



Working Together

Community Consultation Toolkit

1. Introduction

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils offer Community Grants to organisations that deliver community support, projects or activities within Babergh and Mid Suffolk. As part of community grant applications, there will often be an expectation to carry out a community consultation before you apply for funding.

This document outlines how the consultation process can be broken down, and provide an example of how such a process can be used for best effect.

2. Consultations

2.1 WHY - What you hope to achieve with your consultation

You should consider why you are undertaking a consultation and what you want to find out. It could be to demonstrate support for a funding bid, or to illustrate the need for a community facility. It is important that you are clear about this in order to avoid having to carry out further consultation unnecessarily. Think about the outcomes and what decisions will be influenced because consultation with the public always raises expectations.

Key questions to ask yourself and anyone involved in the consultation are:

- What are the key aims?
- What information or change is required at the end and what do we not have now?
- What type of report do I need to produce at the end?
- What will the information be used for?

2.2 WHO - The people and groups you should consult with

You will need to identify any people or groups who may have a view, or be impacted in some way (these are sometimes referred to as stakeholders) and plan how to get them involved in the consultation. This will depend on what you are consulting on. Think about who your key users are, the non-users and others who may have an interest. For example, if you were consulting on making improvements to a community centre, you would need to consult with the existing users, the potential users, local agencies and voluntary groups and the local community including residents, schools and businesses.

It is essential that any consultation exercise reflects the diversity of the population. Ensure that enough effort is put in to engage with members of the public who may find it difficult to be involved.

Some possible examples of those who may find it difficult are:

- Minority ethnic communities
- People with disabilities
- Older people

Once you have identified the members of the public, try to think of ways that could overcome any barriers that may prevent them from taking part. For example you may need to use interpreters, visual aids etc.

2.3 HOW - The level of and method of consultation

Consultation methods include:

1. Focus groups - Group discussions to explore issues in depth and seek the views of interest groups.
2. Surveys - Consultation questionnaire, online questionnaires and telephone interviews.
 - A sample questionnaire can be found further down this document
 - A questionnaire template can be found [on our website](#)
 - Use an online survey system such as [Survey Monkey](#).
3. Forums - Structured and regular meetings with interest groups.
4. Seminars and Workshops - An organised discussion group to exchange and gather information.
5. Public Meetings - Formal meetings to provide information and seek views.

2.4 WHEN - Planning and delivering the consultation

Allow enough time for the planning, delivery and gathering of information for the results, usually between 6-8 weeks in total. The tasks that will be required for the consultation are:

1. Preparation for the consultation
 - Decide on the subject for consultation
 - Decide with whom you will consult
 - Decide on the consultation method
 - Identify any costs involved
 - Build in time to feedback the results
 - Build in time for evaluation
2. Advertise the consultation
3. Produce consultation material
4. Run the consultation allowing sufficient time for all stakeholders to respond

5. Gather and analyse the information collected

6. Draw up a report of the consultation

2.5 Using the results

Once you have carried out your consultation it is important that the results are collected and presented in a way that is easy to understand.

- Gather and analyse the data collected
- Draw up a report of the findings

The focus of the report should be on capturing whether or not the aims and objectives of the consultation have been achieved. An Example Consultation Report can be seen below

It is important that you feed back the results of the consultation to all interested parties, such as funding organisations and those who took part in the consultation process. This can be done in a variety of ways, for example:

- Publishing on website
- By e-mail to those whose contact details you have
- Local media (community newsletters, radio etc.)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter (X) etc.)

3. Contact Us

If you have any queries, would like more information or would like to discuss a potential project and funding application, please email the Grants Team at BMSDCGrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk.

This document has been produced with the kind permission of Dover District Council, with the original source available at: [Grants and funding - consultation](#)

4. EXAMPLE CONSULTATION REPORT

CONSULTATION REPORT FOR THE PROGRAMME OF REFURBISHMENTS/IMPROVEMENTS TO ANYWHERE COMMUNITY CENTRE.

May 2025

Anywhere Community Association has undertaken a consultation with the existing users, the potential users, local agencies, and voluntary groups and the local community including residents, schools and businesses to help inform the design of the refurbishments/improvements to Anywhere Community Centre.

Our project to improve and refurbish the kitchen and to improve the disabled access is the result of the consultation that we conducted in terms of what refurbishments and improvements were needed to make the venue more accessible as well as providing facilities needed to encourage greater use. The consultation comprised a questionnaire, which was collated and analysed. The results of the questionnaire are:

- Three hundred responses.
- 43% of the respondents were male and 57% were female.
- 92% of the respondents said that they would use the Community Centre.
- 96% of the respondents said there was a need for refurbishment and improvements to the Community Centre.
- Of the 92% respondents who said there was a need for refurbishment and improvements to the Community Centre, 75% said they would use it for social events, 30% said they would use it for community meetings, 70% said that they would use it for family functions, 50% for fundraising events and 20% for arts and culture.
- 56% of respondents said they would use the Community Centre weekly, 35% said monthly and 9% said quarterly.
- 98% of the respondents said there was a need for improvements and refurbishment to the kitchen area.
- 93% of the respondents said that improvements were needed to the disabled access

**DETAILED RESULTS CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.ANYWHERECOMMUNITYASSOCIATION.CO.UK**

**ANYWHERE COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION**

5. Example Questionnaire

ANYWHERE COMMUNITY CENTRE



Anywhere Community Association

is carrying out a programme of renovations/refurbishments at Anywhere Community Centre, which is available to all local residents.

BY FILLING IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE YOU WILL HELP US TO FIND OUT WHAT REFURBISHMENTS/IMPROVEMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE IN ANYWHERE COMMUNITY CENTRE, GET SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT AND ATTRACT FUNDING.

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: Under 12 ☐ 12-20 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ 80+ ☐

How many years have you lived in the area? 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 20+ ☐

Do you feel there is a need for refurbishments/improvements? Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you/your family/your group/organisation hire or use the upgraded facility? Yes ☐ No ☐

What would you use the upgraded facility for? Social events ☐ Community meetings ☐ Family functions ☐
Fundraising events ☐ Arts & Culture ☐ Other ☐

How often do you think you would use the facility? Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐

Please use the space below to describe briefly what sort of renovations/refurbishments you would like to see at Anywhere Community Centre.

We would like your name and contact details so that we can keep you informed as to the progress of this project, but this is not essential if you do not want to give us these details.

Name: Name of organisation:

Address:

Telephone: E-mail:

Please return this completed form to:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE