

Public Engagement Strategy

**Vale of Glamorgan Council
Community Services Department**

August 2005



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Community Services Department Public Engagement Strategy

1. Introduction

In this Strategy, the Vale of Glamorgan Council Community Services Department involving both Social Services and Housing, is aiming to improve the way it engages with users, carers, tenants and the public in planning and providing services. It is also aiming to provide a practical toolkit for staff to use in the way that they undertake consultation and that they promote participation and partnership.

It has become apparent that there is a need to co-ordinate and develop the Department's methods of involving people in its decision-making processes. In order to plan effectively for the future, the views of all those receiving services, and potential users of services, are essential to improve the quality of service provision and to meet their needs.

Following several reviews of the Social Services and Local Health Board Joint Planning Structure, it has now been agreed that joint working and consultation with all stakeholders will take place via the key strategic Partnerships. In a previous Joint Planning Structure for the Local Authority and Local Health Board 1997 – 2000, there were specialist Advisory Planning Groups regularly involving service users and carers. Since the restructuring of the Joint Planning Process within the key Strategic Partnerships, shown on page 8 of this document, consultation with users and carers and the involvement of the public has taken place in different ways. It is recognised that there are gaps in the consultation process and the range of methods used could be improved.

The Housing Sector has also reviewed the way in which tenants and residents have been involved in planning and developing services. Strategies and policies are being developed by engaging with all interested parties, and more effective participation processes have been established. Tenant and resident groups are contributing to strategic planning for housing services in both the public and private sectors. The Community Safety Partnership works with the community in the preparation of the Crime and Disorder Strategy.

An initial audit of all the joint working groups in June 2004 was reviewed and updated in June 2005 this audit and the annual reporting of consultation exercises and events to the Welsh Assembly, has highlighted the range of ways in which service users, carers, children and young people, tenants and the public have been consulted by the Department over recent years. However, these have taken place in an ad hoc manner and without consistent feedback to the participants or the wider public.

2. Aims, Objectives and Values

Our Aims are to:

- a) Provide a means for the local community, and specifically for service users, and carers and tenants to contribute to the assessment of local needs and to be involved with the Council in the development of strategy, policy and plans to improve services.
- b) Change and develop the culture of Community Services to ensure the involvement of users, carers and tenants in planning and improving services.
- c) Enable people who are service users, carers, tenants or members of the community to have a greater say in decisions about their own care and local services, including the use of advocacy services when appropriate.
- d) Develop methods for systematic feedback from users, carers and tenants to learn from their experiences to help us shape and improve services for the future, and provide feedback to them.

Our Objectives are to:

- a) Create a variety of strong mechanisms for users, carers, tenants and the public to be involved in developing services and to receive feedback on the outcomes from their involvement.
- b) Facilitate the involvement of users, carers and tenants with: accessible information, the resources needed to participate, appropriate venues and at helpful times.
- c) Ensure effective monitoring and review of User / Carer / Tenant Involvement activity within Community Services.
- d) Provide guidelines for staff in undertaking consultation, involvement and participation exercises.

Our Service Values include:

- a) Integrity – transparency and accountability
- b) Involvement – working in partnership with stakeholders , consulting and involving the community to ensure local ownership of issues
- c) Sustainability – integrated service delivery across organisational boundaries, and consideration of the needs of all groups within our community both now and for future generations

3. Definitions and Models of Public Consultation, Involvement and Participation

It is recognised that there are differences between the terms: consultation, involvement and participation. These differences are outlined in the definitions below, although the term 'engagement' is being used to describe all the activities in this document.

Consultation

The Council's Corporate Consultation Strategy describes consultation as *"the process by which we determine the views of stakeholders to inform our policies and service delivery. It has been defined as a process of dialogue that leads to an action."*

Involvement

In the document 'User consultation' published by the Royal National Institute for the Blind in 1996, the definition for involvement is described as *"where users, voluntary organisations and providers have a continuing and active involvement in planning and developing services."*

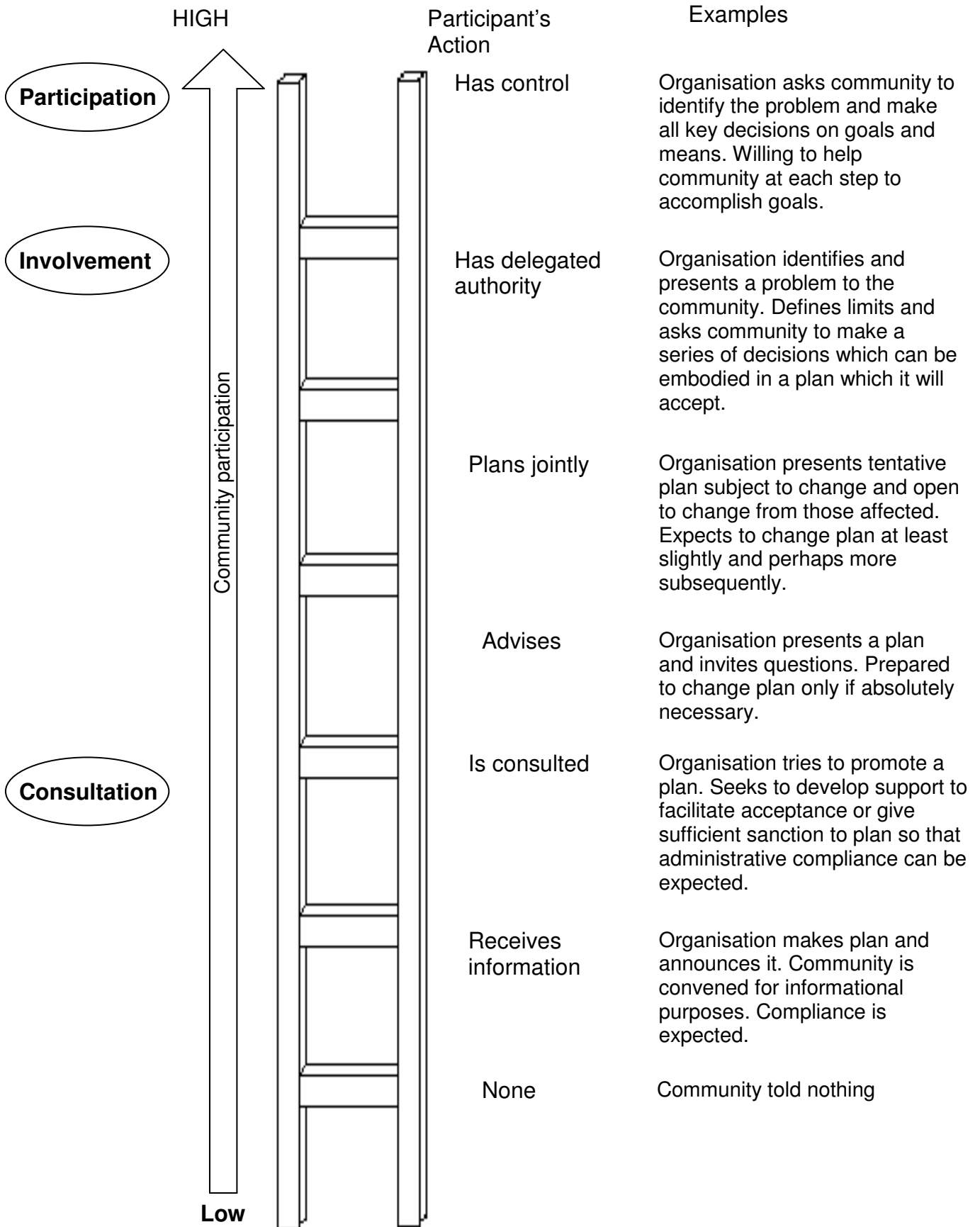
Participation

Currently, a universally agreed-upon working definition of user, carer or tenant participation does not exist. For the purposes of this document, user, carer and tenant participation may be defined as:

Either voluntary or paid participation to the level of control by users, carers or tenants in formal or informal planning, delivery, implementation, and evaluation of all activities associated with Community Services, as well as in all processes which affect the lives of users, carers or tenants through sharing of information, opinions, and decision making power.

To refine this further, we can consider models that define the degree of consultation, with, and involvement and participation from tenants users and carers in more detail. In the diagram illustrated overleaf, we see a ladder of engagement, with the participant's action and illustrative models for achieving it. It highlights the different ways in which an organisation can seek the views of the community and the amount of control the participants have over the agenda for identifying difficulties and finding solutions.

Ladder of Engagement Diagram



Source: adapted from model by Brager & Specht

It is recognised that consultation and participation with children and young people requires a range of approaches. A useful definition of participation for children and young people is to be found in a paper prepared by Save the Children for the Participation Consortium in 2003. It states that:

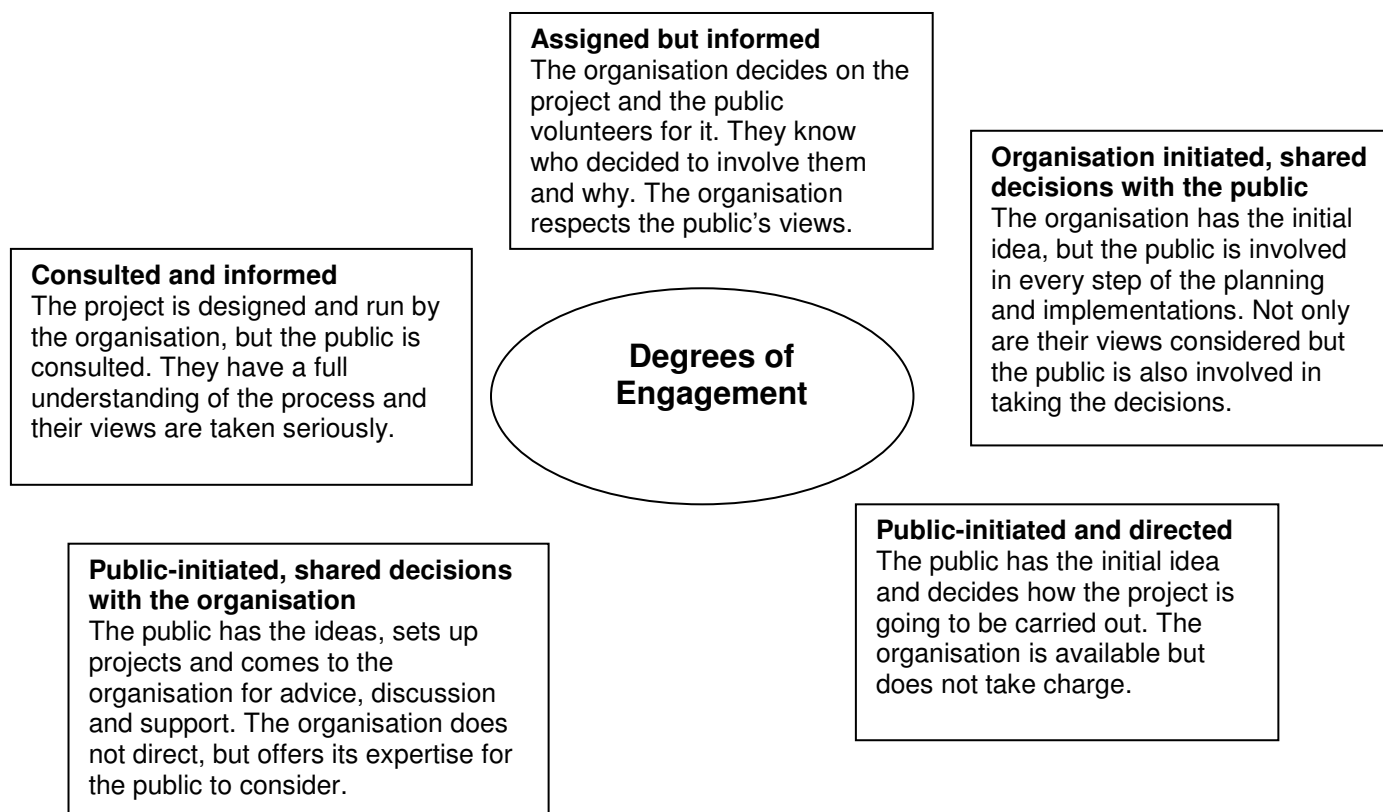
“we must be careful that we do not impose too narrow a definition that could constrict the creativity and diversity that has characterised the development of much good practice around children and young people’s participation in Wales.

The literal definition of participation is ‘taking part’. It is well recognised that there is a spectrum of degrees of power in taking part, from giving opinions on a predetermined issue for adults to decide upon (consultation), to young people choosing their agenda and taking their own decisions (full participation). As with many powerful and popular concepts, ‘participation’ is used (and sometimes abused) to describe many different relationships and activities. The discourse illustrates that **Participation is a process not an event and Empowerment is the outcome**”.

The paper goes on to illustrate a useful model which moves away from the assumption that projects or organisations should always aim for the highest rung on the ladder, and recognises that different approaches may be best in different circumstances.

The diagram is shown below and has been adapted to apply to all age groups for general use:

Degrees of Engagement



Adapted from: Treesder, P. (1997) *Empowering children and young people training manual: promoting involvement in decision-making*. Save the children

4. The Context of Engagement

a) Requirement to engage with the public

There is a national context and requirement to engage with the community, service users and tenants for all agencies. Legislation has emphasised how important it is for local authorities and health services to take account of local public opinion and support public involvement.

Under the Wales Programme for Improvement, local authorities are required to achieve the delivery of high quality services which meet the identified needs of the community. In order to achieve this, arrangements need to be in place to involve and consult users, carers, tenants and other stakeholders in improving services.

