

Cabinet

4 June 2013

Report of the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee

Community Engagement Scrutiny Review Final Report – Cover Report

Summary

1. This cover report presents the final report arising from the Community Engagement Scrutiny review – see Appendix 1, and asks Cabinet to approve the recommendations arising from the review.

Background & Review Objectives

2. In September 2012, having considered a scrutiny topic submitted by Cllr Barnes on ‘Engaging the Disaffected’, the Committee agreed to undertake a scrutiny review to look at the issues affecting levels of community engagement across the city, in the following three areas:
 - i. Community Engagement
 - ii. CYC Customer Services
 - iii. Financial Inclusion
3. A Task Group was set up to scope and carry out the work on the review on behalf of the full committee, and following some initial investigation, the following review remit was agreed:

To identify ways of empowering people and improving community engagement

Objectives:

- a. To improve communications between CYC and Parish Councils
- b. To improve communications in non-Parish Council areas.

Review Recommendations

4. In May 2013, the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee considered the Task Group's draft final report, and agreed to make the following recommendations to Cabinet:
 - i. Resident Association meeting dates to be included in the Council's Corporate Calendar, in the same way that Parish Council meeting dates are.
 - ii. Corporate Calendar to include both formal and informal ward committee meeting dates
 - iii. Introduce Resident Association and Parish Council Forum pages on the CYC website, for the Council to use to disseminate information quickly and regularly e.g. to highlight consultations etc
 - iv. Adjoining Parish Councils to be informed of significant planning applications which are likely to affect their parish
 - v. Training on the importance of the relationship with Parish Councils and Residents Associations should be included in the induction programme for new Councillors.
 - vi. Ward Councillors to receive the minutes from Parish Council and Resident Association meetings, and it should be considered good practice to attend PC & RA meetings
 - vii. In regard to council consultation, more time should be given to enable Parish Councils and Residents Associations to participate, as consultation needs to go to a meeting for discussion, not just to individuals.
 - viii. The council to ensure that feedback is given to PCs and RAs on their consultation responses
 - ix. Council to notify PCs & RAs of significant changes to services e.g. Christmas recycling arrangements, green bin charges etc
 - x. All Council service providers to use Parish Council/Resident Association notice boards and newsletters more to communicate council information relevant to the area
 - xi. Council documents should be checked for jargon i.e. continued use of Plain English
 - xii. Report authors to include appendix of abbreviations in reports where appropriate - to aid ease of reading. The list can be tailored to each committee and duplicated for all reports relevant to that committee, with revisions/additions where needed
 - xiii. Improve joint working at Ward Team Meetings through the adoption of the Statement of Intent shown at paragraph 41 of the final report at Appendix 1.

- xiv. Communications & Equalities Team to identify areas of the city where no Parish Council or Resident Association currently exists and identify a private resident association or some other type of community group to disseminate council information through.

Council Plan 2011-15

5. The recommendations arising from this review supports the council's aim to build strong communities and be a city full of active and self-reliant communities, where everyone has an effective voice in local issues and where there is a strong sense of belonging.

Implications

6. **HR** – The recommendations if approved, will lead to some additional work for officers across a number of CYC Service teams, although this will not require additional resources. For example, Democratic Services will be responsible for updating the Corporate Calendar and providing appropriate induction training for new Councillors (Recommendations i, ii, v). The Communities & Equalities Team will continue to work closely with Parish Councils and Residents Associations and they will absorb much of the work arising from the remaining recommendations e.g. update of RA & RC Forum pages on CYC website etc. They will also offer support to other service teams to ensure they fulfil the requirement to provide sufficient time for those groups to participate in consultations and raise awareness of significant planning applications etc.
7. **Legal** – There are no legal implications associated with the recommendations made in this report.
8. **Financial** – The recommendations outlined in the report will place additional workload across CYC teams however this should not lead to any additional resource requirements. There are therefore no financial implications associated with the report.

Risk Management

9. Without full and proper engagement of local communities across the city, there is a risk that the services provided by the Council will not fully reflect the needs of those communities. Any improvement to ways of engaging with residents identified as a result this review will assist in mitigating that risk.

Options

10. Having considered the scrutiny final report attached, the Cabinet may choose
- i. To approve the recommendations
 - ii. Not to approve some or all of the recommendations listed above.

Recommendation

11. Taking into consideration all of the information contained within the final report attached and its annexes, the Cabinet are recommended to:
- i. Approve the recommendations arising from the review, as shown in paragraph 4 above.

Reason: To conclude the Scrutiny Review in line with CYC Scrutiny procedures and protocols

Contact Details

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Report Approved



Date

24 May 2013

Implications: Information was provided by the following Officers:

Legal – Andrew Docherty
Finance – Patrick Looker
HR – Mary Bailey

Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report

All

Background Papers:

See information contained within the final report attached

Appendices:

Appendix 1 –Final Report