

Consultation & Community Engagement Strategy



www.teignbridge.gov.uk/communityengagement

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Introduction

Teignbridge District Council is working to improve how we consult and engage with our communities. The reasons are two fold: we believe engagement is the key to providing cost-effective services which meet the needs of our communities, and it plays an important role in shaping the places where people live, work and visit. This view is in accordance with that of the Government which wants to give people and communities a greater influence over local service provision. By encouraging localism through the 'Big Society' programme, people and communities can be given the information, power and responsibility they need to respond to the challenges they face.

This Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy will be the basis for all Council consultations. We can take our first steps towards building better relationships with our communities and use the information they give us to aid decision making, allowing us to target and tailor our resources to provide value for money.

Snapshot of the district

The population of Teignbridge in 2014 is estimated at 126,000.¹ The estimated population on census night, 27th March 2011, was 124,220.²

Teignbridge has mixed urban and rural populations with about 60% of its residents living in the urban areas of Newton Abbot, Dawlish and Teignmouth, with the rest living in rural settlements, ranging from rural towns, villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings.³

Since the census in 2001 the population has grown by 2.7% to 2011. According to estimates by the Office of National Statistics, the population will grow by about 8% between 2015 to 2030. Estimates suggest a dramatic increase in the number people over the age of 65 (25% of the population) rising to 32% by 2030, and a slight decrease in the working age population, with the number of children remaining static.⁴

The district population in 2011 was 98% white compared with 99% white in 2001. The percentage of mixed race and Asian people have both risen by more than 75%, while the percentage of black people has decreased by about 15% from 2001 to 2011.⁵

As the population changes in the ways predicted above, challenges and opportunities will be presented to the Council to:

- look after an ageing population
- cater for ethnic minority communities
- deal with the difficulties people in rural areas have in accessing services

The requirements of current service users will differ from the customers of the past and the Council needs to be ready to engage with people to create an environment that best reflects their needs and aspirations.

See www.teignbridge.gov.uk/factsandfigures for more information.

What is the Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy?

Consultation and community engagement is about giving local people the opportunity to play an active role by influencing decisions and shaping the future which may affect them and/or their community. This could include the planning, development or management of services and functions, and involve individuals, communities, voluntary and community organisations, businesses and other public sector bodies amongst others.

Aim

The aim of this Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy is to support and improve engagement activity within the district by setting out how the Council will approach consultation and engagement activities. Together with our Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit it provides guidance for staff and a clear explanation for local people of how and when we will undertake engagement with them.⁶

This will result in effective and efficient community engagement that will give local people, who want to, the chance to participate in shaping their communities. Good community engagement will give people better ownership of community activities and a greater sense of belonging to a community of interest or place. It will also allow us to identify any changes that need to happen and any issues relating to equality and diversity, so we can adapt our services accordingly to drive up the quality and cost-effectiveness of the services we provide, and improve life for local people.

Objectives

We will meet the aim above by delivering the following objectives:

- ➔ To create and develop opportunities for all local people, particularly those from 'hard to reach' groups to influence the decision-making process; for their voices to be heard. Some people may need to be treated more than equally to give them a fair opportunity to have their voice heard
- ➔ To use lots of different methods when consulting; ranging from the traditional to new and imaginative approaches to cater for all sections of the community
- ➔ To use what people say to develop and deliver quality services that meet the needs and aspirations of the local people
- ➔ To be honest and realistic with people about our limitations. We will not always be able to do as people wish as we have statutory requirements the Council needs to fulfil and only a limited amount of money to spend each year

- ➔ To achieve value for money in our consultation activity by co-ordinating engagement where possible. In this way resources can be shared and consultation fatigue avoided.

We are not claiming to have all the answers and will work with partners and other organisations to develop our proposals and may invite interested partners to participate in the prioritisation of tasks.

What is consultation and community engagement?

