

Humberside Fire Authority
DRAFT
Engagement and Consultation Strategy
2009 - 2012

1. Introduction

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service engages and consults with the local community, and our own staff, in a number of different ways. However, this strategy is intended to pull together those different methods and provide a clearer, more consistent way for you to get involved with engagement or consultation activities.

2. Statement of Intent

We will:

- work more closely with the public in our communities, voluntary organisations, our own staff and other stakeholders to give people a voice to influence the Fire and Rescue service they receive;
- make it as easy as possible for as many people as possible, to participate in order to influence how we work and the services we provide;
- ensure that through the use of a wide range of approaches to community engagement and public consultation, we actively encourage residents to speak up, we will listen to your opinions and effectively use your views as an integral part of our decision-making process. This includes improving on everything we already do as well as looking at new and innovative ways to engage with residents;
- ensure that everybody in the Humber sub-region has the opportunity to be heard at every stage of a consultation by taking into account issues such as rural equity (ensuring people are not disadvantaged due to their rural location), the needs of black and minority ethnic groups, the needs of people with disabilities and the needs of people who don't speak English as their first language

2. The scope of the strategy

This strategy is part of Humberside Fire and Rescue Service's commitment to creating and maintaining effective engagement with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge.

HFRS recognises that there are different levels of engagement and that

involvement can be in one or more of the following ways:

Support	Offering organisations advice and other support to deliver their own agenda
Partnership	Different organisations deciding to work together in partnership to carry out decisions or plans
Participation	Encouraging new ideas and suggestions, opportunities for joint decision-making
Consultation	Offering options for consideration and listening to opinions but not necessarily seeking out new ideas
Market Research	Information gathering to help inform decision making
Information	Telling people what we plan to do

The activities covered by this strategy are aimed at all six levels with an emphasis on involvement and collaboration through:

Community Engagement – a process whereby Humberside Fire and Rescue Service, voluntary and community groups, local businesses and other partners jointly address an issue and develop policy proposals or service developments together

Consultation – HFRS seek comments/feedback and ideas on draft policy proposals or service developments

This document is not intended to replace statutory consultations which will be carried out under national guidelines, but is to be used to enhance all of our consultation and engagement activities, making sure that we reach as many people as possible.

We recognise that consultation and engagement activities are constantly evolving and this strategy will be re-visited at regular intervals to ensure it is fully up-to-date with local and national imperatives.

3. Supporting Local Priorities

Consultation and community engagement are increasingly significant activities in the public sector whether that is Fire and Rescue Services, the Police, Health or Local Authorities, and in order for them to be effective need to be approached in a systematic manner.

This strategy therefore aims to balance the interests of all communities, involving people in how local decisions are made and how services are delivered. We aim to reduce inequality by ensuring that the needs of deprived areas and excluded communities are identified, discussed with the residents and reflected in the planning and delivery of our services.

This strategy is also intended to support and complement the community engagement and consultation activities carried out by the four local authorities, (East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, North Lincolnshire Council and Hull City Council) in the Humber sub region.

4. National Priorities

The aim of the Government White Paper (Communities in Control, 2008) is to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. It is about creating strong, prosperous communities and delivering better public services through a re-balancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people.

In the Audit Commission's Community Safety National Report 'Rising to the Challenge' they make it very clear that when assessing a Fire and Rescue Services' performance in the future they will be looking for evidence of partnership working and the

".....contribution that the Fire and Rescue Service is making to the partnership and how that is translating into improved local service outcomes. This will include:

- *Engaging effectively with local communities to build up a comprehensive risk profile for the area;*
- *Involving local communities in developing fire prevention and protection priorities;*
- *Engaging effectively with partners that are engaged in civil contingency and local resilience;*
- *Delivering any fire-specific priorities within the LAA (Local Area Agreement); and*
- *Contributing to broader local priorities, like tackling anti-social behaviour."*

Later in this document we will detail the different ways that Humberside Fire and Rescue Service currently engages with local communities and set out future ways of working.

5. The role of Fire Authority Members in consultation and community engagement

Members of the Fire Authority have a number of duties but those that relate specifically to community engagement are:

- 1) representing their communities and bring their views into the Humberside Fire Authority's decision-making processes, i.e. Members are the advocate of, and for, their communities;
- 2) contribute to the good governance of the HFA and actively encourage community participation and public involvement in decision-making
- 3) forge local partnerships, including Local Strategic Partnerships;

Contact details for all Fire Authority members can be found on the HFRS website www.humbersidefire.gov.uk

6. The role of Local Councilors

As well as the members of the Fire Authority, elected members of the four local authorities covering the sub Humberside region are powerful advocates for local communities and their community leadership role provides them with a major input into the consultation process.

The proposals set out in the 2008 White Paper and subsequent Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007), strengthen the scope for councilors to act as community leaders and democratic champions. They will become a more crucial link between residents, neighbourhood groups and Humberside Fire and Rescue Service empowering local communities and Members alike.

