

# Consulting with People



Customers / Stakeholders

## The Toolkit

November 2013

# Introduction : Consulting People

## **Welcome to the Toolkit :**

It will help you to consult and involve people in what we do. It is designed to lead you through your consultation to develop a bespoke consultation product suited to those you need to consult. It contains simple tools to enable you to consult effectively

## **Everyone's different :**

Everyone has a unique set of needs and views. It's your job to understand and respond to them. This Toolkit will help you to put customers at the heart of everything we do

## **The 8 Key Rules of Consultation – the Melton approach :**

When consulting – Melton's 8 Key Rules of Consultation are to help you focus on what is needed and are the Council's commitment to people being consulted– keep these in mind throughout your consultation project

## The Melton View

- The results of your consultation will become part of what we know about our community and this, as well as public opinion including compliments, comments and complaints is collectively known as 'The Melton View'
- Before you start a consultation exercise, you should consult 'The Melton View' folder on the Q Drive to ensure there is no duplication in your proposal and to collect relevant information to your consultation

# 'The Melton View' data storage ...

## 1. Consultation Documents

A new folder is to be created on the Q Drive for each new consultation and all documents and emails associated with the project are to be saved into that folder

## 2. Annual Programme of Consultation

There is an Annual Programme of Consultation. This is on the Q Drive and is to be filled in as soon as you have an approved consultation project and when the project has ended to show the status of the results and whether public feedback is available

## 3. Consultation Request and Summary Forms

There is a Consultation Request Form as well as a Summary Form to be filled in when you start and end a consultation exercise. These forms are available in the same folder as above. These are part of the structure of consultation that is set out in the strategy and in the toolkit. They ensure there is approval for the consultation, that you have thought about what is needed for the exercise and that feedback is recorded for future reference and learning

## 4. SNAP

The electronic consultation package we are using is SNAP. There are staff trained how to use SNAP and a list is available on the Q Drive. SNAP enables us to retain the data from previous and current consultations and use the information in different ways by requesting specialised reports. This is a method of retaining and accessing customer views from previous consultation projects and also forms part of 'The Melton View'

**First of all - ensure you have approval before moving forward with your consultation proposal ...**

## Pre-Consultation ...

**Before starting a consultation exercise, ensure that you have completed a Consultation Request Form and considered why the consultation is needed, who you will be consulting and when would be the best time for this project.**

**The proposal must then be approved by Management Team before you start ...**

Stage	Responsible Person/s	Action
Pre-Consultation stages	Head of Service	Recognition of need for consultation/seeking views eg. new initiative, policy change, service improvement, developing priorities etc
	Lead Officer	Review existing 'Melton View' data to reduce duplication and understand existing customer views to help inform options, method of consultation, gaps in those who respond ie. hard to reach
	Lead Officer	Complete Consultation Request Form
	Lead Officer	Management Team to approve request. Consultation added to Annual Consultation Plan
Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4	Lead Officer	Follow 8 Key Rules and Toolkit to carry out consultation
Stages 5, 6 and 7	Lead Officer	Analyse results and report to decision-makers Decisions and feedback report publicised
Post consultation	Lead Officer	Complete Consultation Summary Form including any learning from the process

# Our Commitment : The 8 Key Rules of Consultation

It is the Council's aim to work within the following rules when carrying out any consultation :

## **1. Consultation and the Democratic Process**

Councillors and officers will always need to weigh the views expressed through consultation against a wide range of other factors: such as legislation and government guidance; demographic data; financial costs; environmental impact  
Councillors and officers will often have to make their own judgment about the weight to be given to one or other of the views expressed. They may also have to consider carefully whether the aspirations and needs of future generations – who will perhaps be more affected by any change – might differ significantly from those of today's population  
The results of consultation cannot be a substitute for the democratic process – and do not replace the legitimate role of Councillors in decision-making  
Results of consultation together with other relevant factors will be provided to Councillors in a format which enables openness and transparency of decision-making

## **2. Time consultations well and allow sufficient time to respond**

Consultations should be timed to allow the results to influence policy/proposal development  
Wide scale public consultations, eg borough-wide or large parts of it, should run for a period of 12 weeks and for no less than 6 weeks  
Reasonable time will be allowed for people to respond to a consultation

## **3. Clearly present relevant information and encourage informed opinion**

The consultation should clearly state the proposal, why we are consulting, and how we will use the findings  
The consultation should provide enough information to enable consultees to give an informed opinion and not simply an instant reaction  
This information should be written in plain English

Continued ....

