Wards affected:

General

Strategy Group – 9th October 2014

Public Engagement – Scrutiny and Improvement Task Panel Report

Access and Communication Issues

1. Purpose of Report

To consider and propose a course of action in response to the Scrutiny and Improvement task panel report on the quality of public engagement undertaken by the Council.

2. Advice

That it be RECOMMENDED:	1. That further publicity be given to the People's Panel, with a view to increasing the size and diversity of its membership. 2. That signage and access for public access to Council meetings should be improved, subject to funding being available or approved. 3. That the Community Engagement Strategy shall be reviewed taking into account the ideas in the Scrutiny & Improvement Task Panel report (with the exception of broadcasting Council meetings). 4. That public participation in elections continue to be promoted.

3. Introduction

The Scrutiny and Improvement Committee decided it would be worthwhile to review the quality of public engagement undertaken by the Council. The scope for the review was approved on 3rd October 2013 and the S&I Committee approved a final set of recommendations on 8th July 2014. The task panel's report to the S&I Committee is appended.

4. Information

4.1 Task panel report

4.1.1 Introduction

The report's Introduction identifies the key policy driver for pursuing public engagement in the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance, the Council's

values reference to 'public empowerment' and the existing Community Engagement Strategy. The body of the report then considers a wide range of activities which could be classed as public engagement.

4.1.2 People's Panel

In relation to the People's Panel, the report suggests that it 'appears inadequate and unrepresentative of the population as a whole'. In terms of the size of the panel, of a 2011 population of 77,843, a Panel of 356 is 1:219 people in the District. This is a much higher ratio than used, for example, for general election opinion polls, which typically have sample sizes of around 1,000 for the UK population. The other features for which the People's Panel is faulted are given in Table 1.

Characteristic	Census 2011	People's Panel
Gender (male)	50%	59%
Disability (Day-to-Day Activities Limited a Lot / consider themselves disabled)	7%	10%
Ethnicity (White British/Irish)	94%	97%
Age (over 65)	20%	36%
Table 1: Comparison of People's Panel composition with Census 2011 data		

Thus it can be seen that there is an over-representation of all four characteristics identified by the task panel (although if the weaker category of disability from the Census is included, the Census figure rises to 15%, so the 10% 'disabled' in the People's Panel is probably about right). It would thus be preferable to see more women, younger people and those not described as "White British/Irish" in the Panel. That said, the Panel's purpose is not to provide a statistically perfect sample of views, but to provide a sounding board for the likely broad public reaction to current or proposed matters. Additionally, when responses from the Panel are considered, those coming from potentially under-represented groups are identified and checked against the overall view. If there is a material difference this is highlighted. There can, therefore, be some confidence that the People's Panel is a useful tool to help understand public views.

Nonetheless, efforts have been, and continue to be, made to increase representation on the Panel, including by inviting all those who respond to housing needs surveys to join it.

4.1.3 Consultation

The report provides a summary of recent DDC consultation activity. It then seeks to draw conclusions from the surveys conducted for the review. It must, however, be noted that 109 members of the public, 46 parish councils and 16 DDC members responded, a total of 171. As such, the task panel's caution about the results of surveys with lower numbers of responses must also apply to conclusions drawn from this survey.

The task panel raised two substantive issues. The first is that "[t]here was a generalised concern amongst survey respondents about consultations which did not communicate clearly what the Council wanted to achieve…" Subject to the

caveat above about the penetration of the survey, this is something which can be treated as a learning point to further develop presentation of surveys.

The second was concerns about whether consultation responses are fully considered. To fully explore this point would require detailed examination of a particular consultation, the responses to it and the action proposed in consequence. However, the perception may arise because other factors may require the Council to follow a particular course of action, consultation responses frequently conflict with each other (inevitably leaving some dissatisfied with the final outcome) or because consultees have addressed issues not within the scope of the consultation. (Even where consultees address matters outside the scope of a consultation, this is not necessarily fruitless. Council staff and Members are made aware of views and can take them into account when dealing with relevant matters.)