7. Consulting with Representative Bodies

Obviously we will continue to consult with our own staff in order to continually improve the Services we provide and how they can contribute to that. Some issues will also be negotiated with staff. It is important to define the difference between negotiation and consultation, according to the National Joint Council for Local Authority and Fire and Rescue Services.....

“The simplest explanation of the difference between consultation and negotiation is that anything which is contractual and therefore needs the agreement of the individual employee or their trade union on their behalf is negotiation. Everything else is consultation.”

Humberside Fire and Rescue will include representative bodies in all consultations through the existing Joint Consultative meetings.

8. Key outputs from the Strategy and how we will know it is working

This strategy will be delivered through a detailed Action Plan which will be updated on a regular basis and will be available on the HFRS website at www.humbersidefire.gov.uk

Outcomes of the strategy will include:

- Improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement
- Improved information for managers to enable their decision making to take into account the views of our communities
- Improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making and a higher percentage of people involved in community safety activities.

9. Current Methods of Consultation and Engagement

The government's vision for neighbourhood renewal is that within 10-12 years no-one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. To achieve this all elements of regeneration must be prioritised; economic prosperity, safer communities, higher quality education, decent safe housing and better health services. If these issues are to be tackled effectively in the geographic area covered by Humberside Fire and Rescue Service it is clear that effective partnership working and sound community engagement is necessary.

Recognising that Fire and Rescue Authorities have a significant part to play in national government's fight against disadvantage, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service has been a key player in local authority and community partnerships for many years and this strategy is intended to widen and enhance that partnership working by seeking out additional community and business groups.

The table below lists the four main strategic partnerships and who engages with them from our Service. All Local Strategic Partnerships, as far as is practicable, comprise an equal number of representatives from organisations and agencies in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively.

Name of Partnership	Contact should be made through the following
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	people
One Hull	Community Risk Manager, Hull CPU
The East Riding of Yorkshire Local Strategic Partnership	Community Risk Manager, ER CPU
North East Lincolnshire Local Strategic Partnership	Community Risk Manager, NE Lincs CPU
North Lincolnshire Local Strategic Partnership	Community Risk Manager, North Lincs CPU

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service currently engages with the communities through the LSPs, but we also engage and consult at local level with specific groups in communities and with the whole of the public we serve on key issues (such as proposals around the operational service we provide)

10. Principles of Engagement and Consultation

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service will adopt the following six principles in all consultation and engagement activity demonstrating the organisation's commitment to make a real measurable difference for all parts of the community including those people most at risk and most disadvantaged.

Connecting with those communities hardest to hear

- Inclusiveness – more inclusive processes and practices will increase people's access to our information and broaden involvement in assessing our services and decision making processes

Changing the way we work with communities

- Reaching out – new and more effective ways to involve people in the planning and decision making processes will allow HFRS to move beyond established networks to tap into the significant knowledge and expertise within the communities

Listening, understanding and acting on experiences different to our own

- Mutual respect – listening to and understanding the views, concerns and experiences of citizens and communities, will lead to better decisions and strengthen service-community relationships

Open and accountable practices and processes

- Integrity – open and accountable engagement practices and processes that genuinely inform decision making will increase community trust and confidence in the service.

Incorporating diverse values and interests

- Affirming diversity – incorporating diverse opinions and perspectives into policy development, planning and decision making will help achieve effective and sustainable outcomes

Working together to add value

- Adding value – government, people and communities working productively together will add value in policy development and service planning
- Value for money – ensure a planned and coordinated approach to engagement activities to deliver, where possible, annual efficiencies within the Service
- Community Intelligence – Linking community intelligence to HFRS performance management systems will enable users to build a comprehensive picture of its communities and their needs, ensuring Humberside Fire and Rescue Service is doing the right things, the right way, at the right time and for the right reasons.

11. Evaluation Methods

Through the evaluation of our engagement and consultation activities, we aim to establish:

- Outcomes i.e. the number of services, or ways of working, which have changed due to views expressed by the people we have consulted with
- Progress made towards meeting national and local objectives in these areas.
- Effectiveness of the service and work undertaken as viewed by clients, partners and all involved in the services.
- Value for money.
- How the people we have engaged with perceive the engagement activity in order to develop 'best practice' and develop our ways of working to meet the needs of the local community.

The following evaluation activities will be undertaken at pre-determined intervals to assess our success:

Satisfaction questionnaires

Questionnaires completed by the attendees of events and those who have received services.

Partner's interviews

A number of key stakeholder partners involved in our partnerships will be interviewed at least once following access to fire and rescue service activities and information will be used to improve the level of service provided.

Stakeholder consultation and involvement

We will consult stakeholders prior to the initiation of relevant partnership activities. We will also seek feedback on the effect of the activity and the degree to which the activity had a positive impact.

