



Tameside Strategic Partnership
Many Partners, One Direction



Engagement Toolkit

Empowering Tameside

Contents

- 1 Introduction 2
- 2 Why We Need Engagement..... 3
- 3 Principles of Engagement 5
- 4 Framework for Consultation and Engagement..... 6
 - 4.1 What are your key objectives?..... 7
 - 4.2 What level of engagement do you need? 7
 - 4.3 Who do you need to engage with? 8
 - 4.4 Has this been done before? 8
 - 4.5 How will you engage people? 9
 - 4.6 Which method should you use?..... 10
 - 4.7 How will you develop your action plan?..... 19
 - 4.8 How will you provide feedback? 20
- 5 Case Study: 'Included, Inspired, Involved' 21

1 Introduction

Tameside Strategic Partnership's Engagement Strategy 'Empowering Tameside' and Toolkit provide a standardised approach to community engagement in the borough.

It is important that local people are engaged when decisions are being made which will impact upon them and their communities. We are committed to ensuring that the results of engagement are reflected in decision making across the Partnership.

Tameside Strategic Partnership's Engagement Toolkit is designed to provide a framework which Partnership organisations can follow when planning engagement activity. The guidelines are not prescriptive, but are in place to ensure that engagement carried out within Tameside is done so to the highest standard.

The Toolkit sets out not only why we should engage with local people, but also how to carry this out effectively. It provides clear, easy to follow steps to assist in planning high quality engagement with residents. This will help to ensure that decisions about service delivery truly have the interests of our communities at heart.



2 Why We Need Engagement

There are a number of drivers which support our plans to develop a co-ordinated approach to engagement within the borough. These are outlined in section 2 of the Tameside Strategic Partnership Engagement Strategy.

In addition to these, there are a range of practical reasons why engagement is required. Partnership organisations need to be resident-focused and place local people at the centre of service delivery. Engagement is useful in helping to respond to the needs of different groups. It can help you:

- ▶ **Find out what residents' priorities are**

What do local people think are the most important issues for Tameside? Finding out what residents' priorities are can help you focus resources more effectively.

- ▶ **Identify where problems lie, and how the overall customer experience may be improved**

How will you know where real problems exist if local people are not engaged? Public perception is important – making positive changes to issues that residents identify as important can only improve their experience as a customer.

- ▶ **Identify how your service affects residents from minority groups**

How can you find out how your service impacts on different groups within the community? Tameside Strategic Partnership

organisations are committed to ensuring that everybody is given the opportunity to have their say. You can use consultation to show where Equality Impact Assessments are needed, and to provide relevant evidence for those assessments.

- ▶ **Ensure that performance indicators are measuring the things that are important to residents**

How will you improve resident satisfaction if you don't know what they want, and have systems in place to monitor performance against that?

- ▶ **Explore residents' responses to proposed new ways of delivering a service**

You can present different possible models of service delivery, and find out residents' views of each one. Consulting people at an early stage can help to avoid resource-intensive changes later on.

- ▶ **Increase residents' awareness and understanding of your organisation**

How do you know if residents are aware of your organisation and the services it provides? It's perfectly acceptable to present people with information in a consultation exercise – as long as they also have a chance to feed back their views.

▶ **Benchmark your performance against that of other organisations**

How are we doing against other organisations?

Engagement and consultation can also provide benefits to local people:

- ▶ It helps to make sure that local services are delivered in a way that meets their needs
- ▶ It helps people understand how Partnership organisations work
- ▶ It provides them with a chance to influence local decisions
- ▶ It means people feel their opinion is taken seriously which is crucial in having a positive view of public service provision
- ▶ It builds their trust in public service providers



3 Principles of Engagement

Tameside Strategic Partnership has adopted the following joint principles. It is important that these are referred to when planning any engagement activity. For a full explanation of the principles please see section 5 of 'Empowering Tameside' Engagement Strategy.

