

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
REVIEW SCOPING – CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Review Topic	Consultation and Engagement
Chairman	Cllr N Ovenden
Group Membership	Cllrs Ovenden, Ledger and Blanford
Lead Officer (project manager)	Abi Moffatt, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Officer Group Core	Charlotte Hammersley, Will Race, Michelle Pecci, Dean Spurrell
Wider Officer Group	James Sloan
Outline purpose of Review	The council is continually reviewing the ways it communicates and consults with residents over current issues, new policies and projects. Members felt it would be useful to understand the methods used currently, the challenges and compare best practice with other bodies.
Aims for the Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What methods of engagement and communication are used by council services and could they be improved to engage with hard to reach groups? 2. How is the council engaging with hard to reach groups in the Borough and what are the obstacles. 3. To understand the council’s public consultation process and how this contributes to decision making. 4. To explore best practice and the tools used by other Local Authorities to carry out public consultations. 5. Identify ways that Overview and Scrutiny could engage more with residents to increase public participation at Committee meetings.
Background	<p>Following the approval of the Committee’s work plan at the O&S Committee meeting, Members wished to form a Task Group to review how the council consults and engages with residents in the Borough.</p> <p><u>What is Consultation and Engagement?</u></p> <p>Public Consultation can be defined as “the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views with the</p>

	<p>objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of actions”¹</p> <p>Engagement on the other hand is more informal and centres on, "developing and sustaining working relationships to help public bodies and communities understand and act on the needs or issues the community experiences”</p>
Methodology	Witness sessions and research
Possible witnesses (for written or oral evidence) e.g. Council officers, individual residents, community groups, partner organisations, other interested stakeholders, other external organisations, executive members	<p>Tunbridge Wells BC</p> <p>Other public bodies who use alternative consultation software</p> <p>Dean Spurrell, Communications and Marketing Manager</p> <p>Charlotte Hammersley, Head of Policy and Performance</p> <p>Centre for Governance and Scrutiny</p>
Documents to be considered	<p>LGA – Comms Hub – Communications support</p> <p>Dover District Council Consultation Toolkit</p> <p>LGA: New Conversations LGA Guide to engagement.</p>
Expected Outcomes	A focused report recommended by the O&S Committee to the Cabinet that identifies ways that the council engages and consults residents on various topics, and recommend any improvements.
Risks	The topic can be related to many services and so there is a risk of not being focused if the scope is not refined.
What will be excluded	<p>Planning consultations (except where relevant to consultation software)</p> <p>Engagement with Parish Councils</p> <p>Communication with local business</p> <p>Internal Communications</p>
Potential Visits	Possibly to other council
Expected Timescale	6 months but this can be extended if required. 2 or 3 evidence gathering sessions
Project Start Date:	June 2022
June Committee meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise and agree scope.

¹ The Consultation Institute: The Consultation Charter 2004

Meeting 1 - June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How consultations work in the council currently. Residents survey – results and online approach for this year.• Report on consultation tools – Bang the Table, Citizens Space, Hello Lamp Post• Good practice – potential witness session with Tunbridge Wells.• Evidence from Services on consultation needs.
Meeting 2 – July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview from the Communications Team – Engage on Social Media/Magazine/Website.• Discussion on participation at Committee meetings and engaging residents with scrutiny process.
Meeting 3– Late July/Early August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrap Up