
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 APRIL 2003

OSM.19/03 DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT BEST VALUE REVIEW

Further to Minute OSM.93/02, the Communications Manager attended the meeting and submitted a revised scoping report on the Democratic Engagement Best Value Review, including an Appendix detailing academic research and best practice.

Ms Taylor introduced the following members of the officer Review Team, who then presented different aspects of the report: Lynne Wilde - Research Officer, David Mitchell - Electoral Services Officer and Rhian Davies - Youth Inclusion Officer.

Members and officers then had an open workshop type of discussion when the following key areas for the Review and questions for each of these areas were agreed (*questions which were additional to those set out in the report are highlighted in italics*):

(1) Access

- (a) Why do people not attend City Council meetings and what can be done to encourage them to attend?
- (b) What do those people who do attend think of them?
- (c) How can the meetings be made more relevant to the public?
- (d) What have other authorities done to increase interaction with the public?
- (e) *Are there any legal restraints which prevent the Council from doing things differently e.g. disclosure of confidential information?*

(2) Policy

- (a) Are we fulfilling our responsibility to consult?
- (b) Are we being sufficiently imaginative in the methods of consultation we use?
- (c) Do other authorities use referenda and is this method appropriate in Carlisle?
- (d) Do those people currently consulted feel their views help to shape policy?
- (e) *Are we fulfilling the "Plain English" requirements?*
- (f) *What criteria are used for consultation?*

(3) Interaction

- (a) Do the public believe they have good access to their Councillors and how can it be improved?
- (b) Is area working of relevance?
- (c) Which are the most effective ways Councillors communicate with people?
- (d) *What are the most effective ways that the public communicate with Councillors?*

- (e) Is there a suitable mechanism to enhance the role back-benchers fulfill?
- (f) *What are the most effective ways that officers interact with the public?*

(4) Youth

- (a) How can the workings of the City Council be made more relevant to young people?
- (b) How can the views of young people be used to help shape policy?
- (c) What role can we play in the teaching of Citizenship in schools?
- (d) *How do we audit current consultation with young people e.g. do we use of partner organisations?*
- (e) *As a minor authority should we seek to formalise our arrangements with local schools?*

(5) Engagement

- (a) Which other groups are we failing to engage with?
- (b) *How do we engage with these groups?*

(6) Elections

- (a) How can we remove barriers to voting?
- (b) What have other authorities done to raise registration and turnout?
- (c) *Are we doing all we can through our relationships with other agencies to identify those who have difficulty voting?*

RESOLVED – That the scope of the Review as outlined above and further detailed in the scoping report be approved.