

## How should consultation be delivered and used?

### Issues for consideration

1. Approaches to consultation
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This section describes approaches to consultation, ways of choosing the approach and methods, delivering consultation and reviewing and using the findings, including providing feeding back to the various persons and bodies that participated in the consultation exercise.

### **1. Approaches to consultation**

There is no one single or approved approach to consultation. There are different approaches underpinned by the use of different methods. A range of conditions and factors will influence the approach and methods used by CDRPs. These factors have already been discussed in the section entitled **What is consultation and why is it important**, and **What needs to be in place?**

Some approaches and methods will no doubt be more familiar, tried and tested with particular CDRPs than others, while other approaches and methods are fairly new to consultation in England and Wales but have proven useful in particular contexts that may or may not match what is happening in your area. In deciding the approach to take, CDRPs should be mindful of some useful advice provided by the Cabinet Office (2004: 9) ‘... there are no guarantees that just because one method worked well once it will do so again’.

The outcome of the consultation must be the production of both **quantitative** and **qualitative** information that will effectively inform the work of the CDRP, its responsible authorities and its partners in the identification of strategic priorities for the next three years. It is no use producing a wealth of data, with

little idea of how to use it, or data that is not useful to the task of audit and strategy delivery. Data collected must be reliable, valid and meaningful to the CDRP that collected it. It must be fit for purpose. CDRPs must therefore give due consideration to how consultation should be delivered and used?

- **Qualitative approaches**

Qualitative information is about people's attitudes, motives and behaviours. It usually involves small numbers of people and is not usually statistically reliable (<http://idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageID=81653>). Individuals and groups of people can communicate their experiences, fears and perceptions in a variety of different ways but the traditional methods of collecting qualitative data is through the use of the interview method (unstructured, semi structured or structured, either one to one or in a group situation), focus groups, and observation. More contemporary approaches to consultation have developed a range of participatory methods to encourage people to take part and express their views in ways that are accessible and easy to use. Qualitative information can include valuable knowledge and insights that may help to solve problems and deal with issues effectively. It is useful as a means of discovering why, and getting to grips with complex issues. Box 21 provides a list of qualitative methods.

**Box 21 Examples of qualitative methods available for consultation**

- Visioning/planning for real exercises
- Interactive websites
- Role playing or simulation exercises
- Road shows and travelling exercises
- Public meetings
- Question time events
- Letters pages of the local papers
- Panel Surveys
- Focus groups
- Observation
- Citizens juries

Go to <http://idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageID=81653> for a good discussion about the basic nature of the method, together with the main pros and cons associated with each of them and their use.

See also:

Local Government Association (2000) Lets Talk About It. Principles for Consultation on Local Governance London: LGA

Jupp, V. Davies, P. Francis, P. (2000) Doing Criminological Research Sage

- **Quantitative approaches**

The quantitative approach to collecting information and data is about ranking what people have to say and ordering their contribution in a systematic way. Quantitative research generally involves statistically reliable information using a large sample of people. It is used to answer predetermined questions such as the percentage of people who are satisfied with a service. (<http://idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageID=81653>). The traditional approach to quantitative research and consultation is through the use of a questionnaire survey. The mode of delivery can include face to face, by telephone, by post and by electronic mail. A carefully constructed questionnaire delivered in a uniform way provides a very systematic method of collecting data. Furthermore rigorous and representative sampling strategies enable more sophisticated analysis of what people think in relation to age, race, gender, residence etc. A further benefit of the questionnaire survey is that once repeated, it provides an excellent snapshot of attitudes and perceptions over time. The limitation of questionnaires is that they tend to focus on questions that researchers and research funders find interesting and can fail to discover what concerns the community more generally and vulnerable groups in particular. Quantitative information can have a limitation in identifying why people feel the way they do about crime and disorder and what is to be done about it. Box 22 provides a list of quantitative methods.

#### **Box 22 Quantitative methods**

- Postal surveys
- Face to face surveys
- Telephone surveys
- Electronic surveys
- Referenda
- Comment and suggestion cards
- Citizens panel surveys
- Opinion polls
- Written information sent to all, or a number of households with tear off response slips
- Market research exercise in local shopping centres or door to door
- Tear off response slips to leaflets, newspapers or local newspapers
- A hotline telephone vote

Go to <http://idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageID=81653> for a good discussion about the basic nature of the method, together with the main pros and cons associated with each of them and their use.

See also:

Local Government Association (2000) Lets Talk About It. Principles for Consultation on Local Governance London: LGA

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The mix of methods used should therefore allow for a combination of 'counting' of numbers with capturing the perceptions and experiences of a variety of persons and bodies within the CDRP area.

## 2. Choosing your approach

In approaching consultation, the Local Government Association (2000) recommends:

- The need to mix qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure representativeness and depth to consultation
- The nature of the population, its geographical location
- The degree of detail in the arrangements that require the public's views
- The existences of established channels or linked opportunities in order to minimise set up and other costs.

### Note 18 Approaching consultation

You should at this point be able to articulate the **purpose** of the consultation you are intending to deliver, and the constraints and opportunities available to you. The purpose of the consultation was described in **What is consultation and why is it important**, as were the various potential constraints and opportunities. For example, a constraint may be limited resources which will impact upon both the design and delivery of a house hold survey, but an opportunity may lie in your ability to piggyback an aspect of the consultation exercise on the work of a relevant organisation that has appropriate means available (for example they already carry out a survey of their service users).

Probably the single most important tip is not to rely on a single method. The use of more than one method ensures that the problems of particular methods can be balanced by the use of other methods, while the use of more than one method may also increase the probability of a better response rate, both in terms of quantity – numbers replying – and quality – the nature and type of response. Be prepared, as the Cabinet Office (2004: 9) details, to acknowledge that different methods may produce different, and sometimes conflicting results: 'be aware that there isn't a single 'users view', and consensus between all users is highly unlikely'.

According to the Audit Commission (1999) the kinds of consultation carried out can be divided broadly into two types:

- Direct consultation with a sample of people.

- Consultation with delegates, such as area forums, and tenants associations or community organisations that represent the views of other local people.

The Audit Commission (1999) goes on to say that:

‘Direct consultation allows authorities to find out the views of local people at first hand. But in this kind of consultation it can be difficult to make consultees feel involved in the decision making process, or to provide feedback to them on how their views were taken into account. Using delegates who represent the views of others means that consultees can become more involved in the authority’s decision making processes, but runs the risk that delegates may not truly represent the wider community, or even the groups that have delegated them’ (Audit Commission 1999: 9).

Balancing representation and participation is an important issue to address when choosing your approach.

- **Target groups**

The Cabinet Office Guidance (Cabinet Office 2004: 9) provides a good discussion on choosing a consultation approach and offers a number of mechanisms to help organisations think about the consultation approach.

