

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	EXECUTIVE	Item 13	Page 1
Report Originator	Martin Hammond Deputy Chief Executive	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A13/022	
Wards Affected	Ise, Barton, Burton, Avondale Grange and Buccleuch and Queen Eleanor	16th October 2013	
Title	FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE EAST KETTERING LIAISON FORUM		

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Christopher Lamb

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To receive the responses from consultation on the future structure of the East Kettering Liaison Forum and to seek the recommendations of the Executive Committee on any proposed changes to the Constitution of the Forum.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting of the East Kettering Liaison Forum held on 18th July 2013, it was noted that the Council would be undertaking a review of the East Kettering Liaison Forum Constitution and Terms of Reference to ensure that it continued to meet the Council's requirements now that work on site was about to begin.
- 2.2 On 30th July a letter was sent out to all full and associate members of the Forum, Borough Councillors and all Kettering district County Councillors, together with a document outlining proposals for how the membership and constitution of the Forum might be refreshed. A copy of the existing constitution was also included in the consultation pack, which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The consultation period ran from 1st August to 2nd September 2013.
- 2.3. Consultation responses from eight respondees, plus comments made at the meeting of the Forum on 10th September 2013 are attached as Appendix 2. After this meeting, a full revised constitution will be drafted for submission to the full Council meeting on 18th December for approval. A new Constitution and Terms of Reference will then come into effect from 1st January 2014.

3. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 3.1. The comments received reflect a range of opinion, which range from agreement with the proposals to complete disagreement, and from having a tightly defined membership to one which is wide both in scope and ease of joining. Responses relating to the wider issues of the development have been passed onto officers to reply. The commentary in Appendix 2 attempts to identify the main issues which each group of comments raises.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	EXECUTIVE	Item 13	Page 2
------------------	-----------	------------	--------

3.2 The following section addresses the principal issues flagged up by consultees. Appendix 1 refers.

Name – some disagreement about the need to change the name slightly.

Purpose of Forum – the redrafted purpose attracted some criticism because it appears reactive and not proactive and for some consultees does not emphasise the perceived need for the Forum to scrutinise what the Council and developers are doing. The Forum was not set up to be a scrutiny committee and its role was to enable engagement, dialogue, understanding and allow local people to influence the work of the Council and developers, not to become the body to which developers or the local authority is accountable. It is nevertheless suggested that the wording can be strengthened as follows (new elements underlined):-

- To provide a channel of communication between public agencies and those communities most affected by the development of East Kettering.
- To provide a sounding board for issues arising from planning and design, infrastructure provision, housing delivery and democratic representation, in order to secure a sustainable, quality development which improves the quality of life of local people.
- To allow communities and developers to communicate directly .
- To monitor the implementation and impact of the development on the economic, environmental and social well being of the area

Principles of the Review – there was widespread support for the principles, but some concern about the effect of one of them – no (ii) - which had the effect of excluding the Burton Latimer Action Group from membership, but this was the only existing group so affected. A number of consultees sought to retain BLAG's membership. The Committee may wish to set this principle aside if they want to support the continued membership of this Group on the Forum.

Chairmanship – there was clear majority support for the Borough Council to take the chair, but consultees felt it was important that the role continues to be seen as “independent”.

Structure of Meetings – there was support for the specification as to how meetings should be structured, which has not previously existed, but some concern was expressed about what that meant for wider public interaction. The practice has grown up in meetings of inviting or acceding to questions and comment from the public gallery at points throughout the meeting, which has led to meetings losing focus and becoming very “bitty”. The idea of a set agenda structure was to provide more focus but not to lose this aspect of interactivity. Some respondents thought the intention was to prevent public questions, which was not the case. It is proposed that every scheduled item on the agenda should allow for a question time once the item has been presented and debated by

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	EXECUTIVE	Item 13	Page 3
------------------	-----------	------------	--------

Forum members, and that, *in addition*, there is a catch-all Q&A session at the end of the meeting for matters that people felt had not been addressed up to that point. The Council's ordinary three minute right to speak policy would still apply as a further safeguard.

Membership – apart from expressing support for the continued membership of BLAG, the inclusion of CPRE is now recommended and also the addition of the Environment Agency to the list of observers (which should more properly be called a list of Advisers).

- 3.2 If the Committee is minded to agree these alterations and clarifications, a fully revised Terms of Reference and Constitution will be submitted to full Council.

4. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

4.1 The East Kettering Liaison Forum promotes and underpins efficient communication with communities and promotes participation and discussion to support the Council's decision-making process.

4.2 The consultation period ran from 1st August to 2nd September 2013.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The efficient structure of the Forum will ensure its continued effectiveness in supporting the Council's priorities and strategic aims in respect of Sustainable Communities, the Environment and Community and Rural Issues.

6. RECOMMENDATION

That a revised Constitution and Terms of Reference of the East Kettering Liaison Forum, taking into account this Committee's view, be submitted to Full Council for approval, to take effect from 1st January 2014.

Previous Reports/Minutes:

East Kettering Liaison Forum 18.7.13 (Minute No. 13.EKLF.15)

East Kettering Liaison Forum 10.9.13 (Minute No. 13.EKLF.27)

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