

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

MEETING: DEVELOPMENT PLAN PANEL

DATE : 18 July 2006

SUBJECT : Leeds Local Development Framework – Consultation Advisory Group

Electoral Wards Affected :
ALL

Specific Implications For :

- Ethnic Minorities
- Women
- Disabled People

Executive Function

Eligible for Call In

Not eligible for Call In (details contained in the report)

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 Progress on the Local Development Framework has highlighted both a need and an opportunity to consider ways to improve the effectiveness and transparency of consultation on Development Plan Documents (DPD's) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). With the Statement of Community Involvement at an advanced stage of preparation and with consultation activity set to increase significantly in the future, it seems appropriate and timely to set up an advisory group to assist in the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of consultation. This report seeks agreement in principle to establish an advisory group made up of a member of the Development Plans Panel (as chair), selected stakeholders and officers. It is considered that such a group would assist in adding value to the new planning system

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Consultation on the Local Development Framework to date has shown that knowledge and understanding of the new planning system is low. There is also a high level of scepticism on how consultation will be undertaken on the LDF. However, the consultation that has taken place on the Statement of Community Involvement has begun a healthy exchange of ideas and experiences between the Council and a variety of stakeholders and this has been helpful for all involved. This initial dialogue provides an opportunity to improve both the understanding and the practice of consultation and engagement techniques for the benefit of all.

2.2 It is worth noting that, one of the key objectives of the new planning system is to monitor the effectiveness of the Statement of Community Involvement. An advisory group would be a useful tool in this regard.

3. LDF Consultation Advisory Group

3.1 It is suggested that the following structure would be appropriate:

- Chair (an elected member from Development Plan Panel);
- A 'pool' of representatives of community groups and organisations;
- A representative from 'Planning Aid';
- Officers from Strategy & Policy (Planning & Economic Services).

3.2 Meetings would take place at a suitable venue, to be held quarterly dependant on the level of consultation activity and interest.

3.3 Membership would be on a voluntary basis with the opportunity to add new members as required.

4.0 The Benefits of a Consultation Advisory Group

4.1 Both the Council and stakeholders would benefit from a Consultation Advisory Group. Some of the benefits could be:

- Better understanding and publicity of the Local Development Framework;
- Improve the level of trust and understanding between the Council and stakeholders on consultation;
- An opportunity to improve evaluation methods;
- Greater transparency in consultation;
- An opportunity to learn lessons from successes and failures of previous consultation exercises;
- Improved effectiveness through best practice;
- Opportunity to develop consultation skills for officers, members and community groups/organisations;
- Opportunity to discuss and develop creative engagement techniques and to share ideas;
- Incorporation of the groups findings into the LDF Annual Monitoring Report.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1 There are no major resource implications for setting up an advisory group. However, there may be resource implications for consultation in general.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 In conclusion, it is both timely and appropriate to set up a Consultation Advisory Group to assist in effective and transparent consultation on the Local Development Framework .

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 It is recommended that members of the Development Plan Panel:

- i) Agree to setting up a LDF Consultation Advisory Group;
- ii) Nominate a member of Development Plans Panel to chair the LDF Consultation Advisory Group.