Within the NHS Wales, The Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategies (Wales) Regulations 2003, regulation 9 states that there is a duty of consultation on the needs assessment and draft Strategy which must involve a number of statutory bodies and the local population.

Under Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy Guidance from Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) 2002, it states that local communities should be encouraged to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities for inclusion in the Policy. Also, similar Guidance from WAG 2002 requires the local authority to undertake wide ranging consultation on the draft Local Housing Strategy, ensuring that all sections of the community have an opportunity to communicate their views.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on local authorities to work in partnership with the community and key agencies in the preparation of a three yearly crime and disorder audit.

WAG Policy Guidance concerning this duty also affirms that..." in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, young people should be consulted and have their voices heard on issues that affect them in ways that are relevant and appropriate to them".

The Council's Corporate Consultation Strategy, highlights that:
"the best way for Councils to provide services that meet the needs and ambitions of the people we serve is to listen to and involve those people ... Through consultation, local people can be involved more in decision-making, helping to rejuvenate local democratic processes, making the decision-making process more open and accountable."

b) Standards of Engagement

Department of Health and Social Services, Inspection Standards indicate the following measures in relation to consultation and participation:

1. In the Inspection of Service Quality Improvements in Social Care, the following criteria apply for Standard 2, which relates to quality of services for users and carers – information and consultation:

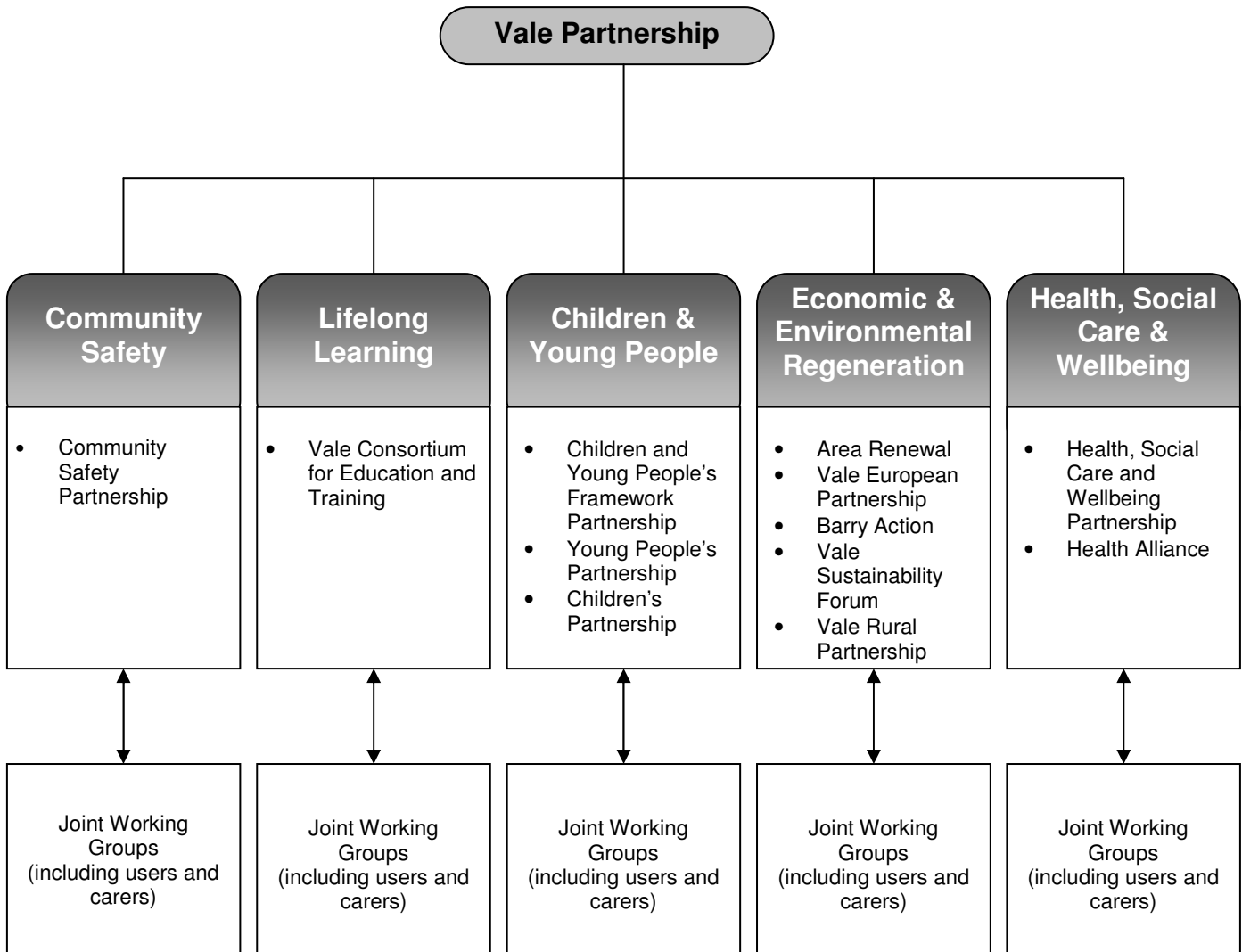
- i) Social Services provides users, carers and the public with sufficient useful information to enable their active involvement in judging quality of services and procedures.
 - ii) Social Services seeks the views of users, carers and the public on the quality of procedures, services and service outcomes.
 - iii) Staff are encouraged to be responsive to the views of individual users and carers as they arrange and provide services.
 - iv) There are arrangements, at appropriate levels in the organisation, for the views of individual and groups of users and carers to be collated and responded to.
 - v) Users, carers and the public receive feedback on the service improvements resulting from consultations and other contributions.
2. These are the criteria for Standard 3 in the Inspection of Children's Services Planning, which relates to participation:
- i) There is active promotion to the public of information about the children's services planning process and the Children's Services Plan to encourage informed participation.
 - ii) Relevant agencies participate appropriately in children's services planning.
 - iii) Experienced and knowledgeable agency staff contribute to children's services planning.
 - iv) Consultation takes place at all levels of children's services planning.
 - v) Children, young people and their families are consulted about current services and future plans.
 - vi) Children, young people and their families are provided with the necessary information and support to be actively involved in the consultation processes.
 - vii) Responses to consultation appropriately influence children's services planning.

c) Strategic Partnerships in the Vale of Glamorgan

In the Council audit of joint working groups involving statutory and voluntary agencies across the Vale, it was found that approximately 15% of the groups involve users and carers. There is a drive to ensure that the views of the participants are heard in the strategic partnerships which are planning and developing the services.

