Consultation Toolkit

MAYOR OF LONDON

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Introduction

This toolkit has been developed to help ensure that our team consult and engage effectively with members of the pulblic, local communities and stakeholders. This toolkit gives you helpful hints, tips and advice for planning and carrying out consultation work. There is a series of guiding questions, referring you to the relevant section of the toolkit where you will find more detailed guidance. There are also minimum consultation standards and principles, outlined in our Consultation Policy, to which you must adhere.

Here at TfL, we regularly consult members of the public and key stakeholders – an individual, group or party that either affects or is affected by an organisation, policy, programme or decision – on proposed changes to our services, policies and other important issues. Our consultations have a specific start and end date and help to inform decisions that the organisation makes.

The key to good consultation is getting the planning stage and any pre-consultation – discussions which take place between a consultor, key influencers, key stakeholders with a view to clarifying the issues, scope and process of a forthcoming consultation (The Consultation Insitute, 2018), right. This can play a pivotal role in understanding our stakeholders and the impact of our proposals on them. Consulting well can save us time and money and result in a better scheme. Consult badly and we can end up in court.

As well as consulting on specific issues, we work to carry out longer term engagement for the lifecycle of a project from conception to completion. This involves working closely with local communities and their representatives to ensure that they are supported and involved in changes to services that may affect their local area and impact their daily lives.

TfL Consultation Principles

- Focused and timely
- Accessible and targeted
- Informative and accountable
- Timed appropriately
- Honest and fair

The aims of this toolkit are to ensure we:

- Meet any statutory and other legal obligations
- Adhere to our consultation principles
- Carry out consistent consultations across the organisation
- Produce high standard consultations that meet best practice standards

The consultation process – a quick guide

The process flow chart overleaf will help guide you through the stages that you should follow when embarking on a consultation. Please click on the questions and links to find out more.

Stage 1	Do I need to consult?	• Is there a legal/statutory requirement to consult? • Are you consulting on a policy? • Is there a real opportunity to influence a decision?	Read our Consultation Policy
Stage 2	Why am I consulting / when should I consult?	• What are the reasons for the proposals? • What are the aims and objectives? • Who do I need to involve? (internal/external parties) • When is the right time? • Am I carrying out a single or multi-stage consultation?	Write a Consultation Plan
Stage 3	Who should I consult?	• Who are your key stakeholders? • Are customers impacted? Does it affect residents? • What internal/external parties do you need to involve • What groups with protected charateristics are affected?	Identify my audience Conduct an equalities assessment
Stage 4	How do I engage my audience?	• What dialogue methods can I use? • What is our Public Sector Equality Duty? • Is my material accessible?	Select consultation methods
Stage 5	How do I design a consultation?	• What information do I include? • Does the information allow informed responses? • What questions shall I ask? • What is our Public Sector Equality Duty? Is my material accessible?	Write a letter / notification email Design an effective questionnaire
Stage 6	How do I publicise my consultation?	• When and how do I organise marketing activity and publicity? • How do I arrange events? • How do I get a consultation to appear on our consultation website?	Write a marketing brief Organise a door to door distribution Complete the online consultation request
Stage 7	What do I do with the results?	• How do I analyse responses? • What report templates do I use? • What data protection laws do I need to adhere to? • Who makes the decision regarding the next steps?	Follow Analysis Guidelines Write a Consultation Report Write a Response to Issues Raised Report
Stage 8	Are there any lessons to be learned?	• Did you reach your intended audience? • What did respondents say about the quality of the consultation material? • What went well/not so well? What would you do differently next time?	Carry out an evaluation

Do I need to consult?

Stage 1

What is a consultation?

Consultation is the *dynamic* process of *dialogue* between individuals or groups, based upon a *genuine* exchange of views, with the objective of *influencing* decisions, policies or programmes of action (The Consultation Institute, 2004)

Before you decide whether to consult, refer to our Consultation Policy. The first thing to ask yourself is: Do I have a statutory obligation to consult? If yes, then you will need to follow the relevant statutory requirements set out in law. If consultation is a statutory requirement then you will need to follow any specified requirements that may be set out in the legislation. In addition, as TfL is a public body then any consultation must comply with public law principles.

