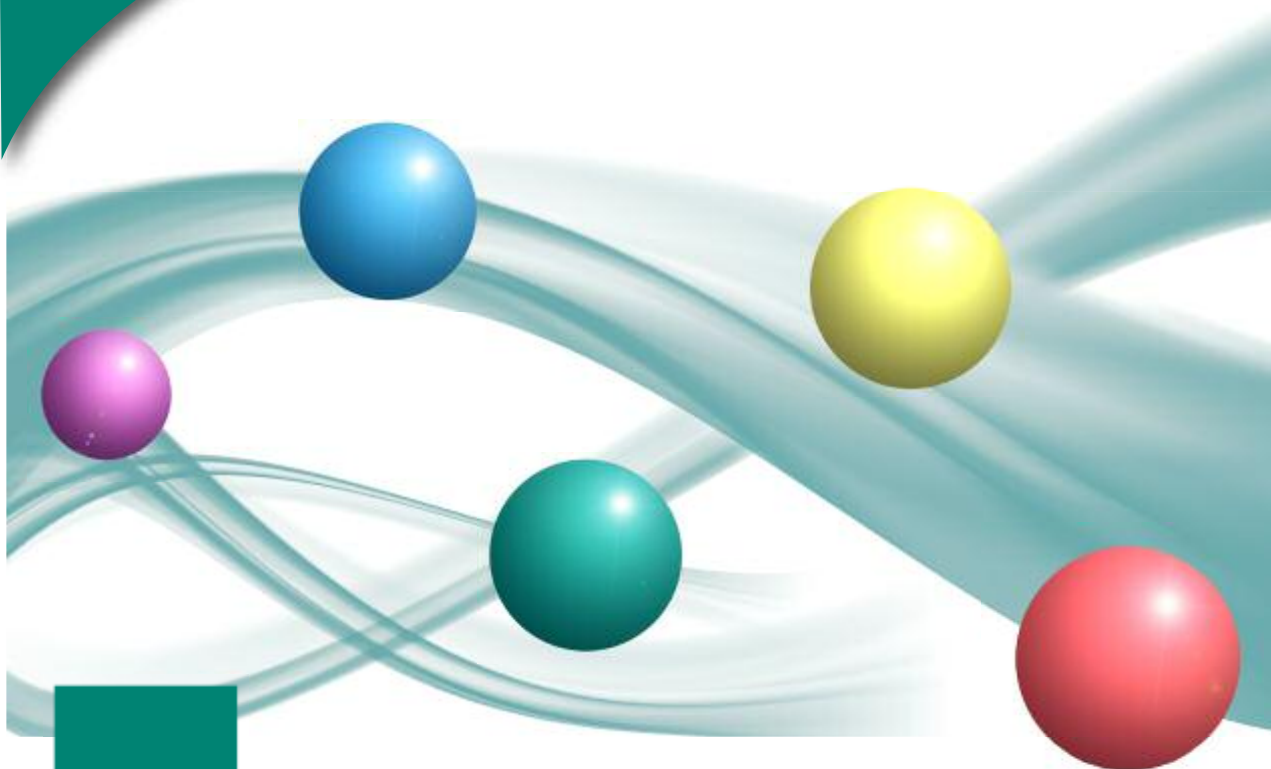


Community Leisure Services 'Consultation and Community Engagement' Work Plan 2010-2012





Portfolio Holder's Introduction

I am pleased to introduce the District Council's Leisure Services annual 'Consultation and Community Engagement' Work Plan.

Effective and regular communication with residents and visitors is a key role for the Leisure Services Team. It is not enough simply to do the consultation, the findings must also be put to use. Without feedback the Council cannot be confident that the services the team delivers are the right ones.

Therefore the service needs to have Consultation and Community Engagement at its heart to ensure that the activities we provide and you pay for, continue to meet your needs and aspirations.

I believe that this document makes an important contribution to improving the way the authority consults and engages with residents and visitors.

Cllr Mike Brain
Portfolio Holder for Community Services



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Introduction

As a section the Leisure Service Team are committed to finding out what you think about issues that affect you. This is to help develop and improve the services that we currently provide and help us focus on other issues that may influence the provision and quality of sports, leisure and physical activity initiatives within the District.

