New Conversations
LGA guide to engagement

Wednesday 19th July 2017
Welcome

Councillor Val Slater
Bradford Council

#newconversations
Introduction and aims

Councillor Judi Billing
Deputy Chair, Improvement and Innovation Board LGA
Icebreaker quiz
Introduction to the guide

Different and tailored channels
Meaningful conversations
Invest in them
One size comms does not fit all
Reaching beyond usual suspects
Building trust
Need to engage on issues & topics that interest them
Resident apathy
Overcome barriers - language, digital literacy
They need to understand what we do

New Conversations
LGA guide to engagement

David Evans
Director – TCC

#newconversations
How the guide works

Knowledge
Test
Tools
Story
Rules

David Evans
Director – TCC

#newconversations
Which hat are you wearing?

- Cabinet member or committee chair
- Local front line councillor
- Chief executive or senior management team
- Officer planning and delivering services
Covering the basics

I  How good or bad are we at engagement?
II  Should I engage, consult or do something else?
III  How do I decide which medium and channels to use?
IV  How do I make sure I stick to the law of consultation?
V  What pre-emptive steps should I use to avoid running into trouble?
VI  How can I follow good practice?
VII  How should I evaluate my engagement work?
Surpassing expectations

• More trust in democracy
• More trust in the community
• More trust in the system
Engagement in action

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Staffordshire County Council
- London Borough of Hackney
- Harlow District Council
1 How good or bad are we?

“The consultation on local government has been a lost opportunity, and a waste of time. The county council approach remains top down. We need to turn decision-making on its head.”

Council Leader, following a 0.3 per cent response to a consultation on local services
II Should I engage, consult or do something else?

- **Information-giving**: where residents are informed, but have no influence
- **Consultation**: where residents can inform decisions, but don’t have the final say
- **Co-production**: where things are done jointly, acting together
- **Supporting citizen power**: where residents lead and the council stands back

“Often the word ‘consultation’ is used when what is meant is ‘information’, and scenarios are not put forward. The public are not stupid. They need to know what happens here if they choose this option and what happens there if they choose that option...”

Simon Hoare MP
How do I decide which medium and channels to use?

“The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it because it is good for you.”

Sherry Arnstein, Author
IV How do I make sure I stick to the law of consultation?

“I fought the law and the law won.”

The Clash
What pre-emptive steps should I take to avoid trouble?

“You can do everything you can to try to stop bad things from happening to you, but eventually things will happen, so the best prevention is a positive attitude.”

Marie Osmond
VI How can I follow good practice?

1. Integrity
2. Visibility
3. Accessibility
4. Transparency
5. Disclosure
6. Fairness
7. Publication

“What have the Church of England and local government got in common? If they don’t keep up with the times, both could become an irrelevance to the daily lives of our citizens.”

Paul Scriven, former Leader of Sheffield City Council
VII How should I evaluate my engagement work?

“True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information”
Winston Churchill

“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted”
Albert Einstein
Table discussions

- What kind of council are you?
The pilots – what did we learn?
Making a success of consultation

In the community:

• Understanding anxieties, mood and feeling
• Getting the messaging right, facts and figures
• Using on-going engagement processes

Within the council:

• Clear leadership with authority to act
• Learning from other departments
Before

- Decide key questions
- Decide stakeholders
- What’s come before
- Decide resources and timescales
Route map to good consultation

During

- Choose consultation methods
- Write communications plan
- Design and implement
Route map to good consultation

After

• Analyse and interpret
• Provide feedback
• Evaluate
TCI’s charter for best practice