Monitoring data

Data will be collected at agreed timescales for all partnership activity taking place.

This activity data will be linked to our performance indicators and will then be considered alongside our Local and National Performance Indicators, which assess general operational and organisational performance. Using this information collectively we will assess our impact on the community. Data across other fire and rescue services will be used to benchmark our performance. This data will then be used to focus on areas which engagement and consultation has taken place, how effective that was deemed to be and any measurable links between the activities and the performance in that area.

Cost-benefit evaluation

The purpose of this analysis is to collect a detailed picture of the resources used in engagement and consultation activities. The cost data collection will focus on the costs incurred directly by implementing the strategy i.e. staff costs, equipment costs etc. Data collected will be compared and costs incurred or saved as a result of the intervention will be assessed.

Evaluation and annual partnership reporting

An annual desktop review will be conducted of all recognised partnerships which are utilised for engagement and consultation activities to ensure the desired outcomes are being met and the resource constraints/commitments remain appropriate. Evidence will also be requested from Partners in the form of testimony.

As a result, a report will be produced by the Head of Administration for the Corporate Management Team identifying the outcomes of evaluation. Decisions

on the effectiveness will be discussed at this level and changes to policy or activity made as appropriate.

12. Future Methods of Consultation and Engagement being considered

- Text based surveys
- Touch screen kiosks
- On-line discussion forums
- Use of social networking sites
- Web-casting
- Drop In Days
- People's Panel - A virtual panel of consultees will be formed from interested members of the public and local organisations. This will be used to 'test' consult with a wide range of people, sometimes as part of a wider consultation, and occasionally as a quick exercise to test local opinions.

In addition a similar panel comprising members of staff will be identified and given the opportunity to take part in internal consultations.

HFRS will use existing community networks and channels wherever possible. There are many opportunities for HFRS to engage in this way and we will actively seek to identify options. This approach will lend further support to existing networks and channels reinforcing their relevance and importance. We will investigate new ways to improve engagement with people we find hard to hear to find out what expectations different community networks have of Humberside Fire and Rescue Service.

Strategic Oversight

Consultation & Engagement Network Group

In order to ensure that as little duplication and as much learning as possible is achieved through our consultation and engagement activities, we will establish a Consultation and Engagement Network Group. This will comprise relevant members of staff from every area of the organisation who will meet on a regular basis to compare and share consultation and engagement activities. This group will be chaired by the Consultation and Engagement Officer whose responsibility it will be to ensure that everybody understands the importance and profile of consultation and engagement activities and the relevance of registering activity on the Consultation and Engagement Register.

Consultation & Engagement Board

The Board will comprise representatives from partnership and community groups across the Humber sub-region and their role, in brief, will be to scrutinise consultation and engagement activity and agree proposals for the future to improve and widen opportunities for people to get involved and influence Humberside Fire and Rescue Service.

Conclusion

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service already engages and consults with key partners and local communities, but this strategy will widen and enhance these activities ensuring that everybody has the opportunity to engage with, and influence, the Service. The accompanying Toolkit sets out step by step guides to help anyone in the Service who is about to undertake a consultation or engagement activity.

Consultation on the Strategy

We value your comments on the document, as your views are important to us.

Please feel free to use the means below to comment.

How strongly do you agree with the following statements (please tick a box):

Strategy and toolkit:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
They are easy to understand?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They explain how we will consult?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They explain how we will engage and what it means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please enter any suggestions or comments you wish to make about the Strategy and Toolkit, including contact details for any community, business or voluntary organisations that you feel would be useful:

.....
.....
.....

Please return to: Chris Blacksell
Humberside Fire and Rescue Service
FREEPOST NEA3610
Kingston upon Hull
HU4 7BR

Or email: cblacksell@humbersidefire.gov.uk

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Appendix 1

Consultation & Engagement Toolkit

1. Consultation

This area of the toolkit runs through some key questions you should ask yourself when planning to consult with people

Why are you doing it?

Who are you going to ask?

How are you going to do it?

What are you going to do with the results?

2. Why are you doing it?

What do you want to find out?

Be clear about what you want to achieve by consulting with people before you start the process.

You can use the following checklist to clarify your aims:

Do you want to:

- Compare and challenge the existing services we provide
- Encourage people to be able to influence strategies and policies
- Look for gaps in the service
- Shape the way your part of the service is delivered
- Measure satisfaction with the service
- Prioritise future spending
- Set targets for the service
- Check out reaction to new ideas or initiatives
- To gauge whether or not improvements have had a measurable effect
- Check opinions, views and attitudes

Now that you're clear about your purpose, check that you really need to consult, there are times when consultation is not appropriate

- If the decision is a result of statutory requirements
- If the problem could be resolved simply without a consultation exercise
- If consultation on the same issue has recently been carried out by another part of the Service
- If negotiation is the required option

Asking the same group of people the same questions again and again will result in 'consultation fatigue' – which basically means that the next time you want to ask residents or businesses for their opinion you may have a lot of difficulty in getting them to respond. Therefore take some to find out what we already know. Your question may have already been answered – contact the Consultation and Engagement Officer at Service Headquarters or use the consultation register on the Portal to see if there is any other information that you can use.

