Bridgend County Borough Council

Consultation and engagement

project planning ▸ guidance ▸ toolkit

Date of issue: **August 2014**

Tel: (01656) 643 664

Email: consultation@bridgend.gov.uk

Web: www.bridgend.gov.uk/consultation

Introduction

This planning and guidance document has been put together by the council's Consultation and Engagement team to help managers ensure that all of their consultation and engagement projects are consistent, robust and effective.

Please note this toolkit is <u>not</u> designed for formal internal employee consultation as there is a set procedure for this in place and you will need to contact HR separately for this support.

If you are unsure if this toolkit is necessary for your individual projects please contact the Consultation and Engagement team on 01656 643664.

The guide integrates Participation Cymru's National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales that have been adopted by the council. In summary the ten principles that underpin effective consultation are:

1. Ensuring consultation and engagement is effectively designed to make a difference.
2. Encouraging and enabling everyone affected to be involved, if they choose to be.
3. Ensuring consultation and engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way.
4. Working with relevant partners.
5. Providing information that is jargon free, appropriate and understandable.
6. Making it easier for people to take part.
7. Enabling people to take part effectively.
8. Giving the right resources and support to be effective.
9. Telling people the impact of their contribution.
10. Learning and sharing lessons to improve the process of engagement.

This toolkit also incorporates Gunning's principles surrounding legal guidance:

1. Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage.
2. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response.
3. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response, and
4. The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.

Following this document will ensure that you meet all the necessary standards as well as BCBC procedures. The full toolkit for BCBC can be found on the intranet under 'c' for consultation. Training sessions and presentations on carrying out effective consultation and engagement can also be arranged if necessary.

Section one: scoping requirements

Step 1 – Do I consult or engage?

Consultation and engagement can cover statutory, policy or discretionary based interaction. It can be used in many ways including to: generate ideas; prioritise services; set performance standards; and improve delivery. Consultations must only be used when there is an open mind to the responses received. However, if there is a preferred outcome, this can be suggested, if there are options that people can still share their views on. You can follow the consultation decision flow chart to confirm the necessity to consult or engage.

Before choosing to consult or engage it is important to also ask the following questions:

- Will engaging make a difference?
- Will the outcomes be considered?
- Is the consultation statutory?
- Is there a similar piece of work currently ongoing?
- Is this information already available?
- If in partnership, do you share the same vision?

Step 2 – Submit draft project planning form and liaise with the Consultation and Engagement team

Once the need for consultation or engagement has been confirmed, refer to the project planning form in appendix 2.0.

Please complete section one to seven and return to consultation@bridgend.gov.uk. The Consultation and Engagement team will contact you to discuss your requirements or to arrange a meeting depending on the complexity of the project.

If applicable, the cabinet report outlining the proposed consultation should be submitted to the Consultation and engagement team alongside the completed form.

Step 3 – Getting resources into place

Consultations and engagement projects can be resource intensive. Ask yourself the following:

- Is the approach you are looking to take cost-effective, for the level of information you need?
- Will you complete the exercise in the required timescales?
  - Robust and effective consultations, that ensure everyone has had sufficient time to be reached and take part, can take between eight-12 weeks (depending on the type of consultation being carried out). Time is also needed to analyse data before submitting reports.
- Are others looking to consult with a similar audience within your timescales, or close to them?
- Could the resources you're using be better used elsewhere?
- Are there currently procedures in place that you must follow?
- If in partnership, are there clear roles and expectations of those involved?
- Consider available venues, staffing, and financial implications.

Step 4 – Understanding specific audiences

Who are your stakeholders (the individuals/groups that may be affected by the project)?
Analyse:

- Potential conflicts and risks that could jeopardise a programme.
- The relationships/partnerships required to successfully implement the programme.
- The groups that should be encouraged to participate in different stages of the project cycle.
- Ways to improve the programme and reduce/remove negative impacts on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

You can create your own stakeholder analysis by following the steps here.