- It suggests that ‘knowing something about the people you want to consult helps you choose the most suitable method’ (Cabinet Office 2004: 9).
- It also suggests that organisations may wish to use one method in the development of another. For example the use of focus groups in the development of a questionnaire survey. But, as the Cabinet Office Guidance goes on to suggest, it is important that:

‘If you want to link methods in this way, make sure you that you are talking to the same audiences: the focus group would need to be representative of the people you actually wanted to reach with the questionnaire, or their views would be less relevant’ (Cabinet Office 2004: 9).

- It also identifies that organisations should think about the type of response that they are likely to get from differing groups.

‘Be prepared for differing responses from people who are expert in your service or area, and those who are less familiar with it. Decide how you are going to weight your views. Whose opinions are most important? Can you please everybody? How are you going to explain what decisions you have taken to different groups?’ (Cabinet Office 2004: 10).

Table 3, drawn from the Cabinet Office Guidance (2004: 10) indicates the types of views you might expect from different people.

<b>Table 3 Types of views from different people</b>	
<b>Who is being consulted?</b>	<b>What sort of views/comments can you expect?</b>
Individual users	Personal view of service as individual has experienced it. Snapshot of service
User groups/panels/meetings	'Non-expert' view from users of your service. Can help you see a different perspective.
Representative groups	Considered thoughts and proposals based on good knowledge of the service you provide and what users of your service want. Sometimes views may be stronger than those of the average user.
General public	General perception of service. Can be useful indicators of problems and preferences with service provision.
Sounding boards (non-users)	Relatively impartial views on proposal – useful for testing out proposals and plans
Staff	Experience of a range of customers' views, combined with knowledge about the practical aspects of providing the service.

- It is also important to acknowledge that different approaches and methods are able to secure / provide different levels of representation, engagement and participation. It is therefore important to be aware of the nature of representation and participation afforded by different methods and approaches. For example, survey questionnaires can provide high levels of representativeness but possibly less in the way of participation, where as participatory appraisal and other research methods will offer limited representation but high levels of participation and engagement.

**Signpost:** For a more detailed discussion of developing your approach see The **Cabinet Office Guidance (2004)**, and the **ID&eA** web based tool kit found at <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/83009> provides a detailed and exhaustive discussion of consultation methods, their benefits, disadvantages and illustrative costs.

The table 4 has been adapted from the Cabinet Office (2004: 9). It gives some general advice on which methods to try, and why for particular individuals and groups. It highlights the nature of information such groups need to be able to respond to the consultation exercise.

- The first row describes the general groups of frequent and regular persons and bodies that may be consulted. They are already aware of the issues, are (probably) interested, and need little additional detailed information. They can be consulted using a standard method of survey questionnaire or written response
- The second row focuses upon specific groups that are highlighted by their vulnerability in addition to being identified as specific interest and hard to reach groups. This second set of people and groups may be canvassed in a variety of formal but generally informal ways that will collect information that is non-standard. This may include meetings, open days and focus groups. Non-standard data may be particularly relevant to the audit if it can identify information that traditional strategies of research and consultation fail to produce. These people and groups will need additional information before they are able to respond.

<b>Table 4 The approach to Consultation</b>	
<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	<b>RELEVANT METHODS (which consultation methods and why?)</b>
<b>General (frequent and regular users)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsible authorities and partners</li> <li>▪ Special interest groups who know about your service</li> <li>▪ The general public if your service or the issue is popular or particularly important</li> <li>▪ Staff and employees</li> </ul>	<b>Generalised data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Postal and face to face questionnaires</li> <li>▪ Feedback questionnaires</li> <li>▪ Written consultation</li> </ul> <p><i>Because: they are already aware of the issues, are (probably) interested, and don't need detailed additional information.</i></p>
<b>Specific groups (infrequent users)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vulnerable groups</li> <li>▪ Other groups of interest</li> <li>▪ Hard to reach groups</li> <li>▪ Potential users</li> </ul>	<b>Non standard data</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meetings</li> <li>▪ Open days and other events</li> <li>▪ Focus groups</li> <li>▪ Discussions</li> </ul> <p><i>Because: they need information before they are able to respond.</i></p>

**In choosing your approach to post audit consultation, follow the instructions in Box 23 below:**

**Box 23 Tips and Ideas for constructing the consultation approach**

- Copy and past Table 4 into a new word document.
- Identify the 'general' and the 'specific groups' in your area and list them under the relevant heading in the left hand column.
- When you have identified the general and specific groups that you want to consult with you can use the right hand column to list the types of method that would be appropriate to engaging people in these groups, drawing

upon the information detailed in Boxes 21 and 22 above, and Box 35 below.

- **Resources, capacity and time**

Cost should not be used as barrier to designing and delivering effective and meaningful consultation and there are many inexpensive methods of achieving engagement, participation and feedback. The Audit Commission (1999) offers numerous ideas on how to increase the cost effectiveness of consultation. These are summarized below in the Box 24 below.

#### **Box 24 Increasing cost effectiveness of consultation**

- Consult with staff at all levels of your organisation
- Use existing feedback and complaints procedures
- Spread the cost by consulting jointly with other agencies
- Incorporate consultation with other initiatives already taking place
- Use members of the community to carry out consultation (note the cost of training community members to consult)
- Combine consultation with other policy consultations
- Use routine activities to canvass the public i.e. when making housing application or benefit claims

Good consultation should avoid costly mistakes and raise awareness of what the CDRP is doing. Tackling crime, disorder and drugs and promoting community safety is an area of work that relies upon public information and community support so effective consultation is all the more important. Effective consultation will ensure the best use of resources by confirming what the strategy should address and encouraging the community to use the services and assistance the new strategy and its priority actions will offer. The costs of neglecting consultation or doing it badly may escalate if resources are wasted by introducing an unrealistic strategy that fails.

Box 25 provides a summary list of useful ideas for managing costs, time and resources during the planning stage of your consultation.

#### **Box 25 Thinking about your budget (From the Idea Knowledge Base**

<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=81659>

Consultation need not be expensive but it is important not to skimp on the approach, scope or methodology. Consultation costs money, but there are good reasons to resource it properly:

- Services which are planned effectively tend to be most cost-effective
- Providing the wrong services for the wrong people is more expensive than finding out what citizens and service users want
- Better consultation and planning can maximise take-up of services

- Good consultation can reduce complaints and the cost of putting mistakes right.

Issues to consider when budgeting for consultation include:

- Researcher time and skills for questionnaire design and analysis
- Consultant time if using external research companies, plus in-house staff time for client management
- Print and postage costs for particular methods, such as questionnaire consultation
- Venue hire for events
- Refreshments for events
- Interpreters' costs, carers' allowances and other costs associated with ensuring equality of access
- Incentives to encourage people to take part.