# Our Commitment : The 8 Key Rules of Consultation cont'd...

## **4. Be well targeted and reach out to seldom heard groups**

The views of those people/areas most affected by the proposal should be sought

Attempts should be made to listen to the views of non-users, especially when service changes are being consulted on

Attempts should be made to include the views of groups frequently excluded or overlooked

Consultations should consider the needs of people with impaired sight or hearing or people whose first language is not English

Consultations should take into account the protected characteristics of the Single Equality Scheme where appropriate

## **5. Offer genuine options and ask objective questions**

Where options are offered, they should be realistic and deliverable

Surveys and questions should be written in an objective way allowing people to express their views

## **6. Be well planned, managed and coordinated**

The Council's Consultation Toolkit contains step-by-step instructions to enable us to effectively manage consultations

## **7. Be well communicated**

We will publicise consultations and make attempts to let people know they are happening

Major consultations – eg. borough-wide or affecting a large number of people – will be publicised by the Council's website, press release and in Council publications such as 'Melton Mail' and the Tenants' Newsletter

## **8. Provide fair, accessible feedback**

We will publish the findings of consultations and later how they have been used

The findings will be reported in a balanced way

# The 3 Models of Consultation

There are 3 models of consultation and each one has a different purpose. It is important for you to know and to make it clear to people at the outset whether the Council is information sharing, consulting or encouraging participation in decision-making. The 3 models of consultation are :

## **Public Information ‘Here’s what we are going to do’**

Public information is about the Council informing people of its intentions, procedures and practices. This level of consultation will underpin more active participation and will often act as a precursor to other levels. However, in isolation it is only appropriate where a range of options regarding the items under discussion is not available  
**eg. press releases, leaflets, website, public awareness campaigns**

## **Public Consultation ‘Here are our options, what do you think?’**

Public consultation is where people are invited to express their views, usually on a range of options and on which the Council is willing to use public opinion as an important criterion for deciding upon a particular course of action  
**eg. questions where options are given with background information as to what each option means so that informed choices can be made, can include opportunity for personal opinion at each stage**

## **Public Participation ‘We want you to help us develop our options and decide our actions’**

Public participation is where people have a significant voice in the planning and decision-making process. Public participation, as a consultative measure is only appropriate either where no pre-determined decisions have been made or where the Council is willing to be led or influenced by public feedback  
**eg. forums, partnerships and focus groups such as the Melton Local Plan Reference Groups, working with partners and customers on the co-design of the online process for Council Tax support**



## The need to consult people on what we do for them is becoming more and more important ...

### Because :

- We are a customer focused organisation
- Local people are less likely to accept poor quality services or decisions they disagree with
- Engaging with people, ensures we are responsive to local needs
- Involvement in service development gives customer satisfaction
- This in turn, creates a good relationship between the Council and its public
- Well respected Councils listen to their electorate and it makes for best practice
- following a recognised process of asking people's views on matters that affect their lives helps avoid legal challenge

The legislation on the 'duty to involve' was repealed with the introduction of the Localism Act however it is our aim to consult local people on services that affect them and we want this to be part of our culture at Melton

# The 7 Stages of Consultation ...

Once you have approval for your consultation, the following are the 7 key stages for consultation at Melton Borough Council. This toolkit will give you the tools to work through the key stages ...