Once you decide to consult, whether it is required by law or not, there are certain legal principles you must stick to. A consultation with the public raises expectations and opens us up to the possibility of legal challenge if it is not done correctly, so you need to be absolutely sure that consultation is the right option.

Am I consulting or just informing?

Consultation is not the same as providing information. When you consult you always inform as well, but it is possible to engage and inform without consultation. Consultation should not be used to launch proposals to the public; plan how to engage with stakeholders before you consult. You need to be very clear about what the purpose of your engagement is so that the public understand whether their comments and views are going to influence the decision-making process. We must be clear to the public what we are expecting from them. If we have already decided on a course of action and are just communicating that, appropriate language must be used to ensure that is clear. In most cases, you should avoid asking for comments, views or responses if you are not consulting.

Risks of not consulting

- Reputational risk – can be accused of implementing services/schemes that are not fit for purpose, or actually required
- Open to challenge – public money spent without public consideration
- Could result in significant resistance, delays to programmes and significant cost and time impacts
- May result in impacts on people with protected characteristics not being identified
- Appear arrogant, damage reputation of TfL and Mayor's office
- Lack of transparency and engagement with affected parties can result in schemes not being approved

What next?

If you're clear that you are going to consult, then follow our seven-stage consultation process set out in detail in the following pages of this document. If you are unsure or have any questions, speak to your team lead.

Stage 2

Setting consultation objectives

It is impossible to set clear objectives until you have decided precisely what you are consulting on – just what is it you want to know? Writing a Consultation Plan will help. You should have a plan in place for every consultation exercise.

A consultation should only be embarked on when you can answer 'yes' to each of the following questions:

- Am I clear about my consultation objectives? i.e. what information does the decision maker need to help inform their decision
- Are there any decisions still to be made where consultees views might affect the outcome? i.e. are plans at a formative stage and open to influence?
- Are consultees likely to have enough interest and understanding to respond to my questions?
- Do I intend to explain the reasons for the options or proposals?
- Is there enough time to carry out the consultation according to the minimum timescales set out in the our Consultation Policy?
- Do I have sufficient resources and budget to communicate effectively with the target audience and analyse the responses?

Timings

Start thinking about timings as soon as possible: consultation works best when it is built into the wider planning of the project. You also need to think carefully about when you will carry out your consultation. At certain times of the year, such as school holidays or religious festivals people may have less time to respond. You may need to extend your consultation period if you decide to consult, to ensure that people have a fair opportunity to respond.

Participation and consultation activities can inform the identification of problems, help to develop options and appraise proposals. If you design the two in parallel, you will be able to demonstrate to your audience that, not only that you have listened, but also that what consultees have said has actually affected your thinking.

Our Consultation Policy states that we will seek public input into the design of options where possible as well as consulting on specific proposals. You should regard this as a general presumption, but not a hard and fast rule. Our stakeholders and customers are clear that, in general, they wish to be consulted at an early stage, before options have been determined (although this isn't always possible), and then afterwards on firm proposals. By seeking views early, you can often gain stakeholder support and buy-in at the start, helping to enable a positive outcome for the consultation. On minor and uncontroversial matters, a single consultation stage is likely to be enough. Consider how a good pre-engagement plan could assist with early stage feedback.

Pre-consultation

Pre-consultation in any field is a critical time of presenting the issues, exploring what will and will not be up for influence, working out who should be involved and the most effective ways to achieve that. (The Consultation Institute, 2016). Pre-consultation involves discussions which take place between a consultor, key influencers and key stakeholders, with a view to clarifying the issues, determining the scope and considering the processes of a forthcoming consultation. It can provide an opportunity to get the public and stakeholders to buy into what you are proposing, making subsequent consultations easier.

At this stage you will need to take note of what those key influencers are thinking, for they will impact you, also how key stakeholders will react because they will be affected by your decisions. If there are strong objections to proposals, it is better to know about them at an early stage so that you can explore what can be done to resolve any issues before the consultation.

Multi-stage consultation

On some major schemes you may want to consult several times which is sometimes integral to obtaining consent (view Camden Station Capacity Upgrade consultation). Perhaps you could start with a fairly open-ended approach before next consulting on the principle and later on the details and implementation.

Draw up a forward programme of consultation from its earliest stages right through to construction, implementation and beyond. This should help you to clarify your objectives at each phase and instil confidence within your consultees that any detailed questions they ask early on will be addressed later. It will also help you to ensure that pre-engagement can be delivered in plain English and wider messaging remains consistent throughout the consultation.

On major schemes, with multiple stages, start communicating with the public and stakeholder groups as early as possible. It can be very valuable to programme in a public engagement phase prior to the formal consultation period; you can use this to bring people up to speed with your plans and give them an early opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. By the time you go out to formal consultation, there will be more understanding of what you are trying to achieve and less surprises. If you lose people's trust early on, it can take a long time to rebuild it.

Think laterally

If you are going to consult then see what other projects or any other consultations are planned soon on the Consultation & Projects Tracker – join up work in the same location wherever possible. Please also make sure that your project is listed on the tracker so that the business is aware of all future consultations.

Check what other consultation has already been undertaken on our online consultation portal – you do not want to repeat work that has already been carried out or not mention previous consultations, for example on the same scheme.

Stage 3

How do I identify my audience?

Our Consultation Policy states that we are committed to identifying our target audience and appropriate and accessible communication channels when we set out consultation objectives.

People directly affected by a proposal have a right to know about it and should have an opportunity to have their say. If we fail to target our audience and communicate in the right way, we risk swamping familiar stakeholders, while leaving the 'silent majority' and socially excluded groups without a voice.

We can only judge whether our stakeholder contact lists are adequate by systematically identifying the groups we need to communicate with.

TOP TIP: See if there is any scope to run a joint consultation with a local partner. For example, proposals that involve changes to a borough road and a TfL bus service.

Aim to understand the full set of people who stand to be affected – for better or worse – by the proposals. It is particularly important to identify and engage with those with protected characteristics within the scope of the Equality Act 2010 as we are under a legal duty to have regard to any impacts of our proposals on those people.

There are some obvious groups that you can expect to come up with:

- Current and potential service users
- Local residents
- Users of other transport modes (eg cyclists where changes to bus routeings are proposed)
- Freight and servicing
- Local businesses
- Specific groups within the community (eg individuals with protected characteristics – see next page)

As a general principle, if you are consulting within an area, you should target everyone who is living or working there, as well as those who are travelling through it. This does not mean that you need to provide every address with a full scheme leaflet, but you should try to ensure that everyone becomes aware of the consultation and has the opportunity to take part.

You must also consider any key stakeholders and/or groups. Undertaking a stakeholder mapping exercise can be a good way of identifying everyone possible and their influence.

You should try to understand as much as possible about your audience:

- What level of influence do they have?
- What level of interest do they have in the issue?
- How likely are people to participate in consultation?
- Do they have the time and means?
- Will they understand written or spoken English?
- Will they be able to respond using the methods you offer them?

You *must* use our central stakeholder contact list as a starting point. Please contact Vanessa Afedzie if you have any queries or questions.

How do I make sure my consultation is inclusive?
We have a Public Sector Equality Duty to consider how our policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

To make sure you are consulting fairly, remember that you will need to reach out to different types of people in different ways. The project team should have done an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the proposed changes so you will need to check with them that they have done this and ask them to share with you. This will help you understand what groups to target. The consultation is the opportunity to test the EQIA to see if it needs to be modified before being passed to the decision maker. It is best practice to undertake an equalities assessment for each consultation.

Stage 4

How do I get people’s views?

