

Public Engagement Toolkit

On 23 March 2022 Full Council agreed the following:

A toolkit to be developed for each committee to use when considering its 'menu of options' for ensuring the voice of the public has been central to their policy development work. Building on the developing advice from communities and Involve, committees should make sure they have a clear purpose for engagement; actively support diverse communities to engage; match methods to the audience and use a range of methods; build on what's worked and existing intelligence (SCC and elsewhere); and be very clear to participants on the impact that engagement will have.

The list below builds on the experiences of Scrutiny Committees and latterly the Transitional Committees and will continue to develop, (including through the ongoing work with Involve). The toolkit could include (but would not be limited to):

- a. Public calls for evidence*
- b. Issue-focused workshops with attendees from multiple backgrounds (sometimes known as 'hackathons') led by committees*
- c. Creative use of online engagement channels*
- d. Working with VCF networks (eg including the Sheffield Equality Partnership) to seek views of communities*
- e. Co-design events on specific challenges or to support policy development*
- f. Citizens assembly style activities*
- g. Stakeholder reference groups (standing or one-off)*
- h. Committee / small group visits to services*
- i. Formal and informal discussion groups*
- j. Facilitated communities of interest around each committee (eg a mailing list of self-identified stakeholders and interested parties with regular information about forthcoming decisions and requests for contributions or volunteers for temporary co-option)*
- k. Facility for medium-term or issue-by-issue co-option from outside the Council onto Committees or Task and Finish Groups. Co-optees of this sort at Policy Committees would be non-voting.*

A public engagement toolkit is therefore under development. It is intended to be a quick 'how-to' guide for Members and officers to use when undertaking participatory activity through committees.

It will provide an overview of the options available, including the above list, and cover:

- How to focus on purpose and who we are trying to reach
- When to use and when not to use different methods
- How to plan well and be clear to citizens what impact their voice will have
- How to manage costs, timescales, scale.

Until the full toolkit is published, there is an expectation that Members and Officers will be giving strong consideration to the public participation and engagement options for each item on a committee's work programme, with reference to the above list a-k.