Research conducted by MORI has consistently emphasised the importance of good communication. Further analysis support findings from the 'Connecting with Communities' initiative, which demonstrates the impact that good communication can have on overall ratings of a Council.

To be successful, communication must focus on the issues that are shown to impact on residents perceptions; quality of services, value for money, and efficiencies. They should ideally look to close the communication-consultation loop i.e. tell people how they can have a say and demonstrate how those who have given their views have had a real impact. (Local Government Association – What drives public satisfaction with local government? LGA research report 20/04).

Analysis of the results from the previous work plans have helped to shape and improve the way in which the team operates a number of our services.

These include the following:

- Improved monitoring and cleaning of the wet and dry side changing areas of the leisure centres during peak periods of usage.
- Improved information on the District Council web site – swimming pool and Group Exercise time tables, fees, charges section and the ability to book our summer schemes on-line.
- The use of customer verbal comments and case studies to capture user's opinions and experiences of coaching courses and holiday play schemes.

This document sets out the methods of consultation and communication. Section 2 outlines the detailed Work Plan of Consultation and Community Engagement activities which are proposed to take place during 2010-2012.

Aims of the Work Plan

1. To enable the Leisure Services Team to have a clear understanding about whether the services it provides meets the needs and expectations of the public and service users.
2. To enable people to have a say in the decisions that affect them at District level.
3. To ensure that consultation is undertaken cost effectively and in a way that avoids unnecessary duplication.
4. To ensure that consultation results are shared and used effectively to improve leisure services.
5. To provide information and feedback to improve service development within the District Council.
6. To gather data sets and benchmark the trends against information obtained during the 2006 - 2009 consultation programmes i.e. Sport England - Active Peoples Survey.

What will the team do with the results of the consultation programme?

1. The Leisure Services Team will feed back the results of consultation to those involved and inform them what it plans to do as a result of the consultation process.
2. The Leisure Services Team will summarise all consultation results, place them on the Council's web site, and report issues of significance to the Head of Community Services.
3. The Leisure Services Team will maintain a rolling programme of consultation initiatives with users and non-users of the service.

Leisure Services Areas

- Sports Development.
- Leisure Centres.
- Play Areas & Skate Park.
- Sports Pitches & Pavilion.
- Community Sports Coach programme.
- Active Communities Programme i.e. Health Walks and Older Adult Activities.
- Coach Education & Club Development.
- Holiday Play Schemes.



The People of the District

Stratford-on-Avon District has about 250 towns and villages spread over a predominately rural area covering 979 square kilometres. This makes it one of the largest Districts in England and means access to services and the delivery of services are both major issues for residents.

Age Group	Number	% of Population
0-4	6,100	5.3%
5-14	13,600	11.7%
15-19	6,700	5.8%
20-24	4,600	4.0%
25-29	4,900	4.2%
30-44	23,400	20.2%
45-64	34,200	29.5%
65-74	11,800	10.2%
75-84	7,800	6.6%
85+	2,900	2.5%

(Source: ONS mid year estimates 2007)

The population in 2007, as estimated by ONS was 117,800 of which 49% were male and 51% female. A significant factor is that the average age of local residents is 42, compared with an average age of 39 across England as a whole. 48.8% of the population is over 45, with only 17% under 14 years old. The proportion of the elderly aged 85+ has increased by nearly half over the last 10 years and this trend is expected to continue.

With over 97.1% of the population of the District being white, residents from black and minority ethnic communities face isolation, and can find it difficult to obtain support or help within the District.

In April 2008 the unemployment rate in Stratford-on-Avon District was 1.1%, compared to 1.8% in Warwickshire and 2.2% for the whole of the UK. Much of the employment within the District is dependent on the service sector, (nearly 80% of jobs). Many residents of the District commute to higher paid jobs outside, while the lower paid jobs within the District are often filled by people commuting into the District.