To help identify the best methods to get people’s views, firstly ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have a requirement by law to consult particular groups or interests in a particular way?
- Who do you really need to hear from? How best can you reach them?
- How much time do you have? Do you have enough to pursue a particular approach without causing delays to the project?
- How much money do you have to spend? Can you afford a particular approach and does it offer value for money?

Sometimes there is a tendency for project teams to “jump the methods” about how they want to consult people. It is important to avoid this and think about your consultation objectives (Stage 2) before deciding on methods.

Timing

It is very important to plan the sequence of timing of consultation events and to organise the resources and budget for your consultation. If, as part of your Consultation Plan, you recognise the need to use marketing activities and/or an external analysis agency you will need to factor this in (See How do I publicise my consultation?).

What consultation methods are available to me?

All consultations should be available online on our consultation portal. Most people in London have access to the internet. It is available 24 hours, 7 days a week and helps keeps costs to a minimum. However, you may also need to use a variety of consultation methods (select consultation methods) to ensure that you are providing a fair opportunity for people to take part. You should look at the Equalities Impact Assessment prepared by the Project Team/Sponsor and see whether any parts of the community are particularly impacted by the proposals. The Equality Act sets out protected characteristic groups – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and; sexual orientation. A key consideration when deciding which consultation method to use is to select the method(s) which will get the best response from those you have decided to consult.

You should consider:

- What do you need to know and what type of information are you seeking?
- Who do you need to hear from and what’s the best way to contact/consult them?
- How complex is the issue?
- How involved are people prepared to be, what is your timescale and budget?

If you’re consulting on a change to one of our services then it’s important to send an email notification to customers on our Oyster database. More information is provided in the table overleaf.

Consultation dialogue methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Questionnaire / survey	● Online questionnaires can be hosted on our consultation platform (consultations.tfl.gov.uk) quickly and at no cost ● Can be used to better understand the whole population's (or your customers) views on a particular subject without contacting everyone ● Comparisons can be made with other questionnaires if questions are the same ● Good way to gather quantitative data	● Response rates to questionnaires can sometimes be low ● No control over who completes it ● Only useful if you get the questions and sample right ● Inputting postal copies can be time consuming ● Analysis can be costly for high response rates and questionnaires that have a large number of open questions ● To have confidence in the results, you must target a larger number of people
Sending letters	● Where tightly targeted, you can expect a reasonable level of response ● Raises awareness and understanding of simple options ● Can be a way of discharging statutory duty to consult specific interests ● Likely to be taken more seriously than a leaflet Quick and cheap for small numbers	● Less suitable for larger and more complex consultations ● Not good for developing new ideas ● May not motivate all sections of the community—eg socially excluded groups, non English speakers or those with visual impairments ● In a multi-occupied household most residents will not even see the letter ● It becomes more expensive as the geographical area increases Unsolicited mail may be unwelcome
Consultation leaflets	● Supplements the information available at an exhibition ● Invites response, via a tear-off reply card ● Good for raising awareness and understanding of larger and more complex proposals ● Can include powerful illustrations—maps, photographs and artists' impressions—including computer-generated images ● Can be strongly branded, along with posters, adverts and exhibition display panels, helping to raise awareness	● May be taken less seriously than a letter (unless included with a letter or in personally addressed envelope ● May not break down assumptions and fixed positions, or encourage people to understand other view points ● Not good for developing new ideas ● More expensive to produce. However, economies of scale mean that the more leaflets you print, the cheaper they will be ● Require a longer lead-in time ● Are less likely to be read than a letter (unless the front is eye-catching enough to persuade the reader to continue) ● May not motivate all sections of the community—eg socially excluded groups, people for who English is not their first language or visually impaired people
Exhibitions	● Stimulates responses and suggestions ● Opponents are less likely to be able to hi-jack an exhibition than a public meeting ● We can consult on the development of options as well as final proposals	● Can overload with information; people will not persevere if there are too many display boards, or too much and too complicated text ● Expensive in terms of materials, time and staff ● Difficult to justify if only small numbers are likely to attend (However, numbers can be boosted by careful choice of venue, good distribution of invitation leaflets and other promotional activity—adverts, poster, banners) ● No guarantee that those who visit will be a typical cross-section of your target audience—some groups are highly unlikely to attend ● More difficult than it is at a meeting to explore and discuss opportunities for consensus ● Response is spoken rather than written and so more difficult to capture and quantify accurately.
Deliberative events	● Specific objective and structured discussion ● Targeted recruitment can include groups otherwise excluded ● Captures informed opinion	● May have to pay to get participants ● Resource intensive – requires specialist support

