

Strategy, Insight and Engagement

ECC's Approach to Consultations

Research and Citizen Insight



Essex County Council

ECCs approach to consultation

“We will put residents at the heart of the decisions we make: it is our responsibility as elected representatives to take decisions on behalf of our communities. To ensure we make the best decisions we can, we will engage with our residents and communities, gathering their views on the issues that matter most to them.”

When do we need to consult?

In general we need to consult if:

- there is a major decision on reorganising services. Even if the decision isn't intended to have a direct and immediate effect on services we do need to consult;
- the decision will significantly affect end users of a service;
- there is a statutory requirement to consult; or
- we have said we will consult.

Suggests need to consult	Suggests no need to consult
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Policy may have a significant negative effect on people.- Decision likely to be contentious with service users or the public- We don't know what the impact is likely to be.- Statutory requirement to consult- We have previously told people we will consult- We have a long history of consultation on similar decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Policy will have a neutral or positive impact on users of the service- The negative impact is likely to be minimal - such as a small increase in cost or a small change to service frequency.- Impact of change is clear and minimal- Urgent need for change which has arisen unexpectedly.- We have no practical alternative to the change (eg new law)- Decision to implement a previously agreed strategy which was adopted following consultation- The aim is to provide a new service or additional choices for people.- Decision is only 'in principle' and there will be further consultation later.- Decision has internal impact only (although staff consultation may be needed)

Is it really consultation?

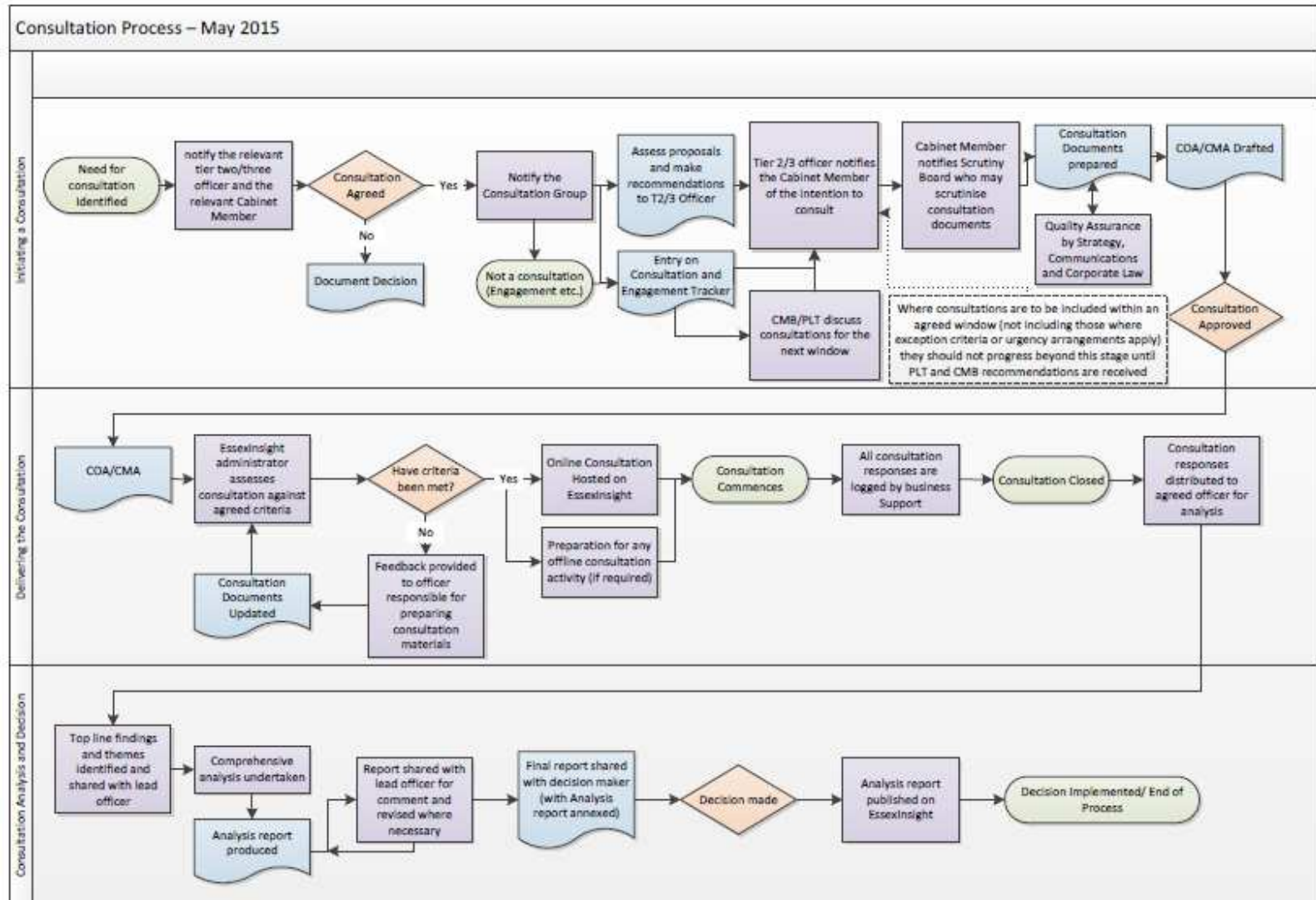
Today we are talking specifically about consultations rather than involvement, participation or engagement. The definitions below are given to services to clarify:-

Activity	Description
Involvement	Interactions between decision-makers and stakeholders to exchange views. Involvement should continue throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
Participation	The act of taking part or sharing in something. Different types of participation are valid for different people at different times according to their own wishes as well as what is possible for an organisation.
Co-production	Co-production is working in partnership between a service provider and people who use services. It draws on the knowledge, ability and resources of both to develop solutions to issues. It is an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals and the people using services, their families and communities
Engagement	Relationship-building activities with stakeholders that enable more specific activities to then take place for mutual benefit.
Research	Using evidence and understanding of lived experience to shape strategy and services using Primary or secondary research methods with citizens voice influencing the development of services
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action

Process

- Notify relevant Officers and Cabinet Member and agree need for the consultation
- Notify ECC consultation group via consultations@essex.gov.uk outlining key details of proposal.
- Group would then decide whether the activity is an engagement/research piece or a Consultation.
- If consultation, then the group will prepare papers for PLT and CMB to agree the consultations for given time frame.
- Cabinet Member to then notify Scrutiny Board of the intention to consult. The Scrutiny Board can then decide whether to scrutinise the consultation plans before a (Chief Officer Action (COA)/Cabinet member Action (CMA) is taken
- Design the consultation exercise and prepare the necessary documentation to support the consultation
- Ensure this design and documentation is quality assured by members of the Consultation Group with named representatives identified for ongoing queries
- Obtain formal authorisation to undertake the consultation from the relevant chief officer or Cabinet Member.
- Ensure that other affected Members, Stakeholders and partners are informed of the decision to consult before the exercise is formally launched.

Process



Consultation Tracker

P1																
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
	Title	Description	Audience	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	
1																
2	Children and Young People's Plan	Consultation on the newly developed Children's and Young Peoples Plan priorities for	Public	01-Apr Ended												
3	Proposed changes to Sure Start Children's Centres in Essex	Consultation on proposals to include Sure Start Children's Centres as part of the Integrated Pre-Birth - 19 Health, Wellbeing and Family Support Offer from	Public	10-Apr Ended												
4	Direct Payments	Consultation on the impact of changes to the Direct Payments Support Services	Public	End												
5	Bus Services Consultation	Consultation on the impact of the withdrawal of services in Braintree, Brentwood and Chelmsford	Public	20-Apr Ended												
6	Bus Services Consultation	Consultation on the proposed changes in route and timetables on the Dengie peninsula	Public													
7	Bus Services Consultation	Retendering of 29 bus services contracts mainly in the Epping, Harlow and Brentwood area	Public		TBC	TBC										
8	Bus Fare Increase Consultation	Consultation to better understand the impact that planned increases in local bus fares may have on fare-paying bus users.	Public		09-May	17-Jun Ended										
9	Extra Care Schemes	Introduction of new piece of mind charges in existing schemes	Public							End						
10	Review of Development Management Policies 2016	Consultation on Development Management Policies 2016	Public				End Open	14-Aug End								