- ▶ Partners should be committed
- ▶ Engagement should be necessary
- ▶ Engagement should be robust
- ▶ Engagement should be fit for purpose
- ▶ Engagement should be inclusive
- ▶ Engagement should be influential and used
- ▶ Engagement should be shared
- ▶ Engagement should (where possible) be joined-up and co-ordinated
- ▶ Engagement should build better relationships with local people
- ▶ Engagement should empower local people to have a say about their lives
- ▶ Partners should be respectful

The following guidelines will help members of Tameside Strategic Partnership ensure that these principles are put into practice when conducting engagement activity.



4 Framework for Consultation and Engagement

Community engagement should always be a primary consideration when decisions are being made about issues affecting the lives of people who live or work in Tameside. Residents and stakeholders should be given the opportunity to have input at every stage of any decision making process. This includes both defining an issue through to identifying and putting in place solutions.

Consultation and engagement should only be undertaken when local people have a real chance to influence a result. If the decision has already been made or there is little chance that input from residents will affect the final outcome, consultation should not be undertaken.

Once you have decided whether engagement is appropriate, it is essential that effective planning is put in place. This will ensure that you are meeting the needs of the people involved in the activity, and that it is carried out to the highest standards.

Before deciding on the engagement method you want to use, it is important to consider the points in the 'Engagement Activity Planner' flow chart. Following these guidelines will help to ensure that any engagement or consultation is effective and appropriate

for your target audience. Consideration of these points will help to structure your engagement activity.

Engagement Activity Planner



4.1 What are your key objectives?

The starting point for any proposed engagement activity is to identify what your key objectives are. This is the most important stage in the process, as the type of problem you are trying to solve will affect your choice of who to consult and the method you use.

Are you unsure how far people are aware of your service? Are you trying to work out what service people would like to have in a certain area? Are you trying to find out how the public thinks you are performing? Do you want to know why people don't use your service? Do you want more information about your customers?

You need to clearly define what it is you want to achieve from the process, the reasons for carrying out the engagement and what decisions this will impact upon. It is also important to ascertain how the information arising from the engagement activity can be disseminated to other Partnership members.

4.2 What level of engagement do you need?

Once your key objectives have been identified you need to consider the appropriate level of engagement to meet your needs. The more you can involve people in decision making, the more empowered they feel. This can also have a positive impact on community cohesion. Tameside Strategic Partnership is

committed to increasing the number of people who feel they can influence decisions made about their local area. If a final decision has already been made or there is limited scope for change, engagement may not be appropriate. In a situation such as this, information provision may be more suitable. It is important that those you are engaging with are aware how their views will impact on any decisions from the beginning.

The Tameside Local Compact provides a basis for a working relationship between statutory agencies in Tameside and the Voluntary and Community sector. The Compact includes principles on consultation and communication which help ensure that all partners are involved in the engagement process. A copy of the Tameside Local Compact is available via the following web link <http://www.t3sc.org/Compact> or by contacting T3SC (Tameside 3rd Sector Coalition) directly on 0161 339 4985.

The Compact Code of Good Practice 'Consultation and Policy Appraisal' also sets out guidelines relating to effective consultation. Although the main purpose of the document is to have a positive impact on the way statutory agencies consult with the Voluntary and Community sector, the information included may be useful when planning your engagement activity. The 'Consultation and Policy Appraisal' also sets out guidelines on how long to allow for consultation. Ensuring that consultees have enough time to respond is important. A full and summary version of the appraisal is available at: www.thecompact.org.uk/information/100022/101508/101517/theconsultationandpolicyappraisalcode/.

4.3 Who do you need to engage with?

Deciding on your target audience is an essential part of the engagement process. Any consultation and engagement activity should be as inclusive as possible. This will ensure that you gain a proper understanding of all points of view on a particular topic. It is important that sufficient thought goes into this process. Remember, it may not just be the people who directly use your service who you need to engage with. Beyond this group there are non-users, staff and partner organisations who may also be able to provide valuable input.

