

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

16 APRIL 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

PRIORITIES CONSULTATION RESULTS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Further to Minute P25/13 of 7 October 2013 set out below, this report provides initial feedback from the consultation exercise at Appendix A.

'Consultation with the Public on Corporate Priorities and Budget Setting 2013/15 and beyond

RESOLVED *That the proposals should follow the outline given by the Chair: the website should always be used, that flyers or the Melton Mail should be used where convenient, practical and justified, and that other methods used when convenient and timely.'*

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the consultation results be used to inform the more wider consultation on the priorities planned for 2014/15.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 As requested by the Committee a consultation exercise has been carried out on the Council's priorities at the same time as consulting on the Council's consultation arrangements. Due to these two areas of the Council's work being related in that to find out what people's views were of the Council's priorities, a consultation process was needed, it was considered appropriate to bring the two matters together for an online public consultation exercise. It was felt that each issue would help the other in terms of interest and responses and there were also economies in promoting the survey, the public's time and effort as well as staff time in bringing the two subjects together. Therefore the survey was constructed in 3 parts as follows :-

- Section 1 – Tell us what is most important to you (priorities)
- Section 2 – Making your views count (consultation strategy)
- Section 3 – About you (information requested about the consultee)

- 3.2 The results on the consultation arrangements of the exercise were reported to the Governance Committee at its meeting held on 2 April 2014.
- 3.3 Section 1 of the survey focused on the Council's 10 priorities and gave a brief summary of each whilst asking that the participant numbered each priority in their preferred order of what is most important to them by allocating a number between 1 and 10, 1 being of the highest importance. The results are available at Appendix A.

- 3.4 The online survey shown at Appendix A (Annex 2) was launched on 23 December 2014 and closed on 14 March 2014. It was promised that the results of the survey were to be made available on the Council's website by 25 April 2014 along with a report back on what was said and how this information was used. Hard copies of the questionnaire were available upon request.
- 3.5 To promote the survey, a Press Release was sent out on 23 December 2013 and an article appeared in the Melton Times on 2 January 2014. The Melton Times published another article on 23 January 2014.
- 3.6 A5 flyers were produced as shown Appendix A (Annex 1) and circulated to our regular user groups and Parish Councils for the village noticeboards. The flyers were available in Parkside Reception, at the library and at the Children's Centres as well as handed out at Tenant Residents' meetings. Also articles were included in the Corporate Messenger and Members' Bulletin to promote the survey to Members and staff so that they could encourage customers/electorate to take part.
- 3.7 It was recognised that ongoing promotion was needed to keep the survey in the public eye and Councillors helped by promoting the survey to shoppers at their Surgery Market Stall held on Saturday 25 January 2014 and mainly handed out hard copies of the survey for people to complete and return at their leisure. The survey was given a high profile on the front page of the Council's website and regular tweets were sent out
- 3.8 There was a link to background documents available on the survey webpage so that consultees could understand what was being consulted on and find out more about the Council's consultation arrangements (Appendix A – Annex 3).
- 3.9 Section 3 of the survey asked for basic information about the respondent ie. whether male or female, age range and postcode. This was considered the minimum standard of what the Council needs to know to provide a benchmark to help inform future consultations as to who is responding and how this level of response can be improved.
- 3.10 The consultation attracted 54 responses to the online survey and there were no hard copies of the survey returned. The survey results are set out at Appendix 1.
- 3.11 An update on the survey results was provided to the Budget Away Day held on 16 January 2014 as well as reported to the Full Council at its meeting on 5 February 2014 when the budget for 2014/15 was considered.
- 3.12 The results are designed to assist Members in determining priorities and allocating budgets and resources against priorities in 2014/15 and beyond. The Council will also be undertaking a wider and more in-depth consultation exercise on the Council's priorities in 2014/15 which will involve focus groups and community events.
- 3.13 The results show that the public attach a higher rating to supporting people and businesses through the economic downturn, reducing crime, encouraging people to take an active role in their communities and meeting the economic needs of the Borough. There appears to be less emphasis placed on maximising the potential of the town centre, providing housing stock and supporting the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. The lowest scored priority is providing high performing services

that are efficient and meet customer needs. This may be as people consider this as a 'given' for a Council to provide services to a certain standard.

