

APPENDIX 2

A Framework for Delivering Successful Engagement in Housing and Environment

Introduction

This framework supports the Policy for Successful Engagement in Housing & Environment. It is intended as a tool for our own staff and providers of services we commission and influence. It is designed to help design, deliver and assess the process of engagement for Housing and Environment.

This framework is not intended to replace statutory engagement or well established good practice in engagement. Rather, it is available as a guide when other consultation/engagement mechanisms do not exist; where colleagues may need help considering what to do; or where sector specific guidance only provides for a minimal level of engagement.

The framework is based on a range of good practice reference material, detailed in Appendix A, particularly National Standards for Community Engagement, Planning Aid Scotland's SP=EED (Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery), and Place Standard, which is a key engagement tool developed by the Scottish Government, NHS and Architecture Scotland.

Supporting Communities with Engagement

Although this framework is focussed on our actions in Housing and Environment, this activity is a two way process, as some communities may need to be supported in how they participate in engagement with us. This could include supporting communities to carry out a self-analysis of their perceptions of their community, combined with their needs and desires for change, such as through the Place Standard. We need to bear in mind how we can both support and upskill communities to engage in the debate.

Pre-Engagement with Elected Members

Prior to wider consultation/engagement with stakeholders, we should consider communicating with elected members, particularly:

- Local members – if there is an issue relevant to their Ward (remembering to include all local Members).
- The Convenor and Vice Convenor with responsibility for a function, if it is a matter which could be of a strategic or policy nature, and/or may require the Committee's involvement at some stage.

The purpose of this elected member engagement is:

- to give elected members an early insight into the issue, in their role as the democratically elected representative for that area.
- the elected members may be able to offer suggestions on who/how to engage on an issue in their community.

In some instances, our communication with the elected members may be confidential – for example if the situation is sensitive or it is a very early stage in the activities, and the detail of the wider engagement has yet to be worked out. In these circumstances, **we should clearly advise the elected members that the matter is confidential at this stage, and not for sharing.**

What is effective engagement?

An essential aspect of effective engagement is managing public expectation. Our activities can be complicated and emotive - often with legal requirements adding a further layer of complexity. Meaningful engagement needs to build and maintain a positive working relationship with stakeholders and local communities, as well as setting out a realistic understanding of what can be achieved and what time is available for the engagement.

The level and type of engagement should be designed on a case-by-case basis, ideally in collaboration with those who will be engaged with. In some cases, the provision of basic information may suffice; in others, members of the public will play a key role in the design process of new proposals, working in partnership with our staff and other stakeholders.

In some circumstances, informing or engaging our communities in advance may not be possible, for example, in emergency situations. In these cases, it can be helpful to let those affected know why the decision was taken, and what factors meant that informing and engaging was not practicable.

Appendix B gives some examples of the stakeholders we may want to include in our engagements.

There will never be a single formula for achieving effective engagement. Therefore, instead of taking a “one-size-fits-all” approach, this framework sets out **3 levels of engagement** to suit different scenarios, and suggests how to undertake effective engagement and consultation for each. However, it is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, and engagement should be tailored to meet local circumstances.

The 3 levels of engagement are:

Level 1	Informing (keeping the public informed. Involves providing balanced information to the public to assist understanding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be appropriate where we have little alternative over what we do (e.g. statutory activity, or time pressure due to safety concerns) • an essential building block for engagement • more likely to be a one-way process • a valuable end in itself and the most appropriate level to aim for in certain situations • an essential step in achieving Levels 2 and 3.
Level 2	Consulting (to obtain feedback / listen and acknowledge how community feedback has influenced the decision making process. A two way process)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • probably the level of engagement practised most commonly and should be achievable in many scenarios. • incorporates and builds on Level 1 above • an interactive and iterative process – listening, and being responsive to issues raised.
Level 3	Engagement / partnership (To actively work with a community in formulating joint solutions. Involves in-depth collaboration and demands time and commitment from all sides)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporates Levels 1 and 2, but goes well beyond these levels • the most demanding level of engagement • achievable in community-led proposals, or other proposals where members of the public are involved in the design and development process such as charrettes; or in large development or regeneration projects. • may take place over an extended period of time, or be a shorter, more intensive process involving in-depth collaboration with partners, and should include potential for their input into design of proposals and the engagement process.

We should consider the most appropriate level for the issue or service design we are considering, and should, strive to engage at the highest possible of the three levels.

