

Derbyshire County Council

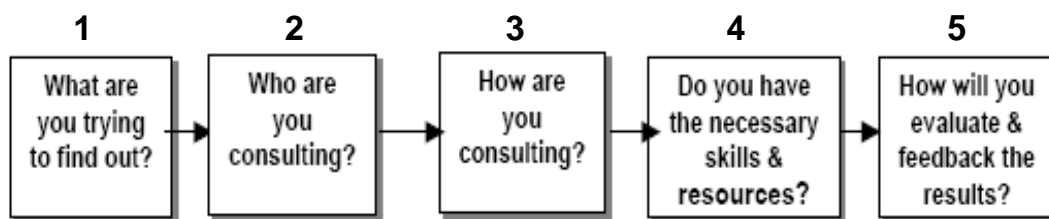
Consultation Tool Kit

Introduction

Consultation must never be a tick box exercise and must always be carried out in a genuine and honest way. We must also demonstrate to people who have taken part how their views have made a difference.

Effective planning is essential when conducting any type of consultation. This toolkit provides an easy to understand guide, covering the key points that should be considered when carrying out consultation on behalf of the County Council.

The diagram below illustrates the key questions that need to be addressed when planning a consultation exercise.



1. What are you trying to find out?

Before undertaking any consultation you should carefully consider if and why it is necessary and what you hope to achieve. To do this you should:

- Identify the primary purpose of the consultation and what you hope to find out.
- Think about what you plan to do with the outcomes, and what decisions might be influenced.
- Consider what information is already available. Check what other consultation is being undertaken, or has been previously undertaken, by the Council and the Council's partners. To do this, speak to your departmental representative on the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Group. The Group is responsible for maintaining a Consultation Calendar which records all completed and planned consultation, this is available on the County Council's website: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/have_your_say/planned_consultation/default.asp
- Conduct a literature search or search the internet as there may be general research that you could use.

- Think about different types of engagement and decide on the level of involvement that you require to achieve the aims and objectives of your exercise:
 - Promoting/consideration (informing/raising awareness)
 - Researching (asking for views and ideas)
 - Developing/improving (moving towards partnership)
 - Devolving (empowerment).
- Decide whether this will be a periodic consultation or a one off exercise.

2. Who are you consulting?

It is important to ensure that you consult with an appropriate number and range of people, groups and organisations. To do this you should:

- Identify who the key stakeholders are and ensure that you engage with them. Possible groups include:
 - Derbyshire residents
 - Service users, non-service users, future service users
 - Partners
 - Local businesses
 - Voluntary organisations
 - Community groups
 - Parish, town or district/borough councils
 - Other public bodies
 - Council staff
 - Trade unions
 - Elected Members
 - Service providers
 - Other authorities.

You should also include analysis of why they might be interested, what their interest may be and how they may be affected by proposals. A useful tool is to plot stakeholders after considering influence and interest.

Influence	Hi (manage with care)	
	Lo (low priority)	Hi
Interest		

Analysis of these groups will then inform the development of appropriate methods of consultation, engagement and communications which can be identified using the table below as an example. *(Taken from DFRS recent consultation plan)*

	Consultation method						Communications					
	Residents' roadshows (4 min)	Briefings to staff (see appendix)	Internet survey	Intranet survey	Briefings (Written and verbal)	Deliberative events (2 min)	Direct email/letter	Media relations	Website	Social media channels	Internal communications	Articles in partner publications
Residents/General public	X		X			X		X	X	X		X
ICIB (Minority group rep)			X			X	X		X			
Community groups including those using station facilities			X		X				X	X		X
BME groups							X	X	X	X		X
Faith groups			X				X	X	X	X		X
LGBT groups			X				X	X	X	X		X
Over 55s	X		X		X				X			X
Mental Health Groups	X								X			X
HQ-based staff		X		X					X		X	