At the time of the 2001 census 23.9% of those people aged 16 – 74 held a degree level or higher qualification compared to the county figure of 20.7%. Those without qualifications were 24.1% which is lower than the county figure of 27.8%. In 2004/05 67.1% of young people at Key Stage 4 obtained five or more grade A - C GCSEs which places the District in the top 10% of local authorities as regards this measure of academic achievement. NVQ Level 4 equivalent and above (HND, degree or higher degree) is 34.2% of the total working age population, compared with 28.8% for Warwickshire and 27% for England and Wales.

While household income is above average at £36,200 against the national average of £32,400 – (2006) this is distorted by a small proportion of extremely wealthy households. It is significant that 10% of households have an average income of less than £10,000 per annum. Gross weekly pay for full time work in 2007 is £508.10 (median) compared to £430.40 in the West Midlands and £459.00 for Great Britain.

In 2005 there were 51,654 homes in the District. 6,465 households were in receipt of means-tested benefits, a figure that includes 4,205 pensioner households. Over 2,000 children live in benefit dependent households. These households are widely spread and not concentrated in any specific communities.

Almost half the households in Stratford on Avon District have 2 or more cars which are amongst the highest level in the Country. However over 6,400 households do not have a car and are therefore reliant on other forms of transport.

How does Stratford-on-Avon District compare to other Districts Councils?*

Economic Well-being	Environmental Well-being	Social Well-being
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average size economy – 182nd • Productivity - 110th • Economic change - 226th • Industrial structure - 84th • Business & enterprise – 190th • Education & Skills - 27th • Labour market 2006 - 28th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing affordability - 284th • Accessibility - (Road & Rail)- 325th • Local services - (Post Offices & Banks) - 319th • Amenities - (Leisure Centres etc) - 226th • Natural environment - 111th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age profile- average age 41.6 years – 55th highest • Population change 2006 – 10.1% 116th • Prosperity – 53rd most prosperous place to live • Deprivation 2007 - 307th • Life expectancy - 80.1 years - 84th highest • Crime 2006/07 – 318th (lowest rate)

(*Source: Local Knowledge ranking tables out of 408 local councils)



Degrees of involvement - The Ladder of Participation

The Ladder of Participation* helps the District Council to be clear about what we want to achieve when engaging with the general public.



- **Information:** you tell people what is planned so that they are informed about what is happening.
- **Consultation:** you are clear about what you are asking people's opinion about and why, you specify what can and cannot be changed. You offer a number of options and listen to the feedback you get. The decision is made taking account of the results of consultation alongside other factors
- **Deciding together:** you encourage people to provide some additional ideas and options, and to decide with you the best way forward.
- **Acting together:** not only do different interests decide together what is best, but also they form a partnership to carry it out. They are equally responsible for the outcome.
- **Supporting independent community initiatives:** you help others do what they want - perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the resource holder.

(*Adapted from David Wilcox 1994)



Where are you on the Ladder?

- Giving people information about what we WILL do (information).
- Giving people OPTIONS about what we COULD do - which the results of consultation can influence (consultation).
- Asking others to help you plan or run an event, service or policy by putting forward different ideas or options and JOIN IN WITH THE DECISION about what to do (deciding together).
- Joining in PARTNERSHIP with others to provide a service (acting together)
- Giving people the RESOURCES to act independently.

(*Adapted from David Wilcox 1994)

The Benefits of Community Engagement & Consultation to Leisure Services

There are lots of ways that Community Engagement & Consultation can benefit the service. Effective Community Engagement & consultation can help us to:

- **Target** services and activities at what people want and need.
- **Plan** services and activities better to give users what they want, and expect.
- **Improve** the delivery of services and activities and their take up.
- **Test** options for service change – leisure centres and holiday schemes.
- **Prioritise** services and make better use of limited resources.
- **Set** performance standards relevant to users' needs (and monitor them).
- **Support** bids for resources.
- **Inform** the development and delivery of the Active Communities Strategy and Work Plans.



Hard to reach groups

Some minority groups are less likely to respond to traditional methods of consultation, so additional efforts are needed to help these people to participate. Traditional survey methods do not tend to work so well for some minority groups. For example, experience shows that young people and people from ethnic minorities are less likely to respond to a questionnaire. Disabled people may be less likely to attend a consultation event. This means that you will need to think of ways to help overcome these barriers when planning your research.

