

Consultation, Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2008-11

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Consultation, Involvement and Engagement Strategy

1. Background

Islington is a place where residents' views count.

The council has a long track record of engaging with and listening to its residents, service users, partners and local businesses. This has helped us to make better decisions about the services we provide and our priorities. In turn this has shaped the local area and the services that people use and receive.

'Listening to Islington' was one of the three main priorities we set out in our One Islington vision in 2006

We have used a variety of different methods to listen to local people. These range from surveys and questionnaires to public meetings and user panels. We have used traditional and innovative methods. In June 2007 we held a referendum on green parking charges – the first of its kind in the country.

Customer feedback and insight into residents' and service users' views are essential for a learning organisation to shape and improve the services it delivers and in due course to improve customer satisfaction. In turn this contributes to the perceptions that residents have of the council, such as whether they trust the council to make Islington a better place for them, their families and the local community.

This document sets out our commitment to engaging even more effectively and even more imaginatively in the future. This means trying new methods and giving local people more opportunities to have a bigger say on local issues and on key decisions.

2. Context

The *Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper*¹ set out the expectations placed on local authorities to act as strong leaders of their communities. Its underlying purpose was to give citizens and communities a bigger say in the services they receive and the places where they live.

The White Paper described a number of ways in which local authorities could develop this community leadership role, many of which are described or referred to in this strategy. The legislative framework for delivering these objectives is set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act². One of the provisions in the Act is a new duty on local authorities to involve local residents. Its purpose is to ensure that people have greater opportunities to have their say and that a culture of engagement and empowerment is embedded across the authority's functions.

Other legislation such as the Race Relations Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 (Gender Duty) place an obligation on the council to involve specific equality groups in the development and delivery of services. Under the Equality Standard the council is also committed to developing an equality engagement and

¹ Strong and Prosperous Communities: the Local Government White Paper, HMSO, Oct 2006

² Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, HMSO, 2007

participation strategy to set out how we will engage with equality groups in the community and in the workforce.

The new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) regime, which has also emerged from the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper, will come into effect in 2009. As well as assessing the quality and effectiveness of services, it will focus on the issues that are important to the community and how these are being addressed. In the context of the CAA, engaging with and involving residents in identifying and addressing these issues will be of key importance to the council and its partners.

The purpose of this strategy, therefore, is to describe our approach to delivering the ambitions of the White Paper and our Corporate Equality Scheme and Community Cohesion Strategy. It sets out our aims and how we will involve and engage with the local community.

3. Our aims

In order to meet the needs of the community through the delivery of effective and appropriate services that meet local needs we need to understand and engage with the local community. For this communication to be as effective as possible we aim to:

- be a resident-focussed council that consults, involves and listens to people
- engage with the diverse range of communities that live and work in the borough
- encourage people to express their views and take part in democratic processes
- develop a better understanding of what people want and need
- reach those individuals groups who don't normally participate in consultation and engagement activities
- empower local communities and neighbourhoods by devolving decision-making where appropriate
- work closely with partners, community and voluntary groups to ensure the needs of local communities are understood and met

4. What do we mean by consultation, involvement and engagement?

The terms consultation, involvement and engagement are often misunderstood or used interchangeably. All are about listening to the views of local people in order to shape services, develop policy or take action.

For the purposes of this document these terms are defined as follows:

Consultation is the process of asking for and listening to the views of local people or groups with the aim of influencing decisions, policies or actions.

Involvement is a process in which people actively participate, and during which the council exchanges information with them and seeks their views.

Engagement involves an on-going mutually beneficial two-way partnership between the council and stakeholders. Decision-making may be shared between the parties.

In practice there are not clear-cut distinctions between the different terms and it is easier to think of them on a spectrum. The concept of a 'ladder of public engagement' has

frequently been used to describe the different levels of participation³. The diagram below is simplified version.

Partnership	Most active	Shared decision-making	Unstructured
Engagement	↑	↑	↑
Involvement			
Consultation	Most passive	No decision-making	Structured
Information			

At the lower end of the ladder the council uses more traditional consultation and research techniques to find out what people think. The middle rungs represents different levels of involvement in which stakeholders are more active participants, for example by attending meetings or taking part in discussions about aspects of a service. The upper steps of the ladder represent public engagement and partnerships in which participants actively contribute to or share decision-making.

The methods we use will be appropriate and proportional to the issue about which we are seeking views. In some cases questionnaires and surveys are the most appropriate methods, whilst in others we will seek to involve and engage people more proactively, or to develop a continuing dialogue.