The Consultation Register tells you:

- Other consultation exercises that have already taken place
- Consultation that is currently taking place
- Consultation that will take place in the near future
- Consultations that have been, or are being, carried out by one of our local partners
- The results of those consultations, and improvements which have been made as a result

Always check to see if another activity is planned that you can join in with – this could be with another CPU or one of our local partners (as above).

3. Who are you going to ask?

Now you need to identify your participants. The range of people you will involve will depend on the issue, for example to assess the performance of a service you would need to consult with the people who have used a specific service (businesses who have accessed Technical Fire Safety advice for example) while for issues such as the Service's priorities the range may be far larger.

Remember to use the People's Panel and/or the internal 'virtual panel' of consultees as part of your consultation process.

Other consultees could include:

Externally

People affected by the service you provide
Residents
Local Businesses
Suppliers

Internally

Staff
Fire Authority Members
Other CPUs

Representative Bodies

Partners

Partner organisations that we already enter into partnership with.

Particular Demographic Groups

The following is a list of potential demographic groups you may wish to engage with, but the list is not exhaustive and don't forget you may want to engage or consult with everybody.

Children and young people
Families and carers
Single parents
Students
Women
Men
People with disabilities
Minority ethnic groups
Lesbian, gay or bi-sexual residents
Employed
Unemployed
Particular socio-economic groups
Resident and Community Groups
Religious groups

How are you going to make sure you reach everyone?

Timing:

For an effective consultation it is essential that an adequate response time is allowed.

This can be a particular issue for equalities groups, for a number of reasons:

- They may need to have consultation materials translated
- They may need to convene a special meeting
- They may need to avoid specific religious holidays or other events
- Community groups may have limited resources for contacting the members of the community they serve

The Policy and Projects Officer (Equalities) will be able to provide guidance on response times for equalities groups. In general, government guidelines specify six weeks, but it is recognised that this may not always be possible.

Information:

To allow everyone a chance to contribute, you need to be aware that information needs vary. You need to ask yourself:

- Is plain language being used?
- Are the language needs of any person whose first language is not English being met?
- Are large print/taped versions available?
- Is there a minicom/textphone facility?
- Is there a clear and accessible point of contact for participants?
- In order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) all printed information for the public should include the following statement in a prominent position, for example the inside or back covers and in Arial minimum of 12 pt:

This information can be made available in other community languages and formats upon request, such as large print, Braille, audio cassette and computer files.

This should be followed by a contact number relevant to the service area issuing the information. If you receive requests for information in other formats the local branch of the Royal National Institute for the Blind can provide Braille, larger font and cassette.

However this can be costly so you should liaise with the Equality and Diversity Officer to discuss the budget for this type of translation, and any other translation into a different language.

Where possible the DDA compliant paragraph should be automatically added in the prominent languages of the local area. Advice on this should be sought from the equality and Diversity Officer

Always take the above into account when costing your consultation, as costs can vary greatly depending on the service required.

Accessibility:

All venues used to consult must be accessible to all. You should use the following physical access checklist to ensure your venue is accessible:

- The main access should be free of steps and wide enough for a wheelchair
- Ramps should not be steep
- There should be sufficient parking. Some parking should be close to the venue entrance
- Consideration should be given to flooring and any obstacles which could cause problems for people with visual impairments
- Good lighting is important for visually impaired people, interpreters and lip readers
- When appropriate, a venue with a hearing loop may be needed
- The toilets and lifts should be appropriate for disabled people and alarms should be provided
- Lifts should have verbal and Braille indications
- There should be sufficient signage and staff to assist, particularly during refreshment breaks etc.
- Distances should be limited as these can cause problems for people with mobility issues
- Different types of chairs should be provided, with and without arms.
- Some people attending a consultation event may require an interpreter, for example people with hearing impairments may require a sign language interpreter and lip speaker.
- Audio systems may be required with microphones for both presenters and people asking questions.

4. How are you going to do it?

The method you choose will depend on the type of information you're trying to find out and whether you are looking for in-depth responses or simply quick responses. Ask yourself are you trying to measure or explain?

Main aim	Main type of questions	Results wanted in	You need.....
TO MEASURE Monitor and get a snapshot of people's views	How satisfied are you? How far do you agree/disagree? Which services have you used?	Figures and percentages	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH (e.g. questionnaires, face to face/telephone interview using set questions)
TO EXPLAIN To find exactly why people think/act the way they do	Why? What? How? What do you think? What's needed?	Words and images	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (e.g. focus groups, group discussions, individual in-depth interviews)

You will also need to take into account other issues such as:

Cost: Different methods will vary greatly. You will need to consider what resources you have available.

