

Appendix B: Consideration of comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Comment from Committee	Reasons from the Committee for raising the issue	Executive Member/Officer Comment	Recommended Action
<p>The document makes no reference to members role in raising the public's concern through the Overview and Scrutiny process</p>	<p>Members' role in voicing the views of residents appears solely linked to engagement and consultation exercises when there is also a legitimate route to do this via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>The aim of the document is to fully recognise the role of all members in facilitating as much meaningful dialogue between the council and the public as possible so this point is accepted</p>	<p>The first bullet point under the heading 'A central, active role for all elected membered' has been amended to read as follows (additional text in bold italics to show the changes)</p> <p><i>As part of the day-to-day contact with the public and specifically during any engagement or consultation exercise, all elected members have the opportunity and indeed responsibility to hear and relay the interests, opinions and feedback of the residents they represent whether through the established Overview and Scrutiny process or in response to specific involvement exercises.</i></p>

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<p>East Herts Council operates within a three tier public sector environment and should not seek duplicate others' efforts</p>	<p>There were concerns that unnecessary duplication would be a waste of public money and could lead to 'consultation fatigue' among residents</p>	<p>This is a good point as strengthening dialogue and joint working between the three tiers, without duplication of effort, is to be welcomed</p>	<p>The third bullet point under the heading 'A central, active role for all elected membered' has been amended to read as follows (additional text in bold italics to show the changes) Elected members can help facilitate meaningful <i>and productive</i> dialogue <i>and joint working</i> between the community and decision-makers <i>within all three tiers of local government in East Herts, that is Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council and the Town and Parish Councils.</i></p>
<p>Different involvement methods are likely to be needed when seeking the views of children and young</p>	<p>The council needs to be as inclusive as possible</p>	<p>It is accepted that a variety of methods will need to be used to maximise the reach of any involvement exercise. It is felt that this is covered by the</p>	<p>No changes proposed</p>

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<p>people, as opposed to adults</p>		<p>principle of 'Reaching out to those whose voices can sometimes go unheard' and the bullet points under this heading. There are, arguably, many different groups requiring specific communication channels as is recognised in the document; singling out children/young people may simply beg the question, why aren't other harder-to-reach groups explicitly mentioned? Listing different groups would lengthen the document and run the risk of inadvertently missing some groups</p>	

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The document should include more 'how to involve' examples	There was a concern that the document may not be put into practice	The document is explicitly a high level set of principles for officers and members to refer to when devising specific involvement exercises. It is the intention that over time best practice and 'how to' toolkits will be developed to ensure the principles are put into practice. Therefore, giving examples in the principles document is not considered appropriate	No changes proposed
There is no mention of the cultural change required to implement the principles	There were concerns that the principles will remain theory without the behaviour change required to put them into practice	It is recognised that there is already a great deal of good practice across the council although behaviour change is always a necessary element of doing things differently. It is officers' view that existing	No changes proposed

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		training and development programmes can be crafted to enable the necessary behaviour change, for example, as part of the Transforming East Herts programme	
The document stresses being a listening council when it might be better to be a hearing council	There were concerns that the document should commit the council to hearing residents, businesses and partners rather than simply listening to them as hearing may imply a more active approach by the council	It is accepted that the wording and tone of the document is crucially important. It is, however, considered moot as to whether the council should aspire and commit to listening or hearing local people, businesses and partners. While opinions will differ, it is felt that listening denotes actively paying attention to what is said, that is, what is heard, and in doing so making a conscious effort to absorb the meaning of what is being said. Proactively listening is	The document already makes several references to wanting to hear people, businesses and partners, particularly those who often go unheard. It is thus not proposed to make any changes

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		arguably at the very core of the 'A Listening Council' document	

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