

Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee

10am, Tuesday, 10 February 2015

Consulting Edinburgh – 6 month review

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|-------------------|-----|
| Item number | 7.4 |
| Report number | |
| Executive/routine | |
| Wards | All |

Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to provide committee with a progress update on the implementation and use of the Council's new consultation framework and hub.

The framework, [Consulting Edinburgh](#), was launched in May 2014 and the framework provides staff with a practical toolkit that guides them through each stage of consultation activity. To support the framework, a [consultation hub](#) was developed for promoting and managing all Council consultations in one location.

Feedback regarding these tools has been positive, with the value of the framework and hub in improving the quality and accessibility of consultation activity being recognised. It has also proved valuable in promoting partnership working between service areas. Further work is planned to develop staff skills and to ensure continued use of the tools in everyday Council business, along with the involvement of Council partners.

The Council Research and Consultation Group has been established to implement and manage Consulting Edinburgh across the Council.

Links

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Coalition pledges | P33 |
| Council outcomes | CO23 , CO24 |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO1 , SO2 , SO3 , SO4 |

Consulting Edinburgh – 6 month review

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee:
 - 1.1.1 notes the completed and planned activities to implement Consulting Edinburgh, the Council's consultation framework and hub; and
 - 1.1.2 agrees to support staff development and the promotion of Consulting Edinburgh with members of the public, staff and key stakeholders.

Background

- 2.1 The final version of the Council's consultation framework, Consulting Edinburgh, was approved by the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee on 6 May 2014.
- 2.2 The framework aims to ensure a consistent approach to consultation activity across the Council and promote meaningful involvement of citizens and communities in service development and delivery. It covers the principles of meaningful consultation and is a practical toolkit that supports staff through each stage of consultation activity.
- 2.3 The framework is available online on the [Council intranet](#), with a downloadable version available for staff if needed. Each stage of the framework has supporting guidance notes, that signpost staff to further information and links on good practice and techniques.
- 2.4 A [consultation hub](#) has also been developed. This online platform provides a central point for recording and promoting consultation activity. This makes it easier for the public and staff to find out what is going on in the city, how they can have a say on matters that are important to them and what actions have been taken as a result of feedback.
- 2.5 An implementation plan has been taken forward by the Council Research and Consultation Group (CRCG). This group comprises of officers from across all service areas, who have an essential role in consultation and engagement, and will implement and monitor the use of the framework and the hub in their respective areas.
- 2.6 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress to date regarding the implementation and use of these consultation tools.

Main report

- 3.1 The Council Research and Consultation Group (CRCG) was created in June 2014, comprising key officers from each service area, with the remit to oversee the implementation of the consultation framework and hub across the Council. Key aspects of the work include:
 - 3.1.1 Raising awareness of the consultation tools to senior managers and frontline services.
 - 3.1.2 Driving implementation and maximising take up of the framework and hub in service areas.
 - 3.1.3 Developing the content and design of the consultation hub.
 - 3.1.4 Creating a training programme to increase the number of staff who understand and can provide guidance on the use of the tools.
 - 3.1.5 Monitoring the level of usage and impact on practice in increasing workforce skills.
 - 3.1.6 Identifying future consultations which the framework and hub can support, including those commissioned in partnership with NHS Lothian, Police Scotland and other key stakeholders.
 - 3.1.7 Promoting the consultation tools to partners for them to use where appropriate.
- 3.2 The framework was launched in May 2014 and has been promoted across the Council. A number of briefing sessions and workshops have been held with elected members, senior management teams and key staff involved in consultation activity. Communication emails, newsletters and orb promotion have also been used to promote the framework and hub more widely to all managers, staff and key stakeholders. This will continue throughout 2015 to promote and profile the tools further, especially during the Council's transformational change when the tools will be ever more important to support high profile public and stakeholder consultation. The communications plan is included at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Since the start of December 2014, Business Intelligence has been tracking access to the consultation framework site using analytic tools.

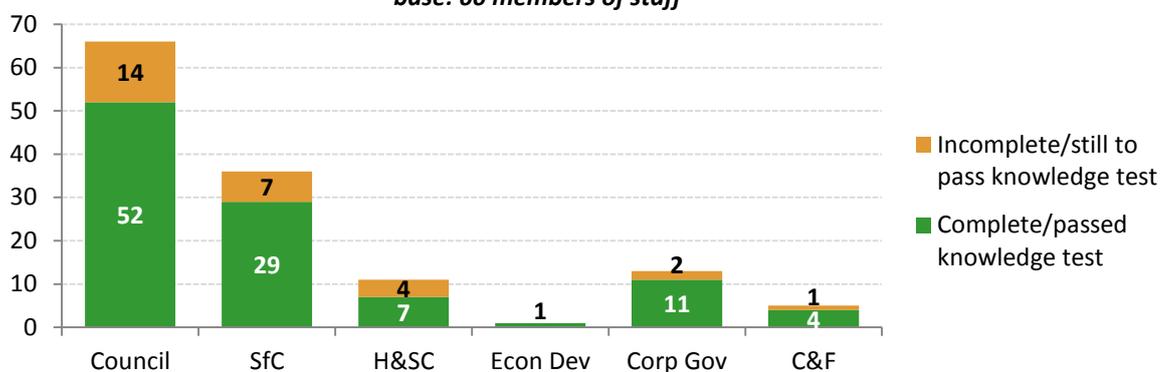
**Access to the Council's consultation framework, Consulting Edinburgh
(4-31 December 2014)**

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| No. of users | 27 |
| No. of sessions | 39 |
| % new visitor | 67 |
| Avg. session duration | 00:01:51 |
| Pages/Session | 2.41 |
| Bounce rate* | 64% |

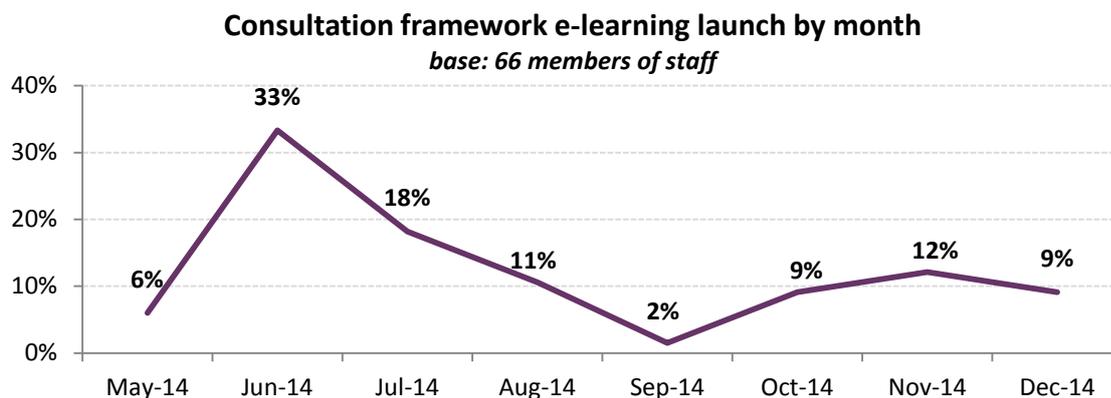
* A 'bounce' is when a user accesses the site, but then leaves immediately without actually clicking on anything.

- 3.4 A high bounce rate might indicate that further improvements could be made to make the framework more accessible or appealing. Minor changes to the framework will be made to simplify the format and make the experience more user-friendly. It is anticipated that the number of site visits and session duration will increase as further communications are rolled out across service areas.
- 3.5 An analytics account is being set up to monitor the use of the consultation hub going forward. This will provide valuable data, such as the source and number of 'hits' for individual consultations. This data will allow effective monitoring of the usage and impact of the hub.
- 3.6 To complement the framework, an e-learning module for staff was developed to promote awareness and understanding of the principles that underpin meaningful consultation. Since May 2014, 66 staff members have launched the e-learning module. 79% of these staff members have since completed the course.

Number of staff launched e-learning module by service area
base: 66 members of staff



3.7 E-learning usage by staff is closely linked to the promotional launch of the consultation framework. 33% of users launched the course following the communications and briefing sessions that took place in May and June.



3.8 The Council's consultation hub was launched in October 2014, with 31 key members of staff from across service areas identified to attend training on how to use the online hub's functionality. A detailed update on promotional and training activity is included at Appendix 2.

3.9 Since the launch in October 2014, 23 consultation records have been added to the hub. A range of consultation activity has been promoted; from the recent Edinburgh's Budget Challenge to more specific issues relating to health and social care, schools and learning, housing, jobs and training, planning and licensing, travel and transport, and leisure, sport and culture.

3.10 Business Intelligence has been monitoring the use of the hub to ensure that all consultations recorded on the site follow the principles of the consultation framework.

3.11 Methods to evaluate the impact on the user experience will be developed early in 2015, and will include feedback surveys to measure the impact of the framework and hub at a city and local level. This will support further improvements to the user experience and functionality of both tools.

3.12 Overall, the feedback regarding the Council's consultation framework and hub has been positive, with the value of having a clear and consistent approach to consultation activity recognised. However, more work is required to embed the approach into everyday Council business and promote these tools to staff and stakeholders.

Measures of success

4.1 The framework was developed by a project team led by Local Community Planning, comprising of officers from across the Council. The Consultation Institute provided the team with specialist advice and support on developing the

framework, which was further refined based on feedback from Council-wide staff sounding boards and test case peer reviews.

- 4.2 Overall, feedback from elected members, managers, staff and key stakeholders has been positive, with the value of the framework and hub in supporting improved practice being recognised.
- 4.3 Meaningful consultations will inform the Council to determine how best to develop and deliver services that are fit for purpose (either citywide or in our local communities) and will contribute to the effective strategic planning, commissioning and management of budgets and resources.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The cost to develop and deploy the consultation hub was £7,995.
- 5.2 Costs associated with the activity to date have been met from within existing budgets.
- 5.3 Funding from existing budgets may require to be realigned to support the delivery of a staff development programme, and specifically the roll out of accredited training for a wider range of staff from across Council service areas.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The Consulting Edinburgh framework acts as a benchmark for consistency across the Council ensuring that whenever and wherever consultations are undertaken, the practices and process will be robust. Consultations must be well planned and delivered if we are to build the confidence of stakeholders and the public. The framework will ensure that consultations have been undertaken with integrity and if challenged, the processes will stand up to scrutiny therefore reducing any risk of legal challenge.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The activity contributes directly to the delivery of the Equality Act 2010 general duties of advancing equality of opportunity, eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and fostering good relations. This is evidenced through the activity seeking to raise awareness and directly address the removal of barriers to participation in consultation activity.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse environmental implications arising from this report. The consultation framework, learning package and consultation hub are available to users online therefore minimising the need for printing.
- 8.2 The framework will assist the collection of evidence on citizen perceptions and priorities which will enable services to adapt, be delivered more efficiently and understand citizen and community needs. Through this improved understanding, it is anticipated that the framework will have a positive impact on social justice and economic wellbeing.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Staff from all service areas have been actively involved in the development of the framework in the form of sounding boards and test case peer reviews.
- 9.2 A detailed communications plan has been developed with extensive activity planned to support the promotion of the framework and hub (see Appendix 1).
- 9.3 The consultation hub provides a central point for recording and promoting consultation activity and makes it easier for the public and staff to find out what is going on in the city, how they can have and what actions have been taken as a result of feedback. The 'We asked, You said, We did' feature of the consultation hub provides details of the issues we have recently consulted on and their outcomes.
- 9.4 A 'mailing list' function has recently been added to the consultation hub to allow people to subscribe to email alerts regarding new consultation activity or particular areas of interest.

Background reading/external references

[Consultation Framework, 6 May 2014](#)

[Consulting Edinburgh – Consultation Hub](#)

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Links

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Coalition pledges | P33 - Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used |
| Council outcomes | CO23 - Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community CO24 - The Council communicate effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO1 - Edinburgh's Economy Delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all SO2 - Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health SO3 - Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric |
| Appendices | Appendix 1: Consulting Edinburgh Communications Plan Appendix 2: Update on promotional activity by Service Area |

Consulting Edinburgh – Consultation Framework and Hub Communications Plan (2014/2015)

This communications plan has been developed to support the promotion of the new Consultation Framework and Hub to both our own staff and the public. It is suggested that over the next few weeks targeted communications should be at those staff who manage public consultations to ensure that the consultation hub is populated before any public promotion, with a target of mid/late October for the public launch.

Audiences

Internal:

- Service consultation leads
- Staff who regularly organise consultations
- All Council employees
- Elected members

External:

- Local MSPs
- Local MPs
- Key stakeholders, eg community councils, EVOC etc
- NHS/Police – to raise awareness of hub and opportunity to promote joint consultations
- General public

| Date | Channel | Audience | Message | Responsibility |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|---|--|
| Awareness raising - 2014 | | | | |
| May, August 2014 | Briefing sessions for elected members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected Member Drop-in session (30 May) • Labour Group (18 Aug) • Conservative Group (19 Aug) • SNP (25 Aug) • Green Group (offered) • Liberal Democrat Group (offered) | Elected Members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation framework has been developed • Benefits of framework • Demo of framework • Introducing consultation hub/benefits • Demo of hub • Who to contact for further information | Business Intelligence/Local Community Planning |

| Date | Channel | Audience | Message | Responsibility |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| May, October 2014 - onwards | Workshops / briefing sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation Hub demo (28 May) • Consultation Hub Intro and Training (28/29 October) • SfC workshop (10 December) | Key staff involved in consultation activity – to be identified by Service Leads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to framework and the benefits of it • Introducing consultation hub/benefits • Demo of hub • Who to contact for further information | Business Intelligence |
| Sep14 – Jan15 | Briefing sessions for Service Area SMTs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Econ Dev (5 Sep) • H&SC (29 Oct) • SfC ESMT (28 Nov) • C&F SMT (15 Jan) • CGMT (15 Jan) | Senior Managers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • Links to framework and hub • Demo of sites • Update on next steps • More info/service lead contacts | Business Intelligence/Service Leads |
| September 2014 | Email/briefings to Service Managers who manage consultations (face to face or written as appropriate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sep onwards – service leads to attend divisional management meetings | Managers – to be identified by Service Leads | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • Links to framework and hub • Demo of sites • Update on next steps • More info/service lead contacts | Service Area Leads |
| October 2014 | All staff email and/or Orb promotion | All Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • Links to framework and hub • Update on next steps • More info/service lead contacts | Comms |

| Date | Channel | Audience | Message | Responsibility |
|------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| October 2014 - onwards | Service newsletters/e-newsletters (service leads to identify any internal newsletters that could be used for promotional purposes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG Team Brief (22 October) • Bright Futures (C&F Blog) | Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • Links to framework and hub • Update on next steps • More info/service lead contacts | Service Leads |
| 21 October 2014 | Edinburgh Partnership briefing | Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • Links to framework and hub • Demo of sites / benefits to users | Business Intelligence |
| 22 October 2014 | Connect (Managers e-briefing) | All Managers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • Links to framework and hub • Update on next steps • More info/service lead contacts | Comms |
| 14 November 2014 | Council Leaders Report | All staff and stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to have your say • Launching of the hub • Sign up for mailing lists • Still time to have a say on budget | Comms |
| 17 November 2014 | Promotion via articles on Newsbeat: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consulting Edinburgh framework 2. Consultation Hub (using case studies) | All staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising of Council’s approach to consultation • Framework to support consultation activity • Hub to help promote and manage online consultation • Who to contact for support/advice | Comms |

| Date | Channel | Audience | Message | Responsibility |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| November 2014 - onwards | Stakeholder email/briefing | External stakeholders (e.g. NPs, Community Councils, NHS and Police) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising of Council’s approach to consultation • Framework to support consultation activity • Hub to help promote and manage online consultation • Benefits for users/public/stakeholders • More joined up city-wide approach to having a say and feeding back to public/stakeholders | Business Intelligence/Service Leads |
| Date | Channel | Audience | Message | Responsibility |
| Awareness raising - 2015 | | | | |
| 13 & 15 January 2015 | Drop in lunchtime sessions Waverley Court | Staff involved in consultations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of consultation approach • Demo of framework and hub • Answer staff questions | Business Intelligence/Service Leads |
| Jan/Feb 2015 | Drop in lunchtime sessions across neighbourhood offices, libraries, etc | Staff involved in consultations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of consultation approach • Demo of framework and hub • Answer staff questions | Service Leads |
| As and when required | Neighbourhood Twitter Accounts (launch date and regular tweets of consultations relating to neighbourhood areas) | Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of consultation approach • Highlighting how people can have a say/get involved | Service Leads/Comms |

| Date | Channel | Audience | Message | Responsibility |
|----------------------|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| As and when required | Consultation Mailing List Email | Relevant parties who have signed up for the mailing list subscription on hub | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of consultation approach • Provide an update on activity • Highlighting how people can have a say/get involved | Business Intelligence |
| Jan 2015 (TBC) | Chief Executive message | Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising of Council’s approach to consultation • Framework to support consultation activity • Hub to help promote and manage online consultation • Who to contact for advice/support | Comms |
| TBC | Email signature on staff emails | Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • How to have a say | Comms |
| TBC | Plasma screens – local offices, libraries, Waverley Court | Staff/Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s new consistent approach to consultation • How to have a say | Comms |
| TBC | Written briefing/update to Edinburgh MSPs and MPs | MSPs/MPs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising of Council’s approach to consultation • Framework to support consultation activity • Hub to help promote and manage online consultation • Benefits for users/public/stakeholders • More joined up city-wide approach to having a say and feeding back to public/stakeholders | Comms |

| Date | Channel | Audience | Message | Responsibility |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|----------------|
| TBC | Press release | Key stakeholders & MSPs/MPs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising of Council’s approach to consultation • Framework to support consultation activity • Hub to help promote and manage online consultation • Benefits for users/public/stakeholders • More joined up city-wide approach to having a say and feeding back to public/stakeholders | Comms |
| As and when required | Promotion via articles on Newsbeat: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consulting Edinburgh framework 2. Consultation Hub (using case studies) | All staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising of Council’s approach to consultation • Framework to support consultation activity • Hub to help promote and manage online consultation • Who to contact for support/advice | Comms |

| Update on promotional activity by service area | |
|--|--|
| Children and Families | <p>Two consultations are currently open and on the hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Review of Community Access to Schools consultation which aims to improve access and ensure that local communities can benefit from the facilities in their neighbourhoods, particularly the state of the art facilities that are available in many of our newer secondary schools. • The Integrated Services for Children and Young People consultation which asks for the views of young people on their experience of using NHS and Council services. Young people's views will feed in to the integration of services involving Children and Families and the NHS. <p>Further consultations will be added over the coming period.</p> <p>More staff from across the service area will be trained in early 2015 on how to use the consultation hub.</p> <p>A presentation will be delivered to the Senior Management Team in January and the framework and hub will subsequently be rolled out to managers across the service area.</p> |
| Corporate Governance | <p>Business Intelligence has been providing briefing sessions to the various service area management teams throughout 2014. A date is still to be confirmed for the team to provide an update to CGMT in early 2015.</p> <p>Business Intelligence has continued to provide support to other service areas regarding consultation activity and usage of the framework and hub. They have been liaising closely with service leads and the consultation hub client manager to ensure the integration of the hub into Council business is as seamless as possible.</p> <p>Since October, the team has assisted with the uploading of 18 consultation records to the hub.</p> <p>Communications Service has been supporting the CRCG with the development and implementation of the communications plan for Consulting Edinburgh. A dedicated communications officer will support the CRCG throughout 2015 with awareness raising and promotional activities.</p> |
| Economic Development | <p>Economic Development Management Team were briefed on the new framework and hub on 5 September 2014.</p> <p>Currently there is one consultation open on the consultation hub – the Leith Economic Strategy.</p> <p>A service lead has been identified to manage consultation activity across the service and is the main contact for any consultation hub enquiries.</p> |

Update on promotional activity by service area

Health and Social Care

All consultation activity is overseen by the Health and Social Care Performance Improvement meeting, which is chaired by the Chief Social Work Officer and attended by all senior managers.

A smaller 'core-group' of officers from research and information, quality assurance and communications meets regularly to audit consultation, arrangements for aggregate needs assessment and consultation about registered services.

H&SC has undertaken five major service consultations in the past year, two of which are still open or about to close. The three closed consultations all have action plans which are monitored by multi-agency groups involving a range of stakeholders.

Two high profile consultations are planned for the next six months. The first on the Integration (of health and social care) Scheme will launch in mid January. It is a joint consultation with NHS Lothian, who have welcomed having the Council's consultation hub as a main platform for undertaking the consultation. The second will be on the Integrated Strategic Plan, which will be drafted collaboratively with a prescribed list of a wide range of representatives and thereafter go out for consultation to communities of interest and place.

Services for Communities

Planning & Building Standards: All planning consultations are now co-ordinated by the service delivery team, who will check for content before loading details on the hub. The Local Development Plan (LDP) Project Support Officer will be trained in the use of the consultation hub in preparation for the next round of LDP consultation.

Community Safety: Following the initial training, further hub training will be rolled out to the Community Protection Support Unit in January in preparation for consultation on the Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy.

Housing & Regeneration: Details of the CECIL e-learning module and the offer of support and guidance have been given to staff members planning consultation activity. The Strategy Team, which conducts most of the H&R consultations, has already been fully briefed and has completed the online training. Further briefing sessions on the use of the Framework and Hub are being arranged for the remaining teams.

Neighbourhood Partnership Teams: On approval of the Consultation Framework, the neighbourhood teams carried out a promotional programme across each of the 6 neighbourhoods through presentations at Team Meetings, email briefings and drop in sessions. Three members of the LCP network have attended the Consultation Hub training and are now developing a programme of activity to cascade the learning across the neighbourhoods in January/February. As many of the staff in the Neighbourhood Teams are accredited through

Update on promotional activity by service area

the Consultation Institute training (and indeed produced the framework) they continue to provide support and advice to colleagues on the framework and used this to inform the Local Community Plan engagement process which was carried out between November 2013 and June 2014.

Other: An additional training/briefing session on the framework and hub was provided to staff in Transport, Corporate Property and SfC Digital Services on 5 December 2014.