Consultation dialogue methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Public meetings	• The best way to reach excluded communities • Demonstrates the human face of the organisation and forms a sound basis for developing good relationships with local people; face to face interaction is more satisfying and inclusive than other less personal forms • Provides an instant response to the consultation on the day and allows members of the public to clarify issues and engage in in-depth discussion on the matters that most concern them • Confirms that the local community's views are important to us by saying, 'we are prepared to come to you', while a convenient time and place maximises accessibility • Can consult on options as well as final proposals	• Can be confrontational, unconstructive and unproductive • May be dominated by an individual speaker whose views are not typical, or exploited by local politicians • Not reliable for quantifying public response. Cannot be sure to be reaching the 'silent majority' or excluded minorities • Mishandled, public meetings can increase/intensify opposition • Might result in claims that TfL has taken decisions against the majority of local opinion. A hostile public meeting does not allow you to present evidence contrary to their arguments—only other, less confrontational methods can do this • A hostile public meeting may be a less effective way of responding to arguments than less confrontational approaches
Focus groups/ workshops	• Allows for an in depth discussion on a specific issue or topic. • Can help you to explore issues, priorities, opinions, attitudes and behaviour in more detail • Can help generate ideas and inform questionnaires	• Can be time consuming • Groups need to be carefully facilitated to ensure that all participants • can have their say • Focus groups require participants to travel to a • specific location which can deter involvement • Unrepresentative
Stakeholder events / meetings	• It is not necessary to target a cross section of the population at large • Good for identifying concerns about a proposal and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to make their points and be heard • Good for collecting ideas, explaining proposals and the thinking behind them. • Can clarify misunderstandings and move the debate forward with improved mutual understanding • Provides opportunities to find the common ground and to build consensus • Contributes to clearer, more relevant responses—although there is no guarantee of this • A tangible and cost effective means of engaging interested parties who will make a contribution	• Does not necessarily help to understand or quantify the public response • Does not communicate with the 'silent majority' or excluded minorities • Difficult to analyse • Everyone wants to be included • Time consuming
Consultation documents	• Presents more detailed information than in a leaflet, including all that is necessary to enable statutory consultees and other stakeholder groups to respond • A good quality document can elicit a good quality response • Targets particular stakeholder groups	• Bulkier and more expensive to produce than leaflet • Relatively expensive and inefficient way of raising awareness among the general public • Is more dependent on written text than a leaflet. Therefore, less likely to reach socially excluded groups, those not fluent in English and people with visual impairments

For further information on these and other methods of consultation visit the Participation Compass website.

How do I design a consultation?

Stage 5

What do I include in my consultation?

The next step after selecting the best consultation methods to reach your target audience is to design your materials. This may include writing an overview for the online consultation portal, writing consultation letters, designing a questionnaire, enlisting help from marketing agencies to design posters/leaflets to advertise your consultation.

You need to ensure you include enough information to allow ‘intelligent consideration’. This means including all appropriate technical information and information that has led to any option(s) developed. This may include, but is not limited to, and noise / environment impact assessments. Essentially, consultees need to be given a fair opportunity to respond and this means ensuring that they know enough about the proposals to do that.

When designing your consultation materials you must make sure that the ‘language’ and the terminology you use is clear, informative, and will not confuse those taking part. However you also need to balance this with the need for technical information (where appropriate) for those with technical backgrounds to consider.