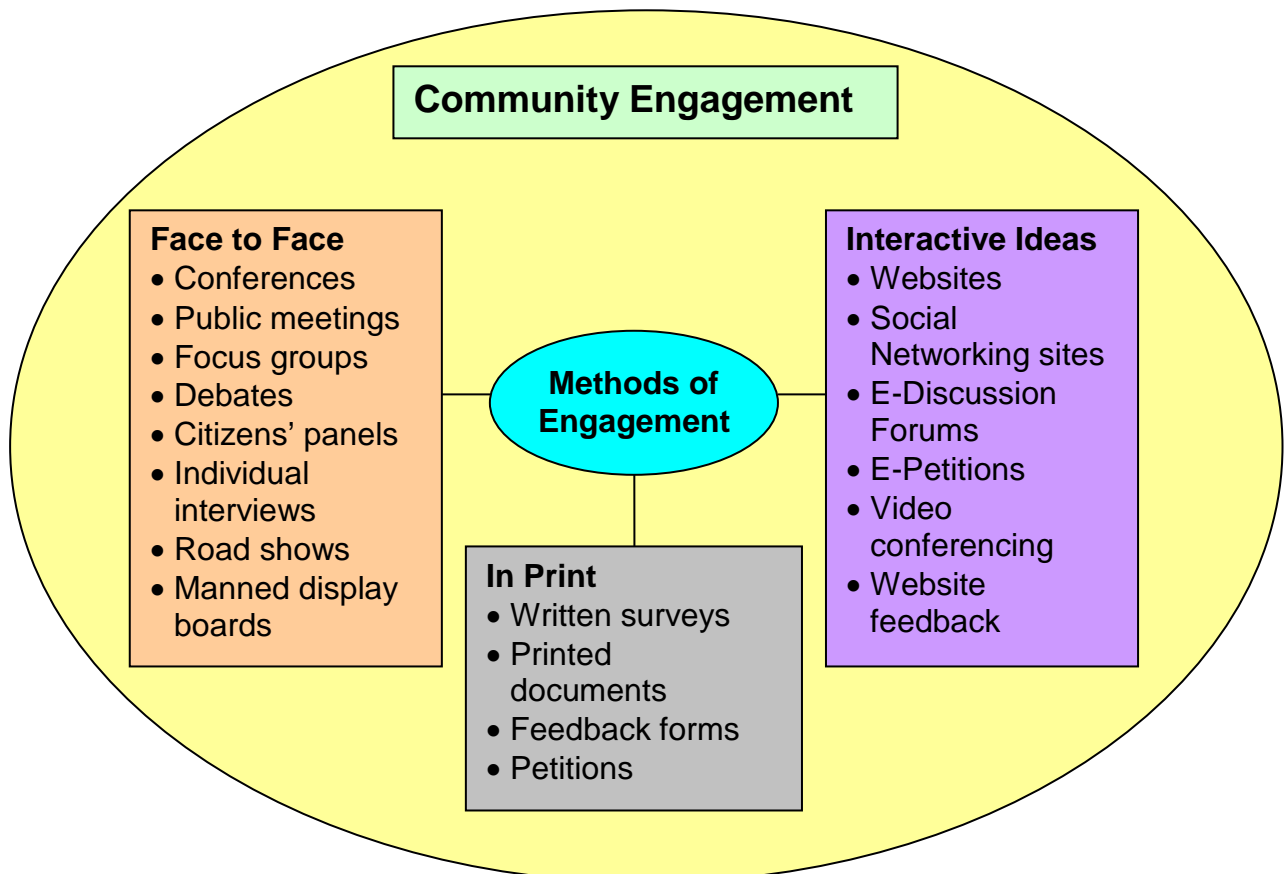
Consultation is defined by the Consultation Institute as 'the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.'⁷ Consultation involves two or more parties and is not a stand-alone concept but comes after a process of information giving. There is more detail on the levels of involvement on page 9.