It is the aim of this strategy to define the framework and create the conditions where residents' views really do count. It is about creating an environment in which more people actively engage with the council in shaping services, policies and -ultimately – helping to shape the borough itself.

Stakeholders

It is also important to be clear about who the council is seeking to consult and engage with. The term stakeholder is often used to describe anyone who has a legitimate interest in a service or issue. In Islington the stakeholders with whom the council aims to engage could be drawn from any of the following groups:

- All Islington residents
- Local geographically based communities (such as people living on an estate or close to a proposed development site, road etc.)
- Users or clients of specific services (or their carers or relatives)
- Potential future service users
- Former or lapsed service users
- People with similar demographic characteristics (such as young people and children, minority ethnic residents, people with school-aged children, carers etc)
- Local businesses and representative business groups
- Voluntary and community groupsPartner organisations (such as the police, PCT, Homes for Islington, Cambridge Education, Transform Islington, Aquaterra, etc)
- Local neighbourhood partnerships (such as FinFuture)

³ *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*, Arnstein, SJ, 1969.

- Non-Islington residents who work in the borough and/or use local facilities
- Partnership bodies of which the council is a participant, such as the Islington Strategic Partnership.

Methods and approaches

This strategy embraces a range of different approaches to consulting and engaging with stakeholders. The council already uses most, such as:

- market research
- surveys and questionnaires
- complaint and feedback forms
- surveys of the Islington citizens panel
- website surveys and online feedback forms
- focus groups
- workshops
- public meetings
- exhibitions and open days
- deliberative events such as citizens' juries
- community networks (e.g. the Mobility Forum)
- service user groups and panels
- 'Listen Up' project groups and projects with young people and children
- friends' groups (e.g. libraries, parks)
- tenant and resident associations
- referenda

The council will use a variety of methods to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. Different methods will be used according to the context and circumstances. If views are sought on an issue affecting only a small number of residents or services users, the methods and scale of the consultation activity will be different compared to an issue of concern to a large number of residents.

The methods we will use will differ depending on the circumstances and we will need to consider questions such as whether:

- we need to raise awareness and understanding of an issue before seeking people's views on the solutions
- it is necessary to engage with large numbers of people or a smaller number in a defined area or with a specific need or interest in an issue?

We will be mindful of the suitability of the methods we use. For example, 'e-consultation' methods are often the easiest way to engage with some people, but electronic methods have their limitations, such as excluding people without access to or confidence in using the technology.

5. Principles of consultation, involvement and engagement

The principles governing consultation and engagement are important as they set a framework, and define standards, for all future activity. We have set out 18 principles on which we will base our consultation and engagement activity. These are that the council will:

1. set out clear objectives for all consultation, involvement and engagement activities
2. identify and seek the views of stakeholders on issues that may affect them
3. take account of the views and input of participants
4. be inclusive by seeking to reach communities and individuals that are seldom heard or have not in the past been engaged with the council
5. use a range of methods and techniques to maximise participation
6. provide sufficient time for people to express their views and engage with the council
7. use and build on existing networks, forums and partnerships
8. collaborate more closely with the community and voluntary sectors to extend our reach into the communities they represent
9. provide feedback to participants and the wider community on the outcomes and decisions taken following consultation, involvement and engagement activities
10. work collaboratively with partners to avoid duplication and overload on participants
11. use plain English, good design and layout and other appropriate formats in consultation documents and involvement and engagement activities
12. be open and transparent about all consultation, involvement and engagement activity
13. publicise our consultation, involvement and engagement activities to raise awareness and encourage participation
14. brand our consultation documents in accordance with council guidelines
15. respect the confidentiality of respondents
16. seek to earn the trust and confidence of stakeholders in our processes
17. comply with all statutory requirements where these are prescribed by legislation
18. review the effectiveness of our consultation and engagement activities, using the knowledge we gain to improve our approach in the future.

6. Scope

This strategy applies to all consultation, involvement and engagement activity undertaken by and on behalf of the council. This includes all statutory consultation activity, planned regular consultation and engagement activities and one-off initiatives associated with particular schemes, proposals or policies.

The council has a duty to consult with residents on a range of subjects such as:

- the level of council tax
- business rates
- economic development and regeneration
- the local development framework / Core Strategy
- planning applications
- licensing applications
- housing rents and management
- traffic and parking schemes
- school closures, expansions or schools' transformation
- residential care home closures
- major changes to services

These will continue to be undertaken in accordance with legislation and guidance. In addition they will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in this strategy.

