

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



Date of Meeting: 11 June 2013

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Support Services

Subject: Consultation Plan 2013/14 and Register 2012/13

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Consultation Plan for 2013/14 setting out those issues on which public consultation is to be undertaken during the municipal year and those consultation exercises completed during 2012/13, be noted.

Background

Consultation is governed by statute and remains under The General Duty of Best Value provided for under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999, as amended by s137 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (detailed in the last year's report). The relevant section of this Act states the following:

An authority must;

- Achieve the right balance and before deciding how to fulfil their Best Value duty, authorities are required to consult a wide range of local persons, including local voluntary and community organisations and businesses. This should apply at all stages of the commissioning cycle, including when considering decommissioning services. An authority should actively engage the organisation as early as possible on: the future of the service; any knock-on effect on assets used to provide this service; and the wider impact both on service users and the local community.
- Authorities should make provision for the organisation or wider community to put forward options on how to reshape the service or project. Local authorities should assist this by making available all appropriate information, in line with the Transparency Code of Practice.^{5 April 2011.*}

**The Transparency Code of Practice states that consultation must be held when proposals are still at the formative stage. Sufficient reasons must be published for proposals to permit 'intelligent consideration' and there must be adequate time for consideration and response, which must be conscientiously taken into account.*

Public Consultation Plan and Register

1. In order to meet the general duty and traditionally to follow best practice, every year a list of all consultation planned and carried out by the Council is published on the website and brought to the attention of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel.
2. All consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by and on behalf of the Council are required to comply with the provisions of the Council's Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy.
3. As part of the Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy, a Consultation Plan was developed and has been included in the Council's annual business planning process from 2006/07 onwards. It sets out the issues on which individual services will be consulting or engaging residents or customers during the year.
4. The Consultation Plan sets out the overall objective for each consultation exercise, how each exercise will be undertaken and the methods used and target groups consulted. This is in order to focus consultation and engagement on priorities and operational issues to be faced in the coming year.
5. 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 ongoing 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 is also published on the Council's website.
6. The Consultation Register incorporates the results of consultation exercises undertaken during the preceding 12 months and gives summary 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.
7. This year, for ease of use, the Consultation Plan and Register for 2012/13 and 2013/2014 has been amalgamated and streamlined into one document, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Community Engagement and Involvement

8. The Council carries out a wide range of community engagement and involvement activity. There were over 29 surveys carried out in 2012/13 and a further seven are planned so far for 2013/14. A total of 10 statutory and 26 discretionary surveys were/will be carried out.
9. Amongst the larger recent and current surveys carried out by the Council are the *Local Development Framework Core Strategy Issues and Options*, the *STAR Tenant Satisfaction Survey* and the *Local Council Tax Support Policy* carried out by Essex County Council working with Epping Forest District Council. Smaller consultation exercises were targeted at specific groups and projects such as *The Museum at the Core Project* and *Gambling Licensing Consultation*. A further district-wide *Waste and Recycling Survey* and *Community Safety Survey* are being planned for the summer

and autumn plus continuing consultation on the *Annual Tenants Survey*. Thirteen of these surveys had an interactive/online element within the consultation.

10. A list of these surveys can be seen in Appendix 1 and can also be found on the Council's website along with the start and finish dates and reports on their findings, where possible.

Internal Consultation

11. Human Resources, in the last year carried out a *Confidential Employee* survey, a *Chief Executive Recruitment* survey and an *ILM Courses for Managers* survey. Although these are not public engagement surveys, they are service specific and help to plan and improve services and inform Human Resource Management of trends in opinion.

Cost

12. All consultation has a cost whether in officer time, postage or information materials. Most consultation was carried out in-house and costs were kept low and within current budgets and account for postage materials only.

The larger consultations such as *the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Issues and Options*, *Draft Statement of Community Involvement*, *Sustainable Appraisal of Community Choices* and ongoing *St John's Road Development* were being partly supported by external consultants.

