

## **Annex 1: Lessons learnt from Consultations A and B, 2015-16**

**(The purpose of this paper is to summarise the lessons learnt from these two consultations hence the decision to anonymise them)**

- Any effective consultation and engagement work needs to start with a thorough mapping of key stakeholders and an accompanying analysis for who might be affected and to what degree. (This work will support later Equalities Impact Assessment work).
- Initial engagement activity needs to be planned thoroughly and where possible, in partnership with stakeholders ( including any activity targeting any harder-to-reach stakeholders.)
- Any consultation and engagement work must include representative groups as well as individuals and groups directly impacted by any proposed change.
- Early communications messages need to be planned to meet the differing needs of the range of stakeholders.
- A communications and engagement strategy needs to be agreed and shared with stakeholders right from the start as this will underpin all the subsequent work.
- Where there are representative groups representing the stakeholders (for example Surrey's Parent Carer forum Family Voice Surrey), these need to be engaged with from the very beginning of the work as they can advise and input into the communications and engagement strategy as needed.
- In order to ensure transparency and trust, pre-consultation engagement is vital. This may include a range of face to face meetings, workshop opportunities, written communications, and social media updates.
- If possible, a partnership monitoring group (representing the stakeholders) should be established with terms of reference to monitor the equitable and transparent management of the consultation work.
- Clear parameters need to be agreed with partners and stakeholders about the level of participation appropriate to this piece of work (are they mandated to coproduce or to participate at an active level? Do they have any decision making responsibility?). Confusion about the extent and limit of the influence stakeholders will have over any final decision making can cause significant unhappiness and lack of confidence later in the process. Clarity from the beginning about this is paramount.
- A timeline and plan for any pre-consultation work and any formal consultation needs to be shared transparently (and ideally monitored by a monitoring group) plus a clear timeline for the decision-making and implementation process. (This may be part of the communications and engagement strategy or separate, supporting documentation).
- There needs to be a named individual or group of individuals to be a point of contact for any questions or queries along the way.
- The effectiveness of a formal consultation will largely depend on the extent and effectiveness of early engagement and pre-consultation work.

- Qualities of honesty, transparency, and listening are a high priority for parent carers, young people and all partners engaging in this kind of activity with the Council.

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