Lastly on this subject, it is apparent that some comments relate to consultation on planning applications. The Council adheres to its Statement of Community Involvement and is obliged to determine planning applications based on the planning merits of each case. There are always winners and losers, and the Council often has to deal with difficult and controversial applications, which can cause real frustration amongst consultees, and probably lies behind some of the responses from parish councils, in particular, to this survey.

4.1.4 Communications

The report provides a brief summary of the Council's communications activity. The only issue which requires comment is the reported suggestion of a monthly electronic newsletter. The code of recommended practice on local authority publicity prevents the Council from issuing a newsletter, whether in hard copy or electronically, more than four times per year. The Secretary of State now has powers to require compliance with the code. It is therefore not practical to consider moving to producing a monthly newsletter of any kind.

4.1.5 Electoral registration and participation

The task panel report notes the current situation but does not draw any conclusions or make any suggestions on this matter in the body of the report. A recommendation to conduct a publicity campaign to encourage voting is, however, made in the list of recommendations.

The Council is already promoting electoral participation on an ongoing basis via actions contained within its existing annual public awareness strategy for elections. The strategy includes an action plan for communicating objectives such as increasing awareness of electoral registration, the elections process, polling and count process. The plan is updated annually in line with the elections scheduled for that particular year (e.g. DDC, NCC, Police and Crime Commissioner, general election). It is a working document reviewed regularly at elections project meetings. Actions are also tied in with the Electoral Commission's promotional campaigns. In line with this ongoing work, the Council will be promoting electoral participation in the run up to the 2015 general and local elections.

4.1.6   Council meetings

The report notes low public attendance at Council meetings and identifies a number of factors it suggests may have a bearing. However, low public attendance at Council meetings is a national (indeed, international) phenomena. Of the factors mentioned these are either a matter for the electorate (political majority) or are probably reflective of a lack of desire to attend, since controversial Planning Committee meetings are typically well attended. Two 'particularly concerning' comments are listed which considered people with disabilities feeling excluded. However, these are individual views and do not necessarily reflect the reality of attending Council meetings, which are all conducted in locations assessable to disabled people.

4.1.7   Public events and meetings

The report notes approval for the bi-annual town and parish council meetings, and notes some other public events which have been held.

It reports comments suggesting more meetings should be held outside of the civic offices. However, these are a convenient location for meetings, and one which has already been paid for, thus avoiding incurring additional costs. Meetings are held in other locations wherever this is appropriate. For example, the Overstone, Moulton, Boughton, Bramptons and Harlestone Development Implementation Working Group is routinely held in Moulton.

4.1.8   Council building

The report suggests improving public access to the Council Chamber for meetings. Currently, the rear door (civic entrance) is held open until the time meetings start and then is closed, with access for anyone arriving late by summoning a caretaker. This is because current security arrangements would leave significant parts of the building vulnerable to unauthorised access if the door remained open. However, as the report notes, relatively minor changes appear likely to be possible to improve this situation, thus enabling the door to be left open. Options to deliver the necessary changes, as well as improved signage, are being explored.

4.1.9   Methods and outcomes

This section of the report deals with a number of matters. It comments on the use made of the Partnerships and Policy Officer and the Equalities Officer, and the Community Engagement Strategy and Toolkit. It then considers the individual public role of Members, mentions the use of the Survey Monkey web-based tool. It finishes with comments about officer capacity.

4.1.10 Report conclusions

The task panel's report concludes with a strong endorsement of the value of public engagement and encouragement for the Council to further develop in this area.

4.1.11 Co-Production

One area of public engagement the task panel did not examine is co-production. This arises when the public or customers work with a service provider, such as the Council, to jointly produce an outcome. Examples of co-production involving DDC include the 'days of action' and community clean-up events such as that held recently on Southbrook.