Expertise: Particular skills are needed for some methods such as designing questionnaires and facilitating focus groups. If you feel that you may need to commission externally or need advice, you can contact the Consultation and Engagement Officer at Service Headquarters for further advice on potential suppliers and procedures to follow.

Time: Some methods are more time consuming than others. You need to consider what time people have available to carry out the exercise and whether the method will fit with your timescales.

Advice for people undertaking the engagement activity

The people involved in carrying out the engagement and consultation activity should be aware of the following

- All presenters should
 - speak at an appropriate speed
 - keep their hands away from their mouth and do not eat or chew while they are speaking
 - Do not shout at people with impaired hearing
- Assistance is provided only when requested
- Guide dogs are not distracted
- Presenters and other participants do not lean on wheelchairs or squat to talk to a person in a wheelchair
- If you require interpreters the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNIB) will be able to help you. You can contact them at <http://www.rnib.org.uk> and 020 7388 1266, but you must take account that there will be a cost for this service

5. Consultation Methods- pros and cons

All methods have their advantages and disadvantages. The table below presents an overview of some of the main methods available as well as their advantages and disadvantages:

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Best For...
QUALITATIVE METHODS			
Comment/Feedback cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to undertake and low cost • Can identify recurring problems • Demonstrates openness to comments and feedback • Provide instant feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not representative – biased towards existing customers, some users are reluctant to comment • Can be reactive • May only produce low numbers – return rate varies 	Service specific consultations
Focus Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to organise, especially if you already have contacts that you can invite • Complex issues can be addressed targeting specific interest groups • People generally feel more confident in groups • Discussion can stimulate thinking and spark ideas within the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that you use an experienced moderator which can add to the cost, advice can be sought from the Consultation and Engagement officer at SHQ • As focus groups are small it is difficult to make them representative of the population, you may need to run several focus groups that represent different groups in your population • As data from focus groups is not statistical (although it can be quantified) its analysis is time consuming and complex • Some participants may be 	<p>Exploring issues such as proposals around a specific proposal which affect a defined group or community</p> <p>Can also be used in conjunction with wider-reaching consultation methods</p>

		<p>inhibited or afraid to say what they really feel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often a group view is the general outcome • Dominant participants might shout other members of the group down 	
Individual interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth and detailed • Can obtain a wider range of responses • Good for consulting excluded groups • Can identify new issues that may not have been considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Time-consuming 	<p>Small focused consultations</p> <p>Can be used in conjunction with other methods to make sure that excluded or isolated communities are reached</p>
Public Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides local opportunities for people to comment on matters that affect them directly or indirectly • Offers a convenient and transparent way to demonstrate public consultation/build up good relationships • Can be used to inform the public at the same time as getting views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who attend are unlikely to be representative of the local population • Attendees' ability to contribute to a discussion about service-wide strategic priorities can be limited by a lack of knowledge and possible lack of interest • Contributions will be mainly about local, topical or personal concerns 	<p>Consultations where you need to demonstrate that all members of the community have had the opportunity to take part</p>

Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a regular dialogue with your local community organizations • Builds positive relationships between the organisation and the community • Provides positive opportunities for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - targeting initiatives at what people want and need - testing options for service changes - testing public views on conflicting priorities and supporting bids for resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can become dominated by particular issues and groups • May not be typical of the views of the whole community 	<p>Future service planning</p> <p>By engaging one or more community groups at the beginning of the planning process, the whole methodology is robust</p>
Written exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows issues/proposals to be explained in detail • Clear, accessible documents give a good impression of the Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long reports can put people off responding rather than encourage them • Written reports may not reach all sections of the community – consider using other methods as well • The views you receive may 	<p>Works well in conjunction with public meetings</p>

		not be representative of the general population	
Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be a fun and interactive way of getting people involved in a discussion or issue • They can enable in-depth discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They need to be carefully organised so that they achieve a specific outcome • Be careful that discussions are not dominated by strong individuals 	<p>Staff consultations</p> <p>Can be useful as part of a wider public consultation</p>
QUANTITATIVE METHODS			
Electronic/web survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large numbers of people can be contacted at low cost • Very easy to conduct in-house with individuals • Easy to survey people who live over a wide geographic area • May encourage some 'hard to reach' groups, such as young people, to take part • The respondent can fill out the questionnaire in their own time, which may lead to more considered responses • The form is sent at the click of a button, making response rates potentially quicker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a minority of the population has access to the internet – and many 'hard to reach' groups may be excluded • Some potential respondents find filling out on-line forms daunting • There is little or no control over who fills in the questionnaire • People with poor literacy skills or with English language difficulties may be put off from responding • It is difficult to ask questions relating to awareness • Difficult to consult internally with whole watches due to their lack of separate e-mail 	Useful 'add-on' channel to consultations