Tameside Strategic Partnership is committed to ensuring that all sections of the community are given the opportunity to have their say. Some groups may be 'hard to reach'. If your target audience includes members of these groups it may be necessary to take a different approach to your engagement activity. For example, experience shows that young people and those from ethnic minorities are less likely to respond to a questionnaire. Disabled people may be less likely to attend an engagement event. This means you will need to think of different ways to help overcome these barriers when planning your project. Depending on the group you are consulting with this could include using interpreters, adapting facilities, providing childcare, using visual or audio aids and providing suitable venues.

It may be useful to refer to the Engagement Activity Audit which accompanies 'Empowering Tameside' before deciding on the most appropriate engagement method for your target audience. The Activity Audit lists ongoing engagement activity taking place within the borough by sections of the community. This includes children and young people, older residents, disabled residents, BME residents, businesses and the third sector. An engagement

activity similar to yours may have previously been conducted and the responsible officer may be able to provide useful advice and guidance.

It is also important that any consultation and engagement activity you conduct meets the requirements of the Equality Standard and current legislation. The equality groups that must be included in any consultation are:

- ▶ Black and minority ethnic groups (BME)
- ▶ Gender groups – men and women
- ▶ Disabled people
- ▶ All age groups, including young and old
- ▶ Sexual orientation
- ▶ Religion and belief

Should you require any further information on equalities then please contact the Corporate Performance Unit at Tameside Council on 0161 342 3711.

4.4 Has this been done before?

One of the main aims of Tameside Strategic Partnership's Engagement Strategy is to ensure that a co-ordinated approach to consultation and engagement is undertaken on a partnership wide basis. Not only will this result in increased cost efficiency, but will reduce 'consultation fatigue' amongst local people. This will have a positive effect on response rates and ensure that feedback received is of the highest possible standard.

The Engagement Activity Audit in the Tameside Strategic Partnership Engagement Strategy provides a comprehensive list of all partnership engagement activity in the borough.

This highlights expertise, resources and existing engagement activity across the partnership so it can be utilised in an efficient way. It also provides a way of identifying where duplication of effort and more streamlining of engagement activity could occur. Before embarking on your own engagement activity you should refer to the audit to see if you could possibly link into existing projects. You may find that the activity you were planning has already been undertaken. This eliminates the possibility of wasted time and resources.

You can also search for consultation and engagement activity on the Tameside Strategic Partnership Consultation Database at www.tameside-strategic-partnership.org.uk/consultation.htm.

Partnership organisations should log all current or planned activity onto the database to ensure we have an accurate picture of what is taking place within the borough at any one time.

4.5 How will you engage people?

Encouraging local people to participate is key to your engagement activity being a success. Careful consideration needs to be given as to how you will persuade members of the community to commit time and effort to taking part. People are more likely to be involved if the issue is of interest to them and that any outcome arising from the activity is relevant. This is why identifying the correct target audience is essential. It is also important to be clear about what can realistically be achieved from the outset. Managing the expectations of participants can make a real difference in the success of your engagement activity. Be clear about time scales from the start; it may take some time to put the outcomes of your project into practice.

Creative thinking around how to engage people will also be beneficial. There are many different ways in which you can get people involved and this can have a real impact in encouraging them to take part. Just some ideas include:

- ▶ Using different methods of engagement such as workshops, focus groups or role-play.
- ▶ Communicate by different mediums such as film, radio or the internet.
- ▶ Use the IML 'Ask the Audience' software as part of your engagement exercise. This allows participants to actively take part in polls and is an enjoyable way for people to get involved. For more information on this equipment please contact the Policy & Partnerships Unit at Tameside Council on 0161 342 3026.¹
- ▶ Give thought to the location and timing of your engagement activity.
- ▶ Use incentives – something as simple as providing refreshments can help encourage participation.

¹ NB – You need to have someone in your organisation who is trained in how to prepare and use the equipment. A small charge will be payable to cover the cost of the license fee. You will also be responsible for any damage to the units whilst in your care.