The term 'community' can be used to describe different groups of people for example:

- 'Communities of place' would describe a group of people who are linked geographically i.e. people living or working in the same area
- 'Communities of interest' would describe a group of people who might have a shared experience e.g. young people, older people, people with disabilities or people who have a common interest, for example a sports club

However, these categories are not rigid and different people identify themselves in different ways. This must be remembered when carrying out all types of engagement.

Engagement covers all the different types of communication that takes place between different parties. Community engagement refers to the process of getting a community involved via interactions between the Council and residents, workers and visitors: anyone who has an interest can participate if they wish. Engagement should be flexible and consultations can be designed according to the target audience that is being engaged.



Duty to inform, consult or involve

We recognise that community engagement is about empowering local people, providing them all with opportunities to play an active role in shaping their future and in influencing decisions that will affect them and their communities.

Central Government has supported this view in a number of Acts: Local Government Act 1999 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. It places a duty on local authorities: a duty to inform, consult or involve.

Local Government Act 1999

The general duty

“(1) A best value authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

(2) For the purpose of deciding how to fulfil the duty arising under subsection (1) an authority must consult –

- (a) representatives of persons liable to pay any tax, precept or levy to or in respect of the authority,
- (b) representatives of persons liable to pay non-domestic rates in respect of any area within which the authority carries out functions,
- (c) representatives of persons who use or are likely to use services provided by the authority, and
- (d) representatives of persons appearing to the authority to have any interest in any area within which the authority carries out functions.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2) ‘representatives’ in relation to a group of persons means persons who appear to the authority to be representative of that group.

(4) In deciding on –

- (a) the persons to be consulted, and
- (b) the form, content and timing of consultations,

an authority must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. “⁸

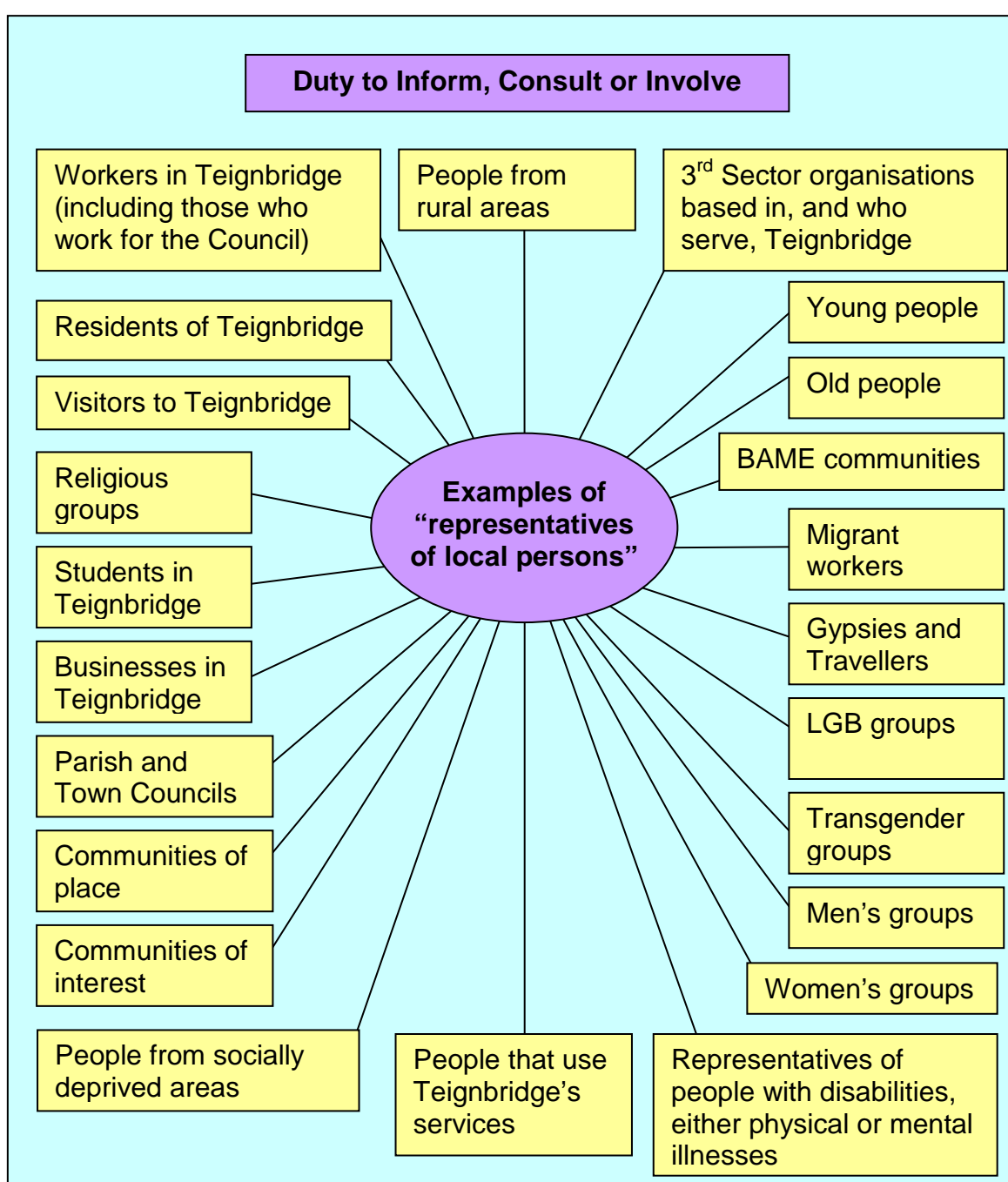
Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Involvement of local representatives

