
CAPITAL PROGRAMME – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

Briefing Note by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL 25 June 2020

1 Background

- 1.1 During the COVID-19 response phase, the capital projects team have endeavoured to maintain momentum on the delivery on most of the underlying capital programme. This has been done against a backdrop of disruption within the various consultancies as they too have required to adopt new working practices during this period. Consequently, MS Teams has been adopted heavily but successfully.
- 1.2 As we enter the recovery phase (Phase 2 of 6 of Scottish Government guidance for construction activity), and a subsequent gradual reduction in the restrictions which have been imposed, the capital projects team are looking to undertake a series of community and public consultations / engagement activities to help inform the continuing design development of a variety of capital projects, with a particular focus on the Learning Estate, particularly Eyemouth, Galashiels and Peebles.
- 1.3 In addition, consultation will be required to support the on-going design development of the planned residential care facilities in Hawick and Tweedbank with a variety of partners and agencies and third sector organisations, including NHS Borders. Additional consultation may be required on other projects as the capital programme is developed through the remainder of the current financial year.
- 1.4 All planned engagement and consultation will be carefully managed and monitored in relation to each capital project, and would effectively comprise ad-hoc and informal (i.e., non-statutory) consultation and is therefore not intended to replace or substitute statutory consultation (for example during a detailed planning application) which would otherwise be undertaken in the normal manner.
- 1.5 This is particularly important, as following a recent meeting with the Scottish Futures Trust, indications are that funding requests for new school investment (which had been originally planned for April 2020) will now be issued in September 2020 and there is an expectation, when submitting requests that demonstrable consultation has taken place regarding proposals.

2 Consultation Process

- 2.1 MS Teams has proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic across a range of use case scenarios. Although other alternatives are available, such

as Zoom and WebEx, the deployment of Office 365 across the organisation has resulted in MS Teams becoming the de-facto standard. Importantly, it is also available as a free download and is available across a range of operating systems and devices, including Windows (Microsoft), iOS (Apple) and Android (Google) and therefore is universally and freely available by individuals, groups or companies.

- 2.2 MS Teams currently supports meetings with up to 250 participants, however for the purposes of consultation and engagement, numbers at this level are likely to be unwieldy.
- 2.3 To allow the widest possible contribution therefore, it is proposed to limit MS Teams meetings to approximately 12-15 or so max participants in any one session. Clearly the level of interest in some of the emerging capital projects will require multiple sessions with multiple groups, but as presentations can be recorded and revisited within MS Teams, then there is no need for the team to constantly repeat the same presentation. Limiting numbers also allows all participants to make a meaningful contribution.
- 2.4 The Capital Projects team will of course coordinate activity with the Customer & Communities team, Education or other internal stakeholders as required. A template (Appendix 1) has been attached to this paper which will identify all pertinent consultees as part of any capital project proposal and for records to be kept as part of the Project Execution Plan. Paper copies of Citizen Space consultations could be provided for any individuals who do not have access to online technology
- 2.5 When much wider consultation is required, the intention would be to publish the same presentation materials to 'Citizen Space', the Council's community engagement tool, which will then be extensively publicised on social media through the Communications team. This would allow individuals or groups to respond as required, and over a much longer timeframe of say 4-6 weeks. By way of a recent example, a public consultation for Peebles High School which commenced before and carried on during the early lockdown period received over 300 responses.

3 Summary

- 3.1 It is intended to use of MS Teams and 'Citizen Space' to carry out ad-hoc and formal community and user group engagement / consultation to assist in the design development of various capital projects, including but not limited to Galashiels Academy, Peebles High School and Eyemouth Community Campus.

Author(s)

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Appendix 1

Consultation Record Template

Indicative template to capture all consultation and engagement undertaken

Consultations with Users, Groups and Communities		
	CAPITAL PROJECT	Locality
	Name / Description	ID
No	Consultee / Group	Consultation Date(s)
1	Internal Staff Group(s) Identify relevant teams	
2	Portfolio Holder(s) Identify relevant portfolio holder(s)	
3	Ward Members Identify relevant members	
4	Council Members Other relevant Members, i.e. Leader, Convener	
5	Community Council(s) Individual or Multiple (i.e. School clusters)	
6	Area Partnerships Identify relevant AP(s)	
7	Community Planning Partnership All or individual partners within CPP as required	
8	Partner Organisations NHS etc	
9	Third Sector Groups Development Trusts or others not on CPP	
10	Other Any other pertinent community, action or special interest groups	