		accounts	
Face to face survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questionnaires used in face-to face interviews can be longer and they are more flexible than postal surveys • Response rates are generally high • You can also track the progress of the number of completed interviews throughout the fieldwork process which is important when a particular response rate or number of responses is required • More probing, complex questions can be asked as the interviewer can guide the respondent through the questionnaire • The quality of the data you collect is of higher accuracy and completeness than in a postal survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face interviews are more expensive than postal and telephone surveys • They are more time consuming, labour intensive and required trained interviewers • Interviewer effect can occur – i.e. when the presence of the interviewer influences the respondent • Not everyone is willing to take part, especially when interviews are conducted on the street or door to door • Older and younger people are more likely to refuse than other groups of people 	Organisation-wide consultations on future direction of service provision
Postal survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to administer • A well designed questionnaire produces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a small amount of information can be gathered in a self- 	General opinion polls

	<p>reliable statistical information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeating the same questions over a period of time allows you to track opinions • Large numbers of people can be contacted in a short period of time • The respondent is able to complete the questionnaire in their own time which may lead to more considered responses 	<p>completion survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A poorly planned or designed questionnaire will result in poor data, a low response and inaccurate results • Expect lower response rates, especially within younger age groups, people with literacy problems and people whose first language is not English • It is easier for someone to ignore a postal survey than an interviewer • Limited length and complexity of questions – the questionnaire must be easy to complete • Lack of control over who answers the questions • It can be costly in terms of printing and postage so you would need to cost it beforehand and identify a budget 	
Telephone survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtains relevant information • Allows freedom to explore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing skill required • Expertise is needed in preparing questions so they 	Proposal specific consultations

	<p>general views and perceptions in detail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can target groups which are often excluded • More complex issues can be tackled than in a postal survey as an interviewer is involved • Easy to survey people who live in wide geographic areas • The data can be inputted electronically as you carry out the interview 	<p>are not prescriptive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample results may not be representative – you cannot validate that you are speaking to the intended person • Telephone surveys have high refusal rates and telephoning people unannounced to carry out a survey can often annoy the prospective respondent 	
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People's Panel

As outlined in the Consultation and Engagement strategy, it is intended to investigate the potential benefits of either establishing a People's Panel specific to Humberside Fire and Rescue Service, or working in partnership with the four local authorities and accessing the arrangements they already have in place. The decision whether to form a HFRS panel or work in partnership will be taken following consultation on this document.

6. What are you going to do with the results?

How are you going to analyse your data?

This always takes longer than you think so allow plenty of time!
Make sure that you identify priorities and highlight these in your feedback, for example:

Low priority -

- Findings that do not require action
- Things we cannot change in the short term

High priority -

- Results that highlight the need for timely communications
- Results that highlight the need for action and what are the next steps?

HFRS has data analysis software that could make analysis of quantitative data a lot simpler. In order to make sure that the design of your questionnaire fits with the software requirements talk to the Consultation and Engagement Officer at SHQ

How are your results going to make a difference?

Make sure that you put in place arrangements for the outcomes of consultations to feed into the decision-making process. The Consultation and Engagement Officer will be able to provide advice on how best to do this.

Also make sure that you:

- Build improvements into your service, team and personal plans based on the results of consultations
- Keep a record of things that change as a result of feedback so that this can be demonstrated if the value of the particular consultation is questioned
- Take the initiative – make sure you pass on views expressed about other services, partner organisations, individuals or other areas of Humberside Fire and Rescue Service,

Remember things can only change if feedback is used and shared.

How are you going to provide feedback?

It is important that you feed back the results of your consultation to everyone who has given up their time to take part. This will encourage them to take part in future consultation. You will also be helping to influence general perceptions of

how good Humberside Fire and Rescue Service is at keeping local people informed of developments. If you don't feed back, people will assume that we don't take any notice of what they've said.

In addition to respondents, you should also consider providing feedback for:

- The Fire Authority
- Local councillors, especially if the results affect or concern their ward
- Corporate Management Team especially your Director
- Team Managers
- Frontline staff - Will the consultation help to improve the service they provide?
- Partner organisations
- Residents

Also remember the Freedom of Information Act. This means we need to provide information to anyone who requests it. Also the Data Protection Act which covers how we would handle peoples personal data. For more guidance on freedom of information and data protection issues contact Alan Maltby at Service Headquarters.

Different audiences will have different needs and require different levels of information, so feedback could take different forms and in many cases a mix of techniques is best. For example, residents may simply be interested in the headline findings of a satisfaction survey, while a Councillor may want the detailed results for the consultation of a development in their ward.

Possible communication methods could include:

- Presentations
- Seminars and workshops
- Summary reports
- Feedback documents to respondents
- Detailed reports
- Reports on the external website and/or Portal
- Through the internal magazine/weekly bulletin
- Via the local media
- Always remember to add your results to the consultation register
- The Communications Team will be able to help you to publicise your consultation findings. Please contact the Lead Media Officer for guidance on ext 470

7. How are you going to evaluate your consultation?

Effective evaluation can help you find out what worked and what didn't work and why.