“ Where a best value authority considers it appropriate for representatives of local persons (or of local persons of a particular description) to be involved in the exercise of any of its functions by being –

- (a) provided with information about the exercise of the function,
- (b) consulted about the exercise of the function, or
- (c) involved in another way,

it must take steps as it considers appropriate to secure that such representatives are involved in the exercise of the function in that way. “⁹



Levels of engagement

Different individuals or communities will want to be involved in different ways and therefore community engagement is not a single process but can be seen as a 'ladder of participation' consisting of the following four levels (although these are described as 'levels', it is not right to assume that one is better than the other):

Empowerment shifts the power, influence and responsibility into the hands of individuals and/or communities.
The Council helps to build capacity in communities and gradually eases away over time.

Involvement is a joined-up approach between the Council and individuals and/or communities to identify and discuss what the issues are and deliver decisions and actions together.

Consultation is a two-way process which involves providing individuals and/or communities with a number of options and allowing them to voice their views, which will be taken into consideration and will help influence the decision-making process.

Information-giving is usually a one-way process where information is provided which would empower communities to make an informed decision.

Empowerment

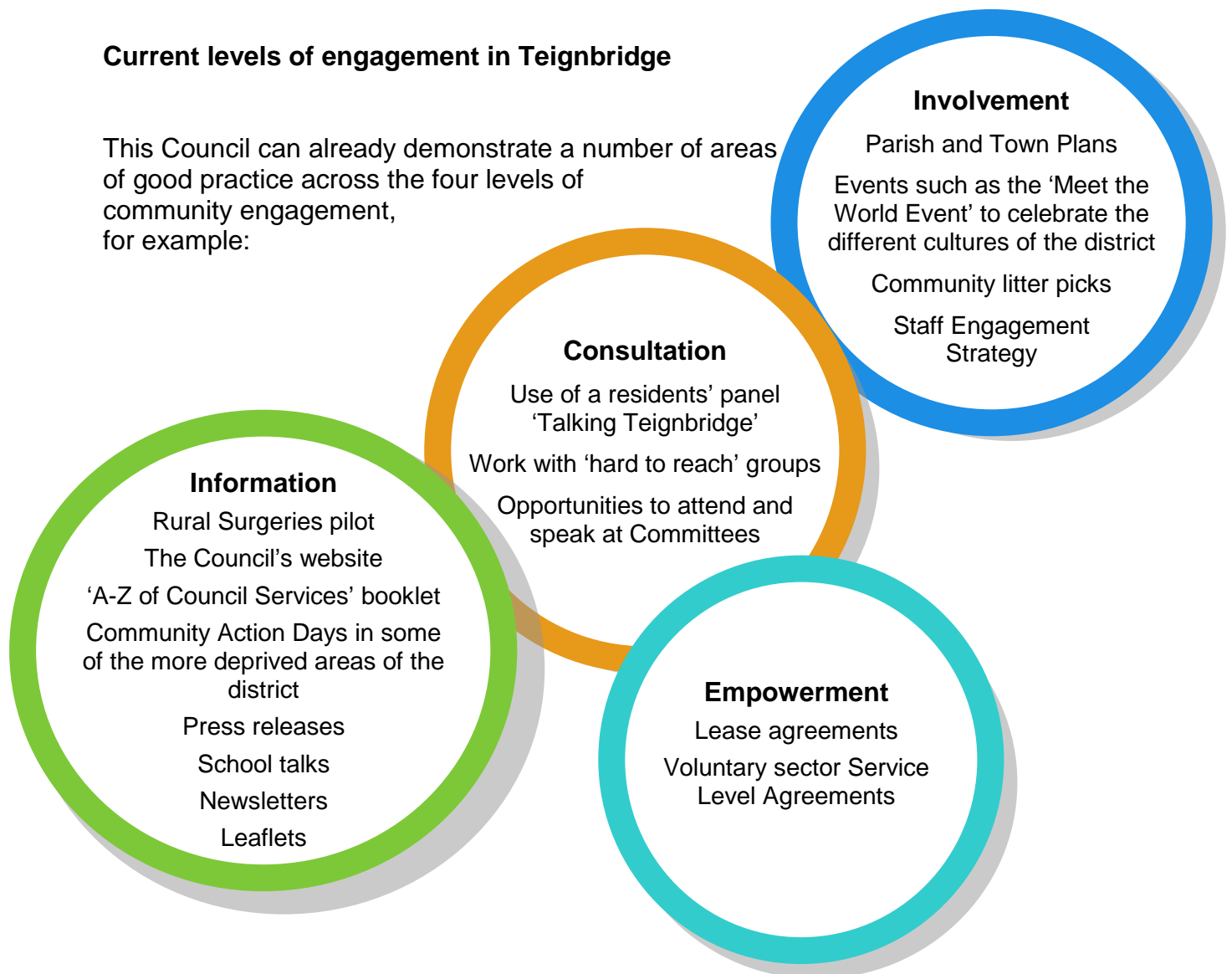
Involvement

Consultation

Information-giving

Current levels of engagement in Teignbridge

This Council can already demonstrate a number of areas of good practice across the four levels of community engagement, for example:



Informing in Teignbridge means...

- We will actively give local people information. We do this in a lot of ways, for example, in press releases, newsletters and leaflets which can be obtained in both a written and audio format, on request. We go out to different events and personally inform people too, for example, Community Action Days and 'U Can Cut It' events held over the summer of 2010.
- Customers can get information they want, including all the things mentioned above, from the reception of our Forde House Offices; there are knowledgeable receptionists, leaflet stands, and two computers with free internet access. Also, our Tourist Information Centres in Newton Abbot, Teignmouth and Dawlish hold information on many of the events and services available across Teignbridge and the South West.
- To improve the way we inform we have set up a website users group that consists of people who use the Council's website regularly. We ask them to try and test different items and then provide us with feedback. This helps us by letting us know where we have not been clear. In addition, the GovMetric system (happy, straight and sad

faces) used on our website allows us to collect feedback continuously as it appears on every webpage and users can rate the page good, average or poor.

- We have recruited local people to form a Readers' Panel. This group is available to read draft documents, leaflets, publicity handouts, etc. Officers should try to use this group as it will help with writing in a way that the public can understand.

Consulting in Teignbridge means...

