

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS
TASK AND FINISH GROUP

11 April 2006

Present:

Councillor Christopher Malpas Chair
Councillor Michael Hill
Councillor Andrew Simpson

Lindsey Ambrose
Tracy Tiff

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eldred and Margaret Martin of the Consortium.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2006 were agreed.

4 Arrangements for the Focus Group Sessions and questionnaire

A discussion took place regarding the format of the Focus Group sessions that had been agreed at the previous meeting and the content of the draft questionnaire.

The Group was reminded that a proforma had been produced for circulation at the Focus Group sessions should individuals wish to discuss issues that are outside the remit of the purpose of the Focus Group. (Copy attached – Appendix A). **It was agreed that a recommendation in the Final Report would be that the proforma be adapted so that it could be used generically within the Council. It could be placed at the One Stop Shop, Libraries and distributed at Council meetings such as Planning Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Area Partnerships and Forums. It would also be suggested that the proforma is available on the Council's website. It was further suggested that it be stated on the reverse of the proforma the responsibilities of NBC and NCC. It would also be recommended that investigations take place to ascertain if it was beneficial for the proforma to be used by both NBC and NCC.**

The Group was then referred to the format of the Focus Group sessions that had been agreed at the previous meeting:-

Focus Group - Format

Copies of the poster explaining the purpose of the Focus Group sessions would be displayed in the Great Hall. A definition of consultation would be displayed on a large screen at the head of the room – **Consultation – How we find out what people (individuals and organisations) think about our Policies, Performance, Priorities etc.**

Councillor Malpas, Chair of the Public Engagement and Communications Task and Finish Group, would introduce the sessions explaining why the Group was holding the Focus Groups. **(Approximately 10-15 minutes).**

Attendees would be asked to complete the questionnaire. Tea and Coffee would be available during this period. **(Approximately 30-35 minutes including time for a short comfort break).**

Depending on numbers present and the number of facilitators, the Focus Group would be addressed as one Group or would move into smaller groups. Flip charts would be available and the facilitators would ask the group(s) for the individual's experiences of what they felt had gone well/not so well with previous Council consultations details would be documented on the flip charts. **(Approximately 40 mins)** it was noted that Geoff Wilkins, Interim Corporate Communications Manager, would be attending the Focus Session on 20th April. Thomas Hall and Kay Atkinson, Corporate Managers, would be present at both sessions. It was envisaged that Councillors from the Task and Finish Group would facilitate the small groups.

Whilst the sessions with the small groups were taking place, T Tiff and L Ambrose would gather in the questionnaires and put together details of the responses. The Chair would give brief details of the results of the questionnaires in his summing up session at the end.

There would then be a short comfort break **(10 minutes)**

The Chair would then do a summing up session, commenting that by the end of this session we realise that (giving details of the main issues that had come through in the session). He would also add that it was envisaged that this exercise would be repeated in the future using the same questionnaire as comparative data. **(Approximately 10-15 minutes)**

The Group then discussed the format of the questionnaire, making relevant changes to the draft, copy of which is attached at Appendix B to the minutes.

The questionnaires would be circulated to all those who had requested a copy. A copy of the questionnaire would be emailed to those on Area Partnership and Forum distribution lists with email addresses. Parish Clerks would also be sent copies. Councillor Malpas would be attending the Youth

Forum meeting on 18 April and would inform the young people of the Focus Group sessions. All Youth Forum attendees would be emailed a copy of the questionnaire.

6 Date of Next meetings

The dates of the next meetings were noted as Thursday 27 April commencing at 6.15 pm and Friday 5 May commencing at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm