



Visioning leading to a Business Plan

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What are we seeking to achieve ?

- How many of your residents understand what the Council has achieved or what it might achieve ?
- If someone moved into your community and attended a PC meeting would they go home at 10.00pm thinking the Council was business like and wish to be associated with it or, would it reinforce their stereotypical view of local councils ?
- If I walked into your local pub and spoke to residents about local services, do you think the PC would be mentioned in a favourable light ?
- If you have answered NO to any of the above, a Business Plan should help.

What is the process ?

- We meet with all councillors and the Clerk but not at a Council Meeting. The setting is informal and all are encouraged to contribute
- The starting point is an 'ice breaker' to reflect on what the Council has achieved for its residents over the past 3 years. Councillors are invited to write down three items on post it notes; these are then grouped and we talk about the success / benefits / problems of each
- Next we move on to what individual councillors would like to see achieved over the next 3 – 5 years; at this point everything is 'in' and nothing 'out'. Again this is a post it note exercise and we look at each idea in turn – predictably these often fall into convenient groups

The process – continued

- From the ideas suggested a 'wish list' emerges, captured by the Clerk and turned into a report for the next appropriate Council or Committee meeting
- A draft Plan is produced looking at priorities for Years 1, 2 & 3
- We go back to the Council and discuss the draft acting as the 'critical friend'
- A consultation version is produced and published by the Council for public comment
- The final version of the Business Plan should be available for the next Annual Parish Meeting

What is the cost ?

- In Sussex & Surrey the CALC does not charge for this service, it probably represents about 6 hours of CALC officer time in total
- Depending upon the nature of the Council's ambitions there could be an implication in research time for the Clerk
- There will be printing costs if a number of hard copies are required but the likelihood is that the Council will make use of its website with a few copies available for those who do not have internet access

Benefits

- Creates clarity of purpose, the public have a better understanding of the ability of the PC to support the community
- Helps to focus the minds of councillors
- Assists the Council in its staff appraisal process where clear objectives have been set
- It is a no cost / low cost 'quick win' for a council needing to rebuild public confidence
- Gives the Council a measure of confidence in dealing with other agencies
- We can think of no dis-benefits !