On a broader scale, the implementation of community-controlled management companies for new estates, as provided for in the Infrastructure and Developer Contributions SPD, is a method of enabling people to control matters which affect them to a greater degree.

4.2   Consideration of the committee's recommendations

The task panel set out nine recommendations, of which the Scrutiny & Improvement Committee endorsed, with some modifications, a consolidated set of eight. These, and responses to them, are set out in Table 2.

Recommendation	Comment
1. Conduct an annual residents' survey from 2015 in order to provide a benchmark for policy-making.	It is unclear what a residents' survey is intended to cover. The costs are also not currently budgeted for. It is therefore not proposed to take this recommendation forward at this time. (See note below)
2. Review and relaunch the Daventry District People's Panel with the objective of increasing the size, diversity & effectiveness of the panel.	The ongoing process of adding members to the People's Panel can be given additional focus, including coverage in Daventry Calling via the website and social media.
3. Introduce a public consultation on the Council's budget for 2015/2016.	The relevance of conducting a specific consultation on the budget is considered each year in line with the Local Code of Corporate Governance. At present it is considered that the best approach is to ensure that the budget reflects objectives in the Community Strategy and Corporate Strategic Plan, which have been consulted on.
4. Improve monitoring, data capture and analysis of residents' experiences of the services the Council provides.	It is unclear what this recommendation would cover, and what it would add to work already routinely undertaken (see note below). Therefore it is not proposed to take it forward.
5. Improve signage and access to the out-of-hours entrance at the rear of the Council building.	This is a sensible suggestion and ways of achieving it are being explored.
6. Assign the responsibility for effective public engagement and consultation to a specific Portfolio Holder.	Public engagement falls within the Access & Communications Portfolio.

Recommendation	Comment
7. Review the current Community Engagement Strategy and explore new ways of engagement e.g. investigating new opportunities to expand public engagement including, broadcasting meetings, demonstration project, Councillor question time, Speakers' corner, Twitter account for Scrutiny and development of a free opt-in personalised subscription platform.	The Community Engagement Strategy is due for review, and will be so in 2015. The issues suggested for exploration can be included in that process, except for broadcasting Council meetings as the Council has recently taken a decision on that matter.
8. Promote public participation in elections in a new campaign.	As noted in 4.1.5, the Council already has an extensive programme of activity to promote election participation. However, this can be further reinforced.

Table 2: S&I recommendations and responses to them

On recommendations 1 and 4, it is worth noting that the Council already strives to understand residents and customers' views of service provided. Ways of doing this include the Feedback Policy, customer surveys at the civic offices and a range of other surveys (such as of residents perceptions of environmental services, and of commercial tenants).

5. Implications

5.1 Financial – The actions proposed to be taken in response to the S&I recommendations at this time do not require the commitment of any additional financial resources. The improvements to access and signage for the Council Chamber are a possible exception to this, but it is anticipated that can be accommodated within existing budgets.

5.2 Personnel – The actions proposed to be taken in response to the S&I recommendations at this time can be accommodated within existing staff resources.

5.3 Legal/Constitutional – The Council has a power to carry out publicity for the benefit of its area and residents under, among other powers, the general power of competence provided by Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In doing so, the Council must have regard to the code of recommended practice as regards publicity issued by the Secretary of State under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986.

5.4 Environmental – Promotion of public transport should, in general, support environmental sustainability generally. It appears unlikely in this case to have any material biodiversity effects.

5.5 Policy – Promotion of public transport should contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Community Strategy themes 'health and wellbeing' priority 1c (Healthier for Longer) and 'protect and enhance our environment', and

Corporate Strategic Plan objectives 1, 2 and 3, in particular priorities E1 (Reduce energy use) and H1 (Improved access to services).

5.6 ICT – No new or modified ICT systems would be required to implement the actions proposed to be taken in response to the S&I recommendations at this time.

