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## THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION - BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE DOING

### THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION - THE SUMMARY

- Be clear about what you are doing – [where are you on the ladder of participation](#)
- Effective consultation has [clear benefits](#) – helping us to plan, test, prioritise, target and improve services and set service standards. It can also provide intelligence about residents needs and opinions and support bids for resources
- Consultation is [not always appropriate](#) – if you can't change the outcome don't ask the question
- [Always check what we already know first](#)
- [Click here](#) to find out some of the biggest mistakes authorities make – these are to be avoided!
- Follow the stages of the Toolkit to avoid these pitfalls
- Go to [Stage One – Why are you consulting?](#)

#### [1.1 WORCESTERSHIRE'S MODEL - THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION](#)

#### [1.2 WHERE ARE YOU ON THE LADDER?](#)

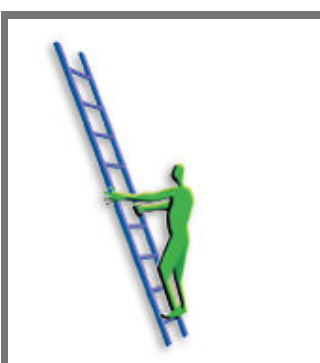
#### [1.3 THE BENEFITS OF CONSULTATION TO THE COUNCIL](#)

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### 1.1 WORCESTERSHIRE'S MODEL - THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

The Council has adopted a model called the **Ladder of Participation** that helps us be clear about what we want to achieve when engaging with the public.



**Information:** you tell people what is planned so that they are informed about what is happening.

**Consultation:** you are clear about what you are asking people's opinion about and why, you specify what can and cannot be changed. You offer a number of options and listen to the feedback you get. The decision is made taking account of the results of consultation alongside other factors

**Deciding together:** you encourage people to provide some additional ideas and options, and to decide with you the best way forward.

**Acting together:** not only do different interests decide together what is best, but also they form a partnership to

carry it out. They are equally responsible for the outcome


**Supporting independent community initiatives:** you help others do what they want - perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the resource holder

(Adapted from David Wilcox 1994)

## 1.2 WHERE ARE YOU ON THE LADDER?

- Giving people information about what we **WILL** do (information)
- Giving people **OPTIONS** about what we **COULD** do - which the results of consultation can influence (consultation)
- Asking others to help you plan or run an event, service or policy by putting forward different ideas or options and **JOIN IN WITH THE DECISION** about what to do (deciding together)
- Joining in **PARTNERSHIP** with others to provide a service (acting together)
- Giving people the **RESOURCES** to act independently


There are examples of all of these in use across the County Council.

You can use this ladder later on in the Toolkit to help you select the appropriate method for what you are trying to achieve.  [Checklist 5.A Methods According to Ladder.](#)

## 1.3 THE BENEFITS OF CONSULTATION TO THE COUNCIL

There are lots of ways that consultation can benefit the council. Effective consultation can help us to:

- **Target** services at what people want and need
- **Plan** services better to give users what they want, and expect
- **Improve** the delivery of services and take up of services
- **Test** options for service change
- **Prioritise** services and make better use of limited resources
- **Set** performance standards relevant to users' needs (and monitor them)
- **Support** bids for resources
- **Inform** the development and delivery of the Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnerships

There are a number of [common myths and fears](#)  (22.00 KB) about public consultation - doesn't it just create rather than solve problems, does it not just bring out 'the usual suspects' and the people who shout the loudest? To dispel these and other common misconceptions, please click the link above.

Not convinced? – for further information on how Consultation can benefit the Council click here:

<http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/methods/index.asp>

#### 1.4 WHEN PUBLIC CONSULTATION IS NOT APPLICABLE

There are many good reasons to consult, but there may also **be issues where consultation is not appropriate.**

- Where the Council's room for manoeuvre is so limited, either by statutory or budgetary restrictions, that the consultation is meaningless.
- Where the Council has already consulted on a similar issue and where 'consultation fatigue' may set in – check the Ask Me! – Consultation Planner and Finder to make sure that we do not already know the answer to your question!
- Where the issue should or could be resolved without needing a process of Consultation

Under these circumstances you may be informing people and not consulting them.

#### 1.5 MISTAKES TO BE AVOIDED

Some local authorities ask people's views, then:

- Do what they planned they were going to do anyway!
- Don't tell people what will happen with the results!
- Don't tell anyone the results!
- Don't do anything with the results!
- Ask the same things again next year!

To make sure that we don't do the same, follow Stages One to Eight set out in this Toolkit!

#### 1.6 REMEMBER - KEY POINTS ON THE LADDER OF PARTICIPATION

- Be clear about what you are doing - where are you on the ladder of participation
- Effective consultation has clear benefits – helping us to plan, test, prioritise, target and improve services and set service standards. It can also provide intelligence about residents needs and opinions and support bids for resources
- Consultation is not always appropriate – if you can't change the outcome don't ask the question
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