It is possible to save costs by finding out what research has been done in other authorities. It may not be directly applicable but may save you time and money if you can use similar methodologies, use their research as some kind of benchmark, or learn from their experience.

**Signpost:** For a more detailed discussion of the costs and benefits of consultation see the:

- **Audit Commission (1999) Listen up: Effective Community Consultation** The Audit Commission Website is at: [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

- **Audit findings and draft strategic priorities**

The audit report should include a summary that describes the main issues or themes identified by the audit. The summary should cover the following in some detail but in an easily accessible way:

- Crime disorder and drug related issues
- Demographic and geographic issues
- Issues affecting homogenous groups
- Socio-economic issues and cross-cutting themes
- Victims and witnesses issues

This report should offer a discussion on the audit findings that links the evidence from the audit data to emerging priorities for the strategy. The draft strategy must also take on board external targets that have been defined by the Home Office and take due account of the priorities and targets of partner agencies.

The findings and the emerging priorities from your audit provide the foundation of the consultation and will need to be reproduced in an accessible format in the consultation document.

**Signposting:** Guidance on the consultation documentation is detailed in the section **What needs to be in place?**

Box 26 offers a checklist for the preparation of the consultation document.

#### **Box 26 The Consultation documentation**

Consultation is about engaging people in a way that they learn about your objectives and can contribute in a meaningful way to the decisions that are made on their behalf. The consultation document is at the heart of your consultation. When constructing your consultation document you should take account of the following:

- Keep the message simple and concise
- Demonstrate how the audit findings will be used to develop strategic objectives
- Use straightforward examples to illustrate how the strategy might affect the public
- Provide translations for people whose first language is not English
- Provide alternatives for people who have difficulties using printed materials
- Keep it brief and include a summary that sets out the main questions and issues
- Make it easy for readers to respond by post, email, telephone or in person.

#### • **Methods**

The Audit Commission Report (1999) [Listen Up Effective Community Consultation](#) points out that responsible authorities already use many different consultation methods and techniques and have a range of consultation approaches already in place.

**Signposting:** The section **What is consultation and why is it important?** identified the legislative and policy context that has informed the increase in consultation delivery over recent years.

Some approaches, methods and techniques are more appropriate for one-off issues, whereas others are useful for broader consultation across a range of issues. Moreover, some approaches, methods and techniques are easier to adapt for post audit consultation than are others, and others again will be more or less suitable for other stages of consultation identified by Newburn and Jones (2002) and discussed in the section **What is consultation and why is it important?** Different organisations use consultation for different reasons and it is important to understand and where necessary distinguish between consultation that is about sharing information, raising awareness, collecting data, market research and evaluating service delivery.

The Audit Commission Report (1999) Listen Up Effective Community Consultation goes on to say that:

‘Direct consultation allows authorities to find out the views of local people at first hand. But in this kind of consultation it can be difficult to make consultees feel involved in the decision making process, or to provide feedback to them on how their views were taken into account. Using delegates who represent the views of others means that consultees can become more involved in the authority’s decision making processes, but runs the risk that delegates may not truly represent the wider community, or even the groups that have delegated them’ (Audit Commission 1999: 9).

Three different consultation levels or approaches referred to by the Audit Commission form what the Audit Commission (1999) describe as a consultation spectrum illustrated in Diagram 1 below.

<b>Diagram 1 The consultation spectrum</b>			
<b>ONE-OFF POLLS</b> <i>e.g. referendum, public opinion survey</i>	<b>REGULAR SURVEYS OF VIEWS</b> <i>e.g. panel survey</i>	<b>ONE-OFF DELIBERATIVE EXERCISES</b> <i>e.g. citizens’ jury, health panel</i>	<b>ONGOING CONSULTATIVE GROUPS</b> <i>e.g. neighbourhood forum</i>

The degree to which consultees are likely to feel involved increases across the spectrum

This illustration provides a guide to thinking about the use of different methods and approaches in the context of addressing issues of participation and engagement. It should be used in consultation with Table 3 **Types of views from different people** and Table 4 **The approach to consultation** in helping you decide which approach and methods to use. Many CDRPs have adopted this model to develop, implement and evaluate their audit and strategy process because it offers a holistic approach to decision making.

Certainly a balanced approach to post-audit consultation will endeavour to use all of the elements to some degree. Box 27 below offers a comprehensive list of methods to help you further develop your own approach to consultation (discussed on the ID&eA knowledge base and found at: <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/83009>).

The evidence from Box 27 demonstrates a considerable expansion in the number and nature of methods and techniques available for consultation’.

For its part the Audit Commission (1999: 11) cautions that:

‘The rapid growth in the reported use of these so-called innovative techniques is striking, but does not on its own imply an improvement in the quality of consultation. Although some traditional consultation

<b>Box 27 Consultation methods an a-z (source: <a href="http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk">www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk</a>)</b>		
Area forums or committees	Art (to express ideas)	Cable television
Choice at point of service delivery	Citizens juries	Citizens' Panel
Citizens' Workshops	Citizens' Polls	Comments and complaints
Complaints	Computer records	Consensus Panels (deliberative)
Consensus techniques	Conflict resolution	Consulting employees
Co-option	Deliberative Opinion Polls	Deliberative panels
Desk research	Devolving power to users	Diaries
Direct user involvement	Documentary information (desk research)	Documents seeking comments
Drama	Electronic communications	Employee involvement
Exhibitions road shows open days	Existing interest groups	Facilitated workshops
Focus groups	Front line staff	Future Search
Health panels	Hearings	In-depth interviews
Informal contacts	Internet	Interest forum
Interest groups (existing)	Interviews	Invitations for comments
Involvement in Council committees	Leaflets inviting comments	Mass media
Members' contacts and outside bodies	Metaphor	Mystery Customers
Neighbourhood committees or forums	Newspapers	Nominal Group Technique
Observation	Open Days	Open Space
Other deliberative panels	Other interest forums	Parish Councils
Participant led sessions	Participation	Petitions
Pictures metaphors drama	Piloting service changes	Planning for real
Plays	Professional bodies	Profiles (desk research)
Public involvement in hearings or scrutiny	Public meetings	Question time
Questionnaires and surveys	Radio	Reading circles
Referendums	Request for written comments	Road Shows
Role Play	Round Tables	Samoan Circles
Scrutiny - public involvement in	Semi-structured interviews	Service user groups
Specialist bodies	Standing Research Panels	Suggestions schemes
Surveys	Tapping peoples experience	Television
Use of front line staff	User choice and involvement in services	User groups
User Management of Services	Video box	Video (as part of observation)
Village Appraisal	Visioning exercise	Whole systems events
Written comments		

techniques – such as public meetings – are often insufficient on their own, many long-established methods – such as surveys – are valuable if done well. A technique is not necessarily better simply because it is new: the keys to success are matching the methods used to the purpose of the consultation exercise and the service covered, and carrying out the chosen methods competently.’

