recommendations to CDRP Co-ordinating Group for consideration in determining crime and disorder priorities to be addressed district wide.	Notices posted on drying areas	Residents in favour
1082	Public Consultation Decision Matrix for Strategic Assessment priority considerations 2008/09	17 Jan 08	22 Feb 08	Strategic Assessment Working Group, Safer Communities EFDC	Strategic Assessment Working Group, Safer Communities EFDC	Results to be incorporated in the EFDC Strategic Assessment and local three year Partnership Plan updated annually	Strategic Assessment Working Group for recommendations to CDRP Co-ordinating Group for consideration in determining crime and disorder priorities to be addressed district wide	Postal survey to all Town/Parish Councils, all district Neighbourhood Watch Groups, Community and Resident Associations. On-line survey for residents to contribute. Paper survey at all District Housing Offices, information desks and remote Parish Council offices. Paper survey through Neighbourhood Action Panels. Survey promoted in the local media. £500 printing and postal costs. Other costs were staff time in developing the survey and recording results	Results were scored through a numerical weighting matrix to give an understanding of those problems affecting the district the greatest extent. Approximately 40% return rate of questionnaires. Results were used to form geographic crime and disorder problem-solving groups

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2081	Transport and Access Needs Epping Forest District Wide Travel Needs Survey.	11 Feb 08	31 Mar 08	EFDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Questionnaire included in the Council's Forester Magazine	To improve inadequate rural public transport	The Essex County Council Highways and Transport Portfolio Holder came to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in January 2009, when he gave an initial response to our survey results. No formal report has at yet been written on the outcomes	Consultation via The Forester magazine by way of a questionnaire. Replies were by a freepost address and by the Council's website replying by email.	Nothing concrete as yet. Replies and figures are still being analysed
3081	Gender Equality Scheme	Mar 08	Mar 08	Performance Improvement Manager	Consultation Officer	To develop a Gender Equality Scheme	Results reported to Performance Improvement Manager and Human Resources	Questionnaire at Springboard Group meeting at nil cost	Results indicated that staff valued the Council's benefits provision of annual leave and the locality and convenience for travelling into work. Respondents felt that they could do more interesting and challenging work
3082	Homeless Interviews exit survey	04 Mar 08	14 Mar 08	Assistant Head of Housing Directorate (Operations)	Housing Needs Manager	To evaluate the effectiveness of service	Not applicable	By completion of paper form at end of interview at nil cost	Awaiting evaluation

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3083	Homeless Prevention exit survey	04 Mar 08	13 Mar 08	Housing Needs Manager	Housing Options Manager	To evaluate effectiveness of Homeless Prevention Service	Not applicable	Nil cost	Awaiting assessment
3084	Youth Initiatives Scheme - Town and Parish Council's and Police 'Beat' Area Survey	18 Mar 08	14 Apr 08	Local Strategic Partnership	Consultation Officer EFDC	To assess the success or otherwise of the Youth Initiatives Schemes introduced during the three year period 2005 to 2008 in terms of the benefits/service provision to young people and reducing anti-social behaviour	Leisure Task and Finish Panel	Within the consultation budget	The majority of respondents felt that the facilities were value for money
5081	Choice Based Lettings Review (six months)	01 May 08	31 May 08	Assistant Head of Housing Directorate (Operations)	Housing Options Team	To undertake six months review of Choice Based Lettings Scheme, to ascertain how homeseekers felt with service. During the review we also sought to ascertain why homeseekers in certain cases were not bidding	Housing Scrutiny Panel Report 3 July 2008	Review was undertaken by survey being sent to all homeseekers addresses	The results in the main were positive. Over 60% of applicants are bidding which is very high. For those applicants who are not bidding are offered assistance or have mitigating circumstances
5082	Grove Court Tree Removal	May 08	Sep 08	Housing Management North	Housing Officer	To get residents views on proposal to remove trees	Not applicable	Postal Survey. £5	The majority of residents wished to see the trees removed and work has been programmed for their removal



