

LEISURE, CULTURE AND YOUTH MATTERS REVIEW PANEL – 13 JANUARY 2009
ENVIRONMENT REVIEW PANEL – 15 JANUARY 2009
GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE – 16 JANUARY 2009
CRIME AND DISORDER REVIEW PANEL – 20 JANUARY 2009
PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION REVIEW PANEL – 21 JANUARY 2009
HOUSING REVIEW PANEL – 21 JANUARY 2009
CORPORATE OVERVIEW PANEL – 22 JANUARY 2009
STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 30 JANUARY 2009

CORPORATE CONSULTATIONS – INCLUDING CITIZENS’ PANEL AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S PANEL

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report aims to:

- Inform and remind Members of how the Citizens’ Panel and the Young People’s Panel function, their many uses and, give details of the Equalities Network;
- Inform Members of which panel and network consultations have already taken place for the year 2008/09 and which are still to be completed;
- Most importantly, ask Members if they would like to consult with the Citizens’ Panel, Young People’s Panel, and/or the Equalities Network during the year 2009/10;
- Inform Members of the next young people questionnaire due to be undertaken by secondary schools in February; and
- Update Members on the 2008/09 Place Survey.

2. THE CITIZENS’ PANEL AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE’S PANEL

2.1 The Citizens’ Panel and the Young People’s Panel are corporate tools that are used to consult with residents on issues relevant to them. They seek to contribute the views of residents into the decision making process and to inform, not only service delivery, but also the council’s aims and objectives. These two panels can be particularly useful to services when developing improvement plans, fulfilling an important part of the ‘consult’ element, by providing information to help inform decision making. These panels represent public opinion that can enhance and supplement existing information.

2.2 There are currently approximately 1086 members on the Citizens’ Panel and 122 on the Young People’s Panel. The profile of the Citizens’ Panel in terms of gender representation is very healthy. In terms of age there is the predictable lack of 18 to 34 year olds. Area comparisons show that the panel could do with more representation in the south west of the district the Barton, Bashley, Hordle and Milford area.

- 2.3 We always endeavour for the Citizens' Panel to be as representative as possible and since April 2008 have successfully recruited over 200 new members. We will be trying out some new recruiting methods in the months to come including, amongst other initiatives, writing to pre-schools in the district to attempt to recruit those younger members we require.
- 2.4 Both of the panels can be consulted using the following consultation methods - written questionnaires, telephone questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. Everyone on the panels are usually consulted, but sub groups can be established so that only those who, for example - are aged over 65, have a disability or are male - are consulted.
- 2.5 All Citizens' Panel and Young People's Panel questionnaires are also publicised on the internet for any resident to complete online. This is firstly to attract more respondents to the questionnaires but also as a recruitment tool for additional panel members.
- 2.6 Costs are allocated corporately for the use of the panels, although extensive requirements may incur a negotiated charge.
- 2.7 Partners can also use the panels; past examples include Community Safety Partnership, New Forest Primary Care Trust and the Local Strategic Partnership.

3. THE EQUALITIES NETWORK

- 3.1 The Equalities Network was formed in 2005 to gather views from individuals who fell into minority groups, and whose voices may not have been heard as clearly as others. This included people with disabilities, different ethnic backgrounds and/or religions/beliefs, and those from the lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual community.
- 3.2 The network has steadily grown and now has approximately 142 members covering all the minority areas, some of whom represent the views of groups/organisations that they belong to. There are also a number of 'gate keepers' who feed through to existing networks such as Hampshire Constabulary's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender independent advisory group and Totton College for students with learning difficulties.
- 3.3 A number of consultations have been carried out – the largest being with disabled individuals, who have been working with the Council on a three year Disability Equality Scheme and are helping to carry out actions identified. The members of the network are keen to be involved.
- 3.4 Costs for consulting the network are incorporated into the corporate budget.

4. PANEL CONSULTATIONS 2008/09

4.1 The following questionnaires have been completed from the 2008/09 programme:

Questionnaire Topic	Results Published	Citizens' Panel	Young People's Panel	Corporate Plan Link/s
Access for everyone	July '08	✓	×	1.3, 2.3, 4.4
Citizens' Panel	July '08	✓	×	1.2, 1.3
Being Active	Sept '08	✓	×	1.3, 4.2, 7.2
Health and leisure centres	Sept '08	✓	✓	1.3, 4.2, 7.1, 7.2
Local play spaces	Sept '08	✓	×	1.3, 7.2
Aiming for less waste in the district	Nov '08	✓	✓	1.3, 5.1, 7.1
Living a 'green' lifestyle	Nov '08	✓	✓	1.3, 5.2, 7.1
Strictly communications	Jan '09	✓	✓	1.3, 7.1

The results of all questionnaires are available on ForestNet.

