

Consultation Plan for Environment Strategy 2020

Consultation Plan period: 25th February 2020 to 18th May 2020

1. Consultation Mission

Rother District Council seeks to identify any gaps for inclusion and gather evidence of the potential impact of the proposed strategy and action plan, including the strength of feeling, and to identify potential future partners for action plan delivery from residents, local businesses, voluntary groups and charities, particularly environmental groups regarding the draft strategy and its action plan. This consultation will give the Members of Rother District Council (the councillors) further evidence to take into account when making a final decision on the content of the strategy and action plan.

2. Target Groups for Consultation

There are 11 main target groups for the consultation:

- Residents
- Businesses operating in Rother and representative business groups, including
 - Transport companies and vehicle suppliers
 - Utility companies – electricity, gas, water
 - Supermarkets
 - Restaurants
- Public sector organisations: Police, Fire & Rescue, County Council, parish councils, NHS CCG and health sector, East Sussex Local Authorities
- Voluntary groups and charities operating in Rother
- Environmental groups and active transport groups, walking and cycling groups
- Schools, colleges and young people
- Housing associations and other housing providers
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Contractors and service level agreement partners with Rother District Council
 - Waste and recycling
 - grounds maintenance
- All Rother parish and town councils
- Internal teams: Environmental Health, Strategy and Planning, Regeneration, housing development, Finance

3. Key Dates and Deadlines

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting for draft proposals and consultation plan – Monday, 27th January 2020

- Cabinet meeting to consider draft proposals and approve consultation plan – Monday, 10th February 2020
- Present draft proposals to Full Council – 24th February 2020
- Communication Plan period – 12 weeks (**25th February 2020 to 18th May 2020**)
- Completion of analysis of findings and draft report – June 2020
- Climate Steering Group meeting – June 2020
- Cabinet meeting on final proposals – July 2020
- Full Council – September 2020

4. **Communication and Consultation Methods**

4.1 Key messages:

- Why we want to have an environment strategy and action plan
- We want resident engagement and involvement in further developing the action plan
- We want those potentially affected to have their say and hear the impact on them and what they want the Council to take into account when making a final decision.
- We want to hear alternative suggestions and/or other evidence for inclusion.
- We are looking for partners to commit to helping deliver the action plan.

4.2 We plan to communicate the opportunity to consult, at a minimum as follows (subject to review during fieldwork period):

- At least two My Alerts notifications: in the first week of the consultation and again two weeks before closing reminding of closing date.
- Media releases on launch and one week prior to closing date
- Social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter, including:
 - Consultation coming up and start date
 - Launch of consultation on start date
 - Progress updates during the consultation period in order to encourage participation.
 - Key messages (above)
 - Feedback on key points being made by others or organisations (to improve quality of debate)
 - Count down to closing date in order to encourage participation.
 - Closing date notification
 - Progress post-consultation to provide feedback, such as when it goes to committee and Cabinet.
- Dedicated web page/s for the consultation on the Council's website (under Current Consultations). The web page will be updated

during the fieldwork period at least every fortnight with progress reports and updated on key milestones after consultation.

- Emailed invitations to consult with identified stakeholders with one reminder before the closing date for those who have not responded
- Posters displayed in public locations and distributed to invited stakeholders for display.
- Engagement events for stakeholder groups including:
 - Environmental strategy workshop/s
 - Exhibition

5. We plan to use these consultation methods and response gathering for target groups:

<p>Residents Including Rother Citizens Panel</p>	<p>Interactive exhibitions Web pages with draft strategy and action plan Further information and ways to respond Social media engagement Online response form/questionnaire In addition, we will accept emailed and posted responses and submissions of evidence</p>
<p>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Black, Asian and migrant ethnic communities recognising these are difficult to reach groups and may require additional targeting</p>	<p>As above and Invitations to participate sent to specific groups who represent these communities.</p>
<p>Businesses operating in Rother and representative business groups</p>	<p>As above (for residents) and Emailed invitation to participate with copy of draft strategy and action plan Invitation to attend appropriate events with recorded feedback during events</p>
<p>Public sector organisations: Police, Fire & Rescue, County Council, parish councils, NHS CCG and health sector</p>	<p>As above And distributed consultation posters for display</p>
<p>Voluntary groups and charities operating in Rother, e.g. premises and/or transport</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Environmental groups</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Schools, Bexhill College and young people</p>	<p>As above</p>

Housing associations and other housing providers	As above
National Farmers Union (NFU)	As Above
Contractors and service level agreement partners with Rother District Council	As above
Parish and town councils	As above

6. To help hard to reach groups of residents to reply to our consultation we will provide versions of the briefing document and questionnaire in large print because this is the main requested format. In addition, we will offer versions in another language or braille and easy read but these versions will be available on request.

7. Questions

These questions will be aimed at businesses, contractors, public sector partners, housing associations and schools

- a. What are you doing now that reduces your impact on the environment? Do you have an environment policy in place?
- b. What are you planning to do over the next five to seven years?
- c. What should the Council be doing to reduce its impact on the environment? Is there anything missing from the draft action plan that we should consider including?
- d. How interested are you in working in partnership with the Council and others on reducing your organisations impact on the environment?
- e. What other or further evidence do you have that you would like the Council to take into account before creating a final version of this strategy?

These questions will be aimed at residents and exhibition/workshop attendees:

- a. What should the Council be doing to reduce its impact on the environment? Is there anything missing from the draft action plan that we should consider including?
 - b. What could I do to reduce the impact my household and I have on the environment?
 - c. What support could the Council provide to help me reduce my impact on the environment?
8. We propose to ask the following questions in order to analyse responses by key groups:
- Who they are representing if from a group, organisation or business – to monitor for a cross section of local organisations
 - Residents only: Age group – to monitor for engagement because younger age groups are hard to access
 - Residents only: Ethnicity – to monitor for engagement because non White groups are hard to access
 - Residents only: Disabled, long term limiting illness or condition or not disabled.
 - Residents only: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, and migrant ethnic communities – to monitor for engagement as these groups are hard to reach
 - Residents only: Where they live in Rother? Bexhill, Battle, Rye, rural village or parish. – to monitor if we have responses from different parts of Rother.
 - Organisations only: Where they are located or operating from in Rother (address). Where they provide services across Rother outside their own premises e.g. transport of goods or services across the district.
9. **Risk and Contingency Plans**
- a. Low participation prevents good quality information and evidence.
 - Sending out more direct invitations
 - Reminders to those already invited to participate
 - Offer a prize draw as a reward for participation for residents
 - b. Challenge on the content, methods and quality of our consultation delays completion or undermines the quality of responses.
 - Follow this consultation plan
 - Inform all invited participants when (if) there is significant new information received and make it available on our website in case it might change their responses so that they can give due consideration of everything the council will use to make a decision.

- c. Hijacking the consultation by interest and campaign groups that, either by misinformation, omission or over-emphasis/focus on one or more issues, affects the quality of or range of responses and supplied evidence.
 - Good quality consultation documents
 - Good quality and frequent communications
 - Prepare to take back the initiative by increasing communication and updating key sources of information (documents, website)
 - Ensure we are targeting hard to reach groups
- d. Bleed of issues from other recent consultations – Council budget, Bexhill Governance Review
 - As above
- e. Called to account for the impact on the environment of undertaking a consultation: printing, power use, travel fuel.
 - Can we use alternatives?

Programme Office & Policy Team
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration Department
Rother District Council
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