How are you going to contact hard to reach and/or seldom heard groups?
Remember you can email equalities@bridgend.gov.uk or call 01656 643606 for equalities support.

Step 5 – How to reach the audience

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement team can help you to select a suitable combination of promotional messages, tools and activities to reach your target audiences:

- **Webpages** – documents can be published on the council's, partner's and/or dedicated sites.
- **Social media** – the council has a corporate Twitter, Facebook and Flickr. Some service areas also have their own dedicated social media pages.
- **Push strategy promotion** – encourage promotional activity from: press releases; externally promote through the bi-annual County Borough Bulletin, or; in the Civic Offices using the information screens.
- **Internal promotion** – Reach all staff through the Bridgenders email, message of the day or the Bridgenders magazine issued quarterly. Councillors can also be reached directly via the bi-monthly Bridgemembers newsletter.
- **Paid advertising** – through newspapers and magazines, radio stations or via the internet.
- **Posters/leaflet drops** – used to promote events or publicise the documents.
- **Face to face** – presentations, events and public meetings can all be used for two-way interaction.
- **Partnerships** – provides the benefits of pooled expertise and resources.

Step 6 – Techniques and methods of consultation and engagement

When selecting the techniques and methods of engagement remember only to ask relevant questions that are specific, insightful, actionable and unbiased. Other factors to consider are:

- Open ended questions verses closed questions.
- Avoid asking leading questions.
- Do you give respondents the option for neutral responses, i.e. 'I don't know / neither / prefer not to say'.

How will you engage with your audience? Select one or more of the following methods:

Traditional methods:

- Citizens' Panel.
- Focus groups.
- Workshops.
- Exhibitions, roadshows and public meetings.
- In-depth interviews.
- Questionnaires.

Alternative methods:

Alternative methods are less common but in some instances are more suitable than the traditional methods.

- Door step and street surveys.
- Forums.
- Mystery shopping.
- Polls, referenda and ballots.
- Action planning – event(s) where citizens work with experts on issues for community benefit.
- Community visioning – the community sets clear, realistic goals, before working backwards to achieve them.
- Vox pops – are short collated video recordings of individual responses.

Any draft documents must follow the ten principles set out by Participation Cymru.

Further information about the mechanisms mentioned in steps five and six can be found here or by contacting the Communications, Marketing and Engagement team.

Step 7 – Send the final draft of the project planning form and the first drafts of any consultation or engagement documents to the Consultation and Engagement team

Complete the project planning form appendix 2.0.

Download the BCBC school organisational code consultation template.

Download the BCBC generic consultation template.

Remember to update and finalise your project planning form, then re-submit to the Consultation and Engagement team. Any drafts of consultation and engagement documents you may have should also be included.

Step 8 – Work with the Consultation and Engagement team until the final draft and responsibilities are mutually agreed. Send the final documents to the Consultation and Engagement team

Once the final drafts have been agreed please submit your final documents to the Consultation and Engagement team. Translations (paid for out of the requestor's budget) and any engagement requiring SNAP* software will be arranged by the Consultation and Engagement team. We will also inform the Customer Services team of the consultation/engagement project timeline.

*SNAP software is an analytics software package designed and used by the council for questionnaires.

In order to ensure BCBC's consultation and engagement exercises are consistent and effective, the Consultation and engagement team will need to sign off on consultation and engagement documents before they enter the public domain for all large/complex/contentious or high profile consultations/engagement projects.

Examples of this would typically include: Policy/service changes, the prioritisation of services, idea generation and anything linked to the MTFS. You should check with the Consultation and Engagement team whether your project fits into this category before you start your preparation work. Even if the project is mutually agreed to run independently we would like to gather some brief information from you in order to keep a central log of all council consultation and engagement activity.

Step 9 – Distribute consultation and engagement documentation

The Consultation and Engagement team will upload any relevant consultation and engagement documents on the current consultation webpage. All other distribution will be undertaken by the department requesting the consultation or engagement, unless a different approach has been mutually agreed during the planning stages.

Step 10 - live period

The live period will typically last between **eight** to **12** weeks (depending on the type of consultation/engagement and what has been agreed as part of the project plan), please also allow two-five working days for final analysis, prior to your report submission deadline dependent upon the data required.

Throughout the consultation and engagement period, the Consultation and Engagement team will provide regular updates on the SNAP software responses and any other data that has been agreed upon.

Engagement techniques e.g. focus groups or public meetings etc. will be carried out by the department requesting the service, unless a different approach has been mutually agreed during the planning stages.

Section two: Summaries

Step 11 – Analysing data

If you have followed the steps in this guide and worked with the Consultation and Engagement team throughout the process, the team can analyse the results for you and provide final consultation reports if necessary. More powerful and advanced statistical tests on numerical data, can be conducted by the Consultation and Engagement team if this has been agreed in the planning stage. However you may wish to analyse the data yourself. Tips on data analysis can be found on the intranet site under 'c' for consultation.

Remember – getting the most out of your data is the reason for the whole process.

Step 12 – Final report

Preparing the results

Download the BCBC report template here.

Remember to consider who needs to see the results and who may benefit from seeing the final report.

Please send a final draft of any reports to the Consultation and Engagement team before publishing the document.

Feedback

Create a feedback response to your audience. The report based on the findings should be publicised in connection with the consultation.

When feeding back the results, make a clear statement of how the opinions from the consultation have been taken on board. Consistently show your audience what the next steps are and how they can get involved in the future. This feedback should also be publicised using similar methods to those used to promote the consultation.

Action plan

Departments and partners directly affected by the report will need to develop an action plan based upon the results gathered. Use the plan to inform policy changes and address issues that need immediate attention.

Share feedback internally for good practice, to inform service delivery and for training/improvements.

Step 13 – Evaluating the process

After the results have been published you can reflect on the project as a whole. Ask yourself:

- Could the resources you used have been put to better use?
- What would you do differently if you were to repeat the process?
- How have things changed since completing the process?
- Were the original objectives met?
- What did you learn?
- Did the results influence any decision?

It is important to separate the idea of output and outcomes. An output is a planned result of a piece of work (a strategy, agreement, idea). Outcomes are what you can achieve from outputs, e.g. an output of an exercise could be a strategy for cleaner streets in a community. An outcome might be a feeling of pride within the community.

Evaluation

In your evaluation look directly at the responses you received:

- How many people took part?
- Did you have a representative profile of the stakeholders you were looking to reach?
- Did you successfully meet your aims (enough time, correct depth, and to a high standard)?
- Did you receive any feedback from participants about the process itself?

Remember to share your feedback with those who could benefit from the information.

Appendix

Appendix 1.0 - check list

You can use this check list as you work through the guidance to help you keep track of the different stages. A rough timeline for how long each stage should take to ensure the consultation and engagement project is effective is also included.

Step	Title	Timeline	✓
	Section one		
1	Do I consult or engage?		
2	Submit draft project planning form.	11 weeks before consultation begins	
	Submit Cabinet report (if applicable)		
	Liaise with the Consultation and Engagement team.	10 weeks before consultation begins	
3	Getting resources into place e.g. booking venues.		
4	Understanding specific audiences.		
5	How to reach the audience.		
6	Techniques and methods of consultation and engagement.		
7	Send final draft of the project planning form, and the first drafts of any consultation or engagement documents to the Consultation and Engagement team.	Six weeks before consultation begins	
8	Work with the Consultation and Engagement team until the final draft and responsibilities are mutually agreed. Send the final documents to the Consultation and Engagement team.	Two weeks before consultation begins	
9	Distribute consultation and engagement documentation.		
10	**Live period***	Eight - 12 weeks	
	Section two		
11	Analysing data.	Two weeks after consultation ends	
12	Meet and/or liaise with the Consultation and Engagement team until the final report is agreed upon. Once agreed distribute the document.	Two weeks after consultation ends	
13	Complete and send the final section of the project planning form to the Consultation and Engagement team.		