From the 30 individual comments received there were 11 that related specifically to the beauty of the rural areas around the Borough and included their concern about wind turbines in the open countryside. There were also 4 separate comments that made reference to the lack of priority given to the infrastructure and facilities in the rural areas within the Borough such as the cost of living out of town, transport links, recreation areas, internet speed, preserving the countryside and working with Parish Councils. Due to these comments and the interest shown in rural matters, whilst this is not currently a Council priority, it is an area that the Council may wish to consider as such in the future. These comments will be considered further within the wider public consultation on the Council's priorities.

3.14 Of the other comments received, there were suggestions for reducing expenditure on Councillor allowances, staff being paid on a performance related basis, removing superfluous quangos, ensuring confidence to go out in the evening without the fear of criminal activity, ensuring equality and diversity and Human Rights in all activities, challenging those on benefits and helping them to get jobs, improving online services which will help the vulnerable to have better access to services, working to improve the economy by using Sainsbury's as a model, increasing the recovery rate of those in rent and Council Tax arrears. These comments will be considered further within the wider public consultation on the Council's priorities.

3.15 Following circulation of the survey web-link to our existing network of groups, Voluntary Action Leicestershire invited the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods to speak on the Council's priorities and update on the consultation at their local meeting held on 14 March 2014. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods gave a presentation on the current position of the priorities and updated the group on the forthcoming wider consultation due to take place in 2014/15. Following this meeting, Voluntary Action Leicestershire has provided some positive feedback specifically on Mr. Rai's presentation which is as follows :-

*'Following today's update do you have a better understanding of Melton Borough Council Priorities, Goals and Promises 2011-2015?
89% said Yes (11% said not sure)'*

3.16 The information collected is valuable to the Council however the overall response being only 54 individuals out of the total population of the Borough is at a low level. Therefore it is anticipated that the wider public consultation due to take place later in the year, will help to reinforce or otherwise the responses received.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 To consult on the Council's priorities is an important part of being 'A Well Run Council' in listening to what people say and using that information to tailor services around budgets and customer needs which in turn helps to achieve customer satisfaction.

4.2 By carrying out a consultation exercise on the Council's priorities, the Council has followed through on its intentions to listen and involve people in matters that affect them and to help make more publicly informed decisions.

4.3 The Council has comprehensive plans to refresh the Council's Corporate Plan that

will include further targeted Consultation and evidence to include:

- Residents Groups
- Survey leaflets
- Stakeholder involvement
- Partner Evidence
- National and Sub-regional Priorities

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial and resource implications will mainly be met by in-house arrangements.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 There are no overarching pieces of legislation on how local government should consult especially since the 'Duty to Involve' was repealed with the introduction of the Localism Act however there are various duties contained in specific pieces of legislation. Case law helps to inform the duties of consultation and the Gunning Principles (from 1985 case law) are used as a measure to assess whether a consultation exercise has been followed fairly and these principles explain a staged approach to consultation.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 It is noted from the survey results that there is continued importance placed on community safety issues.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment on the Council's new Consultation Strategy has been completed. From the assessment, it is recognised that information on participation of those with protected characteristics in consultation is not consistently collected in the Council's consultations and therefore the Council cannot be certain that it is reaching these people when it consults. To address this, it is proposed that Equalities Monitoring Forms be used for all consultations as part of the strategy that was presented to the Governance Committee for approval. This will ensure that monitoring of those with protected characteristics taking part in consultation will be recorded and that information used to inform future consultations. This consultation was conducted using previous consultation guidance due to the revised arrangements, which include the new equalities monitoring form, not yet being approved by Members for consultation. Therefore of those that responded, statistics on postcode, age and gender are available and these are set out at Appendix A.

8.2 On the responses to the questions about the consultees, the summary of postcodes of respondents showed a higher response from the rural areas with 16 being from an LE13 postcode, 32 being out of the town area and 6 non-responses. The 54 responses showed a slightly higher response rate among males. The age range of respondents was higher in the over 45's and particularly in the 45-54 age range. There were no responses from the under 19 age group and the 75 and over age ranges.