The following diagram illustrates the current Partnerships across all Directorates for the Vale, and the overarching Vale Partnership. In general, the social care joint working groups report through the Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership, and the Children and Young People Partnerships; and the housing joint working groups report through the Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership, but also through Economic and Environmental Regeneration. The Community Safety Partnership is established in its own right with 10 joint working groups reporting through it.

key strategic planning partnerships



The recent forms of Consultation and Involvement for Community Services can be found in **Appendix 1** (dated July 2004). Outcomes from these consultation exercises can be found in **Appendix 2**.

d) Links with other Plans and Strategies

There are numerous Plans and Strategies for the Community Services Department and its key partners in planning service developments in social care, health and housing. This Public Engagement Strategy has relevance for all the Plans and Strategies to ensure that users, carers, tenants and the public where appropriate, are involved in their formulation. For this Strategy to be effective, the process of engagement needs to be embedded into the way all Strategies and Plans are written. In addition, recommendations from each of the consultations need to be linked to create a joined-up, co-ordinated approach.

e) Voluntary Sector representation on Joint Working Groups

In order to ensure appropriate voluntary sector representation the Vale Centre for Voluntary Services (VCVS) has agreed a process with the

Council regarding the nomination and selection of voluntary sector representatives on Joint Working Groups.

The agreement involves the Council contacting a named officer in VCVS to arrange the selection of the representative by canvassing the voluntary sector for nominations and, where appropriate, facilitating an election. The representative will be accountable to the voluntary sector by reporting back and acting on behalf of the sector.

On some occasions, the Council requires specialist input from voluntary sector organisations. In this case, the Council makes direct contact with the organisation concerned, and the representative is viewed as representing only the interests of the organisation, rather than those of the voluntary sector as a whole.

f) Engagement with ‘Hard to Reach’ Groups

The Council has a broad view of which groups can be regarded as ‘hard to reach’ . The definition includes young people below 25 years old and older people over 75 years old as well as people with sensory loss, with mental illness, from minority ethnic groups or living in disadvantaged areas.

The methods used to consult and engage with these groups has varied according to the needs and preferences of the groups concerned. Written consultation is not always appropriate and a range of approaches has been required. Some of these methods are listed in **Appendix 4** with their ‘pros and cons’ and their effectiveness and costs are listed in **Appendix 5**.

The Council has used particular groups and bodies to obtain the views of ‘hard to reach’ groups. For example, links have been made with the Gypsy Liaison Group; the Muslim Welfare Centre; the Carers Forum; and other specific groups of service users, listed on **Appendix 1**.

Many of the people on our Citizens Panel fall into the category of 75 years and over, and the Council aims to involve them as much as possible in decision-making. With large public meetings, accessible locations with a loop system and an interpreter have been considered. The Council website has also been developed with accessibility features to ensure as broad access to information and consultation as possible.

5. Vale of Glamorgan Community Services Department Proposed Structure for Engagement

It is proposed that we consider a structure for user / carer engagement on three levels:

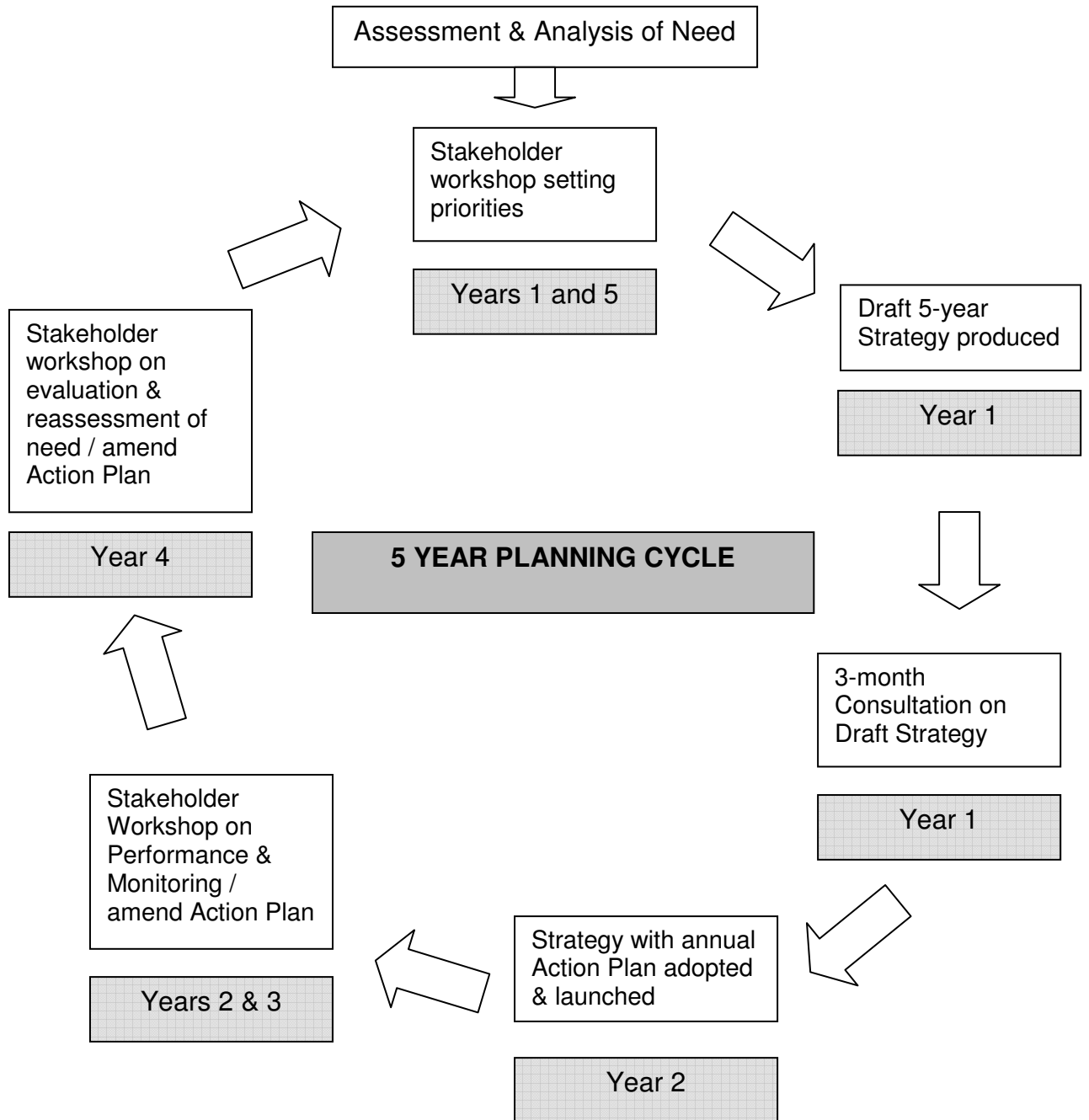
Strategic / Community Level: involvement is based on the notion of local people as citizens, with a stake in local health, housing and social services. This will provide the wider community's view of these services, what local people think the priorities should be, and how we can improve the services we provide. It will co-ordinate the work across agencies and link with the recommendations from the Carer / User / Tenants / Service Interest Groups.

