

CONSULTATION STRATEGY: HOUSING OPTIONS

Background

In February 2009, Waverley carried out a consultation on the three Topic Papers (Living and Working, Town and Country and Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity) as well as the draft Settlement Hierarchy, the draft Core Strategy Spatial Portrait, Issues, Objectives and Spatial Vision.

The consultation attracted a relatively low rate of response, with comments being received from 149 respondents, although a variety of consultation methods had been used. These included the provision of paper copies of the documents and questionnaires in the Locality Offices and Libraries, and electronically, using the Planning Consultation Portal on Waverley's website via Limehouse. Many local authorities now use Limehouse as an effective way of consulting on their LDFs, and once their interests are registered, consultees can ensure that they are informed of all LDF events, can read or download documents and leave comments, which are publicly available. Attention was drawn to the consultation by way of press releases and as News Items on the front page of the Council's website. There are currently 1,707 registered consultees (1,459 individuals and 248 agents).

From the comments received, it was felt that the low response rate for this consultation may have been due to the complexity and broad range of some of the subject matter, and the sheer bulk of the documents. In addition, some people found Limehouse difficult to access.

A Consultation Strategy for the Further Housing Options Consultation

The aims of the proposed consultation are:

- To engage with a wider range of the Waverley population, in terms of age, location, and people in addition to the groups, individuals and organisations who always respond
- To increase the overall level of response
- To ensure that we get enough feedback to help the Council to choose the most appropriate housing options for the Borough.

It is proposed that the consultation will also be aligned with the Council's emerging Consultation Strategy. The consultation will run for 6 weeks and the aim is to start the consultation on 11 January 2010.

It is likely that the consultation will also involve a 'call for sites' to assist in the process of updating the SHLAA. The existing SHLAA will also be available as part of the evidence base to help inform respondents. In addition, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Employment Land Review (ELR) will be available as further supporting evidence documents. Following the earlier consultation, comments on the Draft Settlement

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Hierarchy have also been taken into account and amendments made as appropriate. An amended copy of this will also be available.

Who and How?

Research shows that there are numerous consultation methods, and the method chosen needs to be appropriate for the group that it is aimed at. Time and resources (both staff and financial) are also important considerations. The ways used to attract attention to the event are as important as the methods by which people can respond, and several suggestions are proposed for how we might do this. People need to provide us with their comments, whether electronically via the Consultation Portal or on paper, but need to be interested and encouraged to do so in the first place.

Listed below are the main consultee groups and the methods proposed to attract their attention towards the consultation. All consultees already on our database will be notified of the event either by email or by letter.

General methods to be used

These are the tried and trusted methods used in all Waverley's consultations, being simple and resource effective. The emphasis will need to be on encouraging people to comment, and therefore headlines will need to be carefully considered, with assistance from the Communications Team. Not everyone has access to a computer or wishes to use one, and so different media in different formats must be provided in a variety of locations.

- Throughout the consultation, the Waverley website will have a front-page story about the consultation, which will have a link to the consultation portal. A basic stand-alone document is proposed, with a simple questionnaire, aimed at the general public. There will also be paper versions of this, at the libraries and locality offices.
- Within the basic document, there will be links to a more technical version, providing more background information for those who want it. A paper reference copy will also be available in the above locations, and copies can be provided if required. The simple questionnaire will be the same for all consultees.
- Press releases will be produced for insertion in the local newspapers.
- LDF newsletters about the consultation can be sent out to agents, Members and the WaSP, Towns and Parishes.
- To try to increase the use of the consultation Portal, we will create a simple help sheet to be available to people registering for the first time or needing to change details, and this will be emailed to everyone on the database and on our website.

Additional methods

Residents of all ages

- **Handouts.** It is proposed that a leaflet relating to the Housing Options will be given out at different locations such as local railway stations, supermarkets and events such as the Farmer's Markets across the

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borough. Supplies of these can also be left at other locations if permitted, such as local shops and post offices.

Local Members could also help by distributing these at any of the local events that they attend.

- **Exhibitions.** With handouts and copies of the documents and questionnaires, could be in the locality offices, Waverley and Planning reception areas etc, and other locations if possible. A PowerPoint slideshow could also be run in Waverley's main reception area, with screensaver messages about the consultation on the computers on planning reception.
- **Radio Interviews.** Eagle radio is a popular local station for a range of ages.
- **Emails** We will investigate whether for the duration of the consultation, emails from Planning Services could carry a footnote about the consultation.
- **Posters** for Parish and Town Councils to display in notice boards and local shops, and possibly at village halls, school notice boards. If possible and if timescales permit, use parish magazines, to alert residents to the consultation.

Infrastructure Providers

- Will be consulted via email and /or Limehouse
- Workshop/ meeting

Youth groups.

- Newsletter/handout through the Top Youth Council/ to schools/ other groups
- Facebook/ Twitter? The Leisure department has already used Facebook, and we could investigate the feasibility doing this.

Parish and Town Councils

- Emails in advance of consultation to Chairmen as well as clerks, to ensure that special meetings to respond to the consultation can be arranged if necessary. Also ensures that Chairmen are aware as well as clerks.

Businesses

- Forum meetings
- Emails/letters to business organisations such as Chambers of Commerce