1. Integrity
2. Visibility
3. Accessibility
4. Transparency
5. Disclosure
6. Fairness
7. Publication
# Route map to good consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step One – ‘before’</th>
<th>Decide key questions</th>
<th>Decide stakeholders</th>
<th>Review previous work</th>
<th>Review previous work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To inform decisions</td>
<td>• Proportionate to the issue (not all of the people all of the time)</td>
<td>• Build on previous work at your council and beyond</td>
<td>• Cost of consultation – i.e., staff time, resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Statutory need</td>
<td>• Directly, indirectly or potentially impacted by the issue</td>
<td>• Access knowledge centres within the authority</td>
<td>• Cost of implementing consequence of decisions</td>
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<td>• To help decide spending priorities or shape services</td>
<td>• People important for success of initiative</td>
<td>• Look for national guidance and case studies</td>
<td>• Keep enough time to genuinely consider and respond</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• To get views on proposals</td>
<td>• Includes hard-to-reach</td>
<td>• Plan your evaluation and agree ‘what success looks like’</td>
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<tr>
<th>Step Two – ‘during’</th>
<th>Choose consultation methods</th>
<th>Write communications plan</th>
<th>Design &amp; implement</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Type of feedback: qualitative and quantitative?</td>
<td>• Do alongside other communications initiatives</td>
<td>• Have a clear timetable and activity schedule</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Audience needs and interest</td>
<td>• Involve messaging specialists</td>
<td>• Create content and exercises that provide enough information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Complexity of the issue</td>
<td>• Test all messages to predict how people will react</td>
<td>• Brief staff and councillors not already involved</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Resources and timescale</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Be willing to evolve if needs change</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Your capacity to analyse responses – are you expecting 20 or 3,000?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Step Three – ‘after’</th>
<th>Analyse &amp; interpret</th>
<th>Provide feedback</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Budget carefully (it is the public record)</td>
<td>• Communicated to everyone involved</td>
<td>• Be clear about the success of different elements</td>
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<td>• Ensure clear data protocols</td>
<td>• Accessible and ‘on message’ – delivers key info</td>
<td>• Use techniques such as surveys, depth interviews and focus groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Guarantee technical capability</td>
<td>• Clear on reasoning for how decisions were reached</td>
<td>• Learn from the process for next time</td>
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<td>• Create a forum for discussion to avoid sense of ‘closed doors’</td>
<td>• What’s coming next and how people can be involved</td>
<td>• ‘Make the case’ for consultation</td>
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What are your strengths and weaknesses on the road to good consultation?
Developing Bradford’s corporate approach to consultation

Kate McNicholas
July 2017
Improvement Plan (2017)

1. Developing consistent standards ... consultation toolkit and checklist
2. Communication and transparency ... calendar and feedback mechanisms
3. Capacity and skills development ... departmental leads, training, work with neighbouring authorities
4. Quality assurance ... build into 7 keys, random sampling
5. Ongoing development ... citizens panel
Toolkit: key messages

• Always use plain English and consider the use of Easy Read
• Be clear on what you are asking (only consult if a decision has not already been made)
• Involve elected members at the outset
• Feedback to stakeholders/consultees
Toolkit: key components

• Local Government Association (LGA) New Conversations Guide
• Consultation calendar
• Consultation checklist
• Signposting information
Surpassing expectations

What does it look like and why is it important?

- More trust in democracy
- More trust in the community
- More trust in the system
Trust in democracy

- **Pillar A:** From pre-decided to authentic
- **Pillar B:** From representative to participatory democracy
- **Pillar C:** From top-down to responsive
- **Pillar D:** From ownership to partnership
Trust in the community

• **Pillar E:** From hierarchy to networks
• **Pillar F:** From organisation-based to place-based
• **Pillar G:** From needs to capabilities
Trust in the system

- **Pillar H**: From standardised to personalised
- **Pillar I**: From analogue to digital
- **Pillar J**: From employees to ambassadors
- **Pillar K**: From satisfaction to trust
What can we do to build trust?

1. In democracy
2. In communities
3. In councils, councillors and the system
Trust in democracy

Tool: The dos and don'ts of breaking bad news

Engagement invites a person to open up and express their views and feelings, but what they want cannot always be accommodated. Even when you've been very clear about the scope for change on a particular issue, people can end up frustrated and angry. This is especially a risk when you have to deliver news as much as possible in the last two weeks. If you have to try and deliver news weeks out, you have to try an active listening.  