## Stage 1 :

Decide **WHO**  
to consult with



## Stage 2 :

Decide **WHAT** to  
consult on



## Stage 3

Decide **HOW** to  
ask them

## Stage 4 :

**START** the  
Consultation



## Stage 5 :

**EVALUATE &**  
use the results

## Stage 6 :

**MAKE** decisions

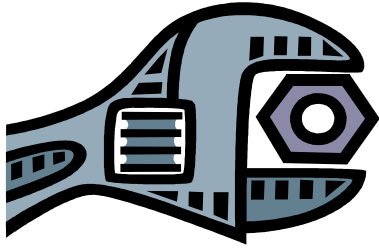


## Stage 7 :

**FEEDBACK &**  
**SUMMARY**

## Stage 1 : Deciding WHO to consult

- Everyone involved in a service has a view on how it could be improved. Non users, staff, Councillors, suppliers, local people, partners, agencies and organisations as well as your key customers will all be full of ideas on how to improve the service
- You will need to work out who your stakeholders are and plan to consult them all. You should start with the main customers/users of your service. For example if you were to consult on making improvements to a local park, you would probably need to consult with park users, people who live nearby, local agencies or groups, businesses, the contractor and people who don't use the park (to find out why not)
- You can start here by thinking which service, issue or challenge you want to consult on. Try to think in terms of the smallest service unit that's appropriate eg. Pest Control not Environmental Health
- There is a list of community groups on the Q Drive who are to be consulted for all consultations to ensure we meet our equalities standards



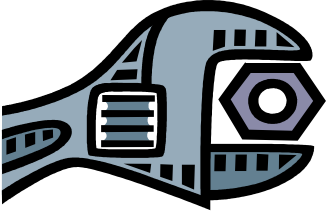
The Tools that follow on the next pages should help you to map out who your stakeholders are. There is a checklist to give you some ideas of who your consultees should be and a reminder to make special efforts to listen to certain types of people who are sometimes harder to reach

### Remember :

- Keep a record of who you are going to consult and why (eg. for Equality Impact assessments)
- For larger consultations, develop a plan and use a phased approach – who will you listen to first?
- When using a staged approach, keep people informed along the way eg via web updates/newsletters/press releases at milestones

**Tip**

**You cannot consult with absolutely everyone about absolutely everything - do whatever you feel an objective observer would think reasonable and appropriate ...**



## Use this checklist to identify your stakeholders

### Key Customers

- People who pay directly
- People who pay indirectly (eg. through council tax)
- Users of 'collective' services (eg. roads, street lights) – think 360 degrees
- Internal customers (eg. other staff)

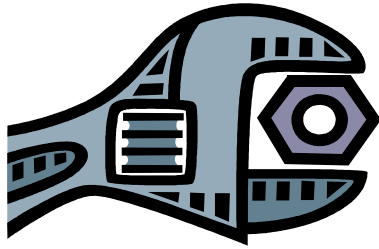
### Non-Users

- People who are unaware of the service
- Dissatisfied ex-customers
- People who might need the service at a later date

### Others

- People we enforce against or who are regulated (eg. landlords)
- Residents/local people
- Businesses
- Interested agencies – voluntary, private, public sector
- People affected by policies or development (eg. planning)
- Local Councillors, Neighbourhood/Ward Partnerships, MP's, carers' advocates, community boards etc

**Make a note in the electronic file of who you intend to consult and why and include this information in your report to decision-makers**



## Consulting with 'hard to reach' groups and those with protected characteristics

**For lots of reasons, you will need to make particular arrangements to find out some people's views ...**

Firstly, be clear who you want to reach – 'hard to reach' groups may vary depending on the nature of your consultation and what you are trying to find out.... whose views do you want? When you know which groups you wish to talk to, remember that groups are not homogenous and what works for one, may not work for another

**REMEMBER** : There is a list of groups on the Q Drive which is to be used for all consultations to ensure we meet our equalities standards

### Ask Others

Is anyone else in the Council or other organisations (eg. the PCT, Police) already consulting with the group you wish to reach? You may be able to use their consultees. Otherwise, does anyone else want to reach the same group as you – you may be able to do joint consultation and save resources

Think which organisations may already be in touch with the group that you wish to reach, eg. the Youth Offending Team of the Council, voluntary organisations such as Age Concern etc. They may be able to put you in touch with the group you want to talk to, or give you advice on how to reach them

# Think creatively ...

- Everyone can be reached somehow
- Think about what the group you are trying to reach does, reads, where they go etc – can you use this information to find a way to reach them?
- Reaching a group may be as simple as changing the venue, format or time of a meeting for example changing to a venue with an induction loop for those with hearing loss, using an interpreter for those whose first language is not English and changing times to fit round school times if trying to reach parents
- Reaching a group may often involve going to them instead of expecting them to come to you, eg. going to a 'drop in' to talk to homeless people, going to a skate park to talk to young people

## Remember other barriers

- Remember that you may have to overcome suspicion or mistrust of the Council, fears of not being listened to or disinterest
- You may also need to take time to build a relationship with groups of people including those from 'hard to reach' groups before collecting views

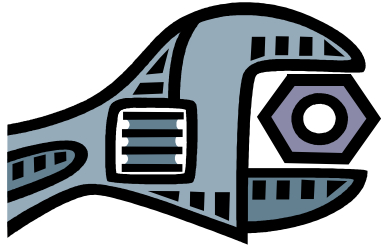
## Stage 2 : Deciding WHAT to consult on

Once you have identified the people you need to consult with, you can start thinking about what questions to ask - here are a few key points ...

- Don't just ask about things that you think are appropriate – think from the customer's point of view. What do they want to tell you about?
- Think clearly about your objectives for consulting people – why are you doing it? What decisions will it influence?
- Value for Money means we have to challenge the way the service is now and question if the need could be met more effectively. Use consultation to explore this key issue
- Avoid asking about things that are just interesting to know – focus on issues that you can change or strongly influence

Thinking about the points above should lead you to some ideas about what questions to ask. Once you have done that - use the following tools to draft some question areas - you can turn them into finished questions later - keep a record of why you chose these questions as well as a note of any changes made later ...



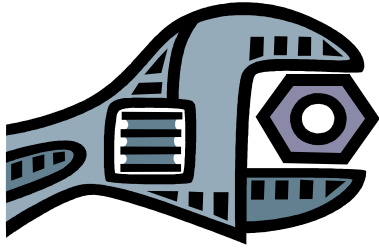


Think about your objectives for consulting

**Which of these do you want to do ...**

- Compare and challenge the existing service
- Look for unmet needs
- Shape the way your service is delivered
- Measure satisfaction with the service
- Prioritise future spending
- Set targets for the service
- Check out reaction to new ideas or initiatives
- Look for quality improvements
- Check opinions, views, attitudes

**It's probably most of these and some of your own ...**



## Ideas for Question

**Here are some ideas of the type of question areas you might want to ask ...**

- What do people like most/least about the service?
- Is the standard or level of the service right?
- Is the frequency of the service acceptable?
- Is the service reliable?
- What about comfort, convenience, safety factors?
- How good is your customer service (e.g. helpfulness, friendliness)?
- Is the range of services available appropriate?
- Is the service equally accessible by everyone?
- Is there enough information available about the service?
- Is the service good value?
- Remember to include the Equalities Monitoring Form within your consultation

**Tip**

**Questions and response options can be developed from using information already held in 'The Melton View' such as customer insight, social media feedback, previous consultations**

## Stage 3 : HOW to consult

**You should have identified the key stakeholders for your service and thought about what to ask them. You will now be able to decide how to go about it. Some key points are :**

- Use the following tools to help select possible consultation methods (eg. focus group, survey etc)
- Think especially about the **different needs** of different people you wish to consult with – and get a representative sample
- To get the most customer feedback, you should use a range of methods for each consultation – one focus group will not do. You need to **‘custom build’** a consultation solution for each service or issue
- Build on what consultation you already have in place, and again look for opportunities to join up with other services/outside agencies. Conduct joint consultation if possible
- If you are asking about satisfaction with your service, it is usually best to do this after change has been made so that you can assess whether the changes have made a difference or when there is opportunity for making changes

You will probably need to use a mix of '**quantitative**' methods (eg. surveys where we can measure satisfaction or opinions/surveys numerically) and '**qualitative**' methods (eg. focus groups where we look for more in depth opinions and personal views)

Different types of people prefer different consultation methods. Also some methods work better for some things than others

Think of the environment and the Council's aim to be paperlight when deciding on your method.