In addition to the statutory consultations, the council will continue to consult on a wide range of proposals, plans and policies and to engage with individuals and groups to understand people needs, expectations, experiences and preferences across the full range of activities over which the council has influence.

It will also undertake market research to understand attitudes and perceptions of representative samples of the population, and supplement this with a range of qualitative techniques. For example, we already have a number of user panels, forums and friends groups. These provide resident and service users to engage more closely with service providers, share their experiences and influence the shape and nature of service delivery. It can be very rewarding for residents and service users alike and is a model we want to develop and extend into other service areas.

This approach also extends into identifying local needs and priorities and planning new facilities and services.

However, we want more people to become involved in the planning and operation of specific services. A range of different activities and methods will be used to involve and engage more people. Some of these have been set out in Appendix 1. They include a number of new approaches that will be used to involve more people and to provide more opportunities for local individuals and communities to be more engaged with the council.

7. Co-ordination, management and governance

To maximise the benefits of consultation and engagement to stakeholders and to the council, this strategy must be adopted across all services as well as for the management of corporate consultations. To achieve this we have established a senior officer level Consultation Quality Group (CQG) whose role it is to ensure that all consultation meets the high standards we have set ourselves. The CQG has senior representation from all council directorates. It will also invite representation from key partners to ensure that consultation is co-ordinated and common standards are applied.

The terms of reference of the Consultation Quality Group are set out in Appendix 2.

A consultation practitioners' forum has been created to provide officers who undertake consultation or other involvement activities an opportunity for sharing experiences and good practice. It is also open to officers of other local agencies.

The council maintains a consultation and engagement forward plan within its communications forward planner. This sets out known and planned activity, enabling this to be better coordinated and for congruent activities to be linked up. The plan will be continuously updated and made available on the council's intranet site.

Departmental service plans should set out the consultation and engagement activity that is planned at the beginning of the year, which should feed into the consultation and engagement forward plan. This should include consultation undertaken by partners on behalf of the council. Where it becomes necessary to consult or engage with stakeholders during then course of the year, these activities will be added to the consultation and engagement forward plan.

A named lead officer will be responsible for each consultation or engagement activity within their service. It will be his or her responsibility to ensure that the consultation is conducted in accordance with the principles set out above.

Prior to any significant consultation or engagement activity the lead officer will complete a Consultation Initiation document (CID). The purpose of the CID is to set out the purpose of the consultation or engagement activity and to set out how, when and with whom it will take place. The CID will be completed by the lead officer. He or she will also set out how the results and feedback will be analysed, how this information will be used and how the outcome of the consultation will be communicated to participants and other stakeholders.

At the end of each year a report on the previous year's consultation and engagement activity will be prepared by the Corporate Consultation and Research Officer. It will be reported to the Consultation Quality Group and published on the council web site.

Guidelines on the standards that are expected, and governance arrangements, will be developed to assist all council staff (and partners) who are planning consultation or engagement activities. The development of a knowledge bank of key learning from past engagement activities will also assist officers in planning effective consultation, involvement and engagement activities.

8. Maximising participation and engagement

Ensuring the highest levels of participation is a challenge faced by all councils, and indeed all other public bodies that seek to engage with stakeholders.

A particular challenge is engaging with groups in the community that have historically proved hard to reach. There is no single list of hard to reach groups, but it includes groups such as young people and children, people from specific minority ethnic groups (especially recently arrived communities and individuals), young professionals and disabled people that may make it difficult to take part in conventional consultation processes and people who have difficulty reading or understanding written documents.

Islington Council has targeted such groups in past consultations and engagement activities but with varying degrees of success. We will continue to use methods that have worked in the past, such as engaging with young people through the *Listen Up* project, ensuring participants in market research studies are representative of Islington's diverse community, and using interviewers/researchers from a range of backgrounds.

Some service users have particular needs. For example, a new user involvement strategy is being developed for adult social care and supported housing, reflecting the changing environment in those services and the needs of these clients. The development of this strategy will also involve users and carers to ensure we get it right.

We also intend to work more closely with voluntary and community organisations, establish reference groups and engage with different communities to understand and respond to their requirements. We will also look at ways of enabling and supporting representative groups to involve and engage their members on our behalf.

It is also important to explain how people's views and active involvement contribute to decision-making processes. This can be explained at the time that their views or involvement is sought. In addition feedback to residents (and other stakeholders) should

make explicit the link between what they said and the actions that will – or will not - be taken following the consultation.