Operational / Service Interest Group Level: the focus for involvement and participation will be on a particular group of patients / Service users, tenants or carers. For example, if we are reviewing mental health services we will involve mental health service users, carers and related voluntary organisations; or if we are reviewing the Homelessness Strategy, we will involve homeless people and key interested parties.

Individual Level: involving people in decisions about their own care, promoting individual health, and ensuring good housing and social care information.

A) At Strategic / Community Level

A five-year planning cycle has been devised for engaging with a range of key partners, users and carers to formulate and evaluate key Strategies and Plans.



The previous diagram follows the process of: assessment of need; setting priorities; Strategy adopted; review and monitoring; and evaluation of services. Service users/ carers / tenants and the public will be invited to attend these events.

The planning databases of users, carers and key stakeholders for the Strategic workshops held by Community Services will need to be reviewed and expanded to include all those who are interested in being consulted and involved in planning and developing services on a regular basis.

B) At Operational / Service Interest Group Level

Arising out of the workshops and consultation events are Task and Finish Groups considering service developments at operational level. Users and carers will be involved in this work. In addition, the ongoing Joint Working Groups which are giving feedback to the Strategic Partnerships will be encouraged to involve users and carers wherever possible.

Work to plan services with existing standing groups such as tenant and resident groups, the Landlords Forum, the Carers Forum etc will also link into the Strategic Partnerships.

C) At Individual Level

The ways in which the three Divisions of the Community Services Department engage with those receiving their services is different. These Divisions are Community Care and Health; Children and Family Services; and Housing and Community Safety.

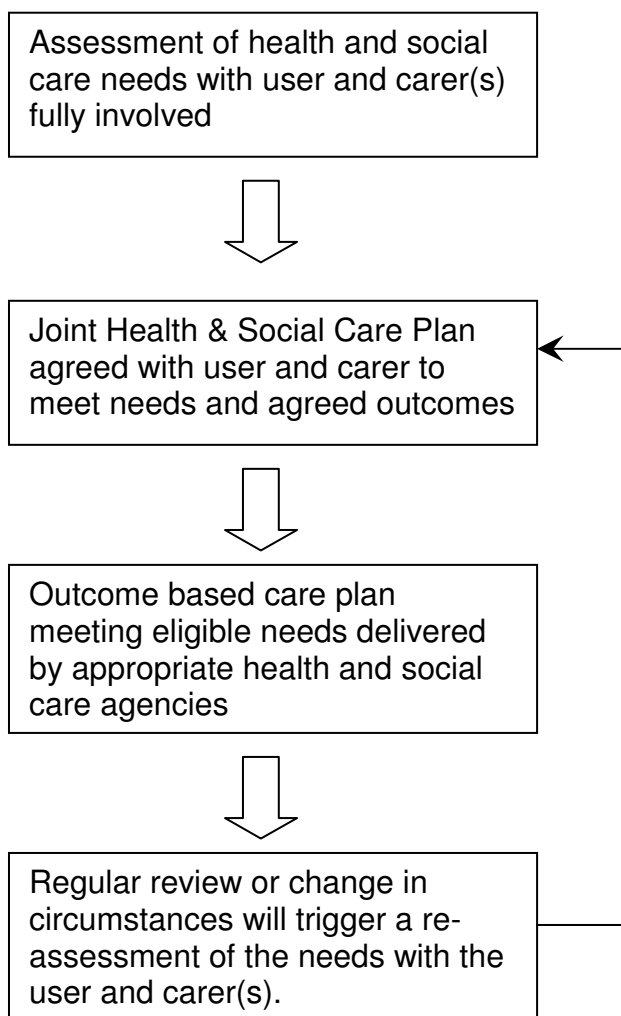
The assessment of needs is different for each Division. However, the importance of involving people fully in the process is recognised by all the Divisions.

For Children and Family Services, the process of engaging with children and families in the assessment, planning and review of their needs is frequently a multi-agency approach. Children and young people who are of an age and understanding to be able to make judgements about future Plans, along with their families, are fully involved in deciding the Child Care Plan.

For Housing and Community Safety, assessments of the needs of tenants and the conditions of properties are made involving the tenants and homeowners, sometimes on a multi-agency basis. There is a desire to incorporate elements of the housing needs of people into the Unified Assessment Process so that service provision can be coordinated across the Directorate.

For Community Care and Health, the assessment process is followed in the Care Assessment and Case Management process for Social Services and Health, which is being adopted by the new joint Unified Assessment model shown overleaf.

Model of The Unified Assessment Process



The intention is to link the 3 levels of engagement in a more effective way.

From the **Individual Level**, it is important to identify the trends of need and unmet need so that this information can inform the discussion about developing services at Operational Level. This is relevant for the Unified Assessment model, and for the assessment processes within the Children and Young Peoples Services and Housing Services.

From the **Operational Level**, it is important for all the Joint Working Groups and internal service development groups to inform the Strategic Partnerships about their work and proposals. The Co-ordinators of the Partnerships also need to liaise with each other to ensure that all the developmental work is reported and co-ordinated effectively. Methods of engaging with users, carers, tenants and the public can be shared and evaluated across the Partnerships.

D) Summary

It is important for the Vale to adopt a framework which not only enables users, carers and tenants to respond to consultation exercises conducted by the key statutory agencies, but also to have a level of engagement that enables them to raise their issues of concern, and to influence the policy makers at a senior level, including Council members. We are aiming to achieve a variety of methods which facilitate this involvement as well as good consultation exercises. Within these various levels of engagement, consideration will be given to the appropriate degrees of participation for users, carers, tenants and the public.

It is recognised that there are many ways in which service users and carers can be participants in service delivery. For example, they can be trainers on courses such as Disability Equality; they can assist in inspecting services; and they can assist in interviewing for staff. These roles and responsibilities will need training and support, and staff will need encouragement to recognise these ways of involving receivers of services.

We need to acknowledge that statutory bodies have their own accountabilities in terms of service provision, and that ultimately, responsibility lies in the hands of democratically elected local councillors for the local authority and Assembly Members for health services. However, within these constraints, there is a requirement to make the needs of service users and carers central to the planning and monitoring processes.

Facilitating the involvement of all those who receive services in an effective manner will lead to services which are more efficient and appropriate to people's needs.

6. Action Plan

In order to improve the range and methods of consultation, involvement and participation, a variety of actions have been identified in the tables overleaf. Practical guidelines for undertaking consultation for general use and with specific client groups can be found in the Appendices.