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5083	North Weald Community Event	22 May 08	22 May 08	Director of Housing	Community Development Officers	To find out from residents their views on living in North Weald, services they use, leisure activities, what services they would like to see in the village, if they are an active member of the community and would they like to be a part of a residents group	Community Development Office	Hall hire, activities, publicity and staff hours	There were 128 respondents and comments were to bring back village day and air show and more information days like this event
6081	The Big Youth Debate	02 Jun 08	19 Nov 08	Youth Council	Consultation Officer, Youth Councillors, Young Persons' Officer	The EFYC has identified five key objectives and wishes to confirm that the issues highlighted are shared by their peers. The EFYC will use the information gathered to prioritise their objectives for the next two years.	19 Nov 08	Questionnaires, online interactive survey and The Big Youth Debate Event	Results of survey and debate can be seen on the Youth Council's section of the Council's website
6082	Older People's Summit	12 Jun 08	12 Jun 08	Joint Management Team	Safer Communities Manager	Helping older people to identify personal safety measures	Not applicable	Nil	Minimal. Event was arranged around group/themes. Community wellbeing was attended only by service providers
6083	Loughton Broadway Regeneration Consultation	23 Jun 08	18 Jul 08	Directorate of Planning and Economic Development	Urban Practitioners	To seek views on proposed development options	It is intended that a report will be made to Cabinet on 1 September 2008	Approximately £20,000	Debden Final Report 28 August 2008

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6084	Residents Allotment Parsonage Court	27 Jun 08	04 Jul 08	Assistant Head of Housing Directorate Operations	Housing Manager Older People's Services	Sports and Health Development, working in partnership with Voluntary Action Epping Forest are keen to establish an allotment within the communal gardens at Parsonage Court Sheltered Housing Scheme. Residents would be encouraged to participate and grow their own vegetables. Given the above it was felt necessary to undertake a consultation exercise	Assistant Director of Housing Operations	Postal Survey delivered by Scheme Manager	47 residents consulted 14 in favour 4 against 1 view not expressed 19 responses
7081	Tenant Support Plans	Jul 08	Sep 08	Housing Manager Older Peoples Services	Older People's Services	Seek tenants' views on updated document	Raised and agreed at Sheltered Housing Forum on 13 August 2008	Nil - discussed at Sheltered Housing Forum meetings	Those consulted approved the changes made to the document
7082	Weekend Voting	14 Jul 08	18 Aug 08	Returning Officer	Consultation Officer	To enable response to a Government consultation document	8 Sep 08 Constitution and Member Services SSP	Nil	Overview and Scrutiny Agenda Wednesday 22 October 2008

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8081	Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2008	Aug 08	Dec 08	Principal Housing Officer (Information and Strategy)	National Housing Federation, Feedback service	Informs National Indicator NI160, Local Authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services. Also analyses satisfaction across a number of service areas such as reports, property condition and contact with the Council. Uses a standard survey format and can be benchmarked against other landlords (LAs, RSLs, Almos and other social housing providers)	Housing Scrutiny Panel, 8 January 2009	Approx £9,500	Postal survey of 1,500 tenants randomly selected from a database of all tenants. 53% response. Questions on all areas of the housing service. Results inform one National Indicator - overall tenant satisfaction with landlord service provided by the Council. Satisfaction 84%
8082	Public Consultation on Waste and Recycling Service	Aug 08	24 Oct 08	Director of Environment and Street Scene	Consultation Officer, Report by Director of Environment and Street Scene	Views on three options proposed for changes to waste collection	Cabinet Meeting 10 November 2008	Questionnaire within The Forester and an interactive (website) questionnaire	Over 3000 responses, majority wanted a second wheeled bin for collection of food and green waste emptied weekly

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8083	Ninefields Tree Removal	Aug 08	Oct 08	Housing Management North	Housing Officer	To get residents views on proposal to remove 119 trees	10 November 2008 to Cabinet	£100	A letter and questionnaire was sent to 382 residents on the Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey, asking for their views on the proposal to remove 119 trees and to reduce the size of many others. Replies were received from 106 residents over 80% of whom said that they supported the proposals
9081	Leaseholders Satisfaction with Information Survey	01 Sep 08	10 Oct 08	Director of Housing	Housing	The purpose of this exercise is to analyse the feedback in order to assess if the Council is providing enough support/information to leaseholders in an understandable format	Survey authorised by Countywide Practice (Essex Leasehold Group) used similar format to other members of the group to enable us to compare results and lessons we learnt	£500 estimated within existing resources	119 responses. Results used to help us monitor the level of satisfaction for the service we provide.
9082	Tenants Talkback	Sep 08	Oct 08	Director of Housing	Housing Information and Strategy	To set up a 'Sounding Board' of tenants with particular interests to enable future consultation on a variety of subjects	Reported to Tenants' and Leaseholders Federation on 18 November 2008	Nil distributed with 'Housing News'	To identify tenants' needs for future consultation on specific subjects and to form new residents' groups
9083	Grove Court Bins	Sep'08	Nov'08	Housing Management North	Housing Officer	To look at new refuse disposal methods	Not applicable	Postage only, less than £10	Two bin areas will be constructed in 2009/10