If your consultation is on a roads scheme then it is likely it should have had a Healthy Streets check undertaken on it. Please check this with the project team. If it is subject to this check then you MUST include the agreed Healthy Streets paragraph, spider diagram and table in your online material. More details, including details of the 10 Healthy Streets Indicators, can be found online at: https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/healthy-streets

What should I ask?

The questions you ask will vary depending on the scheme / topic you’re seeking views on. The type of questions you ask will vary depending on the nature of the consultation and what it is consultees are able to influence. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions will help us understand the most important issues and the detail behind these. A series of well thought through quantitative questions with an open comments box is often appropriate.
For some consultations, such as those undertaken early on, we may be looking to find out whether stakeholders and the public support the principle of an idea we have. In these situations it is better to ask about the level of impact the proposal may have on them or certain groups.

Top tips for writing questions:

- Begin by writing down the information you need, not the question you want to ask
- Re-use questions / question structures that have worked well in the past
- Be consistent and use same answer scales
- Put yourself in the place of the respondent
- Think about how many qualitative questions you are asking and try to close down to make quantitative questions wherever possible – qualitative analysis takes longer and costs more
- Peer review and seek approval from the Consultation and Analysis Team

Consultation material checklist
When preparing your consultation material it is important to ensure that people know:

- ☐ Why they are being consulted / the reasons for the proposed change(s)?
- ☐ How we got here i.e what were the previous stages of the process? What consultation or engagement has taken place so far?
- ☐ Who we are consulting?
- ☐ What decisions or processes will be informed/influenced?
- ☐ What decisions have already been made, and why? How does this fit with Mayoral or other strategies?
- ☐ What is outside of the scope of the consultation?
- ☐ Who will take the final decisions and when (where known)
- ☐ Timescales for the consultation
- ☐ What will be done with any personal data provided and how it will be used
- ☐ How they can get in touch if they have any questions? (include a named contact and consultations@tfl.gov.uk email address)

Stage 6

External marketing process

It is the responsibility of the consultation lead to manage the commissioning and approvals process for marketing activity. This includes the design of leaflets and posters to adverts in local and national press.

All marketing activity (materials, artwork, events and press activity) requires the approval of the GLA communications group at City Hall (refer to separate marketing process). This is managed through the Consultation & Projects Lead and the Head of LCP.

Door-to-door letter distribution

It is best practice to notify anyone who lives 200 metres radius from a proposed service change about the consultation. This is the minimum and will vary by project. Please refer to our door to door distribution guidance.

What else should I consider doing?

- Sending an email notification to customers who use services (Oyster card database) that we are proposing to alter. Contact the CRM Team
- Contacting reprographics to see if they can help with any bulk print requests. Complete the Reprographics order form
- Using our FREEPOST TFL CONSULTATIONS postal reply address on all communications
- For larger schemes, alerting the press office to any consultation launch and coordinating timing and messaging
- Providing a Customer Services number on consultation material and letters (requires notifying Customer Services). Using the consultation telephone number.

What approval(s) do I require before launching my consultation?

This depends on your project but at the very least, all content (including plan, letter, web page (including questionnaire) and stakeholder email should be sent to:

- Project Manager (normally PB3 in Buses and up to PB5 level in Surface Strategy)
- Senior Manager (PB4 LCP or Consultation & Projects manager)
- Consultation Compliance and Analysis Team for a compliance check
- City Hall – for sensitive schemes a short briefing needs to be provided in order to give City Hall a heads up in case any issues are directed their way. There are two templates: a City Hall briefing template for new consultations and a City Hall briefing template for consultation reports. Please complete the relevant templates (as applicable and following approval from PB4) and send to Esme Yuill, Consultation and Projects Lead by noon Wednesday for inclusion in the weekly Thursday briefing. These should be issued ideally three weeks before publication.

How do I launch a consultation?