Strategic Objective	Strategic Activity	Outcome Measures	Resource Implications	Lead Officer	Completion Date
1. Establish a Co-ordinated Framework for the Public Engagement Strategy	Agree timetable for Partnership Consultation Events	Workshops are co-ordinated between Partnerships	None	Operational Manager, Strategic Planning	December 2005
	Formal links are created between the Public Participation Group / Co-ordinators Group / Vale CVS	Arrangements made to share information between groups	None	Operational Manager, Strategic Planning	December 2005
	A paper to consider joint approach to User / Carer / Tenant / Patient Involvement with key partners and resourcing arrangements	Agreement of Local Commissioning Group members to a joint approach and resourcing arrangements	None	Head of Service, Planning and Commissioning	September 2005
	Ensure feedback from outcomes of events and Joint Working Groups is passed to Coordinators Group and is publicised	Co-ordinators Group and the public involved are informed on a regular quarterly basis	Staff time	Operational Manager S.P./ Policy & Consultation Officer	March 2006
	Publish proposed engagement activities in advance so that wider opportunities to contribute are made known	Consultation timetable available to staff and public	Staff time	Policy & Consultation Officer	Annually
	Service Plans to continue to include past and future consultation events	Inclusion in Service Plans	None	Heads of Service	Annually
	Use DOH standards to monitor effectiveness of engagement activities	Annual report on effectiveness of consultation activities	Staff time	Policy & Consultation Officer	Annually
	Prepare Cabinet Report with proposals for the engagement of users, carers and tenants in the democratic processes	Report submitted to Cabinet	None	Head of Service, Planning and Commissioning	December 2005
	Monitor progress of the Public Engagement Strategy with staff	Review of Strategy on a 6 monthly basis with staff	Staff time	Operational Manager, Strategic Planning	October 2005
	Review this Strategy on an annual basis with users, carers and the public.	Review undertaken with users, carers and the public	Staff time	Operational Manager / Policy & Consultation Officer	April 2006

Strategic Objective	Strategic Activity	Outcome Measures	Resource Implications	Lead Officer	Completion Date
	Identify trends of need and unmet need for use in discussions about service developments	Inclusion of information about needs in Management Information Reports	Staff time	Team Manager, Performance Management	April 2006
	Liaison between Partnership Co-ordinators on the work of Joint Working Groups	Information sharing on JWGs between Partnership Coordinators taking place	Staff time	Operational Manager, Strategic Planning	December 2005
2. Improved methods for including users and carers	This Strategy is promoted amongst staff involved in Joint Working Groups	A higher proportion of JWGs engage with users, carers and the public (15% in June 2004)	Staff time	Operational Manager, Strategic Planning	December 2005
a) Strategically	Officers will use more than one method of consultation and choose appropriate methods	The range of opportunities for consultation is increased	Staff time	According to issues and clients involved	April 2006
	More support to engage users, carers and tenants in service development groups e.g. costs reimbursed; advance warning; training to participate	More users and carers involved in consultation events and groups according to needs and circumstances	Staff time, costs of involving users and carers	Team Manager, Policy and Information	April 2006
	Increase community understanding and awareness of housing issues	Outreach session to community groups and educational establishments taking place	Staff time	Operational Manager, Public Sector Housing	March 2005
	Use of consultation checklist for events and groups	More consideration given to needs of participants and 'hard to reach' groups	Staff time	Officers involved	April 2006
	Use of guidance for consultation on draft documents	As above	Staff time	Officers involved	From May 2005
	Link with Corporate Centre Consultation Officer for any consultation exercises	Corporate Consultation Officer is informed of events	Staff time	Officers involved	From April 2005
	Identify examples of good practice in other Local Authorities	Alternative models are available at time of review	Staff time	Policy & Consultation Officer	December 2005

Strategic Objective	Strategic Activity	Outcome Measures	Resource Implications	Lead Officer	Completion Date
	Identify options for involving service users and carers as course trainers and related costs	Options for training found and costs built into budget	Staff time	Team Manager, Training / Operational Manager, S.P.	March 2006
b) Operationally (As above and in addition:)	Involve users and carers in Task and Finish Groups working on Partnership and Service Priorities	More involvement of users and carers in operational development Task and Finish Groups	Staff time, costs of supporting users and carers	According to issues and clients involved	From April 2005
	Engage with Users' Forums, and the Carers' Forum, the Landlords Forum and Community Forums, re service developments and attendance at workshops	Greater user of existing Forums in planning services by officers	Staff time	According to issues and clients involved	April 2006
	Encourage involvement of black and ethnic minority (BME) tenants	Residents groups giving positive consideration to broadening their membership	Staff time	Senior Housing Officers	December 2005
	Development of a process for meeting with tenants and stakeholders on service development issues	Regular meeting of Landlords and Tenants Focus Group Forum	Staff time	Operational Manager, Private Sector Housing	April 2006
c) Individually	Increase individual Carers' Assessments	More Carers Assessments being undertaken	Staff time, training for social workers / case managers	Operational Manager, Community Health Care / Case Managers	March 2006
	An effective Unified Assessment Process	A multi-disciplinary assessment process with the client / patient in place	Staff time	Project Manager, Unified Assessment	March 2006
	Greater access to health, social care and housing information	A broader range of information about health promotion, social care and housing services available	Staff time, Extra costs to be identified	Team Manager, Policy and Information / Operational Managers Public and Private Sector Housing	April 2006
3. Involvement of staff in engaging users, carers, tenants and the public	This strategy is promoted amongst staff involved in writing Plans and Strategies	Greater links made between Plans in relation to consultation outcomes	Staff time	Operational Manager, Strategic Planning	December 2005

Strategic Objective	Strategic Activity	Outcome Measures	Resource Implications	Lead Officer	Completion Date
	Identify opportunities for training staff to account for the needs of all participants being engaged and related costs	Training opportunities built into programme with related costs	Staff time, costs of training courses	Team Manager, Training / Operational Manager, S.P.	April 2006
	Staff skills to analyse data and recommendations from consultation events	More sophisticated analysis of consultation processes	Staff time, training courses	Policy & Consultation Officer / Officers involved	March 2006
	Support staff to give effective feedback to participants and the wider community	Effective feedback being provided on events on a regular basis	Staff time	Policy & Consultation Officer/ officers involved	March 2006
	The creation of a practical toolkit for staff with guidelines for consultation	A consultation toolkit is available and in use by officers	Staff time	Operational Manager, Strategic Planning	December 2005
	Regularly analyse all customer comments and complaints, and use this information to drive improvements in services	Complaints and comments are being reported and used to improve services	Staff time	Operational Managers, Commissioning, Public and Private Sector Housing	December 2005
	Review the use of the Corporate Consultation Techniques with users, carers and tenants to gain their views on how they can be improved.	Users, carers and tenants satisfaction with consultation events is being measured	Staff time	Policy & Consultation Officer / Operational Managers, Public and Private Sector Housing	April 2006

APPENDIX 1

Current Forms of Engagement (July 2004)

At present, the Community Services Department engages with users and carers in a variety of ways to improve services. These have been grouped under three headings of Strategic Level, Operational / Service Level, and Individual Level.

STRATEGIC LEVEL

The following engagement is taking place:

◆ **Open Workshops:**

Involve all agencies, users and carers to formulate plans and strategies for example Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy – January 2004; Older People's Strategy – April 2004; Young People's Event – July 2004; Penarth Central Renewal Area Conference; Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy open meetings; Local Housing Strategy Conference – April 2004; Homelessness Strategy Conference; Black and Minority Ethnic Conference; Community Safety Partnership Conference.