*The live period may fluctuate based upon the nature of project topic and any statutory expectations.

Appendix 2.0 – Project planning form

Name: ______________________________

Role: ______________________________

Division/dept: ______________________________

Tel/email: ______________________________

Title of project: ______________________________

Consultation and engagement start date: ______________ Target finish date: ______________

1. **Why do you want to consult or engage?**
   This question relates to step one in the project guidance.

2. **What are the timescales/deadlines you are working towards?**

3. **What resources will you need?**
   This question relates to step three in the project guidance.
   Please be aware most consultations last eight-12 weeks.

4. **Who are your stakeholders?**
   This question relates to step four in the project guidance. You should also include relevant partners in this section.

The Communications, Marketing and Engagement team can provide support or advice on promoting your consultation through the methods below. Any design work for adverts/posters/leaflets etc. must be completed by an external designer in line with the council's procurement contract and brand guidelines. Please note the administrative side of advertising such as payments, bookings, mail shots etc. would need to be co-ordinated by the service area.

5. a) How are you planning to reach your stakeholders?
This question relates to step five in the project guidance.

Webpages			
Council website		Partner sites	
Dedicated site		Other	
Social media			
Corporate Twitter		Dedicated service area Twitter	
Corporate Facebook		Dedicated service area Facebook	
Corporate Flickr		Other	
Push strategy promotion			
Press release		Customer service screens	
Bulletin*		Other	
Internal promotion			
Bridgenders magazine		Internal email/message of the day	
Bridgemembers		Other	
Paid advertising			
Western mail		Gem	
Echo		Seaside News	
Gazette		Wales online (web based)	
Bridge FM		Other	
Posters / leaflet drops			
Hospitals		Citizens' properties	
Surgeries/dentists		Council buildings	
Community centres		Council venues	
Councillor pigeon holes		Other	
Face to face			
Presentations		Public meetings	
Events		Other	
Partnerships			
LSB		Communities first	
Community planning partners		Service user groups	
Voluntary sector networks		Tenants and residents	
HSC and wellbeing		Business partnerships	
Community safety		Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF)	
Other			

If you have answered other to any sections you can provide further information here:

Email: consultation@bridgend.gov.uk **Ext:** 3664 **Intranet:** search 'c' for consultation.

b) Why have you chosen to use the method(s) highlighted above?

6. **a) How are you planning to interact with your stakeholders?**
This question relates to step six in the project guidance.

Select your methods of reaching your target audiences to tell them about the consultation:

Traditional methods	
Citizens' Panel	
Exhibition and roadshows	
Focus groups	
In-depth interviews	
Public meetings	
Questionnaires - telephone	
Questionnaires - postal	
Questionnaires - online	
Workshops	

Alternative methods	
Action planning	
Community visioning	
Door step and street surveys	
Forums	
Mystery shopping	
Polls, referenda and ballots	
Steering groups	
Vox pops	

b) Why have you chosen to interact in this way?

7. **How will you feedback the results of the consultation or engagement to your stakeholders?**

8. **How will you know if the consultation or engagement has been successful?**

Please send this completed section to consultation@bridgend.gov.uk. Alternatively, contact **01656 643664** for more information.

The final section will be returned to you for completion at the end of the project.

Section to be completed at the end of the project

9. **What were the outcomes of your project?**
   This question relates to step 11 in the project guidance.

Please ensure any final reports have been sent back to the Consultation and Engagement team.

10. **What worked well?**
   This question relates to step 13 in the project guidance.

Remember to share your experiences with those who could benefit from the information.

11. **What would you do differently next time?**

12. **What have you learned from the process?**

Email: consultation@bridgend.gov.uk **Ext:** 3664 **Intranet:** search ‘c’ for consultation.

13. Please use this space for any additional information, feedback or comments that you would like to share.