The framework sets out guidance or what to do at each level, across the following eight criteria;

1	Transparency & Integrity	5	Responsiveness
2	Co-ordination	6	Inclusiveness
3	Information	7	Monitoring & Evaluating
4	Appropriateness	8	Learning & Sharing

The framework is set out as a series of questions for service providers to consider in informing, consulting or engaging with their communities.

Level 1: Informing

1 Transparency & Integrity – The purpose of the engagement is clear and people can find out about it easily

- Do you have a clear statement about the purpose of the engagement?
- Are you clear about potential timescales of the engagement process and delivery?
- Have you considered whether there is a legacy of trust or distrust from previous engagement (research previous engagement and consultation processes, as this may influence your message and communication methods)
- Have you advertised any engagement process or event prominently e.g. leaflets, posters, websites, local press and radio, social media?
- Did you attract passers-by to events by having banners and posters outside venues?
- Was it possible to explain how further information can be accessed.

2 Co-ordination – The timetable for the engagement process will be published and relevant relationships explained

- Did you set out the engagement approach well in advance, identifying who the key stakeholders are, and how to target them?
- Did you allow appropriate time for the engagement process, to give stakeholders plenty of notice?
- Did you establish whether other engagement/consultation exercises are on-going?
- Are you clear about, and provided explanations of, the roles of all stakeholders involved?
- Did you allow a realistic amount of time in the workload of those carrying out the consultation?
- Were you flexible and have contingencies for any delays?

3 Information – Information will be relevant, accurate and comprehensible to the target audience

- Did you describe the relevant issues clearly and succinctly?
- Did you, where possible, present information visually; avoid too much text?
- You should have identified at the outset gaps in information available, and how to source this information?
- Did you provide summaries of the role and content of key documents e.g. Local Development Plans, Planning Advice Notes, and explain how to access full versions?
- Did you invite people to sign up for updates e.g. by email or newsletter ?
- Did you reference all sources of information?
- Did you consider holding an event to attract and gauge public interest in plans or proposals?

4 Appropriateness – Information will be presented to suit its intended audience and can be accessed by all stakeholders at each stage of the process

- Did you consider the best means of publicising the engagement process e.g. public notice boards, libraries, community centers, and local media?
- Did you use clear English and avoid technical jargon ?
- Were you aware that the target audience may not be as familiar with technical terms, as you were?
- Did you explain maps, drawings and diagrams in clear and simple terms?
- Did you consider for public events, venues which are easy to find and times that allow all stakeholders to attend; provide access for people with disabilities and other needs?

5 Responsiveness – Relevant information will be provided at every stage of the process

- Did you ensure that contact details for enquiries/responses were given on all materials?
- Did you deal with enquiries promptly?
- Did you enable access to relevant documents on internet (eg. Council website) and place copies of relevant documentation at public places e.g. libraries, post offices, community centres, Council offices, Housing offices?
- Did you ensure materials can be made in different languages and other formats to reach as wide an audience as possible?
- Did you publicise any proposed changes to plans or proposals?
- Did we record and publicise changes to plans or proposals as a result of the engagement process?

6 Inclusiveness – Relevant representation groups / organisations will be identified and information will be designed and disseminated to reach them

- Did you establish a contacts database and keep it up-to-date?
- Have you used formal and informal networks to make the contacts database as representative as possible?
- Did you identify seldom heard groups and consider how they tend to access information – e.g. via local newspapers/groups/venues/libraries etc. and social media; also via Community Education staff, or social work colleagues.
- Did you consider factors relevant to inclusiveness and representativeness e.g. age, gender, residence, tenure etc.?
- Did you think creatively about venues appropriate to the type of proposal and all groups you want to reach, including seldom heard groups?

7 Monitoring and Evaluating – Distribution of information and feedback received on the engagement process will be analysed after the process is completed

- Did you record and monitor distribution of information at the end of the process?
- Did you record the number and type of any events that took place?
- Did you look at the demographics of those who attended (to ensure a balance of community involvement) ?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did you consider ways to improve future exercises based on the above and feedback received about the engagement process? |
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8 Learning and Sharing – Lessons from the engagement process will be identified and lead to on-going improvements in quality
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did you identify action points from what has been learned?• Can you build on lessons learned into future engagement processes?• Did you ensure all those within the organisation involved in the engagement process are informed about outcomes and lessons learned? |
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Level 2: Consulting

1 Transparency & Integrity – Rights to participate are clearly explained and opportunities are publicised

- Did you make clear which aspects of plans or proposals can and cannot be influenced via the engagement process?
- Did you explain why any aspects of plans or proposals are non-negotiable?
- Did you encourage balanced consideration of the pros and cons of plans and proposals?
- Did you ensure that statements and any assumptions in engagement materials are referenced?
- Did you ensure appropriate notes are taken from group discussion events, to ensure all views are included?