- We will promote engagement activities so that people have the chance to join in. We will follow the Guiding Principles on page 13 when consulting.
- We have established links with a number of 'hard to reach' groups, including the Teignbridge (Disability) Access Group and the Teignbridge Gypsy and Traveller Forum so that we ensure we get the views of representatives of these communities. Many communities of interest have a contact within the Council and these Relationship Leads are listed on pages 18-19. Officers should plan their engagement with these communities through the Relationship Lead in Business Improvement and Development (BID).
- We have established a Residents' Panel called 'Talking Teignbridge,' consisting of local people who have volunteered to be contacted for consultation purposes. We have information on these people and can segment the group in a number of ways, for example, people who live in flats, Newton Abbot residents, car users, etc. Officers should contact BID if they wish to use the Panel which is surveyed quarterly.

Involving in Teignbridge means...

- We will seek to build up relationships with communities of interest and place. We aim to work together over a long period of time; make decisions, target resources and deliver outcomes for these communities.
- We have actively promoted the parish and town planning process which enables communities to identify a vision for the future, to have their say and outline their needs and aspirations.
- We are writing a Staff Engagement Strategy in consultation with Council staff.

Empowering in Teignbridge means...

- To take forward the Big Society agenda there will be a need for us to look to build capacity and capability in communities to empower people to be self-determining.
- For example, we have a number of lease agreements including a 49 year lease with Dawlish Town Council for the maintenance of the Lawn, the Manor grounds and a couple of play areas. They are totally under the control of the Town Council.

- We have given away some of our assets to parish councils, for example, a car park and play area in Ilsington and a car park and public open space in Tedburn St Mary. The parishes paid a fee of £1 for the freehold of the land, and a covenant states that the land must retain its community use. A further deterrent to changing the land from community use to commercial use is a claw back condition stating that if planning permission was ever granted profits from the change of use would have to be given to Teignbridge District Council.

How to carry out consultations and community engagement in Teignbridge

Guiding Principles

In order to achieve the aim and objectives of this Strategy, the delivery of any successful community engagement activity should observe the following guiding principles:

Purpose

Consultation and engagement needs a purpose; it is important to be clear what is needed from the consultation before it starts.

Open and honest

Engagement needs to be easy to understand and we must tell participants what can and what cannot be influenced and changed.

Willingness to learn

We must be willing to learn about peoples' views and be prepared to be influenced and moved from our own stance.

Accessible to all

We will try and ensure that community engagement lets everyone have the chance to have their say. This means offering meeting times, venues, formats and languages to suit a variety of needs (people who work, people with disabilities, etc)

Exciting

A number of engagement approaches should be considered to get people interested and involved when consulting different groups.

Targeted

Consultations and community engagement might be targeted by relevance to certain groups or service users. This provides value for money for the Council and saves residents' time.

Length of time

We have a minimum consultation period of 6 weeks for large scale policies and strategies, but, wherever possible, 12 weeks should be allowed. For engagement with small and specialist groups, a shorter timeframe may be justified and appropriate. For policies, strategies and documents that have already been the subject of extensive consultation, we will not necessarily undertake a wide-ranging public consultation on the new document but may adopt a more targeted approach.

Cost effective

Consultation and community engagement needs to provide value for money. The outcomes must contribute meaningfully to the decision-making process. Documents should go out to consultation via the corporate mechanisms, such as the Residents' Panel, and be co-ordinated by BID. However, if service-specific specialist groups are required, then these consultations will need to be carried out separately by the service. For example, with regard to the Leisure Strategy, specialist equality strands can be consulted via the corporate mechanisms managed by BID, for example, speaking to

gypsies and travellers at the Teignbridge Gypsy and Traveller Forum. However, if Leisure wants to consult with cycle clubs, then the service would undertake this itself.

Confidentiality

Whether or not responses are to be kept confidential needs to be disclosed to participants. The collection of data in engagement activity and its storage needs to take into account the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act. Please see the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit on page 44 for more information.

Partnership

Community engagement activity should be undertaken in partnership where possible. Using a co-ordinated approach allows for the sharing of resources and we might save some money. Co-ordinating avoids duplication and consultation fatigue as well.

