Appendix B
A Listening Council - Feedback from consultation

Number of responses: 23

Q1.   How clearly do you think we have described these approaches?

Clearly	Neither clearly nor unclearly	Unclearly
44%	39%	17%

Areas of support

- Clear division made between the three.
- It makes sense.
- The document is short, sweet and sensible.
- You have separated them and clearly described them.
- You use correct English with no jargon.
- Easy to read in the guide.
- The identified approaches provide sufficient coverage and a means for effective collection of information from individuals and local stakeholders – the approaches and the associated building blocks are supportive of listening to the voice of the East Herts community.
- I can see you have explained the differences and your terms are explained.

Areas for improvement

Area for improvement raised during consultation feedback	Proposed amendment
• We don't need definitions just clear, honest communication that doesn't gloss over bad news.	Sentence to be added to introduction: ***While there will always be conflicting outcomes and some residents may feel dissatisfied with the result, the council will always endeavour to deliver honest and unbiased communication.***
• It's not clear what the difference between engagement and consultation is.	Sentence to be changed on page 2 to make the distinction more clear: ***Consultation is a slightly different form of engagement as it focuses on a specific matter whereby the council actively seeks views, suggestions and preferences on this specific matter.***
• Still a lot of jargon and chat. This is what councillors should be doing anyway.	No proposed change.

• Definition on how you plan to go about "approaching" the population of EH. I only became aware of this proposed document through a private post on "Nextdoor".	No proposed change. Different ways of communicating have been covered on page 3, building block 3), second bullet point and also building block 5), third bullet point.
• I do not 'do' social media. How do you expect to contact me? You talk about not relying on online comms, then fail to identify any direct or 'non' online means of communication.	No proposed change. Explanation of different ways the council communicates outside of digital means is reflected on page 3, building block 3), third bullet point and page 4, building block 5), third bullet point.
• Although we need to be provided with information to be engaged and participate, information is broadcasting out - that isn't listening. The word 'informing' might be slightly better.	No proposed change. The explanation as to why 'information giving' is "a one-way form of communication" has been provided on page 1 building block 1).
• This sounds very much like a 'tick box exercise' to be seen that you are listening to local residents, when I don't think you do. • It's one thing saying you'll do it. It's quite another actually doing it.	No proposed change. The aim of this document is to set out the council's consistent future approach for information giving, engagement and consultation.
• Your purpose is correct but putting these aims into practice is more difficult. There is far too much central government interference in local government affairs.	No proposed change.

Q2.   How well do you think we have explained these building blocks that we need to build our approach upon?

Well	Neither well or unwell	Not well
52%	35%	13%

Areas of support

- Well outlined info.
- It is considered and thoughtful. I particularly like that you want it to be inclusive and that you genuinely want to hear the answers from constituents.

- It's how many you get to reach out to, even with different communication streams.
- I am aware of that it is not easy for a statutory body to see thousands/millions of citizens as people.
- I would also like to record that the pandemic had a very positive outcome. In the words of a council employee "it got us out of our silos".
- Reading the above, I feel I understand your approach well.
- Again written clearly.
- The associated building blocks are well explained and provide clarity for the reader.
- Because you have given a clear description of each building block.

Areas for improvement

Area for improvement raised during consultation	Proposed amendment
• You seem to have missed the most obvious points. Communication needs to be honest and unbiased. This means being honest in delivering bad news.	As noted above, entence to be added to introduction: ***While there will always be conflicting outcomes and some residents may feel dissatisfied with the result, the council will always endeavour to deliver honest and unbiased communication.***
• To a point. Time will tell. I believe, a major improvement to the website, would help: far too much clutter - pages are too long - menus are too long - too difficult to find 'what you're looking for'.	Sentence to be changed on page 1 in 'Information giving' section to now include reference to East Herts Council's website: *Examples of ways in which will give information include **East Herts Council's website,** social media posts, newsletters and press releases to local media.* Note: In addition to the feedback to this question, the resident provides constructive feedback relating to the navigation of East Herts Council's website that will be given to the Communications team.
• I'm not sure what a couple of the points mean eg 1) "a central active role for all elected members" and 2) "allowing people to access	The term 'elected members' has been replaced with ***councillors*** throughout the document.