2 Co-ordination – The timetable for the engagement process will include adequate periods for meetings, public events and discussion with stakeholders

- Did you decide when and how stakeholders' input will be sought and which methods should be used?
- Did you take account of holiday periods and local or big events?
- Did you plan times and locations of events to reach the widest range of stakeholders?
- Did you where appropriate, be prepared to amend timescales?
- Did you invite representatives from partner organisations to meetings/events?

3 Information – Information will be communicated and shared, aiming to invite feedback

- Did you make every reasonable effort to satisfy requests for new information?
- Did you present information in a way which will invite comment and debate?
- Was it possible to flag up any areas of uncertainty; state when and how these may be resolved; and provide opportunities for discussion of these areas?
- Did you provide suitable means for responses and comments to be made?
- Did you provide comments and suggestions - feed them back into the process so that information is up-to-date.

4 Appropriateness – Engagement processes to fit the situation will be used, with opportunities for discussion and for questions to be raised and answered

- Did you ensure that meetings, exhibitions and workshops are held at times and locations to suit different areas and groups within the community?
- Did you allow responses to be submitted by various means (letter, telephone, email, and social media) as well as in person at consultation events?
- Did you arrange for relevant professional staff to be on hand to answer questions at all times, or detail when they will be there?
- Did you use models, pictures, plans, maps and visualisations of proposals, if possible?
- Was it possible, where appropriate, to offer workshops and themed focus groups as well as exhibitions?

5 Responsiveness – Findings from the engagement process will be analysed, disseminated, and potentially incorporated

- Did you record and answer questions at events?
- Did you, if appropriate, provide respondents with a written response?
- Did you offer further workshops or discussion groups to hear people's views or in response to feedback received?
- Did you inform stakeholders if, how and why the proposal has been amended as a result of consultation?
- If significant changes to a proposal are introduced, did we consider holding additional consultation events?

6 Inclusiveness – An emphasis will be placed on allowing the voices of seldom heard groups and those most likely to be affected to be heard

- Did you target publicity at all groups likely to be positively or negatively affected by the proposal?
- Did you target seldom heard and potentially under-represented groups such as young people, BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Groups, Gypsy/Travelers, women with young children, people with disabilities and elderly people?
- Was it possible to seek assistance from colleagues or organisations specialising in promoting inclusiveness and relevant local authority staff: Equalities Officers, Stronger Communities Team, Social Work etc.?
- Did you consider involving with local primary and secondary schools?
- Did you engage directly with people affected by proposals rather than assume they will come to events; or use mobile units to reach a variety of areas?

7 Monitoring and Evaluating – Monitoring and evaluation of the engagement process will take place on an on-going basis

- Did you monitor the satisfaction of stakeholders at different stages of the process?
- Did you keep a record of responses and other contributions to the engagement process, and assess the value, impact and outcome of contributions?
- Did you encourage qualitative responses as to how the engagement process could be improved?
- Did you reflect on the overall quality of the engagement undertaken, and how the comments were integrated into the final delivery of your activity?

8 Learning and Sharing – Lessons from the engagement process will be reviewed and shared with a focus on learning and training

- Did you share and discuss experiences more widely e.g. with other community groups, or organise forum events?
- Have you considered using the engagement as a case study for in-house staff training?
- Did you actively research other engagement processes and possible new techniques to use?
- Did you take people who are new to engagement to meet people who have experience of recent or current projects, as part of their development?
- Did you discuss how to improve future engagement exercises?

Level 3: Partnership

1 Transparency & Integrity – Dialogue will take place with partners about how they will be involved in the engagement process and how their input will be used

- Was it possible to identify all potential partners early and explain to them, and other stakeholders, the benefits of a partnership approach?
- Did you explain which aspects of the actual engagement process are negotiable?
- Did you discuss how input from the engagement process will be used?
- Did you discuss options for involving stakeholders in the design of proposals?
- Did you keep a formal record of decisions and allow partners access to this?