Once you have all the approvals required, firstly make sure that you find a colleague to peer review your work. This will help minimise any mistakes that may have crept into your work, particularly if you have a very detailed, complex scheme which has been subject to changes during the approvals process.

All consultations need to be made available online and sent externally from the TfL Consultations email address. To ensure compliance and accuracy this is managed centrally. Please send requests to the Consultation Compliance and Analysis Team via +Consultation Development, five days in advance for large complex schemes and two days in advance for all other schemes. Please ensure you include the following attachments/detail: Completed online consultation form, email, stakeholder contact list and any details around confirmed dates and timed launches.

Final checklist before you start your consultation

- ☐ Are you clear about why you are consulting, what you want to know and how you will use the information you are collecting? Are proposals at a formative stage?
- ☐ Have you researched previous and planned consultations?
- ☐ Have you prepared a Consultation Plan?
- ☐ Do you have a budget to cover the costs (e.g. leaflet design)?
- ☐ Are you consulting with the right people? Have you identified all the relevant stakeholders? In particular, have you had regard to any potential impacts on people with protected characteristics and how best to ensure that their views are captured?
- ☐ Are you using the most appropriate consultation methods for your target audience?
- ☐ Are you giving people enough time to respond? (refer to our Consultation Policy)
- ☐ Do you have approval to undertake your consultation and have you contacted The Consultation & Projects Lead or Compliance and Analysis Manager representative for advice and guidance if necessary?
- ☐ Is the scheme listed on the Consultation Update with an agreed start date?
- ☐ Do you have City Hall approval (if required)?
- ☐ Have you provided participants with all of the information they need?
- ☐ Have consultees been provided with sufficient clear information about why the issue is important, the expected benefits, disbenefits and constraints in order to be able to provide informed responses?
- ☐ Is it accessible with plain language and clear visual depictions (high resolution) where needed?
- ☐ Is information available in alternative formats and languages available (if proportionate and cost effective?
- ☐ Have you used plain English without jargon in questionnaires or other documents?
- ☐ Have you had your material proof-read by a Engagement Specialist or other Senior Manager?
- ☐ Have you completed any other internal approval processes?
- ☐ Will the questions you are asking provide you with the information you need?
- ☐ Have you piloted your consultation questions?
- ☐ Are you giving people enough time to respond?
- ☐ Have you made the necessary arrangements for any events e.g. advertising, facilitators, note taking, room bookings and exhibition material?
- ☐ Have you sent all the material needed to launch the consultation internally to the Compliance and Analysis Team? See Stage 6 - How do I launch a consultation?
- ☐ Have you organised resources to input responses and analyse the information? If an external agency, have you followed our External Analysis Guidance?

If you can tick all of the above, then you’re ready to go ahead and start consulting for the agreed period.

Stage 7

Monitoring responses

Throughout the consultation, you should input any questionnaire responses you receive (see exceptions below) and analyse the results to get an early indication of the overall consultation response. Ongoing monitoring of the number of responses you receive enables you take action to improve response rates if necessary. It also helps you find out if any issues are arising about the quality of the consultation.

Who carries out analysis?

You should have already considered how you are going to analyse responses at the initial planning stage. Depending on the size of your consultation, analysis can take a considerable amount of time, so ensure that you have considered this when writing your plan and have the resources and available budget (if applicable) to do it effectively. As a guide, you will be expected to carry out the analysis yourself if the number of replies is less than 500. If more, then contact the Compliance and Analysis Team to see if they can help. Alternatively you may be able to enlist external analysis help – see below. If you are going to analyse the responses yourself then best practice is to develop a codeframe and begin analysis at the start of the consultation..

How do I summarise responses and views?

The majority of your responses are likely to have been submitted online via our consultation platform. You are also likely to have also received written and email replies – these also need to be logged and included in your analysis and reports.

It is best practice to add any written or email responses to our online consultation platform (with the exception of campaign responses and petitions – please refer to our campaigns guidance and petition guidance). This ensures all responses are captured in the same place. The exception to this rule is for consultations that are going to be analysed by an external agency.