The total cost of consultation for the surveys registered was £ £117,700+.

Consultation Web Hub

16. In order to achieve the aims of transparency and reaching the wider community, a Consultation Web Hub is being developed on the Council's website. A Consultation Web Hub is a place where people can see every consultation being run by the Council. Stakeholders and users can get involved and sign up for the surveys that interest them and view the results and outcomes of past consultation. The site gives a brief description of the questions that were asked in the survey, the main response and what will be done with the results and the outcomes.

Resource Implications: £100,000

Budget/Personnel/Land: None

Council Plan Reference: Corporate Plan Medium Term Aims MT03 2011/12 to 2014/15

Relevant Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1999 (Best Value), Section 3, amended by s137 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Background papers: Public Consultation Policy and Strategy

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

Key Decision Reference: (if required) None

Epping Forest District Council Public Consultation Plan 2013 to 2014

Register Ref	Subject Matter/Issues or Title	Start and Finish Dates	Who Commissioned Survey	Overview/Objectives and How were/will the results be used?	Method and Target Group/s	Key Results and where will the results can/will be viewed?
1011/SK	Local Development Framework Core Strategy Issues and Options (Statutory)	October to December 2011 Carried out in July to October 2012.	Local Development Cabinet Committee	To inform the next stages of consultation on the Core Strategy. Carried out in July to October 2012.	A postal questionnaire, focus groups, online questionnaire, workshops etc to all residents, local businesses, statutory consultees, Councillors, local interest groups etc. The cost was part of the Community Involvement and Sustainable Appraisal, Issues and Options surveys totalling £77902.	To go to Cabinet 10 July 2013
0312/JT	Customer Satisfaction with Benefits Division	February to April 2012	Director of Finance and ICT	To inform satisfaction levels of Benefit service delivery.	1000 Postal questionnaires sent with annual notification letters. Only costs were the printing of 1000 short questionnaires.	99 benefit claimants responded, the majority of whom were satisfied with the Benefits Service and no major areas for improvement were identified.
0312/CS	STAR Tenant Satisfaction Survey	March to July 2012	Director of Housing	A customer satisfaction survey of council tenants living in general needs accommodation and sheltered housing. Conducted according to STAR methodology used nationally to compare social housing providers.	A random sample of tenants was invited to take part in a postal survey by an independent market research company. £8000.	Over 1,000 tenants responded. 88% satisfied with the overall service provided, 90% with repair work, 89% with quality of the home, 88% with the neighbourhood as a place to live, 84% with rent charged, 83% with tenant communications. Report available from the Housing Information Team.
0312/DP	Grove Court Hall Refurbishment	March to April 2012	Director of Housing	We wanted to ensure that residents of Grove Court were happy with the proposed works of an accessible kitchen and toilet. Fully automatic entry door and a scheme manager's office were incorporated into the design.	Residents meeting were arranged with Council staff including the scheme manager and architect responsible. Cost was staff time only.	Residents decided they wanted to keep the colour scheme and incorporate all the design features.
0211/BC	Being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) in the Epping Forest District	2012	Corporate Equality Working Group	To inform the Single Equality Strategy and identify equality objectives and assess local situation.	Postal questionnaire undertaken by Essex County Council. The experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender who live, work, socialise or study in the Epping Forest District Cost - £1300	CEWG in May 2013 79% happy with the district as a place to live, work or socialise; 56% agree people from different backgrounds got on well together; in general people are tolerant to LGBT people but a minority are intolerant. No visible LGBT infrastructure or amenities, a third indicated they were isolated, 20% reported problems finding LGBT information.