4.6 Which method should you use?

There are a wide range of engagement techniques that can be used, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. It is crucial that the chosen method allows you to achieve your objectives whilst being suitable for your target audience. This could mean using a combination of approaches or concentrating on one in particular.

You will need to decide at this stage whether you require quantitative or qualitative research, or a combination of both.

Quantitative Research – this is used for less complex issues and aims to measure people’s views or perceptions. Quantitative methods may be preferred as statistical tests can be applied to the results to demonstrate robustness. However, their very

structured format means that respondents are unable to raise additional topics and only limited information can be gathered in response to each question.

Qualitative Research – this is used for issues that need to be explored in more depth. Qualitative research is often carried out in the form of focus groups. Although the outputs may not be as statistically reliable, this method gives participants the opportunity to discuss topics in further detail. Qualitative research can be invaluable in coming to a full understanding of what people really think of a particular issue. If selecting this method, it is important to ensure skilled moderators are in place to ensure effective and meaningful results.

The following table may help you decide the type of research most appropriate for your activity.

Main aim	Main types of questions	Results wanted in...	You need....
To monitor and get a robust snapshot of people’s views: TO MEASURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How would you describe your ethnic background? ▶ How satisfied are you with...? ▶ How far do you agree that...? ▶ Which services have you used? 	Figures and percentages	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH
To find out why people think / act the way they do: TO EXPLAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Why? How? What? ▶ What happened? ▶ What do you think? ▶ What would you do? ▶ What’s needed? 	Words and images	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

There are also other factors which you need to consider when deciding on the best method of engagement.

Resources

Planning and conducting a community engagement or consultation project can be resource intensive, in terms of time and money.

Consideration must be given as to whether the method you choose is the best use of your resources. For example, rather than survey the entire borough would a sample survey be just as effective? Can you work with partner agencies or link into existing activity? (See Section 4.4 for further information on how to go about this).

Validity

It is important to ensure that the results of your consultation exercise are valid. As previously mentioned, if you need statistically reliable results quantitative research is likely to be the best method. The number of people involved in your consultation exercise can also affect the robustness of your results. If you need advice on what your sample size should be please contact the Policy & Partnerships Unit at Tameside Council on 0161 342 3527.

Bias

To make sure that consultation is robust, you also need to bear in mind and guard against all the other potential ways that bias may be introduced to the results:

- ▶ **Through the way you select the people who are invited to take part**
Did everyone in the target population have an equal chance of being selected? Is your group of invitees representative of the whole target population – your service users or non-users?
- ▶ **Through your choice of method**
Is your chosen method appropriate to the target population? Does it ensure that robust results will be obtained from minority groups (i.e. have you thought about over-sampling these people, to compensate for the fact that they are less likely to take part, and to ensure that you get a good sample that makes for robust results?)
- ▶ **Through the way you invite people to take part**
Is your communication accessible to people from different backgrounds, and with a full range of disabilities? Have you asked what support people would need to attend / take part? Are materials available in different formats or languages if required?
- ▶ **Through the way you phrase the questions**
Are your questions leading or unclear? Are your rating scales balanced round a mid-point with equal numbers of positive and negative ratings? Have you provided people with a chance to express an opposite view?
- ▶ **Through the way your interviewer asks the questions**
Has your interviewer been trained to ask the questions in such a way that they don't influence the response obtained?
- ▶ **Through the way you analyse the results**
Have you analysed the results for the relevant minority groups? Have you monitored response rates from different groups within the population?

Good quality consultation can overcome many of these factors, but some elements will remain, and it is important to recognise them when reporting your results.

Remember, we should be doing our best to find out what residents think which means trying to do something, even if the results are indicative rather than robust!

Timing

The timing of your engagement activity can be an all-important factor in its success. People should be consulted well in advance of decisions being made so that what they contribute can be taken into account. Enough time needs to be allowed for people to carefully consider any available options and provide their response. Think about when you plan to hold your event – is it during the working day? Will people be on holiday? Will you need to organise childcare facilities? Any such issues need to be considered carefully.