Always ask participants for their views about the consultation process and how it could be improved. You should then be able to answer 'what would I do differently (or the same) next time?'

You can use the following checklist to help you evaluate:

- Were the objectives understood by everyone?
- Were the numbers who took part as expected?
- Were the right stakeholders involved?
- Were a representative set of views obtained?
- Were the views of 'hard to hear' groups obtained?
- Was the consultation accessible?
- Did your methods match your objectives?
- Did you have the right level of support?
- Did you have the right level of resources?
- Were the principles described in the strategy followed?
- Did you achieve value for money?
- Was the timescale/process transparent and kept to?
- Did it lead to a change of policy, service etc.?

Remember to share your experiences with the Consultation and Engagement Network Group and help each other by spreading good practice.

8. Engagement

Make sure that you fully understand what is meant by 'engagement' rather than merely consultation. If you are engaging with a group or community you are doing one of two things, you are either:

Engaging in a fun/interesting activity which will increase their knowledge of the service, or our key messages

Or

You are asking them to join in discussion and forward planning of future service activities

You are NOT

Presenting them with a fully formed initiative and asking their opinion (this is consultation) or undertaking the activity simply to 'tick a box'. True engagement is meaningful, productive and inclusive.

Making sure that any engagement activity is inclusive is important for several reasons:

- Different sections of the community have different needs and priorities. If engagement is not inclusive, the views of these groups may remain unheard.
- By law we have to gather evidence on the needs and views of a number of minority groups, to ensure both that we are not discriminating and that we are actively promoting race, disability and gender equality in line with the relevant equalities legislation.

There are a number of 'umbrella' voluntary organisation groups (see contacts table) who will be able to help you with information about specific groups.

In addition to engaging with the voluntary sector Humberside Fire and Rescue Service work closely with Partners on a number of Groups and Partnership Forums, these can be found in the contacts table with a short description of their main areas of activity.

9. General tips for making your activity inclusive

Timing:

For effective engagement it is essential that plenty of time is allowed to attract interested people and then involve them in the activity. This can be a particular issue for equalities groups for a number of reasons:

- They may need to have engagement material translated
- They may need to convene a special meeting
- They may need to avoid specific religious holidays or other events

The Equality and Diversity Officer will be able to provide guidance on response times for equalities groups. In general, government guidelines specify six weeks, but it is recognised that this may not always be possible.

Information

To allow everyone a chance to contribute, you need to be aware that information needs vary. You need to ask yourself:

- Is plain language being used?
- Are the language needs of any person whose first language is not English being met?
- Are large print/taped versions available?
- Is there a clear and accessible point of contact for participants?

In order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) all printed information for the public should include the following statement in a prominent position, for example the inside or back covers and in Arial minimum 12pt.

This information can be made available in other community languages and formats upon request, such as large print, Braille, audio cassette and computer files

This should be followed by a contact number relevant to the CPU or department issuing the information.

Remember to include costings for potential translation needs in your project plan.

10. How are you going to do it?

Community engagement not only requires a time commitment from you, but also the participants themselves. You must therefore consider how you are going to encourage people to give up their time to participate in the engagement process, and how you are going to maintain their interest.

People are most likely to become involved if the issue is relevant to them or they stand to lose or gain something. Be clear about whether they can expect to see tangible outputs in the short term or whether you are looking to develop a long term strategy that they might not see any benefits from for several years. In other words you must be careful not to inadvertently raise expectations.

Methods

Make it fun!

It's not just young people who want to have fun – nobody wants to spend their time at dull, bureaucratic meetings, or completing long-winded questionnaires! You are far more likely to attract interest if you can devise innovative and even entertaining means of engaging people, such as role plays, or communicating via different mediums – internet, films, CD-Roms etc.

Potential methods of engagement being investigated

Text based surveys	More likely to be popular amongst younger people. Would be good for quick 'yes' and 'no' responses.
Existing networks of elderly people	All the areas of the Service have networks which support the elderly people, these can be contacted for advice, and possibly assistance, in engaging with the elderly

On line Discussion Forums	Web chat pages which will give people the opportunity to air their views and read the responses in a transparent manner
Station Drop In Days	Set days and times when people can just pop in at a time to suit them to discuss a particular topic with the relevant HFRS personnel or Fire Authority Member if appropriate.

Use the checklist in the consultation section of this toolkit to ensure the venue, and the facilitators, are appropriate. And remember to inform the Consultation and Engagement Officer of your activity, so that they can record it for audit evidence.

11. How are you going to provide feedback?

It is important that you feed back the results to everyone who has given up their time to take part. This will encourage them to take part in future activities. You will also be helping to influence general perceptions of how good Humberside Fire and Rescue Service is at keeping local people informed of developments. If you don't feed back, people will assume that we don't take any notice of what they've said.

In addition to respondents you should also consider providing feedback for:

- The local council responsible for your area
- The Fire Authority
- CMT
- PAG
- Other CPUs – will the feedback help to improve the service they provide?
- Partner organisations

Possible communication methods could include:

- Presentations
- Summary reports
- Feedback documents to participants
- Detailed reports
- On the website
- Through the internal magazine
- Via the local media

12. How are you going to evaluate your engagement activity?

Effective evaluation can help you find out what worked and what didn't work and why. Always ask participants for their views about the engagement process and how it could be improved. You should then be able to answer "what would I do differently next time"?

Use the checklist in the consultation section of this toolkit and remember to inform the Consultation and Engagement Officer of your activity, so that they can record it for audit evidence.

List of potential communication channels

Name	Type of Organisation	Geographic Area	Comments	Contact via
East Riding Voluntary Action Services (ERVAS)	Voluntary Sector support organisation	East Riding of Yorkshire	ERVAS produce a bi-monthly newsletter distributed to over 700 groups throughout the East Riding either electronically or through the post.	East Riding CPU Community Safety Manager
East Riding Council for Voluntary Youth Service	ERCVYS was set up in 2005 to respond to the needs of the voluntary and community sector working with children and young people.	East Riding of Yorkshire	<p>Help to set up and develop projects for children and young people</p> <p>Training and awareness on a wide range of skills and knowledge when working with children and young people</p> <p>Links with other partners who work with children and young people, both statutory and voluntary,</p> <p>Local, regional and national support for young volunteers</p>	East Riding CPU Community Safety Manager
Asylum	Voluntary	Kingston	ARKH support	Hull CPU Community

Seekers and Refugees of Kingston Upon Hull (ARKH)	organisation	Upon Hull	individuals, as well as community projects that promote cohesion and integration	Safety Manager
Hull Ethnic Minorities Integration Resource Centre (HEMIRC)	HEMIRC has a focus to inform and support all ethnic groups in the Hull area.	Kingston upon Hull		Hull CPU Community Safety Manager
Humber & Wolds Rural Community Council	Support and encourage rural communities to develop, so they can: Influence their own futures Improve current and future social and economic environments Secure a range of community facilities and services	East Riding of Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire	Bi-monthly newsletter In addition HWRCC is the host organization for the East Riding of Yorkshire Local Information Network (LINK) a health and social care network.	East Riding CPU Community Safety Manager
Humber All Nations Alliance (HANA)	umbrella organisation formed in 2002 by BME groups in the Humber Sub-region.	Humber sub-region	HANA's primary aim is to promote the well being of BME communities in the Humber sub-region, by providing a voice and advocating on their behalf and by representing their interests in a range of influential or decision-making contexts. They also run a series of projects, one	Hull CPU Community Safety Manager

			that may be of particular interest is the BME Youth Forum	
<p>Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire (VANL)</p> <p>VANL helps and advises people working in the voluntary and community sector in North Lincolnshire.</p>	<p>VANL helps and advises people working in the voluntary and community sector in North Lincolnshire</p>	North Lincolnshire	Regular news updates on their website	North Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager
Apna Sahara	<p>Range of services for people from black and minority ethnic communities. Advice on a range of issues including benefits, disability, health and mental health. Befriending and advocacy. Promotes access to public services for minority ethnic communities.</p>	North Lincolnshire	<p>Aimed at people from the black and minority ethnic communities, particularly South East Asian communities.</p> <p>This organisation can also provide a translation service for Bengali, Gujarati, Pashto, Punjabi and Urdu,</p>	North Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager
Scunthorpe and District Mind	Local branch of national organisation dedicated to supporting and enabling people with mental health difficulties	North Lincolnshire	This group offers a range of opportunities to engage with people with mental health difficulties and can also offer advice when	North Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager

			necessary	
The Carers' Support Centre	Help support people who care for someone with an illness or disability	North Lincolnshire	Range of events and strong links to other organisations in the area	North Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager
Fresh Start	Partnership between the PCT, North Lincolnshire Council and VANL	North Lincolnshire	Bumper newsletter reaching a wide range of people over 50 years old and covering a huge range of subjects	North Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager
Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire (VANEL)	VANEL helps and advises people working in the voluntary and community sector in North Lincolnshire	North East Lincolnshire	Regular news updates on their websites. Fantastic links to Neighbourhood Forums	North East Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager
Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Mind	Local branch of national organisation dedicated to supporting and enabling people with mental health difficulties	North East Lincolnshire	This group offers a range of opportunities to engage with people with mental health difficulties and can also offer advice when necessary	North East Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager
Islamic Association of South Humberside	The Muslim community works with many local and national organisations to promote cultural and religious awareness	North East Lincolnshire	The centre has been a focal point for the whole community and is often visited by schools and charity organisations to learn more about the Muslim community and the Muslim religion.	North East Lincs CPU Community Safety Manager