5.7 Crime and Disorder – The actions proposed to be taken in response to the S&I recommendations at this time do not appear likely to have any material effect on crime or disorder.

5.8 Human Rights – The actions proposed to be taken in response to the S&I recommendations at this time appear highly unlikely to impact on any of the Convention rights.

5.9 Equalities – The actions proposed to be taken in response to the S&I recommendations at this time may moderately benefit people with some protected characteristics (such as young or old age, and disability) more than others. However, this effect would be a proportionate means of achieving legitimate aims, including improving people's quality of life, promoting economic activity and inclusion and protecting the environment.

6.   Conclusions

Scrutiny and Improvement has highlighted an issue which it believes justifies additional attention from the Council. Those recommendations which are clear and capable of being implemented without undue impact on budgets or the Council's existing commitments are recommended for implementation in appropriate terms. Those recommendations not proposed for specific Council actions at this time would involve additional costs or diversion of resources from other areas of activity on current strategic priorities. In any event, the Council continues to strive to understand and learn from the experience of residents and other customers.

S P Bowers
Business Manager

Background papers:
None.

Previous minutes:
SI.22/14(a).

Contact Officer: Simon Bowers
Extension 2435

Report reference: SG.091014/4

Appendix: Task panel report

| Wards affected: |
| General |

Scrutiny & Improvement Committee – 8th July 2014

A review of the quality of public engagement undertaken by Daventry District Council

1.   Purpose of Report

This report presents the findings of a review of the quality of public engagement undertaken by DDC.

It explores the key methods of engagement; considers whether it is consistent, appropriate, inclusive and effective; and makes recommendations for future policy.

The review excluded engagement related to planning and development. It focused on the Council's engagement with residents (including through Parish and Town Councils), rather than with stakeholders.

2.   Advice

Recommendations of the Task Panel	1. Initiate an annual residents' survey from 2015 in order to provide a benchmark for policy-making
	2. Increase and diversify membership of Daventry District's People's Panel.
	3. Introduce a public consultation on the Council's budget for 2015/2016
	4. Improve monitoring, data capture and analysis of residents' experiences of Council services
	5. Investigate the value of developing a free opt-in personalised subscription platform
	6. Improve signage and access to the out-of-hours entrance at the rear of the Council building
	7. Appoint a Public Engagement Champion Councillor, and provide development sessions in public engagement for all members
	8. Explore new opportunities to expand public engagement including, broadcasting meetings, demonstration project, Councillor question time, Speakers' corner, Twitter account for Scrutiny
	9. Promote participation in elections in a new campaign

3.   Introduction

Policy background
In 2011, the DCLG replaced the Duty to Involve with Best Value Statutory Guidance. The Duty to Involve had sought to ensure that local people had greater opportunities to influence decision-making and get involved. Best Value Statutory Guidance repealed both the Duty to Involve, and the Duty to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy. The aim was to give more freedom to local councils and more protection to voluntary and community groups in the face of council funding cuts.

Daventry District Council has elected to retain a Sustainable Community Strategy. It has also adopted a Community Engagement Strategy. Our Local Code of Corporate Governance incorporates the core principle 'Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability' and our values reference 'community empowerment'.

Current context
Public engagement remains a key concern for local authorities and the communities they serve, despite the shifting political context.

This year's annual audit of political engagement (Hansard) finds that 43 per cent of the public say they would like to be at least fairly involved in decision-making locally. 21 per cent have no desire to be involved at all. 26 per cent say they feel they have some influence over local decisions.

In the 2009 Place Survey (the last time this data was available: the Place Survey was scrapped by the government in 2010), 29 per cent of residents in Daventry District said they felt they could influence decisions in their local area; 25 per cent said they would like to be more involved.

What is public engagement?
Public engagement is the active participation of the public in the decisions that affect their lives. It's much more than local people just giving feedback on proposed ideas: successful public engagement is a way of working; not something bolted on at the end of a policy-making cycle.