Communication

Clear, well-written information will help to make your engagement activity a success. Advertising your proposals as widely as possible will assist in maximising the number of

participants. Use the Thameside Strategic Partnership 'Have Your Say' logo on any promotional material.



The logo identifies to residents that this is their opportunity to get involved in local decision-making. If you require a copy of the 'Have Your Say' logo please contact the Policy & Partnerships Unit at Thameside Council on 0161 342 3527.

Confidentiality

To comply with legal guidelines and ensure participants feel confident about providing information about themselves, it is important that any information gathered is kept confidential. Inform people that they will not be personally identifiable in any ensuing report. If you are going to take photographs of your engagement activity, remember to request the permission of those involved for these to be published afterwards.

The Data Protection Act 1998 also provides people with rights over their personal information. If you are requesting personal data then you must explain how it will be used. It is important that you do not use the information provided for any other purpose without first obtaining their permission.



The table below outlines a selection of different consultation and engagement techniques. The advantages and disadvantages can help you decide on the most appropriate method for your activity.

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Self-Completion Questionnaire	The most common consultation method is through a self-completion questionnaire. This is usually sent via post or could be completed online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Effective and efficient way of gathering the views of a large group of people. ▶ Probably the most cost effective way of conducting a large-scale survey. ▶ Can provide robust results. ▶ Professional design and printing of questionnaire may improve response rate. ▶ Can be used for a wide range of issues. ▶ Relatively quick turnaround of results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be expensive, particularly if outsourced. Resource-intensive if kept in-house. ▶ Subject to bias through 'self-selection' of respondent. ▶ Open to misinterpretation of questions by respondent. ▶ Response rates can be low. ▶ Difficult to engage 'hard-to-reach' groups. ▶ Preparation and printing can be lengthy process.
Telephone Survey	Interviewers conduct telephone surveys with respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Useful if you need to gather information quickly. ▶ Can ensure a good response rate. ▶ Provides robust results ▶ Can ensure a cross-section of respondents participate. ▶ Easier to engage with 'hard-to-reach' groups. ▶ Good quality of data collection due to flexible structure of interview. ▶ Quick turnaround. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Costly and time consuming. ▶ Only applicable to those with a telephone. ▶ Response rates may be low but still better than a postal survey. ▶ Dependant upon skill of interviewer and quality of questionnaire.

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Face-to-Face Survey	Interviewers conduct a survey in a face-to-face setting with respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Robust data ▶ Good quality of data as the interviewer can clarify points for the respondent. ▶ Good response rate. ▶ Ideal for engaging 'hard-to-reach' groups as can be carried out in different languages, through British Sign Language, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Expensive. ▶ Time consuming. ▶ Skilled interviewers required. ▶ Increased tendency for respondents to give a more 'socially acceptable' response than their real view.
Online Surveys	A self-completion questionnaire conducted online. This can be used as a stand-alone method or as an alternative option to a postal self-completion questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cost effective – once the survey is established the number of respondents has little impact on cost. ▶ Can provide robust data. ▶ Can include controls to ensure that all questions are answered which can improve quality of data. ▶ Quick to complete. ▶ Analysis can be conducted straight away. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Technical expertise required to set up website and questionnaire. ▶ Self-selection bias can occur. ▶ Potential low response rate if people are not expecting survey. ▶ Internet access is required. ▶ Those with security concerns may not want to participate.
Events (An Event Checklist is included within Appendix A)	Usually a one off event which concentrates on a particular area of focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A good way to share information with a large group of people ▶ Good opportunity to hold focus groups or workshops with attendees ▶ Productive and highly rewarding ▶ Good for bringing together different sections of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be resource intensive both in terms of time and money ▶ Need to ensure events are well publicised to ensure high attendance rate ▶ May not be representative as focus aimed at one particular group