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0412/PG	Epping Forest District Safer Communities Crime and Disorder Survey 2012 (Statutory)	April to October 2012	Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership	To inform our Strategic Assessment of perceptions of crime and disorder in the District.	To reach as wide a group as possible in the community including Youth Groups Community Groups members of public through the website, via questionnaires and online participation. £500	As a result, we identified the strategic priorities for the district as: Domestic abuse, dwelling burglary, theft from motor vehicles and anti-social behaviour. These issues will be tackled by the Safer Communities Partnership during 2013-14 and guide the multi-agency partnership plan for crime and disorder reduction which the partners will each contribute to.
0512/KT	Gambling Licensing (Statutory)	May to August 2012	Licensing Committee	It is a statutory requirement under the Gambling Act to consult on changes. The information is governed by legislation and will be used to monitor opinion on the policy.	Gambling & Betting offices, Police, Gambling Commission, Councillors, faith groups, solicitors, fire service via email and postal. Cost for postage and email only.	Full Licensing Committee October 2012
0512/CO	St John's Road Development	March to April 2012	Director of Corporate Support and Legal Services/Estates	To seek public opinion on development of the St John's area of Epping and contribute towards a design brief.	Residents, businesses, people coming to the area to work, visitors and local interest groups. Using consultants 'Urban Practitioners'. £13,160 approx.	Provision of improved sport and leisure facilities in the town centre is the stand-out issue with 535 of all respondents ticking this option; Protection of historic buildings and respect for historic scale were the next two most selected issues with 401 and 382 votes respectively; Provision of space for adult education received a surprisingly high response of 315 votes.
0612/PB	Car Park Fees Survey 2012	June to July 2012	Director of Environment and Street Scene	To seek car park users views and experiences about the 18 different long and short term Council car parks, how well they are maintained, if there are enough parking places and parking fees etc.	Online and face-to-face interview survey. £3,404.	Preliminary findings revealed that the previous findings of Price Waterhouse Coopers on car park charging were supported by the current survey; that responses from the "face to face" survey of car park users were considerably more positive than responses received via the Internet although the latter were not negative as such; the levels of satisfaction with car parking charges etc, would be a key consideration in Members' review of Saturday car parking charges. Conduct a

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						further analysis on the 19% of respondents who considered parking charges too high at present, if possible.
0612/JM	Princefield Playground Area Upgrade (Waltham Abbey)	June 2012	Director of Housing	Planned improvements to existing play area in Princefield	Interested residents were invited to form focus/project groups to determine opinion on a upgrade to the local playground. Cost under £100	Currently no objection. Work will commence during January/February 2013 and was completed within two weeks.
0712/RG	Introduction of Dog Control Orders (Statutory)	July to August 2012	Cabinet	To consult on the proposed dog control orders to see if they are necessary and proportionate before Members consider introducing them.	On the council's website and letters to residents of the district, all dog owners and non dog owners. Town and Parish Councils and Essex County Council, Corporation of London, Lee Valley Regional Park etc. Cost a notice in local paper twice, approx. £1000, but this came out of existing budgets.	Majority in favour of introducing Dog Control Orders - Cabinet 23 April 2012 rept C-073-2011/2012
0712/JT	Local Council Tax Support Policy 2013/14 (Statutory)	August to September 2012	Assistant Director of Finance and ICT - Benefits, Essex County Council	To inform strategy to finalise scheme.	Interested residents of the District were invited to comment on the new Local Council Tax Support scheme that has replaced Council Tax Benefit. A cut in funding for LCTS meant that views were sought on whether the council should make up the shortfall or whether benefit claimants would have to pay some/more Council Tax. If benefit claimants were to receive less support, views were sought as to the fairest way to achieve this. Cost approx. £600	On-line Committee Report Cabinet (October) and Council (December)
0712/TO	The Museum at the Core project	July to October 2012	Assistant Director Community Relations and Customer Services (DCE)	How individuals and groups would make use of an increased offer to explore the collections held at the Epping Forest District Museum with	The appointment of an audience development consultant and consultation costs (£8000) of which £7000 is external funding through a project development	The Museum has submitted a stage 1 bid to the HLF to support a major development programme. If we are successful consultation will form a key element in developing the bid for a stage 2

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				enhanced display and educational resources. How individuals and groups can access and become more involved in supporting the work of the museum through volunteering, taking part in focus groups and support through groups such as Friends of the Museum. The results will form a document to be used internally and to support funding applications to major grant givers.	directed at families, education providers, local history groups, disability awareness groups, young people, other stakeholders. Holding focus groups and questionnaires.	submission.
0712/IW	Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (Statutory)	July to October 2012	Director of Planning (Statutory requirement)	The Forward Planning team is consulting on a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This document sets out how we will engage with the public and interested parties in all planning related matters, including planning policy, planning applications and appeals..	Consultation events were held in 2012, alongside consultation on the Community Choices (Issues and Options for the Local Plan and the Interim Sustainability appraisal. The cost was part of the Community Involvement and Sustainable Appraisal and Issues and Options surveys totalling £77902.	The draft SCI and the responses to the consultation were discussed by Councillors at the Local Plan Cabinet Committee on 18 February 2013, and it was recommended that the revised SCI should be reported to Council in April for approval. The Council meeting of 23 April 2013 resolved that the SCI, including the revised Local Plan Communications Strategy, be approved on the understanding it represents the minimum level of actions the Council will take to encourage community involvement in the Local Plan process.
0712/RW	Homelessness Strategy 2012/13 to 2014/15	July to September 2012	Director of Housing	Consultation on the councils Homelessness Strategy 2012/13 to 2014/15, to assist in deciding in final version of Homelessness Strategy	By post. The main stakeholders. Social Services, Probation service, CAB, and other interested parties at a cost of £50.	Information on the Rough Sleeper helpline included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be clearer that the Council has a proactive approach to Homelessness meeting its statutory obligations. 2. Reference to be made to the furniture re-cycling project. 3. Be clearer about how the Council alerts Social Care when dealing with families with dependent children where they are being required to leave their

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						accommodation. Housing Portfolio Holder report 8/10/12 sets out the responses to the consultation exercise on the <u>Homelessness Strategy</u> .
0712/AT	Sustainability Appraisal of Community Choices (Statutory)	July to October 2012	Director of Planning	The Interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA looks at how potential new policies/decisions may impact on the environment, the economy and society).	All those who live in, work in, or visit the area. Part of other surveys, The cost was part of the Community Involvement and Sustainable Appraisal and Issues and Options surveys totalling £77902.	Local Plan Cabinet Committee 18 February 2013. To go to Cabinet on 10 June 2013.
0812/RW	Tree Regeneration Survey at Takely Close, Newteswell Drive, Pasfield and Parvills	August 2012	Director of Housing	The survey was conducted to gain opinion on improvements to the area, in reducing the number of trees at the back of properties, replacing by replanting trees that do not grow too wide or high.	All local residents contacted by post and pre-paid envelope enclosed for return. £100	No objections were received and 15 to 20 will be felled within 2013. There will be a replanting of new trees which do not grow too high or too wide.
0912/FF	Inclusion Forum	September 2012	The Office of the Deputy Chief Executive	The form was developed for parents to give their opinion on current and future leisure activities being run by EFDC for young people with disabilities. As well as the possibility to give their opinion on the inclusion project.	Venue hire (Loughton Methodist Church) £45	All parents were happy with current provision and the way the project is developing. Meeting minutes available from Olivia Worsfold Disability Inclusion Officer.
0912/DB	Epping Forest District Bus Survey (Youth Council)	September to December 2012	The Office of the Deputy Chief Executive Community Development	Five Secondary Schools (771 pupils) took part in a Customer Satisfaction Survey with Bus Services. In order to investigate the local bus services and explore the issues and concerns that young people have raised.	Suggestion boxes were available at each school for young people aged 13 to 18. Cost - office time only.	Young people said they were not happy with the existing services, buses were often late, dirty and drivers were often rude and discourteous. Results were sent to Essex County Council, Transport Services, Transport for London, Museum of Transport, MP Mrs Laing. Go to for results www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk
1012/JH	Health Summit	12 October 2012	The Office of the Chief Executive	A major conference of stakeholders to review current changes in health care systems and suggest ways of jointly supporting these. To find better communication, clarity about that does what,	Conference of local Groups /providers/ commissioners of health related services. £1000 funded by Age UK	New Health and Well Being Strategy for Epping Forest and West Essex being drafted. Expanded Health Group in place. Report available from James Warwick