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<b>9084</b>	Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document - Issues and Options – Consultation with Travellers and Gypsies	04 Sep 08	20 February 2009 5.00pm	Forward Planning	Forward Planning with consultant working internally and Myriad external consultant	To identify further accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers within the District, through engaging the opinions of all groups and assessing potential sites against a set of criteria	Due to be reported to Cabinet/Council in July this year	A DVD in clear language encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to engage in the consultation was distributed to local Gypsies and Travellers. A company called Myriad engaged in face-to-face work with this community. A written draft document including maps was prepared for consultation purposes. Representations were made	The responses are being collated and analysed
<b>9085</b>	Place Survey 2008	25 Sep 08	Dec 08	Deputy Chief Executive with the Local Strategic Partnership	BMG Research	To inform improvement priorities for the Council and its local strategic partners, regarding the National Indicator set for Local Authorities	LGA and Audit Commission publish results 9 March 2009	Approximately £12,037 postal questionnaires	A presentation of the various results will be carried out on 9 June 2009. The report is subject to Central Government agreement of the final weighted data

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10081	Call For Sites	Oct 08	Dec 08	Forward Planning	Forward Planning with Myriad (external consultant) to facilitate engagement of Gypsies and Traveller	To identify sites within the District that are/will be available for development within the next 15 years in order to plan for the housing, employment, Gypsy and Traveller and other provision which has to be made to meet the present and projected future needs of the District and to meet Government targets	To be reported to the LDF Cabinet Committee at a date yet to be determined. Further work needs to be undertaken with public bodies to identify land holdings. The result of this further exercise will be reported at the same time	Form and covering letter sent out to all contacts on the Local Development Framework consultees database. Form and letter also featured on EFDC website, and hard copies available at Civic Offices for any other interested parties to respond. A Press release was issued. Details published in the Council Bulletin	Results not yet known
10082	Consultation on location of recycling bins across Oakwood Hill Estate	Oct 08	Nov 08	Housing	Housing	To seek comments and views from tenants on the locating of the recycling bins	Not applicable	Not applicable	Consultation with Ward Members and Residents Association Committee
11081	Rochford Avenue Fencing	Nov 08	Nov 08	Area Housing North	Housing Officer	To determine whether or not residents wish to have alternative fencing around their gardens	Not applicable	£10	Six dwelling accepted close board panel fencing 9 dwelling refused improvement

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11082	Gypsy and Traveller DPD Issues and Options consultation – Consultation with residents	04 Nov 08	20 Feb 09	Full Council	Forward Planning	To find new sites for Gypsies and Travellers to live on in the District, to meet the demands of the Direction issued by GO East	Will be reported to Cabinet/Full Council once large volume of responses has been analysed	Paper consultation documents (posted and available to collect), paper responses, electronic documents online, online responses, 11 exhibitions around the District. Total cost for this Issues & Options estimated at £140,000.00	Yet to be established through detailed analysis of responses
12081	The Forester Satisfaction Survey	Dec 08	Feb 09	Assistant Deputy Chief Executive	Consultation Officer	To ascertain views of readers and preferences for frequency, articles, design, format of the magazine	Overview and Scrutiny Agenda Planning Group 15 May 09	Questionnaire included in The Forester Magazine Christmas edition. Three focus groups, all within consultation budget	The majority (75%) wanted to retain the existing format and that it was a useful way of receiving local news.
2091	Taxi Licensing Consultation	6 Feb 09	6 Mar 09	Licensing Panel Committee	Licensing	To improve taxi services within the district	Licensing Committee (Full) 15 April 2009	Via website, email and post	A proposal based on the findings from this survey will be going to Full Licensing Committee in October 2009
2092	Safer Communities	09 Feb 09	09 Mar 09	Management Development Programme 2008/09	Management Development Group 2008/10	To create a comparison with the results of existing data in order to improve indicator scores	Report to CEF 6 May 09	Online, face-to-face canvassing	Inconclusive