Don't say 'It's not possible.'
Don't be evasive.
Don't sugar coat the news.
Don't say 'I know it's painful, but...'  
Don't tell them the facts are the facts.
Do be prepared.
Do be clear about the choices.
Do give them time to think what they think.
Do maintain principle.
Do actively listen.

Knowledge: Citizens Juries – a Q&A

What is it?
A group of lay people consider a complex issue together. Borrowing hear from expert witnesses, cross-examine them, deliberate together. 12 to 24 people who meet for two to five days and are paid a small salary to actively investigate the evidence. Their verdict comes in the form of recommendations.

Why is it a good idea?
A citizens Jury enables input from a well-informed and representative group of people, and the verdicts are likely to have credibility in wider public’s eyes. In 2002, one of the issues the future of public services. One Juror said, “If there are no jobs for the kids, the prosperity was 27 other issues listed in order of priority, and the council was told that they should look beyond the immediate problem and start planning for the future.

How can it be done?
In Wolverhampton, they were given an area satisfaction survey to make their plans. People were given an idea of what they were both positive and negative about the present situation.

Story: The wisdom of crowds – the co-produced football club, and what we can learn from it

'Back of a Clipboard' Engagement List

A Starter Kit for Frontline Councillors

What are the important things to remember?
Trust in the community

Tool: Survey builder for understanding your area

1. Cohesion and clashes: How do different groups feel about economic or cultural differences? Resentful of each other, or enriched? Is diversity thought of as a strength or a weakness? Is there cross-fertilisation between groups or are there cohesion issues? Can the area make an asset of how mixed it is?

2. Transience and settledness: What's the feel? Why? Is it a sign of an upwardly mobile residents feel about this? Do they like or dislike the area?

3. History and identity: What are the settler groups that dominate in different areas? How does this carry over? Is there a history of exploring? Do local communities come from the area? Are people of various backgrounds?

4. Values and ideals: How do people see the area? What types of charities do people give to? Are people altruistic or traditionalist? Sustainable? What are the values?

5. Proactivity and capacity: How much up? What do people do? Are volunteers in the area? Are there more likely to be students and professionals?

6. Hopes and fears: Is the area generally positive or negative? What does the area aspire to? What do people fear? Can the area think?

7. Geography and mind-set: Where do people live? What do they know about the area? Who or what are the people who know better? Do people tend to have knowledge?

The local authority

Residents

Community A

Two-way horizontal trust (trust in community)

Community B

Two-way vertical trust (trust in democracy)

Upward vertical trust (trust in the system)

Story: Croydon Opportunity and Fairness Commission and the creation of Fair BnB

A case study in community potential

Knowledge: ‘Six key ‘bottom-up’ techniques
Trust in the system

Test: Knowing your staff

The ability and propensity of staff to advocate on your behalf is crucial. Research indicates those organisations rated as ‘excellent’ had a higher trust in the system.

There are three techniques that might help in encouraging staff to advocate roles:

1. Net promoter scoring
   This was originally developed within marketing metrics to measure the views of both staff and public.

Story: When digital goes wrong

Information travels like lightning on social media. As does misinformation. On June 23, 2016 every mind in Britain should have been focused on EU referendum. But quite a few were on stationery instead. A conspiracy theory had gone viral that polling stations were providing voters with pencils, rather than pens, so that any leave votes could be rubbed out and replaced with remain ones. The Electoral Commission politely explained that it was just as possible to cross out a vote made in pen as it was to rub out one made in pencil. Pencils were provided because they are cheaper than pens.

The story shows both the extent of how volatile the digital climate is and the power of a single tweet. You need to try and stop misinformation spreading through the use of social media.

Southern Rail are a further example. After strikes, they tweeted a poster with a picture of a map of London with all the stations blacked out.

Commonplace is a website that allows anyone to mark places that are significant to them. It’s now used by many local authorities as a way to engage with the public.
Group exercise

- Trust in democracy
- Trust in communities
- Trust in the system
Driving change and sharing best practice
Summary and next steps

CONCLUSIONS

A.

B.

C.