

Report to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
Cabinet

1 Apr 2009

7 Apr 2009

Report of

Assistant Chief Executive

Title

Coventry City Council Inform, Consult & Involve Strategy 2009/10- 2011/12

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the Coventry City Council Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy 2009/10-2011/12.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 **Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee** is recommended to consider the strategy and convey their comments to the Cabinet (attached at Appendix 1)
- 2.2 **Cabinet** is recommended to consider the strategy and the comments made by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and to approve the strategy (attached at Appendix 1).

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government has published statutory guidance, which sets out how it expects best value authorities to respond to a new 'duty to involve'.
- 3.2 Government expects that the Council will be able to demonstrate that it has in place mechanisms to ensure that 'representatives of local people' are being appropriately informed, consulted or involved in services, policies or decisions that either affect or interest them. This aspect of the Council's performance will be tested by the Audit Commission through the Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- 3.3 The aim of this report is to enable the Council to demonstrate that it has such mechanisms in place. The Council has already recognised the need to improve the quality and co-ordination of its information provision and use and its consultation and involvement activities. It has set up a Corporate Research, Information and Consultation Team to help that work and which will respond to issues raised by local communities.
- 3.4 The strategy sets out six strategic objectives that will enable the Council to build upon what is already in place to improve the way that it works with representatives of local people so

that they feel more able to influence local decisions affecting their area. The strategic objectives are:

- Set and implement standards for informing, consulting and involving;
- Co-ordinate informing, consulting and involvement activities;
- Improve capacity across the City Council to undertake informing, consulting and involvement activities;
- Change our way of working to embed the standards and promote involvement
- Support and encourage local people to get involved;
- Improve access to information and findings and make better use of these to improve services and quality of life.

3.5 The strategy sets out a set of priorities for action that are necessary to achieve the objectives. A three year action plan is being developed to underpin this strategy and will be in place by the start of the municipal year 2009/10. It will be reviewed annually.

3.6 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has invited local authorities to submit, via the Local Government Association (LGA), proposals which they consider would contribute to promoting the sustainability of local communities. The deadline for the first round of submissions from local authorities is 31st July 2009. It is anticipated that the process for considering the proposals through the LGA will be lengthy and there is some concern that there is no guarantee local people would see any results from their involvement. The council's new Inform Consult and Involve Strategy is focused at improving local consultation and involvement and at this stage it is felt that It will be more helpful to invest local effort in implementing this strategy and working on improving the local mechanisms to inform, consulting and involving local people. It is therefore not proposed to submit any proposals to Government by the deadline for the first phase but to learn from the successful proposals submitted by other areas are and to consider whether to take part in future phases of this initiative.

3.7 Oversight of the strategy would be by the Cabinet Member for Policy, Leadership and Governance. Implementation of the strategy will require action from across the City Council and this would be co-ordinated and supported by the Corporate Research, Information and Consultation Team.

4 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

4.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approve the document attached at Appendix 1 as the 'Coventry City Council Inform, Consult and Involve Strategy 2009/10-2011/12'.

4.2 There are no other options proposed.

5 Other specific implications

5.1

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Best Value		✓
Children and Young People		✓

	Implications (See below)	No Implications
Climate Change & Sustainable Development		✓
Comparable Benchmark Data		✓
Corporate Parenting		✓
Crime and Disorder		✓
Equal Opportunities	✓	
Finance	✓	
Health and Safety		✓
Human Resources		✓
Human Rights Act		✓
Impact on Partner Organisations	✓	
Information and Communications Technology		✓
Legal Implications	✓	
Neighbourhood Management	✓	
Property Implications		✓
Race Equality Scheme		✓
Risk Management		✓
Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy	✓	
Trade Union Consultation		✓
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact	✓	

- 5.2 **Equal opportunities** - The strategy will promote equality of opportunity in a number of ways. It proposes a range of priorities to help ensure that informing, consulting and involvement activities are targeted and designed appropriately – i.e. at those groups of people who are affected by or interested in a decision, including those groups that are less likely to be engaged currently. It will enable the Council to monitor at a corporate level which groups of people participate in consultation and involvement activities.
- 5.3 **Finance** – The strategy will introduce better co-ordination and commissioning of work that will achieve better value for money.
- 5.4 **Impact on Partner Organisations** - The strategy will help to rationalise existing informing, consulting and involvement mechanisms and enable the Council to work more effectively with partner organisations when it is informing, consulting and involving.
- 5.5 **Legal** – The strategy will enable the City Council to demonstrate that it is adhering to the Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance, which can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongsafeprosperous>
- 5.6 **Neighbourhood Management** - The strategy will support neighbourhood management.

- 5.7 **Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy** – The strategy will support delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy Outcome 'Coventry will be a more inclusive and cohesive city and people will feel able to influence the quality of services and be involved.' It includes priorities to improve co-ordination of informing, consulting and involvement activities across Coventry Partnership partner organisations.
- 5.8 **Voluntary Sector – The Compact** - The strategy will support the City Council to work more effectively through the Local Compact.

6 Monitoring

- 6.1 Overall progress made towards implementing the strategy will be monitored six-monthly through the corporate reporting process.
- 6.2 An annual evaluation of the strategy to assess impact and whether it has strengthened the link between involvement and decision-making will be led by the Cabinet Member for Policy, Leadership and Governance.

7 Timescale and expected outcomes

- 7.1 The implementation of this strategy will be through the action plan, which defines timescales and expected outcomes.

	Yes	No
Key Decision		√
Scrutiny Consideration (if yes, which Scrutiny meeting and date)	√ Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee 1 April 2009	
Council Consideration (if yes, date of Council meeting)		√

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance

Location: Room 79, Council House

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongsafeprosperous>