



Suffolk
Fire & Rescue
Service

2015-18 Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation

Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee

7 June 2016



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Early key principles adopted

1. Formal programme management approach using the Council's Smartsheet facility;
2. Resources carefully considered and allocated i.e. time, financial and people;
3. Risk-based approach to underpin all options and proposals combined with professional judgement;
4. Full regard to be had for equality impact and H&S risk assessment throughout;
5. Gunning principles, Council guidance and notable practice reviewed and followed;
6. Transparency and openness - all feedback to be published well in advance of any decision-making and information made widely available;
7. Use of all media channels and information to be factual, accurate, clear and easy for the layperson to understand.



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Approach

1. Lessons from other consultation exercises examined;
2. Consultation Institute appointed for professional advice, support, challenge and quality assurance via 6 stage process;
3. Opinion Research Services (ORS) appointed for advice and support regarding approach to surveys and questionnaires;
4. Consultation Strategy and Communications Plan developed;
5. Stakeholder mapping exercise carried out;
6. Consultation activities structured around informal, pre-consultation and formal 14-week consultation phases;
7. Independent report to be produced by ORS to minimise the risk of bias;
8. 12-week post consultation period set aside at the outset to ensure that feedback and formative proposals can be properly considered and, where necessary, revised.



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Activities

1. Early staff engagement around possible future challenges;
2. 2 pre-consultation workshops run for key stakeholders;
3. 5 general public and staff formal consultation meetings;
4. Officers attended 14 meetings (Town/Parish Council etc);
5. All fire stations/watches/departments and staff groups visited;
6. Regular trade union meetings;
7. Formal consultation questionnaires returned = 5,749;
8. Emails received via consultation email address = 127;
9. Freedom of Information requests received = 10;
10. Letters received = 20;
11. Telephone enquiries through dedicated number = 7;
12. Consultation webpage hits = 3,105;
13. Petition signatories = 11,439;
14. Postcard returns received from local campaign = 1,699.



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What worked well?

1. Having in place structured programme management arrangements;
2. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities;
3. Using dedicated resources;
4. Using specialist support and advice;
5. Early stakeholder mapping and engagement;
6. Clear work plans, communications strategy and action planning;
7. Early engagement of the Council's Communications Team and Resource Management function;
8. Open and transparent communication and engagement arrangements.



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Observations

1. Don't underestimate the work and resources required and the requirement also to support normal day-to-day business;
2. It is important to use only relevant, factual, accurate and evidence based information/data;
3. Communicate, communicate and communicate - respond in a timely manner to all enquiries;
4. Beware of consultation fatigue for lengthy exercises;
5. Allow sufficient time for feedback to be properly examined at the end of the consultation and well before any decisions are to be considered;
6. Use the skills and support available within the Council.



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