To meet the requirements of the Equality Standard and current legislation, the targets groups that must be included in any consultation are:

- Older Adults
- Young People
- Black and Ethnic Minorities
- People with Disabilities
- Migrant Workers

Consultation and Communication Methods

The Leisure Services Team employs a variety of methods for communicating and consulting with residents. Using a combination of methods we can provide a targeted and more comprehensive consultation programme to users and non-users of the service.

The table below details the list of consultation and communication methods to be employed to engage users and non-users of the service within the District.

Non users of the service	Users of the service
Press Release	Press Release
Citizens Panel	Citizens Panel
Youth Panel	Youth Panel
Council Web Site	Council Web Site
School Pupils (Colleges, Secondary & Primary)	School Pupils (Colleges, Secondary & Primary)
Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)	Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)
Parish Council Forum	Parish Council Forum
Specific Focus Groups	Specific Focus Groups
Sports Festivals	Sports Festivals & Tournaments
Place Survey	Opinion meters (SLM) Leisure Centres
	Sports Club Forum
	Sports Club - Leisure Directory Questionnaire
	Hi-5 Holiday Activity Programme
	ILEAP – Disability Sports
	Exercise Referral Scheme
	Active Community Projects - walks, activity sessions



Users & Non-Users of Leisure Services

A number of groups appear in both the users and non-users columns, it is important that the District Council provides all residents with the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Leisure Services Team's activity programme.

Through consultation and communication with non-users of our service the Leisure Services Team will be able to research and establish the reasons why some residents choose to remain non-users. i.e. time, cost of activity and transport issues.

Analysis of the consultation results will enable the team to understand the many reasons behind the current level of non-usage by residents. Increased knowledge supported by research will help influence targeted promotional campaigns, to help raise the awareness of existing sporting and recreational opportunities and develop new activities to encourage increased participation.

The table below details a list of users and non-users of the service within the District.

Non Users of the service

General Public
 Parish Councils
 Citizens Panel
 Youth Panel
 Primary Care Trust (PCT)
 Disability Groups

Users of the service

General Public
 Parish Councils
 Citizens Panel
 Youth Panel
 Primary Care Trust (PCT)
 Disability Groups
 Primary & Secondary Schools
 Colleges (FE & HE)
 Community Centres & Village Halls
 Sports Leisure Management (SLM)
 Sports Clubs & Voluntary Organisations
 Sports Clubs – Pavilion Users

Frequency and Consultation Method

Consultation should be necessary; there is little point wasting resources, time and goodwill by consulting people too much, on something that's already been covered elsewhere, or in an area where the decision has already been taken.

The table below identifies the users and non-users groups, identifies the consultation and communication methods to be employed and their frequency to engage residents regarding the performance of the leisure services activities within the District.

Consultation Methods	Frequency of Publication or Meeting
Parish Council Forum	1 x per year
Citizens Panel Questionnaire	2 x per year (Spring – Autumn)
Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)	1 x every 2 years
Specific Focus Groups	As and when required
Youth Panel	1 x per year
Hi-5 Questionnaire, Verbal Comments and Case Studies	4 x per year (School holidays)
Exercise Referral Scheme Questionnaire	1 x per year
Sport & Leisure Directory Questionnaire	1 x per year (Next planned for December 2010)
Opinion Meter - Leisure centres	4 x per year (1x each site)
Sports Club Forums	1 x per year
ILEAP – Disability Sports, Verbal comments and Case Studies	1 x per year
Active Communities Projects - Questionnaires, Verbal Comments, Case Studies	1 x per year
Sports Clubs – Pavilion Users	1 x per year



Verbal Comments and Case Studies

Analysis from the 2008 Sports Development Quest assessment identified the traditional method of collecting customer feedback ('Your Views' questionnaires) could be improved if alternative methods of capturing levels of satisfaction were employed. These may include the use of verbal feedback and case studies.

Each child/parent is given a 'Your Views' questionnaire and a pre-paid envelope to increase the number of respondents and reduce the reasons ('I don't have the time' 'I have to go the children are waiting') for not completing a questionnaire. In 2009, 1197 individual children took part in the Hi-5 and TUFFS holiday activities.