◆ **Joint Working Groups:**

Over 100 Joint Working Groups are being linked to Strategic Partnership Development (as illustrated in Section 4 (c).)

OPERATIONAL / SERVICE LEVEL

There are a variety of Joint Working Groups and Forums

◆ **Adhoc Planning Groups:**

Usually focused on specific services for example Sure Start focus groups; Health Alliance Adult & Parent Carers Development Group; Task & Finish Groups on Independent Living and on Information and Communication; LAMP Stakeholder Conference to consider management of lettings and empty houses.

◆ **Operational Development Groups:**

For example, Survey consulting service users and staff on the development of day services in the Western Vale in 2004; Consultation with people with hearing loss every six months; Millennium Park Cadoxton – working group of Barry residents and councillors to improve park.

◆ **Commissioned Research:**

For example; Survey of 11-16 year olds in the Vale commissioned by Young People's Partnership; Opinion Survey 2003 to gain views of residents on risk of crime; House Condition Survey every five years.

◆ **User, Carer and Tenant Forums:**

Those established include:

- Carers` Forum supported by Carers` Development Project;
- Youth Forum supported by Youth Service (Learning and Development Directorate);
- Vale Carers Network (Mental Health) supported by Cardiff & Vale Mental Health Development Project;
- Cardiff & Vale User Involvement Group (Mental Health) supported by Cardiff & Vale Mental Health Development Project;
- Older People's Forum
- Citizen's Panel supported by the Chief Executive's Department
- Tenants' and Residents' Groups
- Private Sector Landlords Forum
- Old Penarth Community Forum

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

At this level, users and carers are involved in planning their own services and are consulted on their satisfaction with the service once delivered.

◆ **Individual Care Management / Child Care Planning:**

For example, discussions of services for individual users/carers and families with case managers / social workers; Penarth Renewal Area assessment of housing needs for individuals; Needs assessment for homeless people.

◆ **User / Carer Satisfaction with Services:**

For example, consultation on satisfaction with Carers Special Grant services in October 2003; Complaints and Compliments Reports; Website Notice Board; Two year rolling programme of user/carers satisfaction consultation from May 2004; Opinion Survey 2003 on Community Safety; Homelessness Strategy to seek views of service users.

APPENDIX 2

Outcomes from Engagement

It is recognised that feedback to all participants on positive outcomes from consultation and planning events has not been as effective as it could have been. However, there have often been service developments and changes over time which have taken place as a result of these events involving users, carers and tenants.

A few examples of these outcomes are listed below: The recommendations from the Information and Communication Task and Finish Group and Older People's Strategy workshop are being used to identify potential projects for the Older People's Strategy; and the provision of information services has now been given a higher profile in the appointment of an Information Officer and Assistant Information Officer within the Community Services Department for the Council.

In relation to the recommendations in the Independent Living Report, the importance of appropriate accommodation and support for people is recognised as having key significance in enabling people to live independently for as long as possible. The Occupational Therapy team has been expanded to deal with the high demand for their service to support this priority.

As a result of the second LAMP Stakeholder Conference the proposals to introduce a HOMES 4U choice based lettings scheme; a void management procedure; and a Redesignation Strategy for underused housing, have been implemented.

From the written consultation using Community Safety Partnership and the Citizens Panel, the Crime and Disorder Strategy was amended to include arson and vandalism as strategic priorities for action.

From the Children First Plan 2003/4, it can be seen that a number of new initiatives have developed as a result of consultation events and surveys of children and young people.

Consultation with users, carers and key partners on Strategic Plans in the Joint Planning workshops has been highlighted within the Plans, and their views have been given a priority within the recommendations for change. Surveys of user / carer satisfaction with services are now being held on a regular basis, and the views expressed are reported back to managers and staff in order to improve the services.

APPENDIX 3

Consultation Checklist involving documents

Consultation documents should:

- Include a statement of the consultation process, including the timetable, who is being consulted, a deadline for responses and where responses should be sent.
- Give a description of the issue being addressed, state the purpose of the consultation and the issues on which views are being sought.
- Where possible and appropriate, give an indication of how long it will take them to prepare a response.
- Include a feedback sheet inviting comments on the consultation and the documentation.
- Give the name, address, telephone, fax and email contact for someone who is able to provide further information.
- Be concise, clearly laid out, use Plain English and avoid or explain jargon.
- Give details about how copies in different formats can be obtained and be available on request in large print, audiotape and in appropriate languages.
- Contain or separately publish a summary.
- Allow adequate response time – 12 weeks, wherever possible.
- Be placed on the Council's website (in the case of open consultations).
- Give an explanation of decisions that have already been taken or issues on which a particular option is favoured.
- Explain who is likely to be affected by the proposals.
- Provide a statement on how responses will be treated, i.e. will they be confidential and if not, will they be attributable?
- State whether the consultation is being undertaken as a requirement for a project to go ahead.
- State how feedback will be given, or where / how results of the exercise can be accessed.

Please note:

Corporate written consultation guidelines are available on the Intranet and Internet.

APPENDIX 4

Methods of Engagement

There are many methods to choose from, but there are two very important points to remember:

- every method has advantages and disadvantages; no one choice will ever be 100% perfect. The choice is about choosing the best method for your purpose; and
- use more than one method; this helps to overcome the disadvantages and help different people to participate.

There are two types of engagement (neither is better than the other but they tend to obtain very different information):

Quantitative methods collect numerical data, using standardised research elements and statistical techniques. It has the advantage of being scientifically accurate if it is reasonably unbiased and is analysed statistically. These techniques answer questions like “what” and “how many”.

Qualitative methods are more likely to obtain meanings, perspectives and understandings, with an emphasis on process. They answer questions like “why” and “how”.

Some well-tried and tested methods are defined below:

<u>User comments and complaints: users give you feedback (compliments, comments and complaints). There needs to be a clear policy and procedure for dealing with them; staff have to be trained in its use, and it needs to be regularly monitored.</u>	
PROS	CONS
Gives feedback on services	Presentational. Complaints may increase if you make your complaints handling system good, and you publicise it well
Easy to set up	Not representative. Some users are reluctant to complain (or compliment)
Helps identify recurring problems	Essentially reactive to existing systems: give less insight into potential changes
Shows users you are open to comments and complaints and serious about putting things right.	Can be difficult to present complaints information in a positive way
Gives information about your service's weaknesses and strengths	
Provides both qualitative and quantitative information	

