

# Public Consultation: Past, Present and Future

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# Introduction



- What is and isn't consultation
- How well we consulted in the past
- Our aims and plans to improve consultation for the future

# The importance of consultation



- The Council is committed to involving residents in the shaping of local services
- Included in Council's Vision and Values and Community Strategy Priority - Enhance Community Understanding and Participation
- It is good practice to consult to provide for local services that reflect and respond to the needs of residents
- Legal requirement to consult in almost all aspects of Council activity

# What is meaningful consultation?



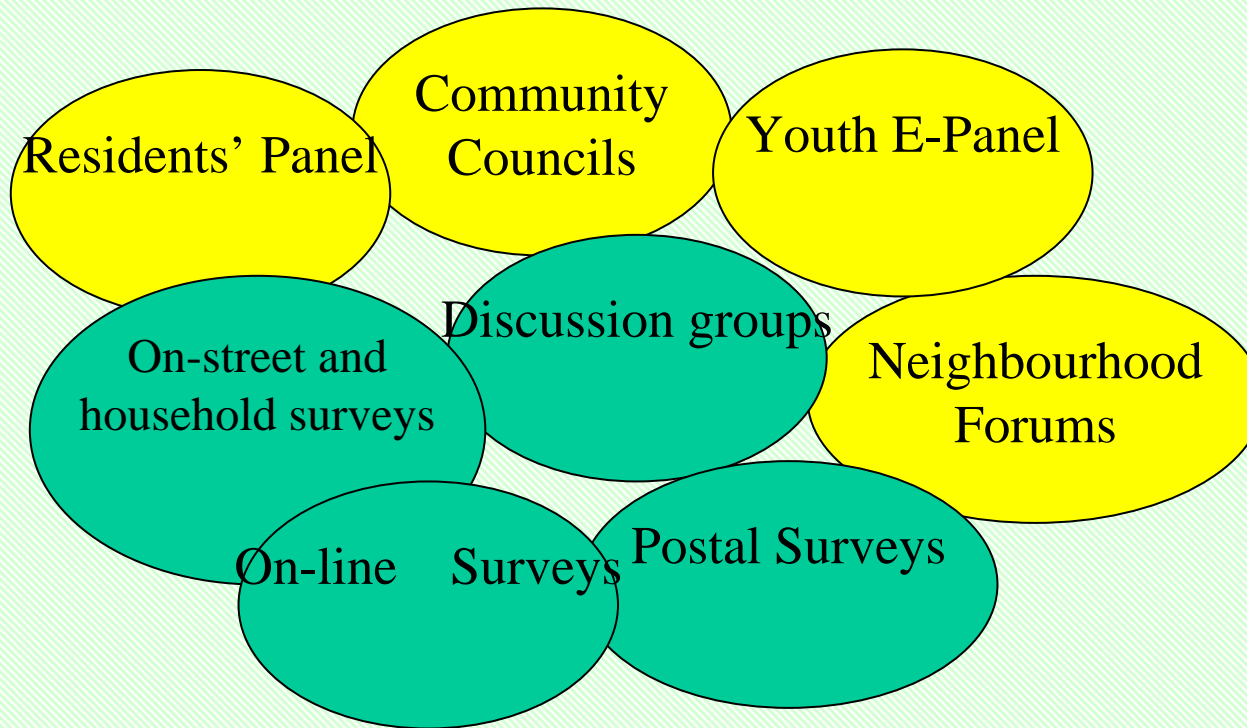
## Consultation is:

- The process of seeking the views of residents and those who receive services
- To inform policy development and service improvement
- In summary it is a:
  - Tool for informing
  - Tool for gathering views
  - Tool for involving residents' and service users in decision-making

# What is consultation?



A range of methods and mechanisms available:



# What isn't consultation?

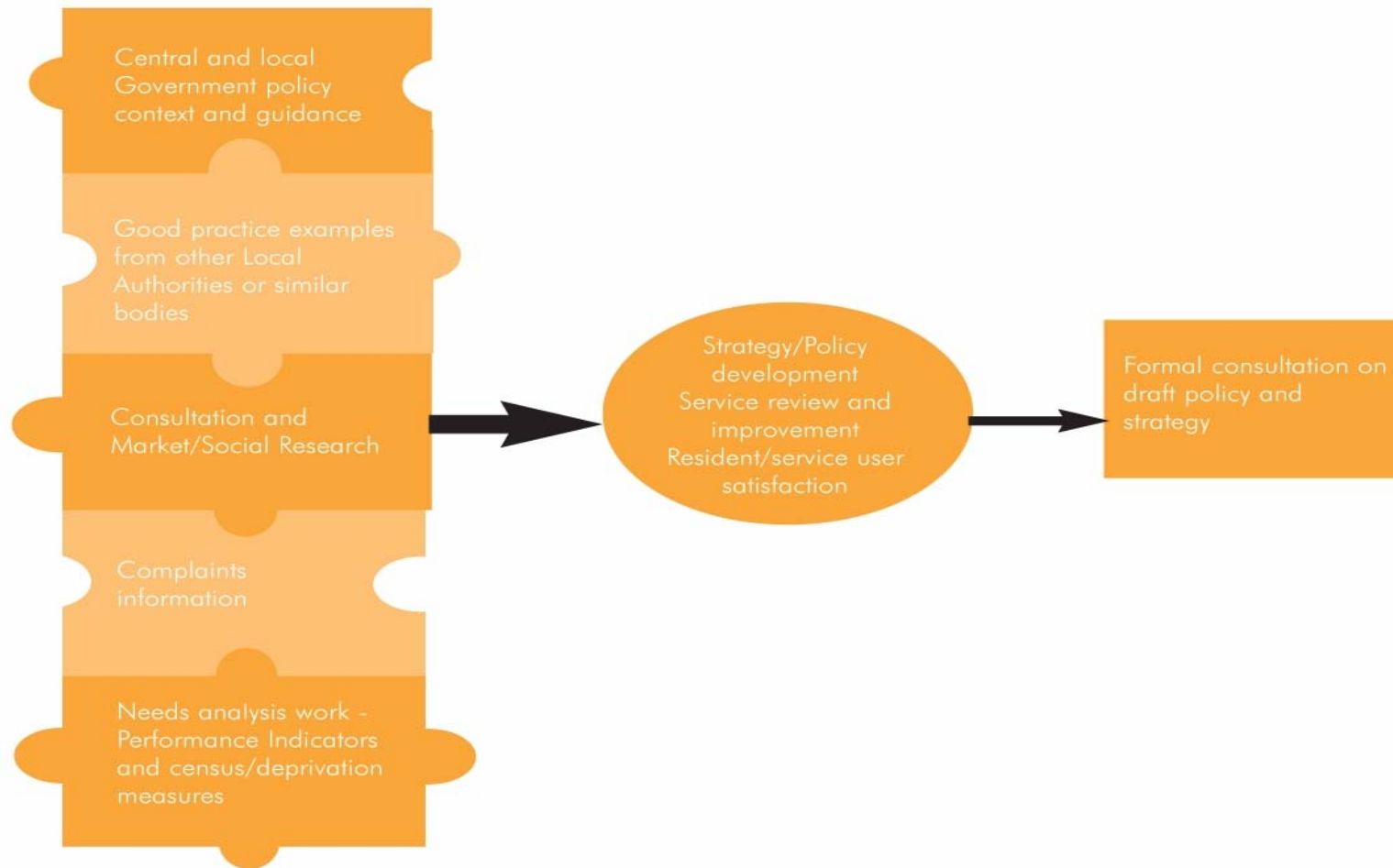


- **Consultation is not:**
  - A referendum
  
- **Consultation should be:**
  - **Balanced** against other sources of information
  - Complex process
  - Only consult on what is up for grabs
  - Part of the information jigsaw

# Information Jigsaw



## Information sources



# What some people think?



- A survey held amongst those attending the round of Community Council meetings between April and May 2005 said:
  - 92% felt that consultation was very important
  - 61% felt that the Council listened to some extent
  - 46% were at least fairly unsatisfied with opportunities to influence decision making
- Discussion groups held with members of the Council's residents' Panel thought that:
  - Consultation and the decisions that stem from it should be **open and transparent**
  - Greater **opportunity** to influence decision making



# We know we need to improve



- Consultation Scrutiny Panel Recommendations:  
March 2004 – need for improvement
- Central consultation function to drive forward  
improvement and provide strategic and practical  
advice and support
- Still need for further improvement!

# Aims to improve consultation



- Aims of effective consultation which you can judge our consultation activity against
  - 1: Open and transparent consultation process
  - 2: Timely and meaningful consultation
  - 3: Inclusive and accessible consultation
  - 4: High quality and value for money consultation
  - 5: Ensuring feedback and dissemination of consultation findings and outcomes

# Actions to improve consultation



- **Increase profile and planning of consultation**
  - All service areas are now required to include consultation activity in their annual plans
- **Build capacity to consult**
  - Staff training
  - Expert advice and support
  - Development of mechanisms for consultation such as the newly developed on-line panel for young people

# Actions to improve consultation



- **Feedback and dissemination**
  - Continue publicity of consultation in media
  - Consultation Finder to search for past consultation findings and be alerted to new consultations in your area
  
- **Evaluation of consultation activity**
  - Self-evaluation after each consultation identifying lessons learnt
  - Annual corporate evaluation of consultation both internally and through external review
  - Public review

# Conclusion



- The Council is committed to improvement
- Still some way to go to build capacity and create a culture of consultation in to the Council activity
- You have a role to play in helping us improve by telling us of improvements that you think should happen and of examples of good and bad consultation

# Q & A



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