4.2 Questionnaires to be completed are:

Questionnaire Topic	Target Date for Results	Citizens' Panel	Young People's Panel	Corporate Plan Link/s
Community safety	March '09	✓	✓	1.3, 3.1, 7.1
Health	May '09	✓	?	1.3, 4.2

5. EQUALITIES NETWORK CONSULTATIONS 2008/09

5.1 Since April 2008 the network have been involved in the following consultations:

Questionnaire Topic	Results published	Corporate Plan Link/s
Applemore wet side changing rooms		4.4, 7.2
Corporate Equality Scheme	November 2008	1.2, 4.4
Race Equality Scheme	December 2008	1.2, 4.4

5.2 Network consultations planned but not yet completed are:

Questionnaire Topic	Target Date for Results (2009)	Corporate Plan Link/s
The Equality Standard Level 3	February 2009	1.2, 4.4
Equality Impact Assessments	Ongoing	1.2, 4.4

6. PANEL AND NETWORK CONSULTATIONS PROGRAMME 2009/10

6.1 Members are asked to input into developing the Citizens' Panel, Young People's Panel and Equalities Network consultation programmes for next year. If Members would like to consult with either/both of the panels or the network they will need to consider the following:

- Which particular topic or issue would they like to ask questions on;
- Which consultation method do they see as most appropriate;
- When would they like the results by; and
- Who will be the lead contact/s when compiling the questions?

6.2 The timetable for the Citizens' Panel and Young People's Panel questionnaires is as follows:

Slot No.	Start date	Fieldwork undertaken w/c	Results published by
1	30 April 2009	25 May 2009	13 July 2009
2	25 May 2009	20 July 2009	7 September 2009
3	27 July 2009	21 September 2009	19 November 2009
4	21 September 2009	16 November 2009	18 January 2010
5	30 November 2009	1 February 2010	22 March 2010
6	1 February 2010	29 March 2010	17 May 2010

6.3 All bids to consult with the panels using written questionnaires will be considered for input into the programme, that will consist of a maximum of six questionnaires. Some questionnaires may cover more than one topic area.

6.4 Heads of Service will be given the opportunity to input into the programme proposed by Members before it is considered for agreement by the Executive Management Team (EMT) in March 2009.

6.5 The final consultation programme for the panels will always be a draft so that it remains flexible and requests can be considered at any time.

6.6 Any bids to use the Equalities Network will be dealt with separately by the equalities team.

7. YOUNG PEOPLE'S QUESTIONNAIRE THROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOLS

7.1 Secondary schools within the district have been invited to take part in a large consultation project during February 2009. At time of writing this report seven of the nine schools have agreed to take part in the exercise. This will enable to council to gain real information on how young people feel about their local play spaces and help us assess true levels of young people's fear of crime in the areas where they live. It is a shame that we will probably be unable to work with all the secondary schools but this should only inhibit the consultation slightly, but particularly when looking more closely at the results in respect of areas. The results of this consultation should be published by June 2009.

- 7.2 We will be taking this opportunity of reaching thousands of young people as a recruitment tool which will hopefully result in many more members being on the Young People's Panel.
- 7.3 Any update will be given verbally at the meeting.

8. NATIONAL PLACE SURVEY

- 8.1 Households across the New Forest have been asked for their views on living in the area in a satisfaction survey which was sent out by post on 25 September 2008. Questions ranged from topics such as refuse collection and the level of crime to more everyday concerns such as shopping, sports and voluntary activities. Residents were asked to give their opinions and satisfaction on the quality of life in their community. The Place Survey was distributed to a cross-section of 2,500 homes. The closing date for respondents was the 19 December 2008.
- 8.2 Findings from the research will be used to evaluate how services are performing and look at any improvements that could be made in the future. The results should be available sometime during Spring 2009.
- 8.3 The Place Survey was part of a nationwide programme which required all local authorities to take part. Councils from Hampshire have been working together to collate and analyse the results to save resources both cashable and non-cashable. Cashable savings have been estimated at £4,100 and non-cashable at £1,280, totaling an estimated £5,380 in savings.
- 8.4 Any update will be given verbally at the meeting.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The results gained in several of the questionnaires should assist the council in its work towards improving the environmental well being of the district, as well as its work towards crime and disorder/community safety.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Citizens' Panel and Young People's Panel questionnaires will be contained within the Citizens' Panel budget for 2009/10.
- 10.2 Any qualitative consultations will need to be funded by the relevant services.
- 10.3 Equalities Network consultation will be contained within the equalities budget.

11. CONCLUSIONS

11.1 In the past Citizens' Panel and Young People's Panel programmes have enabled the council to successfully consult with both young and adult residents in the district on a variety of topics, which has provided the council and its partners with reliable and valid information. 2009/10 will provide further opportunities for consultations to take place, not only with the panels, but also with the Equalities Network.

11.2 It is important to make use of the information gained from these consultations in order to:

- Inform the relevant decision making processes;
- Confirm that the council is taking the actions that residents want;
- Indicate what needs to be done and any improvements that need to be made; and
- Identify new directions for the council to look into.

11.3 This is an important part of the council's Performance Management System.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members:

12.1 Note the corporate consultations that have been conducted in 2008/09 and those that are still to be undertaken; and

12.2 Decide whether they would like to consult with the Young People's Panel, Citizens' Panel and/or the Equalities Network during 2009/10 - and if so when, on which particular topics/issues and who will be involved in putting the questions together.

For further information

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Background papers

Results of Citizens' Panel
questionnaires on ForestNet
Results of the Young People's
Panel questionnaires on
ForestNet
Citizens' Panel and Young People's
Protocols on ForestNet