This expansion has also signaled considerable growth in community and commercial businesses competing to deliver all or part of the consultation. When thinking about using the services of an external organisation, it is essential that CDRPs maintain a central role in the planning, design, preparation and analysis of findings from the consultation exercise.

The Cabinet Office (2004) Report How to Consult Your Users An Introductory Guide provides a comprehensive review of the standards expected of government departments and responsible authorities and provides some useful examples of contemporary approaches to consultation. The core advice on selecting methods offered by the report is set out in Box 28.

#### **Box 28 Choosing Your methods**

- Be flexible: there are many ways of finding out what people think and want. Some are simple and cost relatively little (for example, using existing information like comments and complaints); others can take months and cost thousands of pounds. What you do depends on what you want to find out, how you want to use the results, how much money, time and expertise you have, and the sort of service you offer.
- Use more than one method: don't rely on any single method and think you're doing all that is needed. Avoid short cuts. There is no one 'right' method that will work for any given circumstance. All sorts of conditions influence which methods give you useful information, and there are no guarantees that just because one method worked well once it will do so again.
- Using more than one method increases the chances of a better response both in terms of quality and quantity.
- Be prepared, for what you will do if different methods come up with different results.
- Be aware that there isn't a single 'user's view', and consensus between all users is highly unlikely.
- Knowing something about the people you want to consult helps you choose the most suitable methods.

The Cabinet Office (2004) Report How to Consult Your Users An Introductory Guide also provides an excellent review of a number of different methods including those detailed in Table 5, and highlights their cost and use (Box 29).

<b>Table 5 Cabinet Office (2004) list of consultation methods</b>				
<b>Complaints / suggestions / testing</b>	<b>Meetings and discussions</b>	<b>Surveys (quantitative)</b>	<b>Inviting written comments</b>	<b>Visuals and presentations</b>
User comments and complaints	Using representative groups	Questionnaire based surveys	Written consultation exercises	Open days, road shows, exhibitions
Feedback from staff / suggestions schemes	Citizens panels Citizens juries	Ballots, referenda, deliberative polling		Information technology
Mystery shopping	User panels			
Piloting changes	Face to face interviews			
	Focus groups			
	Open, public meetings			

<b>Box 29 Appropriateness and cost of consultation methods</b>							
		<b>Methods good for: X=reasonable XXXX=very good</b>					
<b>Method</b>	<b>Relative cost</b>	<b>Giving information</b>	<b>Getting information</b>	<b>Representative views</b>	<b>Quantitative views</b>	<b>Qualitative view</b>	<b>Special groups view</b>
User comments and complaints	£		XX	X	X	XX	
Feedback from staff / suggestion schemes	£-££		XX	X	X	XX	X
Mystery shopping	££-£££		XXX	XX	X	XXX	X
Piloting changes	££-£££	XX	XXX	XXX	X	X	X
Open/public meetings	££-£££	XX	XX	X	XX	XX	X
Using representative groups	£-££	XXX	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX	XXXX
Face to face interviews	££-££££	XXX	XXX	X	X	XXXX	XXX
Focus groups	££-££££	XXX	XXX	XX	X	XXX	XXX
User panels	£-££	XXXX	XXX	XXX	XX	XXX	X
Citizens' panels	££-£££££	XXX	XXX	XXXXX	XXX	XXX	X
Citizens juries	££-	XXXX	XX	XX	X	XXX	X

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	£££££						
Questionnaire based surveys	££-££££	X	XXX	XXXX	XXXX	X	X
Ballots / referenda / deliberate polling	££-££££	XX	XX	XXX	XXXX		X
Written consultation exercises	££-£££	XXXX	XXX	XX	XX	XX	
Open days / roadshows / exhibitions	££-£££	XXXX	X	X	X	X	X
Information technology	££-££££	XXX	XX	X	XX	X	X

**Signposting:** A comprehensive discussion on consultation methods can be found in the:

- **Audit Commission (1999) Listen Up Effective Community Consultation.**

In addition:

- The **Audit Commission (2003) Making Connections** offers evidence from the experience of using innovative consultation technique techniques.
- The **ID&eA** (The Improvement and Development Agency) web site <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk> has a tool kit and offers a number of good practice examples and useful contacts.
- **The Cabinet Office (2004) How to Consult Your Users an Introductory Guide** provides commentary of innovative and contemporary examples of consultation method.

### 3. Delivering consultation

A common complaint about consultation is that agencies and organisations use methods and mechanisms that permit a small minority of people – often referred to as ‘the usual suspects’ – to dominate the process and determine findings / outcomes. In practice many consultation exercises are criticised because they focus on the same people time and time again and don’t make it easy for a more representative contribution from the wider public.

Deciding the main groups with whom to consult is determined by the statutory guidance that obliges CDRPs to consult with persons or bodies specified by the Home Secretary and other relevant organisations, including the business community; and, the general public and significant hard to reach groups. However, within these broad headings, a wide and diverse range of groups and interests can be identified, and different methods may be appropriate to consult with various different groups.

**Signposting:** Guidance about the statutory obligation on who to consult is set detailed in the section **Who should be consulted?**

- **Sampling and samples**

It is impossible to talk to every single person and body in the CDRP area. Consultation is therefore dependent upon identifying and utilising a representative sample of the population of the target audience – be it relevant organisations, members of the general public and groups of interest.

Samples can be identified using either probability or non-probability sampling. These are described in Box 30 below.

**Box 30 Sampling frameworks**

- **Non-probability sampling** – where representative selection is not left to chance. This is fairly cheap and quick, but there is far more chance of a sample being unrepresentative or biased. **‘The most common non-probability sampling technique is quota sampling – where quotas from each demographic group are agreed and targeted’**  
<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk>
- **Probability sampling** – where each person in the population has an equal chance of being selected. This can be done by drawing up a sampling frame that contains names and addresses of everyone in the target group (general population; organisations, businesses etc) and picking out a random selection. **‘For example if you had a list of 2000 people who had used your service in the last year – you could number the list and pick out 200 number at random to represent the 2000. Alternatively you could use every tenth person on the list (systematic sampling). ‘Stratified sampling’ is a way of reducing the chances that the random sample is unrepresentative. For example you could use ward data from the Electoral Register to ensure that the same fraction of samples is taken from each ward’** <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk>

Source: <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk>

In planning your sample, it is also important to take account of sampling sizes and sampling error. The **ID&eA** web site <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk> has a good discussion on sampling sizes and sampling error, as well as sampling in relation to different groups and the use of different methods.

- The **ID&eA** (The Improvement and Development Agency) web site <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk> has a useful discussion of sampling mechanisms and techniques and offers a number of practise examples and useful contacts.

- **Persons or bodies specified by the Home Secretary and other relevant organisations, including the business community**

This first category for consultation specifies the responsible authorities alongside other relevant organisations including the business sector, each of which have responsibility for shaping the audit findings and in determining the emerging strategic priorities for consultation.