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				increased local influence on commission local coordinating committee, more use of local groups to supply services, lobbying more for resources for Epping Forest.		
1012/PM	Chief Executive Recruitment Process (Members and Recruits).	October 2012	Director or Corporate Support Services (Human Resources)	To review the Chief Executive recruitment process. The results were reported to Senior Management Recruitment Task and Finish Panel.	No cost. Target groups were candidates, Members of the Appointment Panel, Recruitment Consultants (Gatenby Sanderson).	The results were reported to Senior Management Recruitment Task and Finish Panel.
1012/DM	Romeland Estate Refuse Proposal	October 2012	Director of Housing	To find out resident's views on building four communal bin areas for refuse and recycling on the Romeland Estate in Waltham Abbey.	Letters included a reply slip and self addressed envelope for residents. £100.	Residents were all in favour and works went ahead in early April 2013.
1112/DB	Stonards Hill Skate Park	November to December 2012	The Office of the Deputy Chief Executive Community Development	Young people using the Stonards Hill Skate Park and pupils at the local secondary school in Epping were asked to rate the skate park, the problems they have experienced and improvements they would like to see. Local young people have said previously the park is unsafe and attracts anti-social behaviour due to the fact there is no lighting.	Suggestion boxes were available in secondary schools for pupils to comment. Cost office time only.	The results were presented to the Epping Forest Youth Council meeting and the Town Council has suggested to hold focus groups with the pupils of St Johns School.
1212/IW	Travelling Community Accommodation Needs Survey (Statutory)	December 2012 to January 2013	Director of Planning and Economic Development	A DVD was sent to the Travelling Community asking for a response to their accommodation needs there was a total of five responses which was too low to give a meaningful result.	DVD £100 made by Public Relations.	Members are aware of the volume of responses.
1212/TH	Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy Review	December 2012 to March	Director of Housing	The Council's Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy were	Town and Parish Councils, registered providers of social housing home seekers and	Cabinet 15 April 2013. All references to Flexible Tenancies should be amended to Flexible (fixed-term)

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		2013		considered by the Cabinet in April 2013. The new policies will set accommodation and the types of tenancies granted.	potential home seekers. Tenants and Leaseholders Federation. Partner agencies with an interest in allocation of accommodation contacted by post. Postage £50.	Tenancies to make it clearer in both documents. Tenancy policy to make it clear that where an Introductory Tenancy period is extended by a further 6 months that the fixed-term is 8 1/2 years.
0113/VW	Action on Tourism Workshop/ Working together to develop Epping Forest district's visitor economy	31 Jan 2013	The Office of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning and Economic Development	Workshop attended by just under 100 tourism providers and other stakeholders. Its purpose two-fold - to get operator input – what opportunities do they think there are to grow the tourism and visitor economy locally? What are the barriers to realising the area's potential? Secondly to provide them with the opportunity to promote themselves to other tourism operators locally to benefit their bottom line and broader local economy.	New Tourism website, joint exhibitions at fairs, Tourism Development Plan being developed. The network of local tourism operators to be established and recommendation put forward that the existing Tourism development Task and Finish Group concludes and that a new permanent tourism development working established to take work forward. Cost of workshop circa £700 with much support in-kind from local tourism provider partner.	Report produced following workshop and distributed to all attendees (contact Vicki Willis for copy). Reports to be presented to LSP Board and EFDC Cabinet in Summer 2013.
0213/JH	One Epping Forest Annual Stakeholder Conference	February 2013	Local Strategic Partnership Manager	This year focused on meeting the needs of young people. To review current multi-agency performance and develop improvements.	Conference inviting over 100 Stakeholder Groups £1,600 paid to VAEF for organising the event, food coffee, consumables etc.	Big priority addressing worklessness, interagency working and pressure on resources. Outcomes were fed into each theme group of Local Strategic Partnership and New Youth Employment Taskforce. New Youth Charter to be launched and New Youth Employment Taskforce to be established.
0213/PM	Confidential Employee Survey 2012	February 2013	Director or Corporate Support Services (Human Resources)	To take the temperature of the organisation on an annual basis.	No cost	Report in District Lines for all employees in May/June. To Management Board in June 2013. To JCC in July 2013.
0313/DP	Befriending Scheme Jubilee Court	March 2013	Director of Housing	The VAEF have secured lottery funding to extend their befriending scheme for meeting and socialising and would like to hold regular meetings at Jubilee Court every Friday from 1pm to 3pm	A meeting was held in the residents communal lounge to seek their consent.	Awaiting the results