You also need to make sure you look out for and identify any stakeholders as their responses will need to be analysed and considered separately. Be aware that the majority of stakeholders are likely to reply at the end of a consultation so it's a good idea to factor in time and resource to manage these early on.

Communicating the results and outcome

By letting people know what was said and what has changed as a result, you're giving them a reason to have their say in a future consultation. As stated in the TfL Consultation Policy a Consultation Report (see Consultation Report template) should be made available on the consultation website as soon as possible (our aim is for three months after the closing date although this isn't always possible due to project, mayoral or financial factors. This summary should not include any personal data.

You also need to produce, with help from the Project Team, a Response to Issues Raised Report that answers the issues raised by respondents (see Response to Issues Raised Report template). This document should be published, wherever possible, alongside the Consultation Report. If not possible then it should be made available on the online consultation portal as soon as it is ready. It is best practice for the Consultation Report and Response to Issues Raised Report to be two separate documents. However, for small schemes or those with a low response rate it may be appropriate to merge them into one report. Seek guidance from the Consultation Compliance and Analysis team if you think this might apply to your scheme. Be aware that the Response to Issues Raised Report is likely to set out TfL's intended way forward (subject to any further consultation and the internal decision-making process) so for controversial proposals publication may trigger significant publicity. Always ensure that colleagues in the press team are aware of upcoming publication of consultation reports, particularly where the proposals are controversial.

Are there any lessons to be learned?

Stage 8

Why evaluate and what to do with the results
Evaluating consultation can help you to:

- Find out what worked and what did not
- Identify the reasons for unexpected outcomes
- Apply learning to improve future consultation
- Assess whether the exercise was cost effective in terms of time and resources.

You need to consider how successful your consultation has been. Success includes more than just receiving consultation responses. It includes whether the responses received are from your target audience, whether the best methods of consultation were used, if the consultation came in on budget, and what respondents thought of the quality of the consultation material and detail provided.

The following checklist is helpful in evaluating the success of your consultation:

☐ I was able to consult with those I originally intended

☐ Consultees now have a clear understanding of what they were consulted about

☐ The publicity I used worked e.g posters to advertise an event, putting material on the internet, press releases)?

☐ I got the level of information right (e.g. it was easy to access, relevant to the consultation, produce in plain language, easy to understand and available in other languages and in other formats, e.g. Braille and audio cassette, where necessary)

☐ I received enough consultation responses to draw conclusions from

☐ The consultation responses received were of sufficient depth and quality

☐ I now understand the views of consultees

☐ The consultation method(s) used was appropriate for the consultees

☐ The consultation ran smoothly without problems

☐ The consultation did not run over budget

☐ I was successful in reaching groups or individuals whose views have not traditionally been recognised

☐ The consultation did not run over time

☐ I can show examples of how the consultation has affected the decisions we made

☐ Consultees were generally happy with the consultation process and the quality of materials

If after considering the checklist above, you have left any of the boxes un-ticked, you should make a note of why to improve consultations across TfL and share best practice.

The key point is that you should be asking whether you achieved your objectives. Look back through your objectives to see what else you ought to be checking.

Internal review

Once consultation is complete, it is good practice to organise a meeting with all those involved in carrying out the consultation. Review what worked well, what didn't and what lessons you can learn for improving similar exercises in the future.

You may want to have this discussion with a relatively small group of people immediately after a public meeting or exhibition, while everything is still fresh in your minds. Or you may wish to do it as part of a wider evaluation of the whole consultation procedure once you have analysed all of the responses. On a long, drawn-out process with several stages, you might find it more effective to sample their views at different stages, as various issues arise. For a shorter process, it may be better to wait until the end.

In addition to your own views, it is worth considering a peer review within TfL. What about talking to people from another business unit that typically consults on different things?

The involvement of others might help you to take a fresh look at what's happened and you may well get some good ideas for the future.

Next review date: August 2019