Finally, guidance will be provided on ensuring that venues are communication methods are fit for purpose and cater for the needs of residents. For example, smaller groups with support workers may be appropriate when seeking the views of people with learning difficulties. Venues should be fully accessible and the council should advertise its willingness to make reasonable adjustments for people with specific requirements.

Monitoring participation

We will collect information about participants and respondents to major consultations and engagement activity based on the council's six equalities strands – age, gender, ethnicity, disability, faith and sexuality – to monitor the participation rates of each group.

Where appropriate we will also collect and monitor other important profile information such as the type of housing the person lives in, whether they have children or their employment status. Depending on the service or issue upon which the council is consulting this information can be particularly relevant and important when understanding and analysing responses.

Guidance on collecting monitoring information will be developed. Participation rates will be monitored and reported upon, and action taken, if needed, to further improve participation by under-represented groups.

9. Training and development

Over a hundred council officers are estimated to undertake consultation and engagement activities each year. Some do this regularly and are highly experienced and professional. Many, however, do not do this regularly and do not have the knowledge or formal training about the range of techniques or how best to design a survey or conduct a workshop or focus group. External consultants or market research agencies are sometimes commissioned to do this work, but if there is insufficient budget available the quality of consultation or engagement activity may suffer.

The council recognises the need to build its capacity to engage and consult with residents to the highest standards.

The Communications and Consultation Team provides advice and support to officers who are planning consultation or engagement activities, but there is not the capacity within the corporate team to undertake or manage each consultation activity

A training programme will be developed to provide officers embarking on consultation or engagement activity with the skills and knowledge they require. It will cover topics such as the range of techniques available, survey design, engaging harder to reach groups, maximising participation and interpreting results. In addition, support and expert advice from the Communications and Consultation Team will continue to be offered on an individual basis to officers leading consultation and engagement activities, subject to capacity.

10. Resources and budgets

Consulting and engaging with people takes considerable planning and time. It often requires the design and print of documents and questionnaires, and where postal methods are used there are further postage costs. Setting up and facilitating discussion groups, deliberative forums and other similar activities requires substantial amount of time and expertise.

Budget has been identified for some of the core activities, but generally on-off consultation and engagement projects need to be resourced from within existing service budgets. Some of the proposed activities, such as participatory budgeting and referenda will require their own budgets if and when the council uses them. The capacity of the council to consult and engage more effectively is contingent on identifying sources of funding, and where possible identify cheaper methods of engaging with people (such as electronic polling) or using resources more efficiently (such as by joint commissioning).

Statutory activities such as the Place Survey or consultation on the Local Development Framework, for example, will need to be funded. The CLG does not intend to provide additional funding to local authorities to fund the Place Survey.

11. Setting targets

In order to measure our success in achieving the objectives of this strategy we have proposed a number of targets. These apply to residents' perception of the council as a whole and responsibility for their achievement is shared.

A number of statutory best value performance indicators (BVPIs) were gathered in 2006/7, and although these BVPIs are no longer a statutory requirement for councils to collect we proposed to continue to monitor them, using the 2006/7 figures as a benchmark.

The two most relevant BVPIs were the percentage of residents who think their council "acts on the concerns of local residents" (i.e. listens to residents) and the percentage of residents who were satisfied with the opportunities for participating in decision-making provided by their council.

Islington's performance against these two BVPIs was above the London average but below the top quartile of councils in London in 2006/7. Achieving and then exceeding the top quartile performance is the target for each of these measures (see table below).

	2006/7 Islington (actual)	2006/7 London top quartile	2008/9 Islington (target)	2009/10 Islington (target)	2010/11 Islington (target)
Percentage of residents who think their council acts on the concerns of local residents (BVPI/Place Survey)	54%	56%	56%	58%	60%
Percentage of residents very or fairly well satisfied with the opportunities for participation in local decision-making provided by their Council (BVPI)	32%	33%	35%	40%	45%

	2006/7 Islington (actual)	2006/7 London top quartile	2008/9 Islington (target)	2009/10 Islington (target)	2010/11 Islington (target)
Percentage of residents who think their council is remote and impersonal	54% (BVPI)	53%	50%	48%	46%
Percentage of consultation for which feedback is provided to respondents	Not collected	Not known	100%	100%	100%

A third BVPI measure is the proportion of residents who think the council is remote and impersonal. A more engaged and engaging council is less likely to be seen as remote or impersonal. Again a target is set to significantly exceed the top quartile performance in London.

