



## PLANNING A CONSULTATION

As well as reading the information below you should access the Consultations Planner Template which can be located on the Consultation Toolkit Homepage. This Planner is a good way of turning the information below and your own ideas into a solid plan of action.

Effective planning is an essential ingredient in making your consultation work. A good, effective plan can mean the difference between success and failure. An effective plan will be able to answer – in detail – five main questions:

**What?** Is the purpose of the consultation.

**Why?** Is it necessary


**Who?** Is going to do it.

**When?** Is it to be carried out.

**How?** Is it going to be done.

To be able to answer these questions you need to make sure that you have done the following:

1. Before commencing any consultation you must ensure that the consultation is necessary (include checking whether any previous research on this issue has been done).
2. You must be clear on why you are consulting – set your aims, objectives and strategy first and know what you plan to do with the results.
3. Ensure that you have clearly identified who will be on the consultation project team and clearly define their roles and responsibilities.

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4. Determine who your consultees will be and identify how they will be selected (e.g. random, voter's register).
  5. Identify how many people you will be consulting with (what will the size of your sample be?)
  6. Choose the Consultation methodology that is most appropriate to your aims and objectives and to the people you are going to consult with.
  7. Select the most effective method of analysing the results of the consultation, considering: time taken to input, accessibility of data and presentation of data.
  8. Ensure that the method(s) used are cost-effective, robust and appropriate.
  9. Make sure your consultation is adequately resourced in terms of time, funding and staffing for planning, carrying out and concluding the consultation.
  10. Determine how you will balance competing interests against resources and statutory requirements and how you will balance community demands against members' decision-making role.
  11. Determine a clearly defined timetable for the consultation.
  12. Build in resilience. Make sure that your plans are flexible and give you room to manoeuvre if things don't go to plan.
  13. Identify how and when you will feedback your results.
  14. Ensure that there is continuous monitoring before, during and after the consultation to ensure that the Consultation Plan is working.
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