- Consider how you are going to reach all relevant groups. Some groups can be "hard to reach" (see next section).
- Determine the geographical area where the consultation will take place. It may be all of Derbyshire or a particular area.
- Decide how many people will be consulted. This will have an impact on the time it will take to carry out the consultation, analyse the results and the resources required (see later section).
- If you wish to consult with schools (pupils or teachers) liaise with the CAYA Head of Information Services CAYA.information.enquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk). The unit acts as a gatekeeper for Council consultations with schools. They may already have some of the information you need. Also the unit maintains a consultation calendar and would be able to identify the most suitable time to consult.
- If you are consulting with the voluntary sector it is important to recognise the timescale required for effective consultation. National guidelines suggest 12 weeks as an appropriate timeframe since many voluntary and community organisations represent a wide range of stakeholders. The Derbyshire Compact sets out a framework to guide relationships between the statutory sector, voluntary and community organisations:
(http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/partnerships/voluntary_sector/derbyshire_compact/default.asp)

Consulting 'hard to reach' groups

Experience has shown that there are some groups in the community that are 'hard to reach', these groups include:

- Young people
- Older people
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- People with a disability
- Travellers
- People who are homeless
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups
- At risk groups

Clearly to engage people in consultation you must meet the needs of those you are trying to reach. Therefore it may be beneficial to consult some community groups separately to overcome particular obstacles to involvement, such as language, literacy, confidence and trust and to identify any distinct service needs that a particular group may have.

There may be a number of measures that may be relevant, examples include:

- Holding events during the day, evening or both dependent upon the circumstance of those you are trying to reach.
- Providing crèche facilities at consultation events where you would like to gain the views of parents of young children.
- Ensuring venues are accessible by people with disabilities by providing transport and selecting venues with wheelchair access
- Providing appropriate methods for communication such as induction loop systems for use with hearing aids, signers and interpreters.
- Providing materials in different formats, such as large print, on tape and in translation.
- Being sensitive to cultural traditions and the beliefs of faith groups so that consultation venues are appropriate and suitable refreshments are provided.
- Being aware of regular times and days of worship of different faith groups so that meeting times are appropriate.
- Using play-based techniques for consulting children or innovative techniques that would appeal to young people such as video feedback.
- Using rural events as a focus to consult sparsely populated rural areas.

The profile of the population in a particular area may influence your consultation methodology. The Census Summary Profiles published by the Policy and Research Division are available on the Derbyshire Observatory and provide a quick and convenient way of finding out about the age structure and ethnicity of a population in a particular ward or district:

<https://observatory.derbyshire.gov.uk/IAS/Custom/Pages/profiles/census/summary.aspx>

For further information about Derbyshire statistics contact the Policy and Research Division (ext 38253).

Sample size

In some situations, for example when your target group is small or easy to access, then it may be possible to consult with your entire target group. In many other situations it will not be possible to consult with everyone so you may need to select a sample of the total target group (or population). Generally the larger the sample size used the more reliable your results are likely to be but the sample size may be limited by the resources available. For further advice on your required sample size please contact the Policy and Research Division (ext 38253).

3. How are you planning to consult?

There are a range of tools and techniques available for undertaking consultation. Some of the approaches to consultation and engagement are set out below and include:

- Questionnaires – paper, online or face-to-face
- Telephone surveys
- Interviews
- Citizens' Panels
- Public meetings
- Focus groups
- Piloting
- Complaints and comments systems
- Roadshows and exhibitions
- Press releases and articles in Your Derbyshire, on the County Council website and Dnet and other local media
- Leaflets and posters (including information in different formats e.g. Braille, large print, on tape, minority languages)
- E-consultation methodologies e.g. on-line surveys, web pages, text messaging
- Meetings of existing user groups, local area forums and other forums
- Members surgeries
- Planning for Real, mystery shoppers

Increasing levels of participation

Different groups will respond better to different consultation methods so it is important to consider the needs of your target audience. Incentives are an effective way of increasing the number of people participating in a consultation exercise. Successful methods for improving participation are:

- Conducting the consultation exercise at venues already frequented by the target population, essentially “taking the consultation to the people”.

- Reassuring participants that their individual comments will be treated confidentially and where appropriate adopting an approach that ensures the anonymity of participants.
- Offering an incentive to participate such as a prize or gift
- Payment of travel expenses to attend events
- Providing facilities for those involved, such as refreshments and childcare facilities
- Creating the atmosphere of an “event”
- Using participative consultation methods and making it fun

Take into account the time available. How quickly are answers needed and how long will it take for responses to be analysed. If you are preparing material in different formats for example large print, Braille or translated documents or require an interpreter to attend an event, allow sufficient time for the material to be prepared and distributed or to arrange a interpreter.