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Planned	Subject Matter/Issues or Title	Estimated Start and Finish Dates	Who is commissioning Survey	Overview/Objectives and How were/will the results be used?	Method and Target Group/s	Where will the results be viewed?
April 2013	Off Street Parking schemes approved by the Cabinet to proceed to feasibility stage.	April to May 2013	Director of Housing	To obtain local support for the design and layout of off-street parking schemes that affects them.	Postal survey to local residents and Ward Councillors affected by the schemes.	The results will be incorporated in a future Cabinet report, where a decision to proceed will be made.
May 2013	ILM Courses for Managers	May to June 2013	Director or Corporate Support Services (Human Resources)	To develop new ILM courses for EFDC staff, starting in 2013.	Electronic short survey to all staff who have participated in the programmes over the last 3 years. Cost = staff time to develop survey and staff time to complete survey.	Management Board & JCC.
May 2013	Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Neighbourhood Plan Area Consultation (Statutory)	May to June 2013	Director of Planning and Economic Development (Forward Planning)	The Parish Council have submitted a proposal to create a Neighbourhood Plan. Epping Forest District Council has a legal obligation to publicly consult o the geographical area proposed to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.	Comments can be submitted in writing to the Forward Planning team or by email.	Report available 15 July 2013 at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning .
June 2013	Provision of trade and commercial waste and recycling collection services	June 2013	Director of Environment and Street Scene	The council is preparing to tender its waste and recycling services and wants to know if there would be a demand to provide trade and commercial waste and recycling services to businesses in the district.	Online and postal to businesses in the district.	Report available in September 2013.

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July 2013	Epping Forest Youth Conference	5 July 2013	The Office of the Deputy Chief Executive (Community Development)	In order to meet the demands of The Youth Council Manifesto point 1. To consult young people about what are their likes and dislikes about the district and what are the main issues facing young people.	The consultation will be open to pupils from Epping Forest District secondary schools, year nine and ten pupils.	Report available in August 2013.
July 2013	Public perceptions on the levels of crime and disorder and satisfaction with public bodies. (Statutory)	July to September-2013	Director of Environment and Street Scene (Safer Communities)	To incorporate public responses in the priority selection matrix of the annual partnership strategic assessment	Online, focus groups, town/parish councils, hard copy at help desks, VAEF contacts with elderly, community development contacts with youth.	The Strategic Assessment will be circulated amongst the Partnership.
July 2013	Council House building programme at sites approved by the Cabinet Committee to proceed to detailed feasibility stage.	July to August 2013	Director of Housing	To inform local residents and Ward Members about development of new affordable Council housing on Council-owned land. The results will be used to assist with decisions such as design, layout and rights of access.	Postal survey to local residents and Ward Councillors affected by the schemes. Ward Members will be invited to attend the Cabinet Committee where schemes in their Ward will be discussed.	The results will be incorporated in a future Cabinet Committee reports and minutes, where a decision to proceed will be made.