

Corporate Plan Consultation

This brief sets out how consultation on the Corporate Plan will be carried out taking in to account examples from best practice and the resources available to the Council. The approach has been structured by asking WHY, WHO, WHAT HOW, WHEN.

WHY	<p>The Corporate Plan is an important document in that it sets the framework for what the Council will focus on.</p> <p>It goes beyond a political manifesto drawing from the Neighbourhood Plan and other sources of evidence concerning the challenges facing Belper.</p> <p>Although it is not voted on the public and stakeholders should be made aware of its contents in order that they can provide their feedback to the Council</p>
WHO	<p>Best practice suggests that consultation must include a wide a range of people as possible and reflect the demographic profile of the place which is the subject of the plan or initiative.</p> <p>It must also take in to account other factors to ensure that certain categories of people are not excluded e.g. people who do not use a computer or people whose first language is not English. This means that a variety of methods need to be employed wherever possible.</p>
WHAT	<p>Although the consultation is about the Corporate Plan what is the Council specifically seeking to ask the public and stakeholders about ? It is important to keep this part of the process simple in order to avoid people switching off completely. All it therefore requires is as follows :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A brief explanation of what the Corporate Plan is and why it has been developed- A message about the importance of the Council receiving feedback- 3 straightforward questions about the Plan as follows : <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.Does the Belper Town Council Corporate Plan accurately reflect the priorities for Belper ?2. If not what needs to be changed3. Any other comments about the Plan <p>The way this message is delivered needs to be different for different audiences</p>

HOW

The most effective form of consultation is face to face interview as part of a random stratified survey. This is where sufficient numbers of people representing the demographic profile of an area are selected at random from the Electoral Register or postal Address (PAF) file and all are asked the same set of questions. Unfortunately this exercise costs a lot of money.

However, taking in to account the resources available to the Council the following methods are suggested :

1. Online article on the Council's website and social media asking for response either by email or using a simple online form
2. By Email to all the people who have signed up for Email alerts
3. Letter / Email to a selected list of key stakeholders e.g DCC, AVBC etc to invite their feedback.
4. Public Zoom / Teams meeting to present the plan in an open forum
5. A public meeting or meetings to present the Plan and to receive questions
6. Physical copies of the Plan in public places eg Library / Doctors surgeries etc , including a response card which can be posted back to the Council
7. Newsletter item to coincide with production of the Council newsletter

All supported by a Press release / news article distributed to the media and some local newsletters and Social media pages

WHEN

The question here relates to when the Council wants to start the consultation and how long should it last for and how eager is the Council on getting going on delivering the plan.

The earliest consultation can commence is probably the beginning of September.

Guidance from the Local Government Association suggests that consultation should last for a period of between 6 – 12 weeks. The longer the consultation period the more items from the "how" list can be carried out.

One factor relating to this consultation is the Belper Community Conversation, being run by Transition Belper up to 2nd October. The timing of consultation for the Corporate Plan is, by design, in a position to receive some feedback from the Community Conversation exercise which although different in nature to the Corporate Plan does have some parallels. This event and the consultation leading up to it can , in part ,be used as a proxy for the Corporate Plan consultation

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations set out an approach to consultation on the Corporate Plan. They are subject to one important caveat in that the document itself needs to have some graphic design input to make it more presentable. This work is underway but may not be completed in time for the Consultation to commence.

1. Start Date and Consultation period

The consultation to run for a period of 6 weeks from September 6th to October 15th 2021

2. Methods employed

Items 1 – 4 from the list in the “How” section

Item 5 to be used upon request from Stakeholders / Community Groups who would like a presentation about the plan

Item 7 if the Newsletter is due to be delivered during the consultation period

(Item 6: suggest this is excluded on the grounds of the costs of this exercise being too expensive for the amount of replies expected. Also this may clash with the Belper Community Conversation exercise which will be quite visual)

A press kit will also be produced in order to publicise the existence of the plan and invite feedback.

3. Tasks

Task	Target Completion Date
Produce Consultation Document using Graphic design input. Ensure that there is a reference to assist people whose first language is not english	September 5 th 2021
Produce a list of stakeholders and Community Contacts in order to circulate the plan and invite feedback. Include a letter from the Mayor which invites feedback based on the 3 questions in the “What” section above and offers a presentation to relevant local groups	August 31 st 2021
Design a website and social media article ready for September 6 th and investigate whether the Council’s website can use an online form using the 3 questions (If necessary set up bespoke email address to receive responses)	August 31 st 2021
Ensure the Council’s email database is up to date and devise email to send to residents on the database (Approximately 300 homes signed up) (If necessary set up bespoke e mail address to receive responses)	September 5 th 2021

Decide whether any public meetings should be on Zoom / Teams or in a physical location and make set up arrangements accordingly. Include in letters to local stakeholders invitations to have meetings	August 31st
Develop a Powerpoint presentation for any public meetings	September 5th 2021
Produce a list of websites / community newsletters / social media sites which the plan and any accompanying press release can be sent to	September 5th 2021
Produce a Press Kit to include a Press release, and also possibly a video clip and possibly an invitation to Members of the press to attend a press briefing about the plan	September 5th 2021
Consider having a Market Stall (if available) for the dates of 11 th and 12 th September to showcase the work of the Council to date and to provide copies of the plan. (Transition Belper will be using the Sunday Market to publicise the Belper Community Conversation) CONSIDERED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS AUGUST 2021	September 5th 2021

RISKS

Risk	Mitigation
The consultation has a poor level of response	The work of the Council is fairly minor in most people's lives. The Council is taking steps to ensure that the plan is widely publicised and can demonstrate it has been thorough
The consultation responses are not representative of the demography of Belper	The plan will be available in alternative formats upon request and steps will be taken to ensure the format assists those with visual impairments Schools will be sent a copy of the plan to assist with the engagement of young people. Copies of the plan will be sent to a wide cross section of Community Groups
There is confusion with the Belper Community Conversation consultation and other plans	There is sufficient separation of the two exercise as seen by the branding, content and lead organisation. The Council may wish to avoid having a market stall on the same day as the Transition event. The Council can explain in its publicity and at any meetings the differences.

	The Council should avoid any joint exercise involving the Neighbourhood Plan as this could be confusing.
The Council may not be able to produce a Newsletter during the period of the consultation	<p>There are other consultation approaches being used so there is not an over reliance on the newsletter.</p> <p>The Council has the option of extending the consultation period in order to ensure that a newsletter can be produced but it should be noted that this will not be delivered to every household</p>

CONCLUSION

The approach set out in this brief sets out how the Council will consult on the Corporate Plan and it is hoped that it will be generally well received.

Any comments and suggestions can be considered by the Council for inclusion / amendment but the Council is not required to make changes as this is a consultation exercise, not a referendum