

### Audit of Consultation Documentation – August 2020

Following the identification that some responses to the consultation had been omitted from the published document set available for public viewing and the document set provided to Members, and that the issues raised in the submission had not been specifically referenced in the suite of documents which reported on the outcome of the consultation, an audit of all consultation responses was carried out to identify if there were any further missing comments.

#### Documents checked:

- 904 Hard copy Standard and Easy Read questionnaires (matched to Be heard downloads)
- 961 Questionnaire responses downloaded from Be Heard
- Consultation event evaluation sheets
- Notes from small friendship groups facilitated by internal day care centres
- Comments from attendees at consultation events including day centres, professional meetings, forums, public events.
- Notes from the same set of events and meetings
- e-mail correspondence.
- Comments published on consultation website

The content of the hard copy documentation was inputted onto excel spreadsheets. The hard copy documents and excel spreadsheets were then cross checked to ensure that all comments were included, then cross checked again against the published Themed Comments document. Electronic files/folders were cross-checked.

#### Findings and action taken:

A number of documents previously found in the February 2020 Cabinet meeting papers have been revised. They are referred to below but are also listed in the Cabinet Report.

Matching of hard copy questionnaires against responses on Be Heard identified 32 questionnaires that had not been inputted onto Be Heard previously. The analysis report of questionnaire respondents and responses has been updated to include the missed questionnaires (Appendices 2 and 4 revised).

A response made on behalf of a day centre attendee was submitted by e-mail. The response was not included in the analysis of responses. The response has now been included in full as appendix 1a in Appendix 4 (revised) and additional references also included elsewhere in the same document and in the revised Equality Assessment. The response makes reference to several articles and published research which have been downloaded and are available on request.

[dayopportunitiesvision@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:dayopportunitiesvision@birmingham.gov.uk)

An e-mail sent by an Independent Advocate which included a number of comments was omitted. The comments have now been included in the revised Themed Comments document (Appendix 6) at 2487, 367, 2219 and 4785. (Appendix 6 revised). The full response has now also been published at appendix 4 of Appendix 4 Consultation Findings – Common Themes revised.

Checking of comments from all response sources identified 1593 comments that could not be directly matched against the original comments document. The bulk of these appear to have been

recorded at different events but were not submitted for inclusion in the original comments document. Many of the missed comments are very similar to the existing set and because of the process for recording comments at events there is likely to be much duplication. This can be seen in the “Activities” section of the revised Appendix 6 where there are multiple references to different activities that people like to do.

It was previously claimed that a response received from the Conservative Group had not been included in the published document set but, whilst not included as a stand-alone response, the comments submitted were included in the Themed Comments document at 3187, 3188, 199, 1134, 3541. They appear in the revised comments document at 4353, 4354, 242, 1572, 4854. (Appendix 6 revised). The complete response has now been published as appendix 3 in the revised Appendix 4 Consultation Findings – Common Themes revised.

The consultation response submitted by the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee was included in the Themed Comments document at 3345, 3346, 3347, 3492, 2306, 981, 2560. The comments can be found in the revised Themed Comments document at 4508, 4509, 4510, 4766, 3156, 1290, 3483. (Appendix 6 revised). The full response has now also been published at appendix 2 of Appendix 4 Consultation Findings – Common Themes revised.

### **Factors contributing to omission of documents**

There were several factors that contributed to the omission of documents:

- The volume of work generated by the consultation was not suitably considered, resulting in key staff juggling their commitments to this consultation and falling behind in appropriately processing the responses received after each event.
- The large volume of consultation events resulted in the utilisation of different staff and mechanisms to record minutes at events. There was lack of consistency in how information was recorded and then transcribed that led to the omissions outlined.
- There was no definitive, systematic approach to how both electronic and hard copy documents were tracked and filed. This included attachments to e-mails. This led, for example, to sets of comments being filed in different places leading to both much duplication and to comments being omitted from the consultation document set.
- There was limited oversight of systems, and opportunities to interrogate processes were not taken.
- Priority given to meeting arbitrary deadlines rather than conducting the consultation process itself in a thorough manner.

Lessons learned from the audit of missing consultation responses has identified the need for any future consultation or similar activity to consider:

- A project plan which defines how the work will be managed including clear roles and responsibilities.
- A clear governance process, possibly with a level of involvement from experienced, independent individuals.
- Regular checking of administrative processes and products.
- Implement efficient processes for managing correspondence, documentation.
- Ensure effective version control for developing reports and key documents
- Clear instruction and description of what is required for anyone brought in to support activity