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Focus Group Discussions	Facilitated group discussion to explore issues in depth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can explore complex issues ▶ Allows detailed responses to be provided ▶ Can be designed for hard to reach groups ▶ Can build on earlier survey results ▶ Can produce a large amount of information in a short time period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be expensive – trained facilitators required ▶ Limited representation due to small numbers involved ▶ It may be difficult to analyse all of the information ▶ Quality of information collated is dependant upon skills of facilitator
Workshops	A discussion group used to gather and exchange information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A large amount of information can be shared ▶ Encourages participation and networking ▶ Issues can be explored in detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Skilled facilitators required to ensure good quality information is collated ▶ Can be expensive and time intensive to organise ▶ Can be difficult to ensure that everybody has equal opportunity to participate
Roadshows and exhibitions	A tool for providing information and to obtain feedback on a specific topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Good opportunity to publicise the work of different partner organisations ▶ Promotes good relations with residents ▶ Flexible attendance times so can capture the views of a wide range of people ▶ A way to gain prompt information ▶ Allows residents to ask questions face to face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cost of finding and hiring a suitable venue ▶ Labour intensive to organise ▶ Residents reached will be dependant upon time, location and topic of roadshow or exhibition ▶ Good communication plan required to ensure good attendance rates

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Website	Use of electronic information to inform residents and gather feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cost effective ▶ Can reach a wide number of people ▶ Quick response rate ▶ Residents may be more willing to participate in web based consultation for convenience purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Limited to those with internet access ▶ May exclude certain groups e.g. older residents ▶ Technical expertise and support will be required
Social Networking Sites	Use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to engage with local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Potentially wide reaching ▶ Good way to engage with younger residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Limited to those with internet access ▶ May exclude certain groups e.g. older residents
Media e.g. newspapers, radio, television	Use of the media to inform and consult with residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wide reaching ▶ Allows you to reach different sections of the community ▶ High profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be expensive ▶ Potential of media bias
User Panel	A group of residents who use a particular service meet regularly to discuss service delivery and suggest future improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cost effective ▶ Provides feedback from a user perspective ▶ Group has previous experience and understanding of the issues discussed ▶ Continuing dialogue builds a sense of trust between residents and organisation ▶ Good sounding board for new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be unrepresentative ▶ Potential for bias ▶ Can only be used for consultation on one specific area ▶ Needs of non service users not represented ▶ Can be resource intensive in terms of staff time

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Mystery Shopping	Local residents, often service users, check whether the service being provided is meeting expected and contractual needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Excellent way to obtain resident's insight into service delivery ▶ Highlights both positive and negative aspects ▶ Useful to inform future service standards ▶ Can be carried out via a number of different methods e.g. face to face, over the telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be expensive ▶ Market Research Council guidance states to 'inform staff that they may be identified during the course of the exercise'. This may lead to increased performance during the time of the exercise ▶ Only gives a snapshot of one experience ▶ Only useful for frontline, person-to-person services
Citizens' Juries	A group of residents take evidence on a particular issue over a number of days. Informed and considered opinions on the subject are then fed back to the lead organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Good for involving the public in important, often contentious, issues ▶ Participants develop a deep understanding of the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Expensive and time consuming ▶ May not be representative ▶ Not suitable for all issues
Consultation Documents	Used to provide information to residents and invite comments on proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can provide detailed, comprehensive information ▶ Good starting point for consultation ▶ Can reach a wide and representative audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Good writing skills required ▶ Printing and postage costs ▶ Need to ensure that information is accessible for all ▶ May have a poor response rate ▶ Analysis of information can be resource intensive