Although there has been an increase in the number of questionnaires completed it is still not in sufficient quantity, less than 35% of users. A figure of 50% return rate is required to assess the effectiveness of the summer staff training programme and the quality of the activity sessions that have been delivered during the school holidays.

Consultation – Common Myths and Fears

Doesn't consultation draw attention to – or even create problems?

It may draw people's attention to something sooner - but a proper consultation exercise is unlikely to be used in a situation that would not attract attention sooner or later anyway.

Why should anyone bother to run a complicated and expensive consultation exercise if they don't *have to*?

Actively involving residents and partners helps to make proposals as good as they can be to deliver on expectations. It's not just about answering protests, it's about actively seeking people's views and ideas to improve Council activities and services.

Working with residents and partners helps anticipate future problems and build the skills and relationships necessary to prevent them. In the long run, involving stakeholders and customers should save time, money and a lot of unnecessary headaches.

Does it not just bring out 'the usual suspects' and the people who shout the loudest?

The reason for spending plenty of time on residents and partners analysis, and on general preparation of the process, is to ensure that all stakeholders are reached - not just the ones who tend to dominate. Besides, it often turns up potential allies as well as adversaries.

Won't involving residents and partners just slow down the whole process?

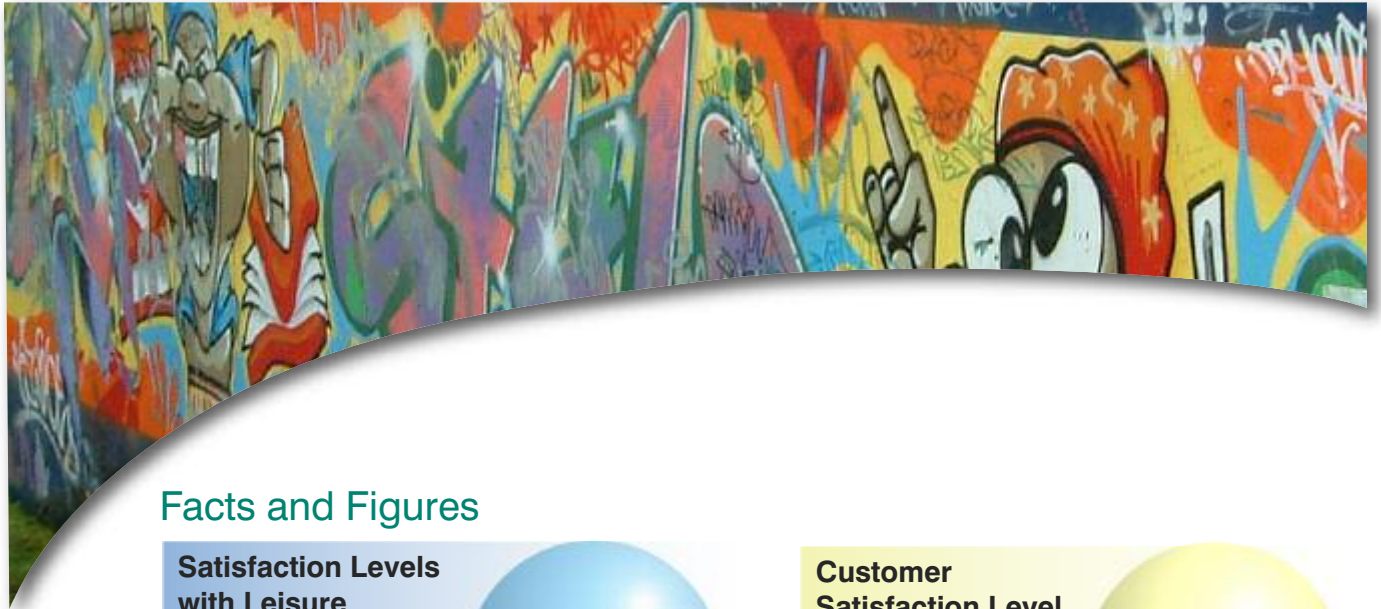
It may cause some delays if it turns up unexpected problems, but in most cases it will save time in the long run if it means the Agency (District Council) is not wasting time later trying to win people round to decisions in which they have had no say.