Adopting a strategic approach from the outset will help to produce a coordinated programme of consultation activities across this group. Indeed, as the Audit Commission (1999: 17) points out ‘corporate co-ordination can also make sure that all exercises are competently designed and carried out across all agencies’.

At the same time, it is important that consultation is delivered not only across each responsible authority, relevant partner organization and business, but that it is delivered within each organization in order to consult with their staff and employee representatives, service users including interest and hard to reach groups they connect with.

Box 31 lists a number of possible means through which responsible authorities alongside other relevant organisations including the business sector can be consulted, as can their employees and service users.

<b>Box 31 Ways of consulting with persons or bodies specified by the Home Secretary and other relevant organisations, including the business community and their employees and users</b>	
<b>With organizations</b>	<b>With their staff / employees</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Surveys) questionnaire-based-surveys</li> <li>• (Inviting written comments) written consultation exercises</li> <li>• (Complaints, suggestions, testing) feedback from staff suggestion schemes</li> <li>• (Surveys) questionnaire-based-surveys (with business community)</li> <li>• (Meetings and discussions) representative groups, user panels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Surveys) questionnaire-based-surveys</li> <li>• (Inviting written comments) written consultation exercises</li> <li>• (Meetings and discussions)</li> </ul>
	<b>With service users</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Complaints, suggestions, testing) user comments and complaints</li> <li>• (Visuals and presentations) open days, road shows, exhibitions, information technology</li> <li>• (Meetings and discussions) open, public meetings, using representative groups, user panels</li> </ul>

- **The general public**

The section on **Who should be consulted?** Detailed the various ways in which the general public could be defined and identified. This section discusses the possible methods through which the general public can be consulted.

An obvious starting point for delivering consultation with the general public is the circulation of the consultation document with publicity and media coverage to get the message across to the widest possible constituency in order that that everyone has an opportunity to take part.

Suggestions for the circulation of the consultation document are set out in Box 32.

<b>BOX 32 Publication and circulation</b>
<p>The consultation documentation can take many forms (see <b>What needs to be in place?</b>) needs to be circulated widely and effectively by responsible authorities, partners and the public including ‘interest’ and hard to reach groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give consideration to alternative paper based, electronic and audio-visual formats for the dissemination of consultation content and questions</li> <li>• Establish a consultation framework for circulation and canvassing partners, the general public and voluntary and community organizations</li> <li>• Develop a circulation strategy using existing mechanisms for distribution used by responsible authorities and partners</li> <li>• Make effective use of local press and media</li> <li>• Allow sufficient time to allow people and organizations to make written responses to the consultation. Cabinet Office Guidance to government departments allows 12 weeks for written responses.</li> </ul>

Table 6 lists a number of possible means through which the general public can be consulted.

<b>Table 6 Consulting with the general public</b>				
<b>Complaints / suggestions / Testing</b>	<b>Meetings and Discussions</b>	<b>Surveys (quantitative)</b>	<b>Inviting written comments</b>	<b>Visuals and presentations</b>
User comments and complaints	Using representative groups	Questionnaire based surveys	Written consultation exercises	Open days, road shows, exhibitions
Feedback from customer suggestions	Citizens panels	Ballots, referenda, deliberative polling		Information technology

schemes				
Piloting changes	User panels			Local television and radio
	Face to face interviews			Local printed media
	Focus groups			
	Open, public meetings			
	Citizens juries			

It may be possible to combine some of the elements described in the table to develop effective consultation where resourcing is a barriers. **For example, a questionnaire may be delivered in local free newspapers as an insert, or as part of a page allowing readers to cut out the page and return free post to the local authority.** Similarly, audit findings and emergent strategic findings may be an item on the agenda of Citizens Juries / Panels.

- **Significant hard to reach groups**

The third group to be consulted are significant hard to reach groups (groups of interest). The section **Who should be consulted?** detailed the ways by which significant hard to reach groups could be identified, and also suggested the terminology 'groups of interest' as a more inclusive phrase to use in describing this group.

The need to consult with service users and those affected by particular policies, strategies and agencies is a key imperative across a number of policy areas including community safety and housing providers. However, it is also widely recognised that traditional methods of research and consultation (such as the survey and public meetings) are unlikely to engage 'hard-to-reach' groups whose experiences and views may be of central interest to the audit and strategy (see Box 33).

In reality, given their attendance at services and projects, many individuals may not literally be hard to reach. However, they are hard to consult. The problem with carrying out good quality consultation includes gaining their agreement and co-operation. Neither do they provide a 'captive audience', and we would argue that participation in consultation should be voluntary rather than obligatory if it were to be meaningful. These groups probably also require prior information if the consultation is to uncover their experiences, concerns etc.

It is extremely important, to maximise the chances of people taking part in and engaging seriously with consultation, that appropriate methodological techniques are employed which they are likely to enjoy and that prioritise their views and concerns in a way that is demonstrable to them.

### BOX 33 Consultation with hard to reach groups

#### Problems with common methods of consultation:

- Fail to cover a wide range of people, including 'hard-to-reach' groups
- Do not always have a discernible effect on or lead directly to action
- Fail to encourage real participation in consultation and follow up action.

#### Ideally, successful consultation will:

- Access different social groups
- Have a strong qualitative component
- Emphasise participation and engagement of people
- Make it clear the participants' agendas and priorities drive the exercise
- Have structures and practices already in place for direct follow up action
  - Locate action at the centre of the consultation process.

Source: Pain, R. Francis, P. Fuller, I. O'Brien, K. Williams. S. (2002) Hard to Reach' Young People and Community Safety: A Model for Participatory Research and Consultation Home Office Police Research Group Briefing Paper 152 London: Home Office

The idea knowledge website (ID&eA) has some useful tips and ideas about the issues CDRPs are likely to face when consulting with hard to reach groups. These tips and ideas are set out in Box (34)

### BOX 34 Issues You Are Likely To Face (From ID&eA)

- Remember that the people that you think are in hard-to-reach groups don't know this – they see themselves as **individuals**.
- Some groups may be new, they can **lack capacity** and **confidence**.
- Quite often, hard-to-reach groups will need **support** in terms of training and awareness raising. **This will cost** – have you thought about where they or you can get funding to support them (e.g. Community Empowerment Fund)?
- Such groups may feel very **cynical** – they may feel consulted to death and nothing has changed in their life for the better.
- Sometimes they feel that the '**usual suspects**' pinch all the places.
- The issue is not necessarily about getting members of hard-to-reach groups involved but about **understanding what their needs are**.
- How is your partnership using **the information** obtained from 'hard to reach' groups and how are the views and needs of individual communities reflected in the policy process.
- You may experience particular difficulties in engaging with particular 'hard to reach' groups in rural areas.
- <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=79885>

Box 35 lists a number of possible means through which the significant hard to reach may be consulted alongside some of the organisations that work with them. In some instances, these organisations may carry out the consultation on behalf of the CDRP, in other instances they may act as a broker between the hard to reach and the CDRP, and other instances they may identify who the hard to reach are and then consultation is carried out by external research organisations.