Public engagement has both democratic and practical advantages. Services are more effective when they are designed around the needs and priorities of local communities. Where people don't feel empowered, they are less self-reliant and the local area is less resilient. Trust in public services and confidence in democratic decision-making is dependent on people feeling that their voices have been heard.

Many local authorities are taking innovative approaches to engaging residents as part of their day-to-day business. In Harrow, the Council used a 'pop-up' living-room as part of their budget consultation, with senior officers and members travelling to key locations across the authority with their pop-up 'set' to talk to residents. At Bristol City Council councillors and officers take to the streets on Saturday mornings to promote key consultations and surveys. In Peterborough, officers worked with artists to invite residents to conduct mini-tours of their neighbourhood - visiting places in their communities that mattered to them and sharing their stories.

Examples from other local authorities include weekly Councillor Question Time; publishing blogs by the Leader; conducting consultations by mobile phone; broadcasting meetings; setting up Youth Councils.

4. Information

Daventry District Council's Community Engagement Strategy states "the Council will need to give greater thought to find new ways of working with our communities and partners so that we can better deliver our services against a backdrop of a tough economic climate and changing government agendas".

In reality, it seems that little has changed since the Strategy was introduced in 2010, though use of social media as a tool for public engagement has expanded significantly.

Since the Place Survey was scrapped by the government in 2010 there has been no district-wide measurement of residents' needs, experiences or ambitions. There is therefore no benchmark for developing policy in this area. Monitoring of users' experiences of Council services is limited (10 per cent of call-backs from the contact centre are monitored) which also makes it difficult to engage strategically.

4.1 People's Panel

The People's Panel exists to gather views on public services, on neighbourhood and local issues through postal, online and telephone surveys or face-to-face meetings.

It has just 356 members. 10 per cent describe themselves as having a disability; 41 per cent are female; 58 per cent are male; 36 per cent are over 65; and 97 per cent say they are White British/Irish.

A People's Panel of this size and make-up appears inadequate and unrepresentative of the population as a whole.

4.2 Consultations and surveys

The Council's principle means of public engagement is consultation. The Partnership and Policy Officer manages a public engagement calendar to forward-plan consultations; approximately ten per year.

The number of responses to surveys and consultations varies considerably. The highest numbers have been for Jubilee Playground development (1252 responses), the public consultation on the Enterprise Contract (216 responses), and the Community Strategy (169 responses).

Consultations and surveys are held online, paper copies made available at reception and at Daventry Library. Details of the consultation are emailed to Parish and Town Councils, the People's Panel, the Daventry and District Disability Forum, Northamptonshire Rights Council, Polish groups, Age UK, youth groups and the Gipsy Traveller Unit. There are 583 individuals and agencies on the statutory list for planning consultations; there is no other database of consultees.

The results of consultations are made available online on the 'Get Involved' section of the Council website. These are not, currently, up to date.

It is rare that requests are made for consultation documents to be in alternative formats; but these are supplied if requested (e.g. large print, other languages).

There was a generalised concern amongst survey respondents about consultations which did not communicate clearly what the Council wanted to achieve, and calls for greater clarity about aims and the impact. A standard summary template, giving the wider context for and purpose of the consultation (e.g. government policy), was requested.

Many respondents suggested that consultations did not feel genuinely open: *'as though the answer is already known and we are being asked to endorse it'*. A District Councillor commented: *"They must encourage the person reading it to want to comment".* There was a call on the Council to '*be passionate!*' Responses suggested a general appetite for more meaningful, substantial engagement. It was observed in the course of the review that many other local authorities now consult on their budget.

A number of Parish/Town Council respondents noted that the timescale for consultations sometimes did not accommodate their own meeting cycles.

