

Brighton & Hove City Council

Strategy, Finance & City Resources Committee

Agenda Item 118

Subject: Community Engagement Framework

Date of meeting: 14 March 2024

Report of: Executive Director, Strategy, Governance & Resources

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 This report presents for information the refreshed Community Engagement Framework (CEF). The framework sets out the council's commitment to engagement, including a refreshed policy statement and accompanying guidance and tools that will support best practice for the council's engagement with local communities.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee notes the information in this report and its appendices.

3. Context and background information

3.1 [Brighton & Hove City Council Plan 2023-2027](#) sets out our ambitions to be a listening and responsive council; this refreshed community engagement framework shows how we will ensure this ambition is delivered. Building on the achievements and principles of the following key strategies:

- [2008 Community Engagement Framework](#)
- 2017 Collaboration Framework
- 2022 consultation guidance
- [2023-2028 Anti-racist City Strategy](#)
- [2023-2028 Accessible City Strategy](#)

The Community Engagement Framework commits the council to the highest standards and the latest best practice. The refreshed Community Engagement Framework has three key components set out as follows.

3.2 The first key component is the **BHCC Community Engagement Statement (Appendix 1)**. This sets out our commitment to ensuring that everyone "...should have a fair, equitable, safe and accessible choice on how they participate and influence decision making on issues and challenges which matter to them." The statement outlines how the representation of different

voices is captured to “...undertake engagement that recognises the breadth and diversity of minoritised and excluded communities, and takes an intersectional approach, using positive action where necessary.” The statement provides an overview of different types of engagement to ensure we engage as many diverse people as possible. It sets out core principles and standards as to how engagement should be planned and delivered.

- 3.3 The second component of the framework is an officer guide and toolkit. This sets out ways to bring the engagement statement into action and upholds the principles and standards of the community engagement statement. It provides complete information, guidance and practical examples on how to deliver community engagement comprehensively from planning through to providing reports and feedback.
- 3.4 The third component is the introduction of a new digital engagement platform, called **Your Voice Brighton-Hove (Appendix 2)**. For residents, Your Voice offers better and fairer opportunities to have their say (for example using participatory budgeting tool); it will be easy for them to follow engagement projects they are interested in and be informed about the different phases and decisions a project may go through. The platform is not a substitute for in-person engagement, but rather is a way to complement it and enable access to a wider audience. Additionally, through its Digital Inclusion Strategy the council will continue to work hard to support those who want or need to access digital-based services.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Not applicable to this report for information.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 This refreshed community engagement framework has drawn on and included learning from existing and recent strategies that aim to better understand, include and be responsive to the city’s communities (as outlined at 3.1).

Additionally, it has drawn extensively on the council’s internal work to improve and embed the council’s approach to its equalities duty to ensure our services are available to everyone.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the refreshed Community Engagement Framework (CEF). The CEF provides guidance and tools to support council officer engagement with local communities.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this framework. Financial resources required to work on this framework will be met by existing budget resources.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ishemupenyu Chagonda Date consulted 22/02/24

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The proposed refreshed Engagement Strategy will provide clarity and support to the Council to deliver effective consultation and engagement activity. Clear officer guidance and improved accessibility will assist the Council to comply with legal requirements on consultation.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted 22/02/24

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Community Engagement Framework sets out an intention to ensure a fair and accessible approach to community engagement is taken, and that the diversity of minoritised and excluded communities is understood and responded to. The introduction of a new digital engagement platform improves the council's compliance and commitment to digital accessibility

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 There are no sustainability implications.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Community Engagement Statement
2. Your Voice – Digital Community Engagement Platform briefing