9.0 RISKS

- 9.1 Lack of recognition as to when to consult can result in lost opportunities for customer feedback and involvement in Council initiatives.
- 9.2 The low response to the consultation could impact on the design of the priorities and this needs to be taken into account together with some consolidation of the views expressed sought in the wider public consultation due to take place in 2014/15.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 10.1 In accordance with the Council's commitment to meet green targets and engage with customers through the website, the strategy refers to electronic methods of communication and consultation where appropriate.

11.0 CONSULTATION

- 11.1 A consultation was held on the Council's priorities from 23 December 2013 to 14 March 2014. An online survey was available on the Council's website during this period and this was promoted in the local media as well as through our user groups and Parish Councils network. The results of the consultation are available at Appendix A.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

- 12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officer	Sarah Evans, Senior Democracy Officer
Date:	March 2014
Appendices : Background Papers:	Appendix A – Consultation Feedback
Reference :	X : Cttee Council & Sub Cttees/PFA/2013-14/160414

Have your say and help us get on the right track ...

Consultation Results

In the priorities section of the survey, respondents are asked to rate each priority giving each one a score of 1-10, 1 being of the highest importance and 10 being the lowest.

From the survey results, the table below shows the priorities in order of importance, 1 being the most important. The third column shows the average score given by participants for each priority, the lowest score being the highest importance.

Rating	Priority	Average rating score given by respondents**
1	Support people and businesses through the economic downturn	5.30
2	Reduce re-offending and the impact of offending on the community	5.37
3	Encourage people to take an active role in their communities	5.56
4	Meet the economic needs of the Borough	5.87
5	Increasing public confidence & pride in neighbourhoods	6.02
*6	Maximise the potential of Melton Mowbray Town centre	6.15
*6	Help provide a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community	6.15
8	Improve quality of life for people living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods	6.17
9	Improving the well-being of vulnerable people	6.52
10	To provide high performing services that are efficient and meet customers' needs	7.15

*These priorities have the same score

**The lowest score = the most important priority

The survey also asked the following question (in bold).

‘...tell us anything else you would like us to know when considering the Council’s priorities’

There were 30 comments received from individuals and the Council is currently considering these comments. A summary of the responses is included within the report.

The following formed Section 3 of the survey and were concerned with the consultee.

The summary of postcodes of respondents below show a higher response from the rural areas with 16 being from an LE13 postcode, 32 being out of the town area and 6 non-responses

LE13	16
LE14	23
LE	3
NG	6
Non-responses	6

The 54 responses distributed between male and female as follows with more males responding than females :-

Male	28
Female	21
Non-responses	5

The age range of respondees (shown below) is higher in the over 45’s and particularly in the 45-54 age range. There are no responses from the under 19 age group and the 75 and over age range.

Under 19	0
19-24	2
25-35	7
35-45	6
45-54	13
55-64	10
65-74	12
75 & over	0
Prefer not to say	2

A5 promotional flyer :-

Have your say... and help us get on the right track...

Over the coming months, Melton Borough Council wants to be sure that it is meeting the needs of the people it serves and making the best use of its budgets and staff.

These are difficult times for everyone and this means it is even more important that as we move forward we deliver the services people need within the budgets available. Therefore we would like your views on what the Council does and how it spends its money.

At the same time, the Council is asking for your views on the way it consults people.

The Council is putting together some new arrangements and would like to know what you think of these and whether they will work for you. A new strategy aims to ensure that the public opinion is asked for whenever the Council changes its services and way of working. Your opinions will be used to improve the way the Council works and helps Councillors with making decisions. This is valuable information for the Council as it helps to make a future which we all have a part in creating.

Go online today to tell us what is important to you!

www.melton.gov.uk/priorities
 Closing date 14 March 2014







Melton Borough Council
 Parkside, Station Approach
 Burton Street
 Melton Mowbray
 LE13 1GH

To request a paper copy
 Contact customer services on contactus@melton.gov.uk or call 01664 502502



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At the same time, the Council is asking for your views on the way it consults people.

We are currently looking at the way we consult with you and are putting together some new arrangements. We would like to know what you think of these and whether they will work for you. Our new strategy aims to ensure that public opinion is asked for whenever the Council changes its services and way of working. Your opinions will be used to improve the way the Council works and help Councillors with making decisions. This is valuable information for the Council as it helps to make a future which we all have a part in creating.

So that we can understand what you think and your needs, we ask you to answer a few questions which will help to tell us how you want to engage with the Council and what is most important to you.