The following tools should give you some ideas

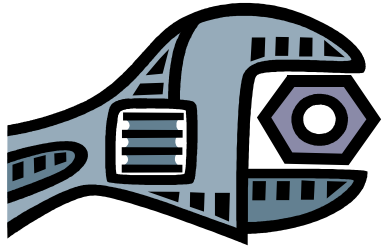
**Tip**

**You can ask for questions to be incorporated into other Council surveys ...**

**Help**

**Phone 502441 or email [sevans@melton.gov.uk](mailto:sevans@melton.gov.uk) if you need help ...**

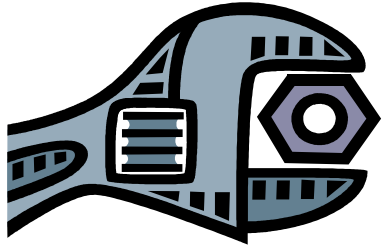
# What methods to use and when



**Research has shown that different people prefer different consultation methods**

## **Here are a few clues :**

- The most popular methods generally are 'having the information sent to them' and 'surveys' ie. home based consultation
- There is much less support for public meetings or anything that involves leaving the home
- People on higher incomes are more likely to favour being on panels/ groups etc.
- People on lower incomes are generally less keen on getting involved and feel 'information poor'
- Young people like focus groups and street interviews
- Older people often like Neighbourhood Forums



## Consultation Methods continued ...

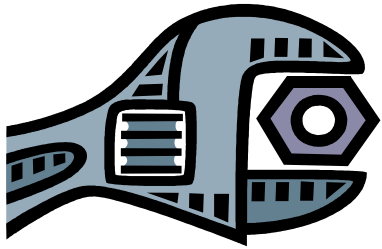
All consultation methods have strengths and weaknesses. Some are more representative than others, some get a more 'in depth' response, some are best if you want a quick response :

- **Questionnaires by post** often get a limited response (20% or less) but can be good for when you want to give information as well
- **Focus Groups** explore issues in detail from the customers' point of view - they are good for getting common sense opinions on complex issues
- **Telephone Surveys** are great when you need a quick response and have simple questions
- **Personal Interviews** are often the most statistically reliable method because you can control the number and type of people that you ask

Tip

Use a mix of these methods to ensure you reach everyone...

## Different types of consultation



The following table shows the main methods of consulting and involving people that you could use ...

**Please view the information on the next 3 pages to help you in selecting which method(s) to use which best suit your aims ...**

**Make a note of what method(s) you choose and why and include this information in your report to decision-makers**

Method	Description	Pros	Cons	Costs
Users on committees/panels	Stakeholder involvement in decision-making bodies	Has real power. Shows users perspective of service provider.	Users may get too close representativeness	Low
Neighbourhood appraisal/audit	Local people conduct own study and prepare analysis and plan	Involves residents in whole process. Builds skills and local pride.	Needs big input in training and support	Low
Large-scale community events	Various. Bring together locals to give views/produce plan.	Can take very full view. Can build consensus and pride in result.	Also needs much pre work and balancing ideas.	Medium /High
Policy conferences	Extended large meeting, including key stakeholders, breaking into smaller workshops	Gets key people focused clearly on issue. Improves partnership and joined-up working	May be too big to achieve consensus or decision. Raises expectations	Medium /High
Community Associations	Management committee for community centre.	Builds local partnership, skills and involvement.	Asks a lot from people. May miss majority view.	Low
Round tables/user forums	Groups of stakeholders meeting regularly to discuss issues.	Bring in important variety of views, knowledge, etc. Can build consensus	Need to be well prepared and supported	Low
Citizens' Juries	Extended group discussing issue and hearing/seeking advice	In-depth look at complex issues. Shows how evidence affects views.	Small selected group may lack credibility. Much work.	High
Deliberative groups	Participants gather and have information and chance to discuss before giving opinion.	Gets various points of view. Allows in-depth consideration. Shows how views change	Requires quite skilled preparation and facilitation.	Medium
Tenants Associations	Body of tenants (or other stakeholders?) meeting formally.	Very self-led, strong local involvement.	May be a minority. May get adversarial.	Low
Focus Groups	Group of people talk about issues and share views	Good in-depth look, includes feelings, responses and results of discussion. Can look at certain types of people.	Views of just a few may be misleading. People can change when in groups	Medium
Referendums	An open vote on a particular issue for all the public	Easy to understand. Gives a clear message. Open to all in theory	Big effort to set up. Usual turn-out worries.	High



