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| REPORT TO: | Policy Development Panel (PDP) |
| DATE: | 9 April 2024 |
| SUBJECT: | Partnership Engagement Pledge |
| PURPOSE: | To provide feedback on the draft Partnership's Engagement Pledge prior to consideration at Cabinet |
| KEY DECISION: | No |
| PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | Councillor Jim Astill |
| REPORT OF: | James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | Shaun Gibbons, Group Manager – Communications and Engagement |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | All |
| EXEMPT REPORT | No |


SUMMARY

The Partnership's draft Engagement Pledge sets out the proposed Partnership's key principles when engaging and consulting with the sub-region's residents, businesses and stakeholders.

This report seeks scrutiny input into the Pledge as it develops.


RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Panel provides feedback on the Engagement Pledge at Appendix A.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure scrutiny can help shape the Pledge as it develops.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not to seek scrutiny input – discounted. Scrutiny adds value to the decision-making process and the views sought from the committee will shape considerations around the final Pledge.

## 1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Engagement Pledge at Appendix A follows South Holland District Council's Peer Review in July 2023 in which a recommendation was to "strengthen how the voice of residents and communities inform future service delivery".

1.2 Despite this recommendation being specific to South Holland District Council, it is recommended that the Partnership adopts the Pledge as part of its corporate approach to engagement.

1.3 The Engagement Pledge sets out the broad principles of how each council will approach its engagement work. The Pledge makes clear each council's commitment to providing a clear and consistent approach when engaging with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

## 2. REPORT

2.1 With more than 300,000 residents, thousands of small, medium and large businesses and a broad number of stakeholder agencies (such as neighbouring councils, Police, NHS, government and non-government agencies) across the sub-region, it is vital that the Partnership's work reflects the thoughts and ambitions of its communities.

2.2 The Partnership's engagement and consultation processes are crucial to how it communicates with its residents, businesses and stakeholders, however, each serve slightly different purposes.

- Engagement refers to the process of involving the community in decision-making and keeping them informed about our activities. Engagement is about relationship building, gathering feedback, and encouraging a sense of involvement and ownership among residents.

- Consultation is a more formal process which seeks input from the community on specific issues or decisions. This often involves seeking feedback on proposed policies, projects, or plans and may include public meetings, surveys, or focus groups.

2.3 In essence, engagement is broader and ongoing, focusing on communication and relationship-building, while consultation is more targeted and specific, seeking input on particular matters.

2.4 The scrutiny committee is asked to consider the Pledge and provide its feedback to shape the final version to be presented to the Cabinet.

## 3. CONCLUSION

This Pledge at Appendix A sets out the Partnership's intention to have a consistent approach to engagement and consultation. Scrutiny input is important to shape the final version.

## 4. EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

4.1 This Pledge, which will be published on the SELCP and individual Council websites, will bring a clear and transparent process when conducting engagement and consultation exercises in the future.

## IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

To provide a clear and consistent set of broad principles when engaging and consulting with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

### 5.2 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Pledge will support the existing Communications Strategy for residents, stakeholders, etc to see and benchmark against.

The Pledge will also be adopted by any agency, individual or partnering organisation working alongside the Partnership which is consulting and engaging with the sub-region's residents, businesses and stakeholders on our behalf.

### 5.3 STAFFING

Non direct staffing implications.

### 5.4 WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

Non direct staffing implications.

### 5.5 CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There is a need to ensure consultation is undertaken in a meaningful and robust way to inform effective decision making.

### 5.6 DATA PROTECTION

The Data Protection Officer will be informed of any engagement or consultation exercise and, where necessary, Data Protection Impact Assessments completed.

### 5.7 FINANCIAL

None

### 5.8 RISK MANAGEMENT

The risk of not conducting engagement and consultation exercises in accordance with this published Pledge will be mitigated by the inclusion of engagement/consultation sections in the Partnership's Communications Plan. A further mitigation is to inform staff and senior managers of the Pledge's adoption via internal communications and, where applicable, in-house training via the Communications Team.

### 5.9 STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

The following have been consulted:

Portfolio Holders
Senior Leadership Team

## 5. REPUTATION

There is a risk of reputation if the Pledge is not adhered to and followed. These risks are mitigated as explained above.

## 6. CONTRACTS

As described above, any partnering organisation or individual who are/is tasked with consulting or engaging with residents, etc on behalf of the Partnership or an individual Council will be expected to adhere to the principles outlined in the Pledge.

## 7. CRIME AND DISORDER

None

## 8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

The Pledge clearly outlines the Partnership's obligations to uphold equality, diversity and safeguarding when consulting and engaging with residents. Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments to inform consultation/engagement activities.

## 9. HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None

## 10. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

## 11. LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

This Pledge contributes to the following Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper:

Pride of Place

| MISSIONS<br>This paper contributes to the following Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper. | |
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| Living Standards | By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing. |
| Research and Development | By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth. |
| Transport Infrastructure | By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing. |
| Digital Connectivity | By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population. |
| Education | By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third. |
| Skills | By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas. |
| Health | By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years. |
| Wellbeing | By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing. |
| Pride in Place | By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing. |
| Housing | By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas. |
| Crime | By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas. |
| Local Leadership | By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement. |

## 12. ACRONYMS

None

| APPENDICES |
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| Appendix A – Engagement Pledge |

| BACKGROUND PAPERS |
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| N/a |

| CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT | |
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| **Name of body** | **Date** |
| BBC Corporate and Community Committee | 21 March 2024 |

| REPORT APPROVAL | |
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| Report author: | Shaun Gibbons, Group Communications and Engagement Manager - Corporate |
| Signed off by: | James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Corporate |
| Approved for publication: | Cllr Jim Astill, Portfolio Holder for Communications |