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Area Forums	Structured forum meetings held in a particular geographical area. Can be used to provide information and to consult on issues of local interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relatively cost effective ▶ Regular process of engagement ▶ Effective in making local people feel involved ▶ Helps build relationships between residents and partner agencies ▶ Good way to disseminate locally based information ▶ A good way to share information with a large group of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Attendance can be low ▶ Can be unrepresentative ▶ Can be dominated by more vocal attendees
Public Meetings	Formal meetings with set agendas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be held at times and venues to suit target audience ▶ Opportunity to share information with a large group of people and obtain feedback ▶ Builds relationships with local people ▶ Relatively cost effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Attendance can be low ▶ Can be unrepresentative ▶ Can be dominated by more vocal attendees
Participatory Budgeting	A method used to directly involve local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities for a defined budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can reach a wide range of people ▶ Targeting a representative selection of residents ensures everyone in the community can have input ▶ Process gives residents a greater understanding of budgetary constraints ▶ Residents feel they are being consulted in a meaningful way ▶ A good way to explore what local priorities are and find out the reasons behind these 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can be resource intensive, both in terms of cost and labour ▶ Budget decisions can often be complex ▶ Need to ensure voting procedure is open, fair and honest so there are no accusations of bias ▶ Can be unrepresentative

The following web links may be useful if you require further information on engagement techniques:

- ▶ www.peopleandparticipation.net - this site provides practical information for those working to involve people. The site also includes a process planner that can help you decide which participatory method is most suitable for your purpose.
- ▶ http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/mrs_guidelines.htm - the Market Research Society provide a number of guideline documents relating to engagement techniques. These include questionnaire design, qualitative research and using surveys for consultation.
- ▶ <https://mrs.org.uk/standards/internet.htm> - further information on e-consultation and online surveys.

4.7 How will you develop your action plan?

One of the principles of 'Empowering Tameside' is that engagement should be influential and used. This specifies that every consultation or engagement exercise needs an action plan and those actions should be incorporated into service delivery plans or feed into Business Plans.

When compiling your action plan it is important to think **SMART**:

Specific – clearly identify your aims. Avoid setting unclear or vague objectives; be as precise as possible.

Masurable – be clear how you will know once your goals have been achieved. Using numbers, dates and times is one way to represent clear objectives.

Achievable – it is important that the goals you are setting are within reach. Setting impossible targets will only result in disappointment.

Realistic – make goals challenging but realistic. It should be feasible that you are able to deliver on the actions outlined within the plan.

Time related – there needs to be a commitment to achieve each goal by a certain time and dedication to avoid slippage. Even if this needs to be reviewed as you progress it will help keep you motivated.

Compiling a SMART action plan will also help in the evaluation of your engagement activity. It is important that you evaluate any activity carried out to understand outcomes and impacts, and to improve future engagement. Some key questions to ask include:

- ▶ Did the engagement activity achieve its objectives?
- ▶ What feedback did you receive from participants?
- ▶ What impact will the outcome of the activity have?
- ▶ Would you do anything differently if you were to plan this activity again?
- ▶ How can you use any lessons learnt to improve engagement in the future?

4.8 How will you provide feedback?

Providing feedback to participants is a crucial stage of the engagement process.

People are less likely to give up their time unless they know it will make a difference. If you don't feedback the results of your engagement activity, and how you're going to act upon them then they won't take part next time. This will lead to you spending more time, energy and money on increasing your response rate.

As well as feeding back to participants, it is important that mechanisms are in place for findings and experiences to be shared with partner agencies.

Due to the different audiences you will be providing feedback to, there are a number of ways you can do this:

- ▶ **Formal report** – usually compiled specifically for your organisation, a formal report should include detailed analysis and any supporting statistics. Key recommendations arising from your activity are also important for future learning.
- ▶ **Summary report** – this will normally include the key points from your engagement activity including outcomes and how you plan to follow these up. This should be accessible for both participants and partner organisations.
- ▶ **Presentations** – these are useful as they can be adapted for different audiences. Interactive presentations may make delivery of your feedback more entertaining.
- ▶ **Newsletters** – an informal and interesting way to provide details of your outcomes. Newsletters are helpful in reaching a wide number of people.
- ▶ **Newspaper/internet articles** – an ideal way to publish outcomes to a large audience. These are also useful for evoking people's interest in future engagement activity.