Method	Description	Pros	Cons	Costs
Simulations	Proposed arrangements or ideas are tried out in role-play with stakeholder representatives	May get good idea of complex and unpredictable possibilities. Shares points of view	Needs good facilitation and running. Can only involve a few people.	Medium
Residents' Panel	List of people who will respond to periodic surveys	Can be quicker and cheaper than one-off surveys. Gets into how views change, who thinks what and why.	Will pick out more interested types not the average person	Medium /High
Neighbourhood Forums	Locally-run bodies which hold public meetings on local issues	Address local issues. Independent image. Can respond to approaches	Risk hearing only an active minority.	Low
Public Meetings	Open meeting called on specific issue	Allow expression of view on important current topic	Can be adversarial and dominated by minority. Not liked by most people.	Low
Specific surveys	Various research into customer needs, views, experience, etc	Done well can be clear, fair and very informative. Can give good figures	Bad surveys can give poor information. May miss certain groups.	Varies
Ongoing surveys	Monitoring of satisfaction with eg. high volume service	Brings standards into service evaluation. Shows trends over time. Can contact less vocal users.	Time-consuming	Medium
Residents' surveys	Wide-ranging survey, hundreds of interviews every 2 years.	High accuracy, credible. Trends over time. Representative sample.	Relatively expensive. Not quick.	High
Video Box	Booth with camera open to public record views.	Allows very expensive feedback. Needs no literacy or third party.	Can be tricky to organise. Scares some people off.	Medium
Electronic Polling	Use internet, etc, to get views, perhaps set up debates	Good potential for debate and live interaction or access at any time from home or public terminal.	IT puts off many people, others have little or no access to the kit.	Low after set-up
Quality Check phonecalls	Quick follow-up to service delivery to check quality/satisfaction	Quick and customer-responsive. Easy to administer	May be too much for customers	Low
Complaints and suggestions	System to make it easy for customers to give feedback	Fairly easy to do. Customer views are key. Promotes satisfaction	Only gets views of local minority – often negative	Medium
Mystery Shoppers	Researchers go into service delivery process as users	Combines user perspective with consulter's questioning.	Does not involve real users (normally)	Low

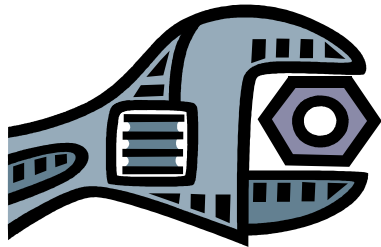
Method	Description	Pros	Cons	Costs
Advice Leaflets	Advice on - service & process - how to get involved, who to contact etc	Reaches users - content is relevant	Relies on customer effort for feedback	Low
Newspapers	Promotion of consultation activities and results	Easy to arrange. Reaches lots of people	Relies on customer effort for feedback	Low
Reports	Detailed information on subject and changes - able to comment on content before implementation	Easy to arrange – relies on good literacy skills and high interest in subject	Time consuming – does not always involve users	Low
<b>The following item to be inserted before Citizens' Juries</b>				
Social Media eg. Facebook, Twitter	Ongoing dialogue with users on all Council issues	Builds trust and two way dialogue with customers Easy to arrange Public opinion flows constantly	Sharing storage and capture of views Needs constant monitoring to manage Council reputation Can be time consuming	Low