A fourth target is already used, which is that feedback should be given to participants on the outcome of all consultation exercises. This remains unchanged at 100%.

We are also able to compare the response and engagement of different groups within the community and measure this against the demographic profile of the borough. This method, whilst relevant for borough-wide consultation and engagement activities is not always applicable for locally-based or small-scale consultations, and for some groups reliable baseline information is not available. Nevertheless the participation rates by gender, age, ethnicity and disability will be monitored and compared with the population profile of the area.

There is undoubtedly further work to do in the field of developing appropriate targets, and where appropriate to identify mechanisms for measuring the outcomes of consultation and engagement.

12. Summary

The council is committed to engaging in a dialogue with residents about the issues and concerns that matter most to them. This strategy seeks to develop and build on the good practice that has been established in creating an environment in which this dialogue not only takes place, but leads to tangible improvements in the services, amenities and quality of life enjoyed by the people of Islington.

Appendix 1: Methods and approaches to be used

Islington Citizens Panel

A standing panel of 1,000 residents has been in place since 2003. The panel has been used to seek the views of these residents on a wide range of issues over the years. Initially representative of the borough's population by age, gender, ethnicity and tenure, over time it has become unrepresentative and is being refreshed.

From June 2008 a new, representative panel of around 1,000 adults (aged 18 or over) will be established. It will provide a useful sounding board of residents' views, and will be available for use by partners as well as by the council. The panel will also be used as a reservoir of residents from which to draw participants in focus groups and other similar forums. This will enable us to explore attitudes and perceptions of specific groups of residents including those from some of the harder to reach groups within the community. Recruitment to the panel will particularly target people from some of the harder to reach groups. And the composition of the panel will need to be regularly refreshed to ensure it remains representative.

Tracking survey

We will use the citizens panel to follow changes in individuals' views and perceptions over time by asking the same questions and looking at the changes over time. Talking to those people whose views do change will enable us to assess what has changes their perceptions. This information can be translated into actions that can be taken to improve overall satisfaction with individual services and the council.

Place Survey

Each local authority is required to undertake a statutory Place Survey every two years with effect from Autumn 2008. The government specifies the questions that must be asked, but additional questions can be included on issues of particular local relevance. Subject to funding, a non-statutory survey may be conducted in the years when the Place Survey is not conducted.

Budget consultation

The council has undertaken an annual budget consultation for several years. In addition to conducting face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of residents, all residents and local businesses have the opportunity to express their views on the council's spending priorities and the level of council tax for the forthcoming year. We are committed to consulting on the budget priorities each year.

Referenda

The success of the referendum in 2007, and the support from residents for this approach in the future, indicates that this is a method the council will consider for important decisions affecting all or most residents in the future. The costs of any future referenda will need to be found from the relevant service budgets.

Temperature Gauge

We will undertake research on a regular basis to monitor perceptions of the council and whether it is making a difference by asking a standard set of questions when we undertake market research. This will give us insight into residents' views about the overall performance of the council and how residents perceive it.

Engaging with young people

The council will continue to use its *Listen Up* project as a means of engaging with young people on a range of topics and issues. The project offers a resource to all council services that want to seek the views of young people. There are a number of positive initiatives that are currently led by young people such as the Youth Opportunities Fund panel. The Children and Young People's Participation strategy aims to build further on these by strengthening partnership working with schools, the pupil parliament, health and the voluntary, community and faith sectors.

The *Listen Up* team takes responsibility for being the vehicle to drive and deliver this plan.

Participative budgeting

Participative budgeting (PB) provides residents with an opportunity to get directly involved in contributing to, or even making, spending decisions. Limited versions of this approach are undertaken in Islington, but the council is actively looking at PB as a mechanism to involve and engage more residents by developing this approach.

Register of interests

A register of interests enables the council to invite residents to identify topics and issues about which they are particularly interested. This makes it easier for the council to seek their views when it consults on these topics, or to create forums, establish reference groups or simply invite people to events or meetings that may be of interest to them.

User forums

A number of forums already exist, at which service users, or people with common interests, can meet and exchange ideas and information with the council. Examples are the Mobility Forum and friends groups. Last year a panel of residents helped to shape the new 'commonsense' parking enforcement contract before it was tendered.

This method of actively involving residents in service planning and delivery will be extended into other service areas, drawing on lessons learned and good practice from elsewhere.

The new local involvement network (LINK), once established, will be an important vehicle for engaging with residents on the delivery and effectiveness of the full spectrum of health and social care provision.