<b>Box 35 Ways of consulting with the significant hard to reach may be consulted alongside some of the organisations that work with them.</b>	
<b>With hard to reach</b>	<b>With relevant organisations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Visuals and presentations) open days, road shows, exhibitions, information technology</li> <li>• (Meetings and discussions) open, public meetings, using representative groups, user panels</li> <li>• (Research) participatory appraisal / interviews / group discussions / focus groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Surveys) questionnaire-based-surveys</li> <li>• (Inviting written comments) written consultation exercises</li> <li>• (Meetings and discussions)</li> </ul>

Delivering consultation with hard to reach groups goes beyond issues of diversity and equality to embrace ideas about community cohesion and social inclusion. This means different things in different contexts. For example black and ethnic groups may be visible partners in a city centre context but become hard to reach in rural areas. Young people in urban centres can be contacted through education, social and leisure activities but excluded, disaffected and homeless youngsters have high visibility but are rarely consulted. The elderly, sick and carers may face real issues that are affecting their quality of life that are never accounted for because no-one thought to ask. The questions and ideas set out in Box 36 highlight a number of factors that will influence your approach to consulting with hard to reach groups.

<b>Box 36 Topics and tips for consulting with the Hard to Reach</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Who are the hard to reach?</b> Do your homework and consult with partners in the community and voluntary sector to find out who is hard to reach in your area.</li> <li>▪ <b>What can they tell you?</b> Knowing who the hard to reach are is only the first step to recognising what knowledge and experience that the hard to reach have that you need to include in your consultation.</li> <li>▪ <b>Obstacles to consultation?</b> Communication with some hard to reach groups may involve special techniques to overcome obstacles of literacy and numeracy. Other people may have physical or medical problems that prevent them from communicating effectively.</li> <li>▪ <b>Where are they?</b> Everyone is somewhere and once you have found your target group you can make a start to undermine the barriers and obstacles that make people hard to reach.</li> </ul>

- **What are the barriers to consultation?** Many of the barriers to consultation are institutional. Work with all your partners especially those who are already talking to the hard to reach.
- **Go to them.** Make it easy by reaching people in the places where they feel at ease and accessible by using methods of communication that people feel comfortable with.
- **Feedback and participation.** Make contributions count by ensuring you provide feedback that demonstrates taking part can make a difference.
- **Reward.** Some people may need help or an incentive to participate. Be prepared to cover expenses and to offer appropriate rewards.
- **Listen.** Hard to reach or hard to hear? Make sure you listen to what the hard to reach are telling you.
- **Honesty is the best policy.** Sometimes hard to reach groups will be brutally frank but it is also necessary to be brutally honest when reporting what has been said.

As part of the Home Office Innovation Research Challenge Fund, Rachel Pain et al (2001) developed a method of consulting with significant hard to reach groups during post audit consultation stage. The method, known by the acronym PARC (Participatory Action Research and Consultation) draws upon and develops methods and techniques of participatory research approaches developed in the South.

**Signpost: Guidance about PARC and participatory research methods and mechanisms can be found in the following:**

- Pain, R. Francis, P. Fuller, I. O'Brien, K. Williams. S. (2002) Hard to Reach' Young People and Community Safety: A Model for Participatory Research and Consultation Home Office Police Research Group Briefing Paper 152 London: Home Office
- Pain R, Francis P, Fuller I, O'Brien K, Williams S (unpublished) 'Hard to Reach' Young People and Community Safety: A Model for Participatory Research and Consultation Home Office Crime Reduction Research Series Report 152
- R Pain and P. Francis (2004) 'Living With Crime: Spaces of Risk for Homeless Young People' Children's Geographies Vol. 2. No. 1. February: 95-110
- R. Pain and P Francis (2003) 'Doing Participatory Research in the Developed World' Area 35. 46-54

The method described here was developed in a study funded by the Home Office Innovative Research Challenge Fund and carried out by Northumbria and Durham Universities. Focusing on the offending and victimisation experiences of homeless and school-excluded young people in Newcastle upon Tyne, this project developed a replicable method for consulting with hard-to-reach groups of young people.

The method is Participatory Action Research and Consultation (PARC). It has been developed from a family of participatory research approaches, which have been widely used in developing countries and more recently are gaining popularity in the developed world. PARC is ideal for use with 'hard to reach' groups, including residents and service users of housing providers. One key benefit for use with 'hard to reach' groups is *methodological* – it employs techniques that are interesting, fun, and only require skills which most people already have. Another benefit is its *ethics* – it is a participatory approach that draws out people's own understandings and opinions on issues and highlights these. Finally, an action research framework is central to PARC in order to give the best chance of ensuring that *action* follows consultation in light of findings. All of these benefits offer organisations better and more effective service evaluation and delivery.

PARC draws on the principles and techniques of participatory appraisal, a research approach used in community development work which involves, empowers and benefits local people via a combination of research, education and collective action. PARC builds on participatory appraisal to allow relatively rapid consultation on behalf of local agencies and organisations, in order to be relevant across a broad range of policy areas and target groups, while retaining a commitment to ethical and participatory practice.

The method involves accessing people in the places they normally gather (such as drop in centres, health centres etc.). It uses qualitative research tools that are more participatory than traditional techniques, including visual exercises (e.g. brainstorming, cause-effect diagrams, timelines), group discussions and one-on-one interviews. It can produce high quality information from a large number of people that highlight and prioritise their views, ideas and solutions, rather than collecting data in the pre-set categories of researchers or organisations. Participants may also be involved in data collection, interpretation and analysis. The method also engages key workers throughout the process in order that they have ownership of findings and the capacity to act on them. The model emphasises the productive use of the information gathered in a way which reflects the concerns of those involved, i.e. the effective feeding back of findings to improve practice and service delivery. Where possible, those people involved in the consultation should participate at every stage of the process.

