
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

Mid Argyll Partnership

Customer Services

29 July 2015

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Argyll and Bute Council aims to work with as well as for the people of Argyll and Bute. Seeking the views of our communities through consultation is an important part of that.

Further to a request by the Mid Argyll Partnership, this report outlines the different ways in which the Council consults with our communities, and steps we are taking to develop our consultation approach.

The views of the Partnership on building on effective consultation approaches are welcome.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Argyll and Bute Council consults with our communities on a range of issues, and uses different approaches to encourage and facilitate response.
- 2.2 This report outlines different approaches used, and highlights steps being taken to build on the effectiveness of consultation exercises.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Mid Argyll Partnership gives views on building on the effectiveness of consultation exercises.

4.0 DETAIL

Consultation topics and promotion

- 4.1 In addition to areas of work where there is a statutory requirement for consultation, the Council seeks views on a wide range of matters from planning our future to parking proposals or how people like to receive council news.
- 4.2 The two most popular ways in which to receive news about the Council, indicated through responses to a consultation exercise, were through local newspapers or the Council's website. This has contributed to the approaches we take to promoting consultations.
- 4.3 Different approaches are used in raising awareness of consultations. These may include issuing information via:
- local media (press release and/or adverts)
 - in the Council's weekly news round up
 - on social media
 - via email
 - face to face meetings
 - web chats
 - printed information in Council offices

Methods of consultation

- 4.4 A range of formats have been used in seeking responses such as :

- on-line surveys
- face to face feedback via our Third Sector Partnership, with people who would not seek proactively to express their views
- printed questionnaires in libraries
- printed questionnaires to our Citizens' Panel
- area events, workshops and drop in sessions
- questionnaires to specific target groups
- focus groups recruited from the Citizens' Panel membership

4.5 The Council's Citizens' Panel consists of 1,000+ people across Argyll and Bute who together are a representative sample of our population.

Feedback – level of response and contribution of views given

4.6 Levels of response vary across consultations.

4.7 Examples of response rates are:

- Responses from the Citizens' Panel is on average 70%
- The budget consultation of 2014/15 received 1,400+ responses; the first phase consultation for planning our future this year received 1,000+ responses.

4.8 A summary of steps taken as part of these two specific consultations is listed in Appendix 1, along with a summary of how views to the latter were used in progressing the planning of future service delivery of the Council.

4.9 With further consultation planned on service delivery choices later in the year, views on building on effective consultation approaches are invited from the Partnership. The steps the Council is already taking are listed below.

Developing our consultation approach

4.10 The Council is currently looking at ways in which to build and improve on the effectiveness of consultation exercises.

4.11 Steps already being progressed are:

- Development of a feedback section for consultations which are available on the Council's website
- Agreement in place with community planning partners to consider where possible options for combining topics for consideration at consultation events
- Review of best use of the Citizens' Panel

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The views of the Partnership on building and improving upon the

effectiveness of consultation exercises are invited as part of the Council's work to develop our approach to consultation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy: none

6.2 Financial: none

6.3 Legal: none

6.4 HR: none

6.5 Equalities: comments on developing our approach will support increasing effectiveness of consultations in reaching those with a view to give

6.6 Risk: Updating approaches to consultation will help ensure that methods are relevant and effective

6.7 Customer Service: comments on developing our approach will support increasing effectiveness of consultations in reaching those with a view to give

Jane Fowler
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consultation: examples of methods and use of feedback

Appendix 1: Consultation - examples of methods and use of feedback

Methods used for financial planning consultations in 2014 and 2015

Promotion	Methods
Local media adverts	Printed questionnaires to Citizens Panel
Press releases	Printed questionnaires in libraries and customer service points
Social media promotion	Face to face meetings through our Third Sector Partnership
Web chats	On-line survey
Emails (for example to community planning partners)	Targeted consultation with our youth services

Use of feedback to the first phase of the Planning Our Future consultation

Responses given to the first phase of the Council's consultation on planning our future service delivery were considered by the council's Policy and Resources Committee in April this year as part of agreeing initial savings targets. For example:

- 'Investing to create jobs' was highlighted as the most popular approach in investing for the future of Argyll and Bute. It was agreed to consider options for investing more in the Economic Development service.
- Education services were shown as important across all ages. In response to this, and in support of the council's priority to give our children and young people the best start in life, our child protection, youth and looked-after children services have not been asked to identify savings.
- Feedback highlighted the importance of the road network. Having already invested millions of pounds in the road network, a 'light touch' only is being looked at in terms of levels of savings being considered.
- The majority of people told us that Argyll and Bute is not well promoted, at a time when we are aiming to attract people and jobs to the area. The Council will look at options for investing in promotion in support of the Single Outcome Agreement.