Feedback

Feedback should be provided to participants showing both the results and how the results have influenced the decision-making process. The 'You said, we did' feedback forms should be put on the engagement pages of the internet within 6 months of the consultation ending.

Maximisation of information

We want to make better use of the information we have across the Council. This will cut down the need to consult with the community more times than necessary, avoiding consultation fatigue and the waste of resources.

Steps to consulting

If you want to undertake a consultation, here are the basic steps to follow, and more information is provided in the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit.

Step 1 – Has anyone consulted on this before?

- Collect information that already exists internally or externally
- Check the Consultation Calendar on the Council's website at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/consultationcalendar
- Check the Consultation pages of the Council's website at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/consultation
- Check with the Community Engagement Officer on 01626 215893 or email laura.trist@teignbridge.gov.uk
- Other members of BID will also be able to help you



Step 2 – Think about who may need to be consulted

- By thinking about who may need to be consulted you will have given consideration to the positive and negative impacts of your policy, strategy, service or facility on the population, including the hard to reach groups that are identified during this process
- You will need this information to fill out the Equality Checklist in the Consultation Plan in Step 3
- Please see page 30 in the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit for more information



Step 3 – Write a Consultation Plan

- By completing a Consultation Plan you can be sure that you have planned your consultation and community engagement activity thoroughly
- Read and use the Guiding Principles on pages 13-14 as a useful overview
- Next, read the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit from page 31 onwards which will take you through the Consultation Plan that is available at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/communityengagement
- Remember to monitor your customers by using the Corporate Monitoring Form that can be found at <http://bridge/monitoringform>
- Contact the Community Engagement Officer on 01626 215893 or email laura.trist@teignbridge.gov.uk to review the details of your Consultation Plan



Step 4 – Send the information to be uploaded onto the internet

- Upload the information onto the Teignbridge Consultations page of the Council's website at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/liveconsultations by emailing a brief description, and link to further information and the location of the online survey to the Community Engagement Officer on laura.trist@teignbridge.gov.uk
- Read page 46 in the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit for more detail



Step 5 – Carry out the consultation and engagement activity



Step 6 – Analyse the results

- BID will analyse the results of any corporate consultations
- Upload your results to the Council's webpages for consultation results, which can be found at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/results
- Read page 48 in the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit



Step 7 – Feedback the results

- Feedback on as many levels as possible: ranging from internal team meetings to holding external events to show the results of the engagement and what has changed because of it
- Fill out a 'You Said, We Did' feedback form, available from the Consultation pages of the website at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/yousaidwedid within 6 months of the consultation closing
- Pass a copy of the 'You said, we did' form to the Community Engagement Officer to publish on the Consultation pages of the website
- Read page 51 in the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit

Have you thought about involving...

It may be worthwhile involving many or all of the following people for inclusive and successful consultation and community engagement:

Members

There is a need to include Members in consultation and community engagement as they are the elected voice of a community. They have the necessary skills and close links to engage successfully with their communities. As decision makers, Members will also be consulted through Committee process. Members represent their Wards; a list of these can be found at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/councillors.

Local people

Local people must have an opportunity to be involved in any engagement activity that may affect them or their community, if they wish to do so. Teignbridge accommodates diverse communities and therefore any decisions or improvements need to be based on a representative voice; this maybe representative of the district or of a target group or audience depending on the issue being considered.

Please also refer to the diagram on page 8 which shows a full list of people who might be considered to be 'representatives of local persons.'

Staff

The employees of Teignbridge District Council have important roles to play in consultation and community engagement. Many members of staff are the first point of contact for local people and are therefore well placed to give the views of the customer. A lot of staff are Teignbridge residents, and are Council customers themselves, which makes their views just as important.

Other stakeholders

Other stakeholders may wish to be consulted with. These can include the Local Strategic Partnerships; town and parish councils; town and parish plan groups; statutory agencies; the business sector, including individual traders, trade organisations and major employers; neighbouring councils, and the green lobby, amongst others.