2 Co-ordination – The timetable for the engagement process will include opportunities for partners to develop their own ideas; partners will be involved in discussing how to co-ordinate actions

- Have you tapped into resources from the community: enthusiasm, local knowledge, local volunteers and networks of contacts?
- Did you set up a steering group representing the local community and interested parties may be appropriate in some cases?
- Was it possible to plan ahead to allow partners to input into timescales; allocate time and resources for them to develop their own ideas and proposals?
- Did you consult those with experience of a partnership approach for guidance e.g. on timescales, levels of resources required, techniques to use?
- Did you liaise with key agencies/statutory consultees / organisational stakeholders about the partnership approach and its timetable, and take into account any impact of their policies or projects?

3 Information – Identification, collection and dissemination of relevant new information by partners is encouraged

- Could you have created a dialogue with all partners from an early stage to collate knowledge and information?
- Did you start the information gathering process as early as possible for maximum efficiency?
- Did you discuss with partners the best means of disseminating information?
- Was it possible to seek professional advice on information gathering techniques e.g. designing questionnaires and other surveys, with the aim of avoiding the problem of unreliable data?

4 Appropriateness – A collaborative approach to working with partners on proposals, and regular review of the engagement process

- Were steering groups, meetings and forums open to all, and notes of meetings made available publicly after these and any other open meetings?
- Did you consider professionals/consultants could be brought in to explore possible solutions? E.g. transport consultants, trained facilitators etc.
- Did you consider mediation in appropriate situations – when there are divided opinions but common aims?

5 Responsiveness – Partners will be offered the opportunity to present and discuss their own ideas and receive feedback

- Have you considered suggestions for modifying the engagement process?
- Were you prepared to give feedback on ideas and new matters raised by stakeholders?
- Did you consider professional expertise e.g. trained facilitators to make best use of interactive methods for developing proposals and making decisions?

6 Inclusiveness – Assistance and advice will be made available to seldom heard groups to enable to become partners in the process; overall, a representative range of stakeholders will be involved

- Did you consider using Equalities Impact Assessments or Health Impact Assessments at the start of the process and review regularly?
- Did you consider using colleagues who work with client groups to act as liaison officers to work directly with specific groups?
- Did you where possible, compare the profile of stakeholders involved throughout the whole engagement process to that of areas as a whole?
- Did you consider using professionally designed and conducted surveys to ensure that the views of the population as a whole are known?

7 Monitoring and Evaluating – Monitoring and evaluation processes will be devised in collaboration with stakeholders

- Did you ask partners at the outset about their thoughts on how best to evaluate satisfaction with the process?
- Were you ready to modify approaches to monitoring and evaluating as required on an on-going basis?
- Did you analyse findings as you go along, aiming to embed the idea of monitoring and evaluation into every stage?

8 Learning and Sharing – The creation of a creative, problem-solving culture where skills and experience are pooled, shared and enhanced

- Did you consider individuals' skills and share via formal or informal training sessions, for future engagements?
- Did you share information about the engagement process, and findings from all partners, with all involved stakeholders?
- Did you offer opportunities for members of the public as well as professionals to receive training?

Appendix A – Reference Sources and Useful Information

Further Information

National Standards for Community Engagement - <http://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/>

SP=EED (Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) - <https://www.pas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SPEED.pdf>

PKC Guidelines for Developers and Individuals on Engagement - http://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/38009/Guidelines-for-Developers-and-Individuals-on-Engagement/pdf/2016016_Guidelines_24_Oct_16_FINAL.pdf?m=636130787134170000

VOICE Toolkit - <http://www.voicescotland.org.uk/>

Place Standard Tool - <https://placestandard.scot/>

The Place Standard tool provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place. It allows people to think about the physical elements of a place (for example its buildings, spaces, and transport links) as well as the social aspects (for example whether people feel they have a say in decision making).

Guidance on Engaging Communities in Decisions Relating to Land - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-engaging-communities-decisions-relating-land/>

Appendix B - Potential Stakeholders for Consultation / Engagement

Elected Members - <https://perth-and-kinross.cmis.uk.com/perth-and-kinross/Councillors.aspx>

Community Council(s) for the area - <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/communitycouncils>

Local Development Trusts <http://www.dtascot.org.uk/>

Local Action Partnerships <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/18463/Action-Partnerships>