This list is not exhaustive and you may well find your own innovative ways to provide feedback.



5. Case Study: 'Included, Inspired, Involved'

Tameside's Culture and Community Cohesion Partnership recently carried out an extensive consultation exercise to inform development of a new Community Cohesion strategy - 'Included, Inspired, Involved'. The following case study outlines how this successful programme of citizen involvement was delivered.

Defining key objectives

The principal purpose of the consultation was to understand what it is like to be part of a community in Tameside. Community Cohesion is something that has to be locally specific. Whilst a wealth of guidance is available from central government on how to implement successful cohesion projects, it is widely accepted these will only work if rooted in something of relevance to local people. Key objectives identified prior to the consultation process included creation of a local vision for cohesion and identification of a set of common values. However, the ultimate aim was to talk to local people and pick up real examples of how they interact and engage.

Deciding on the best level of engagement

In order to reach as many people as possible, a variety of consultation methods were utilised. It was important to collect both quantitative and qualitative data – this provided figures to understand the Tameside picture (e.g. the extent to which people feel part of their local community) and the stories behind them (e.g. why people feel they do or do not belong to their community).

Deciding who to engage with

A consultation plan was designed targeting a wide cross-section of local communities. It was important to acknowledge that cohesion affects everyone and not just one group, for example BME communities. Efforts were made to engage as many people as possible. The views of people from a variety of different backgrounds, including areas, faiths and age groups were sought.

Who took part

The consultation process for 'Included, Inspired, Involved' was far reaching with the following engaged:

- ▶ 2,000 local people through the Citizens' Panel.
- ▶ 200 local people through the 'What does Community mean to you?' survey. This was made available in all museums, libraries, galleries, public buildings and sports centres across the borough. The survey was also available online via the TSP website.
- ▶ Local voluntary and community groups e.g. Faiths United, the Local History Society, Hyde Community Action, local schools and colleges, Residents Associations, BME Network, Proud Tameside, Tameside Arts Network and Tameside Sport and Physical Activity Alliance.

How people were engaged

Existing groups were met and engaged with on their terms – if their meeting was during the evening then consultation was carried out then. A decision was made not to use PowerPoint presentations or to run ‘typical’ focus group sessions. A creative workshop was developed which focused on one key question ‘What does community mean to you?’ The workshop consisted of five exercises encouraging active involvement. These were designed to make people think about the things we already do well in our communities – Where do different people come together? How do communities already interact? What are the things that make us proud? A discussion was then held about the things we could do better, followed by group work to look at any barriers to achievement.



Methods used

Surveys and creative workshops

Feedback to residents

Everyone involved in the consultation has been sent a copy of ‘Included, Inspired, Involved’. Groups who raised specific issues have been visited to provide feedback and agree a way forward.

Action plan and moving forward

The Culture and Community Cohesion Partnership are currently in the process of creating an action plan. The Strategy is littered with actions local people suggested and the plan will be based around these.

What worked well

Being creative - not relying on PowerPoint or running standard focus group sessions. People really welcomed a different approach.

Improvements for the future

The whole process took around six months but even more people could have been involved if only there had been more time. It is important not to underestimate the scale of consultation required to produce a strategy in partnership with local people.

A copy of 'Included, Inspired, Involved' can be viewed at www.tameside.gov.uk/communitycohesion.

Appendix A

Events Checklist	Yes?	No?	N/A
Budget set and recording system in place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Event date decided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identified a venue accessible to all e.g. with comfortable seating and heating controls, able to provide culturally appropriate refreshments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Venue visit and risk assessment completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Venue booked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Draft timetable drawn up	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration team responsibilities allocated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest speakers booked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop topics confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitators and scribes confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibition stands booked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment booked and PAC tested if required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agenda produced including agreed finish and start times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications plan produced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catering arrangements confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency contact numbers distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Aider to be present	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearly identifiable helpers will be available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participants information packs produced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registration materials produced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation approach confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feedback to attendees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>