

## SFJA52

# Manage consultations to support democratic and decision making processes



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### Overview

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to consult with the public on a wide range of issues. There may also be other situations in which local authorities decide to carry out public consultations on their own initiative. In either case, local authority officers need to be competent in managing or contributing to this process. This unit covers contributing to public consultations, but not assuming overall responsibility for them.

### Target Group

This unit is appropriate to the work of staff in local government working, for example, in Committee Services, Democratic Services or other departments that have an important role in assisting the local authority to consult with the public and other key external stakeholders on issues of interest to them.

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#### Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

- P1 include within your plans for consultation:
  - P1.1 those to be consulted
  - P1.2 the methods to be used
  - P1.3 agreed timescales and costs
  - P1.4 monitoring methods
  - P1.5 critical success factors
  - P1.6 possible contingencies and ways of dealing with these
- P2 ensure your chosen consultation methods:
  - P2.1 are consistent with the aims, objectives and processes of your organisation
  - P2.2 are consistent with the reasons for consultation
  - P2.3 represent the most effective methods of consultation within available resources
  - P2.4 meet the needs of the people with whom you need to consult
  - P2.5 respect requirements for openness and transparency
- P3 gain the support of the accountable body for your consultation plans
- P4 provide appropriate support to those taking part in the consultation
- P5 complete a clear and effective analysis of all consultation responses
- P6 ensure the accountable body receives:
  - P6.1 a summary of the consultation processes and outcomes
  - P6.2 clear conclusions and options for action, supported by appropriate evidence
  - P6.3 support to enable them to reach appropriate decisions
- P7 evaluate the consultation process and share lessons for future practice

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#### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

- K1 the importance of effective communication and consultation in a democratic context
- K2 the range of processes and methods available for communication and consultation
- K3 the strengths and weaknesses of these processes and methods according to different situations and different groups
- K4 how these processes and methods can be used effectively in a democratic context
- K5 the importance of openness, confidentiality, political independence and sensitivity when carrying out consultation exercises
- K6 the established methods of communicating and consulting in a democratic context and their strengths and weaknesses
- K7 individuals and groups that should be communicated and consulted with according to the requirements of the accountable body
- K8 house styles and local requirements for report writing
- K9 how to identify communication and consultation processes that are appropriate to your needs
- K10 the importance of devising methods of communication and consultation that meet the needs of all the stakeholders involved and how to do so
- K11 why you should take account of other communication and consultation processes
- K12 why you should plan and document your communication and consultation process
- K13 why you should consult with others on your plans
- K14 why it is important to identify and plan for possible contingencies
- K15 how to organise data in a way that will help analysis
- K16 why it is important to be objective in your analysis
- K17 what factors may tend to make you less than objective
- K18 how to set out a report in a clear and logical manner
- K19 the importance of continuous improvement in communication and consultation processes

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#### Additional Information

**This unit covers the following types of consultations:**

**Scope/range  
related to  
performance  
criteria**

- 1 involving public meetings
- 2 involving surveys
- 3 involving web-based methods
- 4 involving focus groups
- 5 involving media

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#### Behaviours

#### You must show that you work in the following way

1. you demonstrate political neutrality
2. you recognise changes in circumstances promptly and adjust plans and activities accordingly
3. you constantly seek to improve performance
4. you generate and recognise imaginative and innovative solutions
5. you identify people's information needs
6. you identify people's preferred communication media and styles and adopt media and styles appropriate to different people and situations
7. you present information clearly, concisely, accurately and in ways that promote
8. you prioritise objectives and plan work to make the best use of time and resources
9. you accurately calculate risks, and make provision so that unexpected events do not impede the achievement of objectives
10. you monitor the quality of work and progress against plans and take appropriate corrective action, where necessary
11. you check the validity and reliability of information, with sensitivity to possible bias and ensuring balance
12. you analyse and structure information to develop knowledge that can be shared
13. you show sensitivity to internal and external politics that impact on your area of work
14. you show sensitivity to stakeholders' needs and interests and manage these effectively

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#### Links to other NOS

- 1 A51 Take effective decisions
- 2 C11 Manage your own resources and professional development
- 3 C22 Maintain and develop effective working relationships in local government
- 4 C32 Facilitate the implementation of local government legislation regulations and procedures

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