A significant number of respondents were doubtful of the value of their participation in formal consultations. One member of the public described the phrase 'No change' on consultation reports as *'a real turn-off'*. A District Councillor commented: *'I am often disappointed by the prevalence of 'No change' as a DDC response".* A Parish Councillor observed: *"I have no illusions about [our] influence, but I expect constructive comments to be considered".* Another respondent thought that the views of individuals didn't seem to be valued as highly as those made by organisations. (Copy attached Appendix A)

This review highlighted the recent consultation on the Corporate Strategic Plan. A number of residents complained or sought clarification and further context during the consultation process. Responses to the consultation on the Corporate Strategic Plan were not shared publicly nor with Councillors. Public consultation took place only for two weeks and generated 113 responses, which was judged by the Business Manager to be 'a pleasingly high number for what is naturally a rather 'dry' document'. Why does the vision for the future of the District over the next three years have to be 'dry'; why should 113 responses be considered a pleasing response rate?

4.3 Communications

The Communications Team issues around 180 press releases a year, publishes 4 issues of Daventry Calling, and is on course to issue 1700 tweets/Facebook updates a year. The Council currently has 688 'likes' on Facebook; 2911 Twitter followers; and 12 subscribers to its YouTube channel. Engagement with residents through the YouTube channel is in its infancy and officers are keen to see this develop.

There is limited information on the Council website about engagement undertaken by Councillors individually in their own Wards (surgeries, ward walkabouts or other community events). Officers agreed this could be developed.

Some respondents found Daventry Calling a useful means of engaging with the Council. Others thought it limited in its role. There were several calls for a monthly newsletter which could be emailed to subscribers (with hyperlinks to surveys and consultations) and for a regular Council column in the Daventry Express.

Support for more ambitious and creative use of online resources was balanced by reminders that not every resident had access to the internet or was comfortable with social media.

4.4 Electoral registration and participation

At 97 per cent, the electoral registration rate for Daventry District is amongst the highest for local authorities in the region, where the average is 93 per cent. Anecdotal evidence suggests that areas of the District where there is greater movement of people, higher numbers in private rented accommodation, higher numbers of Eastern European residents, the electoral registration rate is lower.

The average turn-out in local elections held in 2014 was 37 per cent, very close to the national average (36 per cent). Turn-out tends to be significantly lower in areas of

deprivation: Hill ward, where above average numbers of children are living in poverty, had the second lowest turnout of all wards at 29 per cent.

4.5   Council meetings

The vast majority of Council meetings are open to the public, and members of the public are able to submit questions in advance to meetings of Full Council. In practice, very few people attend and even fewer submit questions (9 over the past 12 months).

The survey prompted a number of negative reports about Council meetings:

One respondent who had attended a number of meetings reported that they were "*stared at and made to feel uncomfortable, as if the meeting is not for the public".*

Several respondents said they felt the sizeable political majority negated proper debate. Others suggested that a general lack of diversity (age, gender, background) amongst Councillors inhibited truly inclusive public engagement.

The reasons given for not attending Council meetings included lack of awareness, the timing of meetings; the distance from home; '*nowhere to park*' and *'mobility issues'.*

There were two particularly concerning comments which reflect badly on the Council's reputation for engagement and inclusion:

"I'm profoundly deaf and wouldn't be able to follow what was going on"

"I cannot speak very well and why would they take notice of a disabled person?"

A number of people asked for meetings to be broadcast *'so we can watch decisions being made'.*

4.6   Public events and meetings

The Parish and Town Council meetings, held twice a year, are well-attended and widely valued. Some survey respondents welcomed the input of other partners (especially the police). A number of Councillors thought the meetings should focus more on what DDC itself can influence.

A number of 'Days of Action' have also been held with partners in different locations across the District. 45 people took part in the 'roadshow' of meetings to kick-off the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan.