Can residents and partners consultation resolve direct conflict between outright adversaries?

Sometimes, but definitely not always – it depends on the source of dispute. If, for example, disagreement stems from misinformation or partial understanding of proposals, some discussion of the issues may resolve the conflict of interests. A good consultation process can also help people to appreciate each other's concerns and perceptions more clearly.

Sometimes agreement on a certain issue is impossible, but the process of debating the key issues can often lead to an agreement to disagree about that issue. Agreement and consensus can then be sought over less contentious issues, so progress can still be made.

(Adapted from Environment Agency – Modernising Consultation)



Facts and Figures

Satisfaction Levels with Leisure Facilities

2004 – 72.2 %
 2006 – 75.9%
 2008 – 75.2%
 2010 – 75.7%

Combined Council Average
74.3%

Customer Satisfaction Level for Play Areas

2004 – 72.3%
 2006 – 73.2%
 2008 – 72.9%
 2010 – 73.0%

Combined Council Average
74.3%

Satisfaction Levels with Parks and Open Spaces

2004 – 75.1%
 2006 – 75.6%
 2008 – 73.4%
 2010 – 74.3%

Combined Council Average
74.7%

Evaluation Forms Completed

2005 – 48
 2006 – 60
 2007 – 113
 2008 - 307
 2009 - 54

How satisfied were parents/children with the Summer Scheme in terms of the following:

Subject Area	Very Good 2007	Excellent 2007	Very Good 2008	Excellent 2008	Very Good 2009	Excellent 2009
Safety	38.1%	56.7%	29.2%	62.5%	31.5%	61.1%
Location/Venue	27.8%	72.2%	21.9%	71.2%	27.8%	72.2%
Value for Money	16.3%	78.6%	17.8%	78.1%	35.2%	61.1%
Staff	28.4%	70.5%	23.6%	76.4%	24.1%	75.9%
Activity subject	28.4%	68.4%	35.2%	59.2%	35.8%	62.3%

(*2008 SDC Customer Satisfaction Index)

Section 2: Consultation and Community Engagement Annual Work Plan 2010-2012

The activities planned for the first six months of the year are set out in the following table:

Month	Consultation Activity	Format	Lead Dept	Objective of Consultation
January				
February				
March	Youth Panel – Summer holiday programme	Focus Group	H&R	Service improvement, Information outlet
April	Hi-5 - Easter Programme Active Communities Projects Sports Club Forum	Questionnaire Verbal Comments Case Studies	SD SD SD CSC	Level of satisfaction, Service improvement Level of satisfaction, Service improvement Mapping & Audit, Service improvement,
May	Opinion Meter - Stratford Sports Clubs – Pavilion Users	Questionnaire Questionnaire	SLM LST	Level satisfaction Level of satisfaction, Service improvement
June				

KEY **LST:** Leisure Service Team, **SD:** Sports Development, **C&P:** Change & Performance,
H&R: Housing & Revenue, **CSC:** Community Sports Coach, **SLM:** Sports Leisure Management

Section 2: Consultation and Community Engagement Annual Work Plan 2010-2012

The activities planned for the second half of the year are set out in the following table:

Month	Consultation Activity	Format	Lead Dept	Objective of Consultation
July	Opinion Meter - Shipston Newsletter	Questionnaire	SLM	Level of satisfaction
August	Hi-5 – Holiday programme ILEAP – Summer Sports Activities (Disability Sport group)	Verbal Comments Case Studies	SD ILEAP	Service improvement
September	Citizens Panel	Questionnaire	C&P	Level of satisfaction, Service improvement Information outlet
October	Parish Council Forum Opinion Meter - Studley	Forum Questionnaire	MS SLM	Service improvement, Information outlet Level of satisfaction
November				
December	Opinion Meter - Southam	Questionnaire	SLM	Level of satisfaction

KEY **LST:** Leisure Service Team, **SD:** Sports Development, **C&P:** Change & Performance,
H&R: Housing & Revenue, **CSC:** Community Sports Coach, **SLM:** Sports Leisure Management



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