The report suggests that for this group of interest:

- Consultation should include a strong qualitative element (e.g. their attitudes, experiences and understandings of crime should be explored in depth)
- Participatory research approaches (including those described above) offer great benefits in involving young people in the audit and strategy process and in promoting their interests

- Research findings should be addressed and acted upon where appropriate but, since there are certain limitations to such methods, their use as a basis for action must be acknowledged if they are to be used effectively

PARC involves the stages described in Box 37:

<b>Box 37 Stages of PARC</b>	
•	Identification of an issue for consultation. The purpose may be to achieve greater understanding of the issue or to evaluate a particular aspect of service delivery.
•	Establishment of a steering group comprising young people, members of the consultation/research team and agency staff. This group should have responsibility to address the findings and to promote change.
•	All steering group members must ensure that the organisations that they represent are committed to change. Consultation needs to be embedded in practice, policy and procedure and mechanisms to ensure that findings can be translated into action need to be developed.
•	Consultation is undertaken using participatory visual techniques (such as brainstorming and timelines), interviews and other methods as appropriate. The consultation process should be flexible so that its focus and steering group membership can be adapted as findings emerge. Young people should have the opportunity to play a central role in checking and analysing findings.
•	The steering group should respond to early indications at all stages of the consultation process. The group should be able to take decisions quickly and in partnership with the young people involved, but support should be given where they wish to act separately.
•	Steering group members can work most effectively across levels of their organisation and in partnership across the community safety strategy group.
•	Findings and details of subsequent action should be fed back to all of those involved in the consultation especially the young people who took part.

#### 4. Data processing and analysis

The key to effective consultation does not just lie in the ability to deliver consultation effectively but also in the ability to process and analyse the variety of responses achieved in ways that best represents the interests and concerns of the persons and bodies taking part. The Cabinet Office (2004) highlights the variety of response that can be expected when consultation reaches a number of different target groups. Box 38 sets out the different views anticipated from consulting with different people.

<b>Box 38 Alternative response to consultation by target group</b>	
• <b>Individual users</b>	• Personal view of service as individual has experienced it. Snapshot of service.
• <b>User groups / panels / meetings</b>	• 'Non-expert' view from users of your service can help you see a different perspective.
• <b>Representative groups</b>	• Considered thoughts and proposals based on good knowledge of the service you

	provide and what users of your service want. Sometimes views may be stronger than those of the average user.
• <b>General public</b>	• General perception of service. Can be useful indicators of problems and preferences with service provision.
• <b>Sounding boards (non-users)</b>	• Relatively impartial views on proposals – useful for testing out proposals and plans.
• <b>Staff</b>	• Experience of a range of customers' views, combined with knowledge about the practical aspects of providing the service.

The handling, processing, analysis and presentation of data should enable the CDRP to identify key experiences, perceptions and viewpoints and verify the findings from the audit. At the same time the consultation report needs to demonstrate that people's concerns have been taken seriously.

**Signposting:** Guidance about the data processing and analysis is detailed in the section **What should my audit look like** Further guidance can be found in **Mori (2003) Feeling the Pulse II**.

MORI (2003) suggests 'Both quantitative and qualitative research can produce a wealth of *data* which will require time and skill to convert into *information that can be used by an authority*. With some thought and consideration, value can be added prior to wider dissemination of the results. MORI (2003) go on to state that the potential for applying the most useful types of analyses will ideally have been considered when designing the research methodology and research tools. MORI (2003) also identifies some very useful objectives for maximising the value of the research set out in Box 39.

**Box 39 Using analysis to maximise the value of consultation**

**Benchmarking the data**

- How do your results compare to those from other similar authorities?
- To the national average?

**The need for relevant comparisons**

- Are you comparing like-for like?
- Have you taken account of factors such as relative levels of deprivation and ethnic fractionalisation?

**Trends over time**

- Do these results suggest residents' perceptions are getting better / worse?
- Are you in line with the national trend or are you bucking it?
- Have you taken into account rising expectations?

**Identifying priorities**

- Have you identified residents' priorities using analytical techniques?

- What influence have categories in the question wording had?
- How do priorities vary by sub-group?

#### **Getting behind the figures – what’s driving attitudes?**

- Do you have a clear sense of what key variables are driving perceptions?
- Have you used further statistical techniques to identify some of the covert messages from research?

#### **Segmenting your customers**

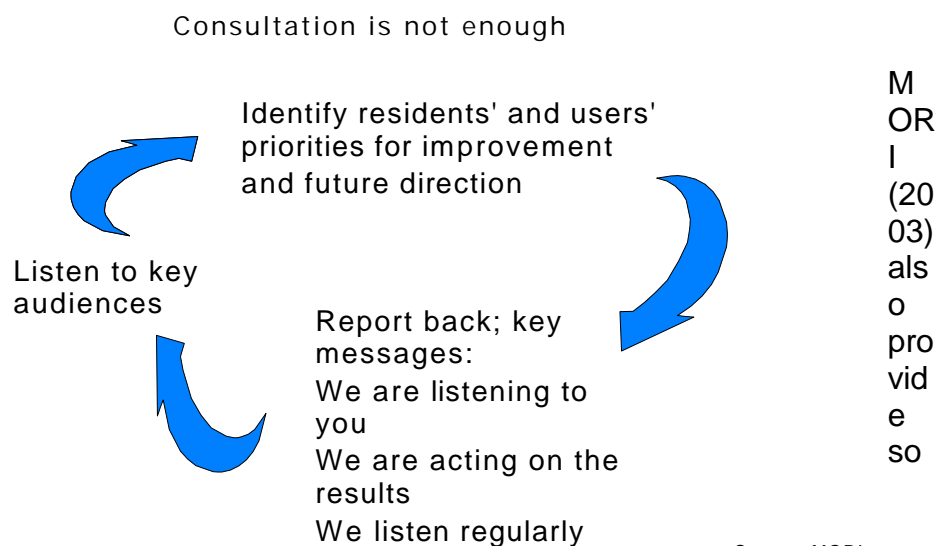
- Do you have a clear understanding of your “market”?
- Who are your different types of customers? How do they vary?
- Have you segmented your customers in order to focus service delivery to their specific needs and requirements?

### **5. Incorporating the findings and providing feedback**

If consultation is to be effective it must be seen to have an impact on the final strategy. Consultation should confirm priorities otherwise the strategy will need to take on board consultation outcomes before it can be finalised. But effective consultation is not a one off mechanism in the post audit consultation process. While this guidance is concerned with post audit consultation it is also about setting benchmarks and parameters for performance that will contribute to monitoring, review and evaluation of the strategy throughout its lifetime.

The knowledge that is learnt in post audit consultation will help identify what people are concerned about alongside what they would like the strategic priorities to achieve. If people can see that their contribution to consultation has made a difference they are more likely to respond positively to the outcomes of the new strategy, engage in initiatives and interventions introduced and contribute more generally to the success of the CDRP. Mori (2003) identifies the relationship between consultation and contributors in Diagram 2.

#### **Diagram 2 Mori 2003 Consultation is not enough**



me useful pointers for communicating the outcomes of consulting the public as set out in Box 40.

#### **Box 40 Communicating the outcomes of Consultation**

##### **1. Identifying priorities**

- Which findings do not require action?
- Which things can we not change in the short term?
- How do we tell people?
- Which results highlight need for more communications?
- What, how, who, where?
- Which results highlight need for action?
- What are the next steps?