council information to the depth that they prefer"?	Building block 8 – 'A central active role for all elected members' has been reworded as **'Councillors being fully involved.'** Building block 7 – 'Allowing people to access council information to the depth they prefer' has been changed to **'Allowing people to be able to get information from the council at the level of detail they prefer.'** The bullet points for Building block 7 have now been rearranged to correspond with the above change.
• Feel there are too many and sometimes they overlap or confuse e.g. combine 1, 4 and 9, 3 and 5 (what are involvement methods?), 3, 6 and 7? This isn't 'straightforward, jargon-free messaging!' • Each item you've described seems an obvious thing that I would expect normal people at the council to already be doing. I can't see why you need this bureaucratic document.	No proposed change. There is a balance to be struck. The council wishes to spell out in as much as is possible its new approach.
• It's one thing saying you'll do it. It's quite another actually doing it. • The proposals as laid out are fine if they are put into practice.	No proposed change. The council is committed to fulfilling these principles as outline in paragraph 1 of the document.

Q3. Is there anything you feel is missing from or you would like us to add to the Listening Council document?

Areas for improvement

Area for improvement raised during consultation	Proposed amendment
• Honesty and unbiased communication. This is so	As noted above, entence to be added to introduction:

important, honest and unbiased communication of bad and good news is the way to rebuild public trust and confidence.	*While there will always be conflicting outcomes and some residents may feel dissatisfied with the result, the council will always endeavour to deliver honest and unbiased communication.*
• Yes. Then what? I think you have to set out what happens then. Eg how, you will respond. Will you publish questions, challenges, feedback and your responses? Will you respond to individuals and groups? Will feedback etc be analysed and used to inform you about topics of concern to communities of concerns? I think that is an important next step.	Building block 9 – 'Listening to feedback' has had a bullet point added.

We will include feedback and consultation responses in published reports when making decisions. |
| • Stress the importance of working with (and supporting) community groups, young people and senior citizens. | No proposed change.

This point was raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a decision was made to not highlight specific demographic groups as this could potentially run the risk of prioritising one group over another. |
| • Don't look from just one of many views, try and accommodate diversity. | No proposed change. |
| • It is readily available to Internet users. Have you made an extra effort to make it available to those who don't/can't use the Internet?

• That you don't listen to your constituents. Try letters, you miss a large older demographic I feel deliberately by posting on social media sites. | No proposed change.

Collaborating with the public we will consistently work on ways to use feedback to inform wider communication and review what is most effective. |
| • A guarantee that you will carry out what you promise and follow it up. | No proposed change.

Page 1, it is felt that the first paragraph details the council's commitment. |
| • Some bullet points of how you propose each one will be achieved? | No proposed change. |

	A Listening Council document has sought to provide this throughout the document in its building blocks. For example, specific approaches are outlined in Building block 3 'Involvement methods tailored to the locality, community and topic' as well as Building block 7 'Allowing people to be able to get information from the council at the level of detail they prefer'.

Demographics

Responding as an individual or as an organisation:

Individual/Organisation	Percentage
Individual	96%
Organisation	4%

Area of respondent

Area	Number of respondents
Hertford	9
Bishop's Stortford	4
Thorley	3
Sawbridgeworth	2
Ware	2
Bengeo	1
Braughing	1
Buntingford	1

Age Categories

Age Range	Number of respondents	Percentage
17 & under	0	0%
18-20	0	0%
21-29	0	0%
30-39	0	0%
40-49	5	22%
50-59	6	26%
60+	12	52%

Gender

Gender	Percentage
Male	48%
Female	39%
Prefer not to say	13%

Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
White British	74%
Black Caribbean	4%
Other	9%
Prefer not to say	13%

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Percentage
Heterosexual/Straight	61%
Prefer not to say	26%
None of the above	13%