A number of respondents suggested the Council should make more efforts to hold meetings and events outside of the Lodge Road offices: *"Consider coming to us!";* "*Come out of your ivory towers!*"

4.7   Council building

Although most Council meetings are open to the public, the out-of-hours access to the building is open only to pass-holders, and the caretaker is present to show people in only when a controversial planning meeting is scheduled. At other times members of the public have to press a button to call the Caretaker to let them in. Officers are currently investigating whether access can be limited to the ground-floor, enabling the door to be left open until meetings begin. Signage to and around this access is limited and should be improved: it is the most obvious way of signalling that the Council values public engagement, and of enabling that engagement.

4.8   Methods and outcomes

The Partnerships and Policy Officer co-ordinates public engagement across the Council. She encourages colleagues to involve her at the early stages of a consultation; where this doesn't happen her input is inevitably more limited.

Consultation drafts are shared between teams and sometimes with neighbouring authorities. This seems to happen on a fairly ad-hoc basis and could helpfully be formalised. Members of the People's Panel are not generally invited to comment on consultations in draft stage.

Both the Partnerships and Policy Officer and the Equalities Officer felt they had limited contact with Councillors when it came to public engagement. Only half of the District Councillors who responded to the survey were familiar with the Community Engagement Strategy and Toolkit. The Toolkit itself suggests that Councillors should be involved as early as possible in the development of a consultation or engagement strategy.

Councillors play an important role in linking the Council with the community. But Councillors' own approach to public engagement varies considerably: in some wards an annual surgery is held; others are held monthly; some regularly attend Parish Council meetings; some rarely. Some do ward walkabouts with Highways Officers or PCSOs; some prefer just to 'be about' and 'on call'.

A member development session on public engagement was suggested, to share experiences and practices, and discover new approaches. Some local authorities routinely provide ward profiles & GIS data for elected members; this could be a useful resource for newly elected councillors.

Survey monkey is increasingly used for consultations, including for this review. The Resources Manager referred to it as a *'routine business tool'.* It is simple, efficient and cheap. One respondent considered it looked *'rather amateur'* and proposed DDC should develop its own bespoke survey tool if it was serious about digital engagement with residents.

Other Councillors considered there was a knowledge-gap when it comes to public engagement: *'I think Officers genuinely want to engage but aren't always sure what to do with the results of the engagement'.*

Amongst the responses there was recognition of the constraints afforded by the structure of the Council and the size of the District.

5.   Implications

5.1   Financial

5.2   Personnel

5.3   Legal/Constitutional

5.4   Environmental

5.5   Policy

5.6   ICT

5.7   Crime and Disorder

5.8   Human

5.9   Equalities

6.   Conclusions

All those involved in this review appreciate that effective public engagement takes time, effort and passion. For it to have more of an impact, it must be 'embedded' more fully in the business of the Council, and sit at the heart of what the Council does. Better communication and engagement will support the core values and improve the delivery of Council's strategic objectives.

This review has identified that there is an opportunity for DDC to lead good practice in public engagement across the District, and do much more to promote the role and work of elected members, facilitate democratic debate and accountability, engender participation and engagement, and promote co-operation and partnership.

We acknowledge that not everyone wants to be engaged with (one respondent commented *'Most people don't need major engagement'*). But at the moment we don't know who does, because of the lack of any general residents' survey and the restricted make-up of the People's Panel.

The Council could do much more to make public engagement attractive. One respondent commented, *'the question should be: how can we motivate the public into engaging with the consultation process?'*. We need to be cleverer as a Council about how we incentivise involvement.

If people feel they have the information and the tools to respond, if the goals are clear, and the system responsive, and when they're asked directly, they are much more likely to engage.

<div align="right">

Councillor Wendy Randall
Councillor Abigail Campbell

</div>

7.   Appendices

Three surveys were issued via surveymonkey, one to Parish and Town Councillors, one to District Councillors and one to members of the public. The link for the latter was sent to the People's Panel and the Disability Forum, and hard copies were made available at DDC reception and in Daventry Library.

Survey to Parish and Town Councils (46 responses)
Key questions 'at a glance'. Full responses and comments in separate document.

