



## Tools: A route map to good consultation

The below tool shows the process at the heart of any good consultation<sup>1</sup>. A good example of a council that has built this type of approach into its consultation guides is [Northampton Borough Council](#).

Step One – ‘before’	Decide key questions	Decide stakeholders	Review previous work	Review previous work
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To inform decisions</li> <li>Statutory need</li> <li>To help decide spending priorities or shape services</li> <li>To get views on proposals</li> <li>Plan your evaluation and agree ‘what success looks like’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportionate to the issue (not all of the people all of the time)</li> <li>Directly, indirectly or potentially impacted by the issue</li> <li>People important for success of initiative</li> <li>Includes hard-to-reach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on previous work at your council and beyond</li> <li>Access knowledge centres within the authority</li> <li>Look for national guidance and case studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of consultation – i.e. staff time, resources</li> <li>Cost of implementing consequence of decisions</li> <li>Keep enough time to genuinely consider and respond</li> </ul>
Step Two – ‘during’	Choose consultation methods	Write communications plan	Design & implement	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type of feedback: qualitative and quantitative?</li> <li>Audience needs and interest</li> <li>Complexity of the issue</li> <li>Resources and timescale</li> <li>Your capacity to analyse responses – are you expecting 20 or 3,000?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do alongside other communications initiatives</li> <li>Involve messaging specialists</li> <li>Test all messages to predict how people will react</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a clear timetable and activity schedule</li> <li>Create content and exercises that provide enough information</li> <li>Brief staff and councillors not already involved</li> <li>Be willing to evolve if needs change</li> </ul>	
Step Three – ‘after’	Analyse & interpret	Provide feedback	Evaluate	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget carefully (it is the public record)</li> <li>Ensure clear data protocols</li> <li>Guarantee technical capability</li> <li>Create a forum for discussion to avoid sense of ‘closed doors’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicated to everyone involved</li> <li>Accessible and ‘on message’ – delivers key info</li> <li>Clear on reasoning for how decisions were reached</li> <li>What’s coming next and how people can be involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be clear about the success of different elements</li> <li>Use techniques such as surveys, depth interviews and focus groups</li> <li>Learn from the process for next time</li> <li>‘Make the case’ for consultation</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> This tool was developed by The Campaign Company as part of the research for this project

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