

# Consultation and Engagement Protocols

February 2022



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*These protocols set out the Combined Authority's approach to consultation, which is "the dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon genuine exchange of views, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action" (The Consultation Institute).*

*Our engagement activity does not have the same legal requirements as consultation but we want it to be best in class. We will therefore consider these protocols (where appropriate) when planning our engagement activities. We will also continually look for new methods to engage with key stakeholders, businesses and the public and will measure effectiveness.*

*We will also encourage our partners to adhere to these protocols where possible.*

*Consultation and engagement exercises often result in the collection of personal data and we have processes in place to ensure that this is GDPR compliant so that your [or any] private personal information is protected.*

- 1. We will ensure that stakeholders and members of the public are aware of our approach to consultation and activities**
  - We will consult where we have a statutory duty to do so or when we consider it would be unfair not to consult
  - The Combined Authority values consultation as an opportunity to consider the views of the public in shaping our projects and policies, because we recognise that it is important to listen to the people who are affected by what we do.
  - We will publicise consultations using a variety of channels and monitor the effectiveness
  - We will use existing data and knowledge of our communities to find the best ways to consult with seldom heard groups and those most impacted by our proposals
  
- 2. We will ensure that stakeholders and members of the public are able to have their say on proposals when they are still at a formative stage**
  - We will consult in advance of decisions being made and may carry out consultations in a number of phases (where appropriate) as plans develop
  - We will clearly explain the issues and options we have considered (if applicable)
  - We will be honest and open about decisions which are outside our control
  
- 3. We will ensure that consultation is open, transparent and accessible**
  - We will give sufficient reasons for the proposals to allow respondents to understand them and respond to them properly
  - We will set realistic timescales for consultation (where these are within our control) providing sufficient time for responses to be made and considered
  - We will adopt approaches that maximise participation and response rates and will monitor and report diversity statistics
  - We will identify mechanisms to consult with seldom heard communities

- We will ensure that consultation activity is accessible in terms of methodology, venues and use of plain English
  - We will provide information in alternative formats such as braille, audio, easy read, and other languages if required
- 4. We will ensure that the consultation process is well planned, managed and coordinated and achieves value for money**
- We will seek opportunities to deliver joint activities with partners wherever possible to avoid duplication
  - We will make the most of existing groups and networks, this includes working with equality, diversity and inclusion networks
- 5. We will ensure that consultation is effective, meaningful and of a consistently high quality**
- We will ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to enable them to undertake effective consultation
  - A quality control process has been developed for consultation activity
  - We will work with our equality, diversity and inclusion internal working group to understand and share best practice in order to strengthen our consultations
- 6. We will ensure that consultation feedback is properly considered and outcomes are reported in a timely way**
- Assessments and interpretations of consultations will be as objective as possible
  - Comprehensive consultation feedback reports will be provided to decision makers, in a timely manner, for their consideration
  - Participants will have the opportunity to opt-in to receive information about the outcome of the consultation. This information will explain, as simply as possible, how feedback has influenced decision making

## Find out more

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