1. Users on committees / panels
2. Neighbourhood appraisal
3. Large scale community events
4. Policy conferences
5. Community associations
6. Round tables / users forums
7. Social Media
8. Citizens juries
9. Deliberate focus groups
10. Tenants associations
11. Focus groups
12. Referendums
13. Simulations
14. Residents panel
15. Neighbourhood forum
16. Public meetings
17. Specific surveys
18. Ongoing surveys
19. Residents survey
20. Video box
21. Electronic polling
22. Quality check phone calls
23. Complaints and suggestions
24. Mystery shopper
25. Advice Leaflets
26. Newspapers
27. Reports

## INVOLVING

Quick method selector

## CONSULTING



This chart shows the more usual consultation methods. The higher up the list the greater the level of public involvement

## INFORMING

## Stage 4 : **START** the Consultation

You should now be at the stage where you can actually **implement** some consultation. It is important that we stick to some basic standards - use the next tool as a checklist ...

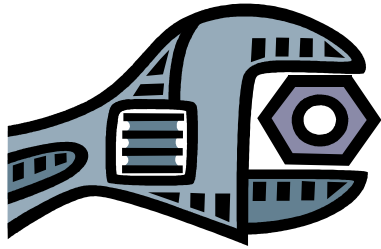
### **Some local authorities ask people's views, then ...**

- don't tell them what will happen with the results
- don't do anything with the results
- don't tell anyone the results
- do what they planned they were going to do anyway
- ask them the same things again next year

**We must make sure that we don't do the same ...**

**Tip**

**You could form a team of users/non-users to work with you to oversee the consultation process and use of results ...**



## Before you start

### Ensure that consultees know :

- Who is being consulted and why
- What decisions will be influenced
- Who will take these decisions
- When the decisions will be taken
- When and how the results will be fed back to them
- That anonymity will be respected if requested
- Who they can contact if they are unhappy about the consultation or need more information

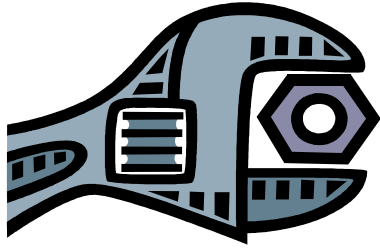
### Ensure that you have :

- Used plain English and no jargon
- Avoided any leading or ambiguous questions
- Offered a choice of consultation methods
- Thought about involving “hard to reach” people and arranged to use the list of groups that meet equalities requirements on the Q Drive
- Made any special arrangements eg. interpreters, hearing loops etc.
- Thought about different people’s preferences in terms of consultation methods
- Planned for how the views of different stakeholder groups will be ‘weighed up’ against each other
- Given people plenty of time to respond
- Decided who will lead on the consultation
- Successfully built consultation into your service review and planning process
- Arranged to promote your consultation in the local media and on the Council’s website or in the Council’s regular newsletters such as Tenants, Business and the Melton Mail explaining what you are doing and why

# Pitfalls when consulting

## Some pitfalls to think about are :

- By consulting, you can easily raise expectations that things will change overnight, they won't - be careful!
- If you consult on a decision that has already been taken, it will come back to haunt you. People know when we are doing 'token' consultation
- Expect some conflict - if you consult with a range of customers and stakeholders, they will often have opposing views. Councillors will decide how to respond – bearing all these views in mind
- Don't just put on an event (eg. focus groups) and expect people to be interested and flock to it. You may need to work hard to engage and you may have to go to them
- If you only allow people to write in on an issue you may get unrepresentative responses
- Ensure the time allowed is long enough to allow a representative response