Advocacy groups and consultation forums

Different approaches have to be adopted in order to gain the opinions of all groups within the community. Rather than making assumptions about what technique would work best, talk to the target group about the best way to consult them. Working alongside community leaders can often be beneficial as you may not be seen as impartial. Consultation through advocacy groups may be a worthwhile approach as you can benefit from the experiences of someone working, on a daily basis, with a particular sector of the community. In addition to this there are a number of forums that have been set up to give a voice to specific groups in the community. Examples include the Derbyshire Youth Forum, the Over 50's Forum and the BME Forum.

A directory of forums and advocacy groups has been established. The directory provides contact details, information about the expertise of each group and identifies possible ways of consulting. This document contains personal information and so has been removed from this publication for use internally by County Council employees, please contact the Policy and Research Division for details (ext 38253).

4. Do you have the necessary skills and resources?

Before beginning any consultation exercise it is important to think about the skills and resources that will be required to plan and carry out the consultation and analyse the results. As part of this process, you should also consider when the results of your exercise are required, so that any deadlines can be met.

Resourcing your consultation

Careful planning of resources for your consultation will help you avoid running out of time and money. Costs could include:

- Costs for carrying out the consultation itself, including consultation design, printing, postage and analysis of the results.
- The anticipated capacity required in terms of people and other competing priorities.
- The potential resources required implementing changes required following the outcomes of the exercise.

Help with designing and analysing questionnaires

The Policy and Research Division in the Corporate Resources Department provides advice on research, questionnaire design and analysis.

- They can advise you on how to obtain and use statistics from a wide variety of sources.
- Provide advice and support in the design and analysis of questionnaires.
- The Division has a professional subscription to Survey Monkey for online survey design.

For further details please contact the Policy and Research Division on ext 38253 or email haveyoursay@derbshire.gov.uk

Help with the design and preparation of consultation events

Professionally trained facilitators are available through the Facilitators Network. This is a multi-agency network of facilitators who can assist in event design and preparation and in some circumstance will be available to lead, record and evaluate a consultation event. For further details please contact the Policy and Research Division (ext 38253).

Purchasing translation and interpreter services

Details of businesses that have previously been used to provide signers, interpreters, translators, or have provided documents in different formats such as audio tape, can be found on the Dnet

http://dnet/resources/translating_interpreting/default.asp

A Braille writer is located at Chesterfield Library. For more information contact library staff on 01629 533 400 or email chesterfield.library@derbyshire.gov.uk

Choosing a venue

If you are looking for a venue for a consultation event a good starting point is the list of council owned venues available on Dnet:

http://dnet/meetings_and_diary/default.asp

An approved list of external venues is currently being compiled by DCC Procurement, a link to the website page showing this list will be added after 1 April 2017.

5. How will you evaluate and feedback results?

When you have carried out consultation, it is important to feed back the results to everyone involved. This is not only important for helping to improve perceptions of the Council by keeping people informed, but it may also

encourage them to take part in future consultation exercises. If you do not provide feedback, people are likely to think that the Council has not taken their views into account. At the end of your consultation exercise you should:

- Tell those who have taken part what will happen next and how and when feedback will be given.
- Having involved people in a consultation exercise and obtained their views and ideas it is vital that some form of report-back is provided so that consultees can see how their contribution has shaped the final decision making.
- Be clear about what decisions have been taken and on what grounds.
- Highlight what aspects of the methodology worked or didn't work and why.
- Consider whether the approach achieved value for money.
- Identify lessons learned and how future consultations should be modified.

Sharing information

If your consultation results do not contain any personal data or contain anything that would lead to individuals being identified you can share the results with partners. However, if you are collecting personal information and passing it to a partner organisation you must comply with the Data Protection Act and the individual consultees must have given their consent for this to happen.

6. Data Protection

When consulting ideally you should not collect any 'personal data' about the consultees, personal data is any data which allows an individual to be identified. The Data Protection Act 1988 sets out how information must be processed. The Act states that when you collect personal data about people you must process and store it fairly, for example limiting access to any files and all files should be password protected. If it is necessary to collect respondent contact details these should be stored separately from the consultation responses.

Version Control

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1.0	Policy & Research, Chief Executive's Office	9/3/2017	Barbara Ackrill, (01629) 5382523 barbara.ackrill@derbyshire.gov.uk