Community and Voluntary Sector

The voluntary and community sector consists of local groups and organisations that represent and deliver services to communities who might be 'hard to reach' or 'seldom heard.' The Council gives funding to the Teignbridge Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) to support engagement with the voluntary and community sector. CVS can be contacted on 01626 326120 or by emailing office@teigncvs.org.uk

Equality Impact Assessments

By undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) we can ensure the delivery of fair services to all. Policies, strategies, services and facilities will be assessed to ensure that all appropriate individuals, communities and groups, customers or potential customers, have been considered and engaged with to identify any possible impacts. Following any necessary engagement, an action plan will be created and monitored to mitigate any negative impacts identified.

The Equality Checklist found in the Consultation Plan can help decide who is consulted in the consultation process. Services need to decide how they are going to fulfil the duty to inform, consult or involve, who to consult with and to what degree they will do this.

For more information on the Equality Checklist in the Consultation Plan please see page 30 of the Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit.

Contact information

If you need more information please contact –

Teignbridge District Council's Business Improvement and Development (BID)
Team Leader – Steve Wotton
01626 215602
steve.wotton@teignbridge.gov.uk

Teignbridge District Council's Community Engagement Officer
Laura Trist
01626 215893
ext 5983
consultation@teignbridge.gov.uk

Teignbridge Community and Voluntary Services
01626 326120
office@teigncvvs.org.uk

Relationship Leads

Gender	Laura Trist 01626 215893 ext 5893 laura.trist@teignbridge.gov.uk
Age – Younger people	Celia Hadow 01626 215607 ext 5607 celia.hadow@teignbridge.gov.uk
Age – NEETs	Celia Hadow 01626 215607 ext 5607 celia.hadow@teignbridge.gov.uk
Age – Older people	Gary Powell 01626 215895 ext 5895 gary.powell@teignbridge.gov.uk
Race – BAME	Laura Trist 01626 215893 ext 5893 laura.trist@teignbridge.gov.uk

Race – Gypsies and Travellers	Celia Hadow 01626 215607 ext 5607 celia.hadow@teignbridge.gov.uk
Race – Migrant workers	Celia Hadow 01626 215607 ext 5607 celia.hadow@teignbridge.gov.uk
Disability	Gary Powell 01626 215895 ext 5895 gary.powell@teignbridge.gov.uk
Sexual orientation	Laura Trist 01626 215893 ext 5893 laura.trist@teignbridge.gov.uk
Faith	Laura Trist 01626 215893 ext 5893 laura.trist@teignbridge.gov.uk
Rural isolation	Gary Powell 01626 215895 ext 5895 gary.powell@teignbridge.gov.uk
Social deprivation	Celia Hadow 01626 215607 ext 5607 celia.hadow@teignbridge.gov.uk

References

- ¹ Population is the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimate for 2013 from www.ons.gov.uk
- ² Neighbourhood Statistics population census 2011 statistics from www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
- ³ Draft Housing and Health Strategy available at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/housingstrategy
- ⁴ Teignbridge facts and figures can be found at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/factsandfigures
- ⁵ The Teignbridge profile contains population facts and figures and can be found at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/population
- ⁶ The Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy and Toolkit can both be viewed online at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/communityengagement
- ⁷ Amanda Murrell (2010), The Consultation Charter, Bedfordshire: The Consultation Institute, p. 2
- ⁸ Office of Public Sector Information (1999), Local Government Act 1999 – Chapter 27, London: The Stationary Office Limited, p. 5
- ⁹ Department of Health (2007), Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 – Chapter 28, London: The Stationary Office Limited, p. 102

Glossary

BAME	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
BID	Business Improvement and Development
CVS	Teignbridge Community and Voluntary Services
EIAs	Equality Impact Assessments
NEETs	Not in education, employment or training
LGB	Lesbian, gay and bisexual
TDC	Teignbridge District Council
Toolkit	Consultation and Community Engagement Toolkit