How to take part

ONLINE :

Fill in the questionnaire on the Council's website at www.melton.gov.uk

BY POST TO :

Have your say - Priorities, Melton Borough Council, Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 1GH

OR HAND IN AT :

Parkside (as above) or at one of the Children's Centres at The Edge, Dalby Road or at The Cove, Sysonby Street, Melton Mowbray

If you need any help in filling in the survey, please call 01664 502502 or email contactus@melton.gov.uk

Closing date is Friday 14 March 2014

Your views will be looked at with other information and feedback from this survey and what decisions were made from it will be available on the Council's website by Friday 25 April 2014. More information on the Council's consultation intentions, priorities and services is on the Council's website.

Section 1 - Tell us what is most important to you

Melton Borough Council's 10 priorities are in the list below.

Please rate each priority in the list between 1-10 to show how important each one is to you. Each priority must have a different number. 10 = the most important and 1 = the least important

	<p>Support people and businesses through the economic downturn - helping people and businesses to work out how to look after and use their money wisely</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Improve the well-being of vulnerable people - helping mainly older and young people to live independent lives</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Reduce re-offending and the impact of offending on the community - reducing crime and making the Borough a safer place to live</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Meet the economic needs of Borough - helping businesses grow and bringing new businesses to the Borough and helping people to get qualifications and jobs</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Improve quality of life for people living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods - addressing anti-social behaviour, developing positive activities for young people and improving the look of the buildings, streets and open spaces in these areas</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Increase public confidence and pride in neighbourhoods - making a cleaner and greener place to live with good waste and recycling collections and well kept parks and open spaces</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Maximise the potential of Melton Mowbray Town Centre - promoting the town to bring more visitors into the town centre which will then help improve the shops, eating out places and businesses in the town for everyone</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Encourage people to take an active role in their communities - encouraging people to volunteer and helping them to get involved in running local services</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Help provide a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community - making sure the Council's houses are in good condition and help to get more housing that is affordable for local people</p>	<input type="text"/>
	<p>Provide high performing services that are efficient and meet customers' needs - making sure the Council is working properly and using the Council Tax money to provide services people need</p>	<input type="text"/>

Anything else to tell us about what is important to you

1. Please use this box to tell us anything else you would like us to know when considering the Council's priorities

Section 2 - Making your views count

2.	Do you want to be asked for your views on Council services, projects and issues that affect you and your life?	<input type="radio"/> Yes
		<input type="radio"/> No
		<input type="radio"/> Don't Know

3.	When the Council asks for your views, do you think they take them into account when making decisions?	<input type="radio"/> Yes
		<input type="radio"/> No
		<input type="radio"/> Don't know

4.	How would you prefer to give your views?	<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire delivered to your home
		<input type="checkbox"/> Online survey
		<input type="checkbox"/> Street survey
		<input type="checkbox"/> Public Meeting
		<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group
		<input type="checkbox"/> Social media such as Facebook, Twitter
		<input type="checkbox"/> Contact Customer Services
		<input type="checkbox"/> Contact Local Councillor
		<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please use box below)		

5.	Do you think the draft Consultation, Engagement & Involvement Strategy sets out what you need when the Council consults with you?	<input type="radio"/> Yes
		<input type="radio"/> No
		<input type="radio"/> Don't Know

6.	Please use this box to tell us anything else you would like us to know when considering the Council's consultation arrangements
<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div>	

Section 3 - About you

7.	Postcode Please provide only the first 5 digits eg. LE13 1	<input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
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8.	Are you	<input type="radio"/> Male	<input type="radio"/> Female
9.	Which age group are you in?	<input type="radio"/> Under 16	<input type="radio"/> 45 to 54
		<input type="radio"/> 16 to 18	<input type="radio"/> 55 to 64
		<input type="radio"/> 19 to 24	<input type="radio"/> 65 to 74
		<input type="radio"/> 25 to 34	<input type="radio"/> 75 & over
		<input type="radio"/> 35 to 44	<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say
Thank you for your time			

[Home Page](#) > [Council and democracy](#) > [Consultation](#) > what is important

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- [More information on Consultation arrangements](#)
- [More information on the Council's Priorities and Goals](#)

Closing Date - 14 March 2014

[Take survey](#)