

Let's
talk



Consultation Toolkit



Please use this toolkit together with the '**Consultation Request Form**' to help plan your consultation and give us the information we need to support your project.

This toolkit outlines:

- 5 steps to a successful consultation;
- the methodologies available; and
- the ways we can help promote your consultation.

Five steps to a successful consultation

1. **Allow enough time** - it takes around 3 months to undertake a consultation project (Designing survey: allow 2 weeks, consultation open: at least 6 weeks, analysis: allow 4 weeks).
2. **Know your aims** – the ‘Consultation Request Form’ is there to help you put together the information required to plan a meaningful consultation.
3. **Know your audience** – who are the target groups you need to reach? You need to think about your available budget and how best you can use this to engage with your audience
4. **Promotion** – each consultation is different and some require more creative methods of promotion and engagement than others. The promotion should also marry well with your target audience
5. **Feedback of results** – it is important to show that we have used the results to inform our decision-making as an organisation. As standard we publish consultation reports on our ‘Consultation Results’ webpage, but more targeted feedback may be required e.g. presentations to communities, members etc.



Your options

The table below outlines a few basic methodologies that can be altered in creative ways to suit the needs of your consultation. You are able to use more than one method.

Methodology	Description	Qualitative (open questions)	Quantitative (closed questions)
Online questionnaires	<p>Online questionnaires are the most popular form of consultation and can be easily adapted to suit your needs.</p> <p>Generally, we try to avoid large mail outs of paper questionnaires as the cost is high and the response generally low, however hard copies will be given on request for those who need them.</p>	✓	✓
Face to face questionnaires	<p>This method is time-consuming but enables us to reach groups who are not competent internet users. These can take place on the street or at community events using our consultation iPads. The questionnaire can be handed over to the respondent to answer any sensitive demographic questions.</p>	✓	✓
Initiatives survey	<p>You are able to include a short questionnaire within Initiatives, which is delivered to every household 3 times a year. The respondents would be encouraged to cut out and send back the survey.</p>		✓
Telephone survey	<p>A telephone survey has a quick turnaround but can be expensive, time-consuming and generally has a high refusal rate.</p> <p>It is also important to note that we never cold call so any telephone survey would have to be well-thought through and widely publicised to avoid concern and criticism.</p>	✓	✓
Comment/suggestion cards	<p>If you want to ask a few short questions, feedback postcards are a great method for this. Responses are more likely to be honest as people remain anonymous.</p>		✓
Targeted discussion with groups	<p>We have a stakeholder database which means we are able to target a sample of a particular type of group e.g. volunteers, residents' associations, young mothers etc. This is similar to a focus group.</p>	✓	

Methodology	Description	Qualitative (open questions)	Quantitative (closed questions)
Focus groups	Focus groups can provide in-depth feedback or suggestions on a complex issue. Although a group of 6-10 people cannot speak for an entire community it is a good method to find out about local issues. Provides the opportunity to give information before discussions begin with a presentation.	✓	
Individual or paired interviews	This method is time-consuming but has the benefit of in-depth discussion and enables people who do not feel comfortable taking part in group discussions/filling in questionnaires to have their say. Paired interviews are effective when consulting with children.	✓	
Vox Pops	This method requires stopping people in public and asking for their opinion on your consultation subject, either filming their response or taking their photo and using a quote with their permission.	✓	
Public meetings	Holding a public meeting to discuss your consultation subject can be an effective way of hearing people's opinions. However, it is easy for these discussions to veer off topic, especially if the subject is controversial.	✓	
Polls	A poll is useful if you would like a snapshot of information but cannot be used alone to make decisions. We have the facility to hold week long polls on our CDC Twitter account.		✓



Promotion/Engagement

There are many ways to improve the response rate of your consultation. If your consultation has a specific target group you should outline this at the start and tailor your promotion accordingly.

Promotion / Engagement Method	Description	Notice needed
Existing community events	<p>Events are a great way to gather the views of people who may not usually have the time or inclination to fill in an online questionnaire or attend a focus group discussion (e.g. families, young people etc.)</p> <p>Events could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street parties • Food festivals • Community fun days etc. 	Approx. a week
Hold your own event	<p>This is less cost-effective than attending an existing event but it means the attendees are prepared for the consultation element of the day and more likely to get involved.</p> <p>Events could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community clean-up day • Arranging a local event that ties in with a national event or day of celebration e.g. Earth Day • Community walk etc. 	A few months
Hobby clubs	<p>Attend an existing hobby club with the permission of the group leader and make sure the group are aware of the consultation and are willing to be involved.</p> <p>A presentation can be done with the group and then question cards or surveys can be filled in and returned at the end.</p>	Approx. one month
Social media	<p>We are happy to promote your consultation on our social media channels which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Twitter (including 7 day polls) • LinkedIn • Youtube 	A few days
Social Media Q&A with...	<p>We are able to hold a live Q&A event on social media – it could be a Q&A with an appropriate member, the leader of the council or a senior officer. It would run for a pre-arranged period of time (e.g. 1 hour) and would have to be promoted beforehand to encourage people to post their questions in the run up to the Q&A event.</p>	At least a few weeks

Promotion / Engagement Method	Description	Notice needed
Road shows/ Exhibitions	<p>These events are great for providing the public with more information and the opportunity to ask officers questions about the consultation subject. People can also be given the opportunity give their views at the event.</p> <p>These can take place in a well-known or relevant venue, on the street or in a public open space (weather dependent).</p>	A few months
Initiatives magazine	<p>With enough notice we are able to promote your consultation in Initiatives which is delivered to every household in the district 3 times a year. You are also able to have a short questionnaire within the magazine itself.</p> <p>Submission deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Jan for Spring Issue (distributed mid-Apr) • Mid-Apr for Summer Issue (distributed mid-Jul) • Mid-Aug for Winter Issue (distributed mid-Nov) 	See submission deadlines in description box
Leaflets/posters	<p>Promotional materials can be placed in public locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries • Novium Museum • CDC Reception • Pubs • Village halls/shops • Parish council buildings • GP surgeries • Dentists 	Design/print: allow approx. 6 weeks
CDC advertising	<p>There are several advertising channels available including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advert banner on CDC website • Car park advertising (contact PR for pricing) • Little London toilet posters • CDC reception TV screens • Display board at the Grange (Steve Hill) • Noticeboards in parks <p>Make sure you have enough time for the design and production of your promotional materials.</p>	A few months Digital channels: at least one week
Local media	<p>Writing a press release will serve as free promotion, appearing on the news slider of the CDC website and may be picked up by local papers and radio stations.</p>	A few weeks
Council Tax bills	<p>When issuing bills to residents a leaflet for your consultation can be included.</p> <p>Bills are issued early March and ad hoc bills are also sent throughout the year to residents who have had a change of circumstances.</p> <p>Because the mailing to all households is once a year it is likely that other services will want to include promotional materials so you may have to negotiate your place because postage prices may be pushed up.</p>	Contact Marlene Rogers cc Diane Kirkham

Promotion / Engagement Method	Description	Notice needed
CDC buildings	<p>You have the use of screens, noticeboards and pull up banner space in the following CDC buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Pallant House • Westgate Leisure Centre • Bourne Leisure Centre • The Grange • The Novium 	At least a week
CDC phone lines	A message can be recorded for customers waiting on the telephone to inform them of the consultation and signpost them to the website.	At least a week
Social Media Boosts	Posts on Facebook and Twitter can be promoted to wider audiences by paying for advertising. The cost can be set to match your requirements – usually around £50 but can be as low as £25.	A few days
CDC staff	<p>There are many teams across the council who travel regularly for their work. Think about which teams may be interacting with your target audience.</p> <p>Examples of teams who work off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Wardens • Planners • Housing • Economic Development • Environmental Health • Health and Wellbeing • Youth Engagement Officers • Refuse crews 	At least a week
Councillors	Councillors may be able to promote your consultation among resident or community groups that they are aware of in their area.	A few weeks
Refuse vehicles	<p>There are 22 refuse vehicles with advertising capabilities – the panels on the sides of the trucks can be used for promotion. Please contact PR for pricing.</p> <p>Make sure you allow enough time for the design and production of your materials.</p>	A few months



Promotion / Engagement Method	Description	Notice needed
Existing stakeholder databases/lists	Depending on the target audience of your consultation we may have a list of contacts for groups or organisations that may be able to help us promote your consultation to the people you would like to hear from.	At least a week
Intranet/News Round Up	We are able to advertise your consultation to staff through the intranet and the News Round Up.	Intranet: none News Round Up: at least a week
Schools	We are able to include leaflets in children's book bags, as well as promotion through school emails if your target audience is parents or young people.	A few weeks
Economic Development Ebiz Newsletter	If you are targeting businesses we are able to include a piece in the ebiz newsletter which is sent to local businesses usually once every 2 months.	Around one week
Parish Councils	We have 68 parish councils who are happy to help promote consultations that affect their area. Promotional materials can be distributed to them as well as requests to be included in any parish newsletters they distribute themselves. Cost will depend whether you require an advert or editorial content.	Distribution: a few days Newsletters: varies
Empty shop premises	Vacant retail premises can be used for a pop up consultation event or information session. The empty shop can be set up with promotional materials and have officers available to answer questions and allow people to give their views.	Dependent on availability of premises but a few months should be allowed



External Advertising

- Observer
- Chichester Post
- Spirit FM
- Heart FM
- Wave 105 FM
- City Centre banner (City Council)
- AA/RAC signage
- Bus advertising
- Royal Mail leaflet drop
- Till receipt advertising
- Primary Times
- Visit Chichester website and communication channels
- Chichester BID (Business Improvement District) communication channels and events
- Chichester College
- University of Chichester
- Petrol pump advertising

There are many more ways to make your consultation engaging so it is worth thinking outside the box to get as many people as possible involved in your consultation.

Here are a few other examples of creative consultation:

- **Walking tour of the consultation area**, allowing people to give their opinions along the way.
- **'Have Your Say' trolley** – a shopping trolley or cart is pushed around the area, encouraging people to fill in comment cards and put them in the trolley.
- **Jars and counters for consulting with children** – each jar is labelled with a multiple choice answer to a question and each child is given a counter to put in the jar of their choice.
- **Entry to a prize draw** is a simple way of encouraging people to respond to a consultation.
- **Drawing or writing competitions** to get the views of children.
- **Pop up beach with sand, deck chairs, beach balls etc.** people are more willing to answer questions if they are enjoying an event.



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