Staff forums

There are a range of staff equality forums involved in informing corporate policy covering the black and minority ethnic (BME), lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT),

disabled staff, faith and women. The Equality Staff forums are consulted on matters of interest, including relevant legislation.

Data sharing

Information gathered from consultation and engagement activities will be shared with partners where it is appropriate to do so, subject to ensuring the confidentiality of individual respondents. This not only enables partners to be better informed about the views of local people, but may reduce the burden places on residents and reduce the costs to partners. For example the council has information about the methods of communication that residents prefer and about the media they read and watch. Information of this sort is useful to a range of partners in targeting and planning their own communications campaigns.

Joint commissioning

Working collaboratively with partners and planning engagement activity provides opportunities for jointly commissioning consultation or engagement activities. For example, the police and council may each want to understand attitudes and perceptions about crime and anti-social behaviour. The citizens panel offers further opportunities for partners to either ask specific questions in the survey or to reduce the costs of recruiting to focus groups by asking the council to approach people from the panel.

The council is developing a partnership policy that will become part of new and existing contracts. This will set out the council's expectations with regard to consultation and engagement activities undertaken by partners.

Feedback finder and other online tools

Most consultations are posted on the council's web site in an online list of current and past consultations called Feedback Finder. The council established this tool a while ago but the software is limited and it is not used as widely as it should be. A priority for the council in 2008/9 is to develop and make better use of this tool.

Web Lab

A self-selecting panel of residents has been established, who undertake to respond to online surveys every month. This model could be developed to increase the number of participants and to extend the range of subjects on which people's views are sought.

IslingtonNow

The council magazine, IslingtonNow, is delivered to all homes in the borough every month. It is an excellent tool for publicising and providing feedback on consultation and engagement activity. A dedicated *Your Views* page appears in every issue and this will continue to be used to highlight opportunities for people to become more engaged.

Petitions and calls for Community Action

We receive various petitions from residents about a range of subjects. The council stipulates how it deals with petitions in its constitution. Petitions provide a powerful

measure of the mood of significant number so of people about issues that are often local issues.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, places a duty on councils to respond to community calls for action, which may often take the form of a petition or similar representation.

Asking residents

Seeking feedback from residents on their experience of consultation and engagement is an obvious, but often overlooked, way of identifying the gaps and weaknesses in current practice. Over the course of 2008/9 the Communications and Consultation team will hold a number of workshops with residents to get feedback and fine tune the way in which the council engages with them, and to explore the ways in which they would like to be engaged.

Appendix 2: Consultation Quality Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the group is to provide strategic guidance and support to the Listening Board on consultation, and to oversee the operational side of consultation and market research planned and conducted across the council

Draft Terms of Reference:

1. To provide support, advice and guidance to the Listening Board on consultation and market research.
2. To respond to the policy and legislative framework on consultation and community involvement in a coordinated and proactive manner.
3. To ensure that the council makes every effort to engage with and listen to the views of all groups in the community, including hard to reach groups.
4. To recommend innovative and creative ways of listening to the views of local people and businesses.
5. To develop an annual corporate consultation plan and monitor progress against it.
6. To review the quality of consultation undertaken by, and on behalf of, Islington Council, ensuring it is of a consistently high quality and is fit for purpose.
7. To encourage the co-ordinated procurement of consultation and market research services across council departments and agencies.
8. To receive reports on major consultations that are undertaken in Islington, and to review key learning and recommend actions to take as a result of the consultation.
9. To review and monitor the council's expenditure on consultation and market research.
10. To ensure that all planned and completed consultations are recorded and published, and that feedback on the outcome of consultation is made available to stakeholders.
11. To encourage the collection of good practice and its dissemination throughout the council and to partners.
12. To monitor and report on the public perception of the council as a 'listening council'.
13. To develop and ensure the use of a corporate consultation initiation document (CID) for all major consultations and market research

Frequency of meetings:

During 2007 meetings will take place bi-monthly around two weeks prior to the scheduled meetings of the Listening Board (ie in first or second week of March, May, July, Sept and Nov)

Current membership of the group

Assistant Director (Communications and Consultation) - Chair
Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Equalities)
Assistant Director (Performance and Quality), Adult Services
Assistant Director (Strategy and Commissioning), Children's Services
Assistant Director (Planning), E&R
Assistant Director (Public Realm), E&R
Assistant Director (Financial Management), Finance
Head of Community Safety, Corporate Resources