Question		Yes	No	Don't know
1	Do you feel you are given enough time to contribute to DDC consultations?	52	48	-
2	What do you think about the number of consultations DDC invites you to take part in?	69	14	Not enough
				21
3	Do you find the consultations are easy to understand?	60	40	-
4	Do you feel the results of consultations are communicated well?	35	65	-
5	Do you find the Parish and Town Council meetings held at DDC useful?	50	18	32
6	Do you feel your contribution to consultations has an impact on Council policy?	22	78	-
7	Do you feel DDC values your opinions?	30	70	-

Survey to District Councillors (16 responses)
Key questions 'at a glance'. Full responses and comments in separate document.

Question		Yes	No	Don't know
1	Are you familiar with DDC's community engagement strategy and toolkit?	50	50	-
2	Do you feel you are given enough time to contribute to DDC consultations?	81	19	-
3	Do you find consultation documents easy to understand?	69	31	-
4	Do you feel the results of consultations are clearly communicated?	57	43	-
5	Do you feel your contribution to consultations has an impact on Council policy?	62	38	-
6	Do you feel that residents' contributions to consultations have an impact on Council policy?	53	47	-
7	Do you find the Parish and Town Council meetings at DDC useful?	73	7	20

Report reference: SG.091014/4

Survey to members of the public (109 responses).
Key questions 'at a glance'. Full responses and comments in separate document.

Question		Yes	No	Don't know
1	Have you taken part in a DDC survey/consultation in the last 2 years?	0.59	41.1	-
2	If yes, did you find the consultation document easy to understand?	86.4	13.6	-
3	If yes, do you feel the results of consultations are communicated well?	41.7	41.7	16.7
4	If yes, do you feel your contribution has an impact on Council policy?	18.3	30	51.7
5	Do you feel DDC values your opinions?	49.5	50.5	-
6	Have you attended a DDC meeting in the past 2 years?	16.5	83.5	-
7	Do you know who your District Councillor is?	64.4	35.6	-
8	Are you a member of the People's Panel?	65	35	-

Consultation Topic	Number of Responses
Community Strategy	169 Responses
Corporate Strategic Plan	113 Responses
Strategic Housing Plan	42 responses
Hidcote Way – proposed playground	58 responses
Shackleton Drive – proposed playground	188 children (Ashby Fields School) 92 other responses
Plain English (S&I Task Panel)	27 (online)
Infrastructure & Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document	43
Communications	129
Housing Needs	Various response rates received dependent on parish. All publicly available reports available on the link below. Response rates in the section 'Survey Results'. http://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living/housing/housing-needs-surveys/
Enterprise Contract	Peoples Panel - response rate 27.6% Public Consultation - 216 responses
Changes to council tax	143
Community Infrastructure Levy	tbc
Neighbourhood Area Applications	Flore – 0 West Haddon - 0 Harlestone -0 Charwelton-0 Moulton - 4 Barby & Onley-0 Creaton-1 Brixworth-1 Spratton-0 Weedon Bec – 0 Kislby – 0 Braunston - 0

	Creaton - 0 Spratton - 0
Village Design Statement	Clipston – 3 Spratton - 0
Wind Turbine Guidelines	50 responses
Jubilee Playground	Phase 1 – 400 responses (children & adults) Phase 2 – 852 responses (children)
Lease of open space to the Grange School	76 responses
Allocations Scheme	14
Affordable Housing SPD	23
Tenancy Strategy	4 (Registered Providers)
Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan – Issues Paper	45 people attended public meetings 120 written responses
Open Space Byelaws	8 responses
Environmental Health Enforcement Policy	0
Sex Establishment Licensing Policy	4

1:1 Consultations
1:1 consultations were held with:
Tony Gillet (DDC)
Roz Tidman (DDC)
Zoe White (DDC)
Ian O'Pray (DDC)
Becky Hutson (DDC)
Ciara McMillan (DDH)
We were not able to secure an appointment with Simon Bowers.