##### **2. Communicating the findings. Who are we going to disseminate information to? The need to identify stakeholders:**

- chief officers
- members
- service managers
- front-line staff
- partner organisation
- respondents
- users/residents

##### **3. How are we going to communicate the results? Different audiences have different needs:**

- presentations
- seminars/workshops
- summary report
- feedback document to respondents
- detailed report

##### **4. What are we looking to communicate? This will depend on your audience**

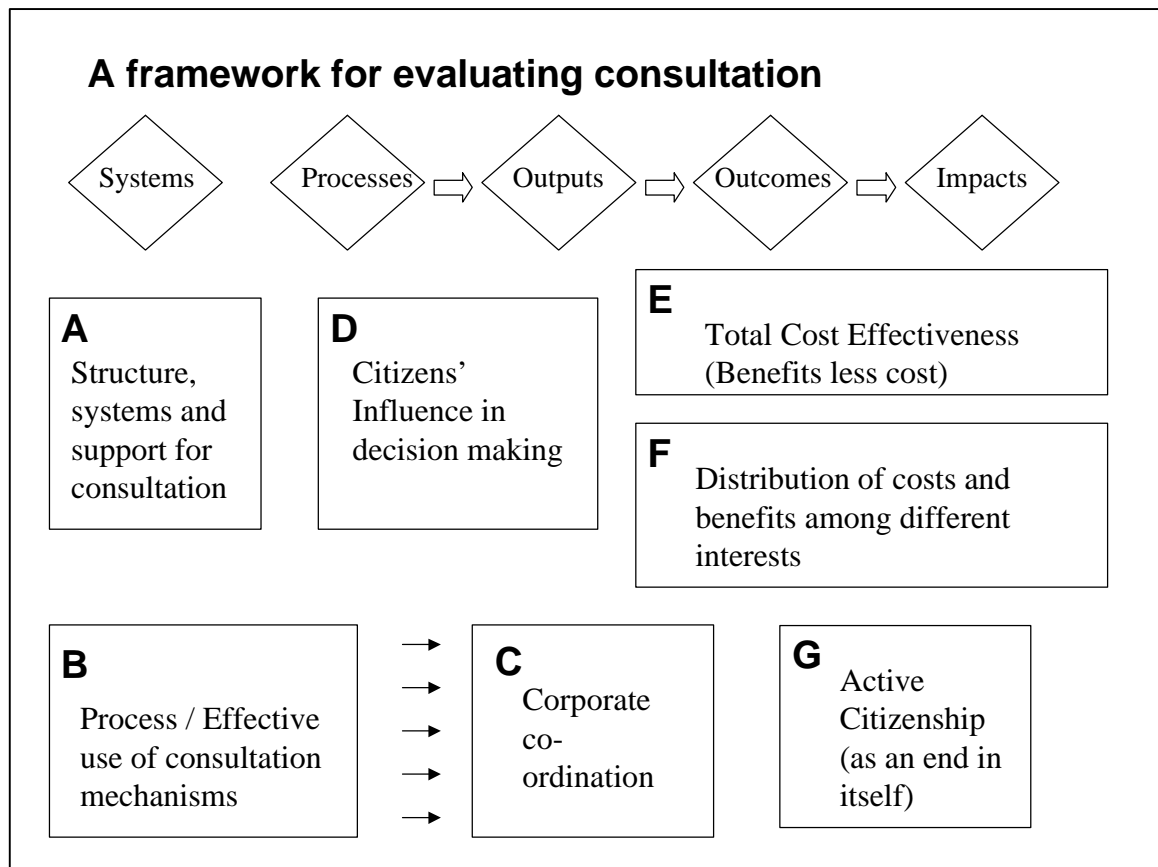
- headline results
- full results
- how the methodology worked
- invitation for feedback/suggestions
- an action plan

Signposting: **Guidance about Incorporating the findings and providing feedback is detailed in the section What should my audit Look Like? Further guidance can be found in Mori (2003) Feeling the Pulse II**

## 6. Evaluating consultation

ID&eA has developed a model for evaluating consultation that is designed to help authorities and services conduct qualitative evaluation. ID&eA suggests that this model 'is a framework not a solution. It supports judgement but does not judge. It is subjective but systematic.' The ID&eA model is illustrated in Box 41.

### Box 41 A Framework for evaluating consultation



The evaluation model marks out a route from setting out the objectives of consultation through to the final impact that consultation has on the final published strategy.

- This evaluation process is extensive but in practice it is a process that simply requires an honest and disciplined Yes or No response to a series of questions. If the CDRP can answer yes to all the questions set out in the evaluation model then the consultation has achieved what was intended.
- The structure of this evaluation model suggest that a positive outcome across all of the different sections means that the CDRP can be confident that the consultation has had a positive impact on the development and delivery of the audit.

Box 42 illustrates the ID&eA approach to evaluating consultation by setting out the questions that are addressed in Section A Evaluating Structure, Systems and Support for Consultation

### **Box 42 Evaluating structures, systems and support for consultation**

#### **Objectives**

Are the objectives of the consultation exercise clear (to those conducting it)?

- 1.1 Are there legal requirements to consult, and if so, how is it ensured that they are followed?
- 1.2 Are the objectives understood by all relevant stakeholders?
- 1.3 Do they feed into the planning process

#### **Systems and Support**

- 1.4 Are Members playing an appropriate role in the process?
- 1.5 Have those involved in this consultation exercise had all the necessary skills and training?
- 1.6 Has there been adequate training / 'capacity development' for those being consulted and involved?
- 1.7 Is this consultation exercise supported by appropriate corporate and departmental structures (e.g. line management and control, decentralisation, communications)? How might it be better co-ordinated?
- 1.8 Was appropriate support sought and given from support sections, such as PR/Communications on the style of presentation?
- 1.9 Is this consultation exercise supported by appropriate corporate and departmental strategy?
- 1.10 Is consultation / customer orientation written into (or assumed to be part of) people's roles? Is it an essential part of the style, values, and culture of the authority?
- 1.11 Was appropriate central support provided? (Written guidance, central source of advice, reference to other resources?)

ID&eA suggest that it is important that evaluation is built in from the planning stages, and managed effectively. Key aspects to track, according to ID&eA include:

- The numbers of those who took part: were they as expected?
- The techniques used: was the research carried out well?
- The representativeness of those consulted (although you may not necessarily want a representative sample in all cases, for example when you are consulting a specific consultation group)
- Success in reaching the hard to reach
- Evaluation by those who took part about how they felt: was it easy to give views, did they perceive the exercise as fair, useful?
- Did you get the information you wanted in sufficient time, depth, and quality?
- Did it change anything?
- Overall perceptions of 'listening' in general residents surveys

- What would you do differently next time?

**Signposting:** Comprehensive Guidance about evaluating consultation is detailed in ID&eA <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/83011> further details about evaluation are also set out in the section Monitoring and evaluation.

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