## Final checklist before consulting

### Just before you start – think about these things again :

#### Do you know ...

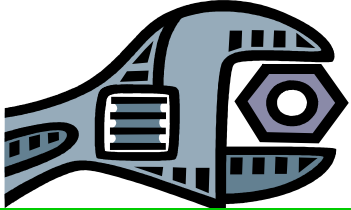
- who to consult – have you thought of everyone
- who's views will be most influential and who is most affected by any change
- you have thought of the 'right' issues to focus on
- which model of consultation you are applying
- you have selected the most appropriate method(s)
- is the timescale realistic to allow meaningful feedback
- how much it will cost and where the money is coming from
- what decisions will be affected and when
- about Equalities and how those with the protected characteristics may be affected by your consultation

**TIP**

### Make it short and sweet

A Council sent a 20 page questionnaire to 180,000 homes at a cost of £100,000. It took 3 hours to fill in and was sent back by just 85 (patient) people = £1,200 per response = not best value!

## Stage 5 : EVALUATE and use the Results



### Evaluating consultation

**Local government generally has been attacked for never evaluating consultation – we need to prove we're different ...**

- Don't underestimate the amount of effort required to analyse the data collected or write reports
- Look at the broad picture painted by the range of consultation you have done. Where is there consensus or conflict?
- You will need to adopt some process for making quality improvements (big and small) based on what you have found out, and for taking any big decisions on budgets etc. Make sure you have thought this through, and keep evidence of why you carried out consultation in a particular way (for monitoring purposes)
- Do further consultation to test out your ideas on how to respond to the consultation (eg. ideas for changes to the service)



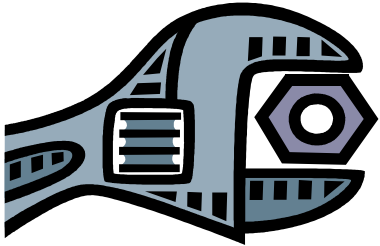
## Stage 6 : MAKE decisions

The whole point of consultation is to ensure that the views of customers and stakeholders are taken into account when making decisions ...

Use this checklist to present the findings to the decision-makers :

- Were the objectives understood by all stakeholders
- Did the methods used match the objectives
- Could you say that a representative set of views were obtained
- Was the timescale/process realistic, transparent and kept to
- Was the consultation accessible (eg. translations, plain English etc)
- Did you get to the right customer, stakeholders and the 'hard to reach' people as well as consider the views of those with the protected characteristics
- How many people will be affected by any proposed changes
- Was any weighting applied to questions and responses
- Were any changes made during the consultation process and if so provide the reasoning
- Are there any financial implications
- Are any others affected besides those originally identified

## Stage 7 : FEEDBACK & SUMMARY



### Making sure the results of your consultation are heard

Too often people are not given feedback about the consultation that they have taken part in. We need to tell people what we have done, how we did it, the results of the exercise, what changes their input has made or not and why

Where people's names and addresses are known, get in touch to give results of the consultation. If this is not possible, use methods such as the Council's Website and the local press

**REMEMBER** to fill in the Consultation Summary Form at the end of your Consultation project including lessons learnt - this information needs to be available centrally so that there is a permanent record for cross-referencing with other consultations and to inform other projects. It will also help to avoid duplication both in officer time as well as people not being asked the same information twice

## **REMEMBER** to

- log your consultation on the **Annual Programme** &
- fill in a **Consultation Summary Form** at the end of your Consultation project ...

This is important as we need to have a central log of all consultations so that there is no duplication and information can be shared as part of 'The Melton View'

**Also you must remember to get your feedback out there and if possible, on the website!**

**Think about what you could do better next time to make sure customers are at the heart of everything we do and include this in your lessons learnt on the Summary Form ...**

## You're not on your own ...

Use the following hotline to ask about :

- Any advice you need on any respect of the consultation process
- Web resources to help you
- Other surveys that you might be able to include questions in
- Sharing best practice and working with others in MBC and with our partners
- What groups are being consulted and what future consultations are planned
- The best type of consultation to use

**Consultation Hotline : 01664 502441**  
**sevans@melton.gov.uk**