Staff suggestions schemes: collect views from staff who are in everyday contact with carers and users and who know what annoys and frustrates stakeholders what they like and what they want changed.	
PROS	CONS
Gives positive and negative feedback on services.	No good unless staff are properly trained and systems for collecting and discussing feedback are in place.
Shows you value your frontline staff	Can be time consuming to analyse comments
Shows you are open to suggestions and comments	Will not provide statistics other than numbers of comments
Source of instant information about your service	Not necessarily representative. Relies on staff making effort . No substitute for actively seeking their views.
Mystery shopping: someone commissioned by you (you could recruit some of your users to do this) tests the service looking at a number of pre-determined areas, and then reports back. This gives you a picture of the type of experience a real user would have.	
PROS	CONS
Precise and detailed feedback	More applicable to frontline, person to person services
Relatively simple to implement	Staff are often suspicious of schemes
Equivalent to asking other users for their experiences.	Only gives isolated instances and small samples
Flexible and immediate	Regular shoppers could get too experienced
Can be used to commit/motivate staff	
Piloting changes: Trying out changes on a small area of your service to test whether those changes are going to work for the whole service. Gives information about how planned changes will impact on people and allows for informed comments and evaluation of changes.	
PROS	CONS
Enables informed judgements to be made about costs and benefits	There may be a suspicion that the results are a foregone conclusion
Allows discussions with users and potential users to resolve problems at a pilot stage	Evaluation needs to be carefully planned
	Circumstances may change during the life of the pilot so that the lessons are less relevant to the whole service.
	If unsuccessful can prejudice possible changes in the future.

Open/public meetings: Arranged for members of the public to find out about and express their views on a particular issue. Meetings are usually open to any member of the public and held in a public place convenient for people to get to. The issue to be discussed is publicised in advance.

PROS	CONS
Provides local opportunities for people to comment on matters that affect them directly or indirectly	People who attend are unlikely to be representative of the local population.
Offers convenient and transparent way to demonstrate public consultation/build up good relationships	Attendees ability to contribute to a discussion about service-wide strategic priorities can be impeded by a lack of knowledge and possible lack of interest
Can be used to inform the public at the same time as getting views	Contributions will mainly be of local, topical or personal concerns

Representative groups: Many, mainly voluntary, organisations know what is happening on the ground, and are in a good position to tell you what users think about your service and the problems they have. They may be advice agencies, single interest groups or support groups, or may see themselves as having a 'watchdog' role.

PROS	CONS
Numbers to be dealt with are more manageable	Depending on the type of organisation the group may contain particularly motivated people who aren't representative of users.
Allows you to tap into information being collected by independent organisations	May not provide statistical information
Can provide quantitative and qualitative information	Finding the right group and maintaining records of existing groups can be time consuming
Can help you get views of particular groups such as minority ethnic communities etc	Groups may require a considerable amount of time to respond
Relatively cheap and quick.	
Gives you a chance to explore views in depth	
Allows you to discuss detailed solutions with people with some technical knowledge	

<p>Face-to-face semi-structured interviews: can tell you what people think and why, and allow you to explore in detail their views, attitudes, behaviour or motives. Not to be confused with face-to-face questionnaires, semi structured interviews have only an outline of questions, allowing you to explore subjects in depth.</p>	
PROS	CONS
Can help in obtaining wide-ranging responses to proposals for new services	Interviewers need to be trained researchers
Good for gaining views of certain sorts of individuals excluded from mainstream consultations	Costs are high per individual
Flexible enough to allow new issues to be raised that your organisation may not have thought of.	
Can provide more detailed feedback than a group discussion	
Useful for obtaining views of people who are not comfortable speaking in a group.	
May help explore personal, sensitive or painful issues	
<p>Focus groups: normally made up of 8-10 people led by a trained facilitator in a one-off discussion on a particular topic. They allow you to explore a topic in-depth, with the advantage that people can bounce ideas off others.</p>	
PROS	CONS
Lets you find out what is important to users	Experienced and specialist (language)
Users may feel more confident in groups and say things they would not say on their own.	Group views can tend to the norm.
Groups allow people to spark ideas off one another	Difficult to prioritise issues
Provides information about what people think and why	Does not provide statistical information – gives you the ‘why’ not how many.
Can help you get through to non-users	
Can include people who do not read or write or who do not speak English	

User panels: allows a small group of users and senior managers to discuss user concerns. A user panel usually meets regularly over a long period. It can give you early warning of problems and helps to come up with ideas for changing or developing what you do, or as a sounding board to test ideas.	
PROS	CONS
Useful sounding board upon which to rest plans and ideas	Managers may think that once they have a user panel, that's all they need to do
Can you give relatively quick feedback	Users can get too close to the organisation
Adds credibility to your consultation feedback	Provides little in the way of statistical information
Creates a continuing dialogue with users	Can be unrepresentative
Helps you concentrate on issues from user perspective	
Citizens' panel: The Vale of Glamorgan Council has developed a Citizens' Panel of approximately 3000 residents (the exact figure will fluctuate as participants leave whilst other join). The Panel is used as sounding boards to test specific options or proposals, to assess local services and develop views about future needs and goals.	
PROS	CONS
Can track changes over a period of time	It can take longer than expected to recruit the panel
Can collect views of particular groups in the population or particular services	Delays in getting questionnaires back can result in delays in analysing results
As members are recruited on a voluntary basis, they are more likely to be committed to responding to questionnaires and so increase the response rate.	Response rates are sometimes not as high as hoped/expected
Panel offers opportunity to consult members of the population who have traditionally been hard to consult, such as members of ethnic minority groups.	The subject needs to be seen as relevant to the members and there can be criticism if important decisions are not considered by the panel
Once a panel is set up it can provide very quick results	Over time the process of taking part on a panel is likely to make members increasingly experienced and knowledgeable. This will make the panel less representative of the population as a whole
Special needs of certain panel members will be known about in advance so they can be prepared for	Younger members tend to drop out so the panel gradually becomes older.
The cost of a panel, once established and used several times, is less than a large one off survey	

Citizens' juries: usually made up of 12-16 lay people (neither experts in a particular issue nor members of interest groups) who hear evidence from a range of specialist witnesses over several days and draw conclusions. They are a structured method of obtaining detailed, considered views from members of the public on particular issues.

PROS	CONS
Provides informed feedback	Expensive
Members of jury have an opportunity to make a real contribution to public affairs and generally seem to enjoy the experience	Not suitable for all issues
	Works best where organisations have already made substantial progress in their consultation
	Jurors will not want to commit the time and effort unless they are given some undertaking that their views will count
	May not be representative of the views of the general public , who don't have the benefit of expert evidence

Postal questionnaire: gives you statistics in response to a set of questions asked using the post. Samples are taken using a list of households or individuals.

PROS	CONS
A good method of obtaining reliable statistical information	A poorly designed survey can give misleading results
Allows you to analyse large samples quickly and to track changes if you repeat questions in later surveys	If response levels are low results will be unreliable
Requires low level of interaction	Difficult to get views of disadvantaged minority groups
Good method of getting the views of non-users	Difficult to obtain qualitative information
Can be low cost if routine and supported by in-house expertise	A lot of time is required for analysing results

Telephone questionnaire: gives you statistics in response to a set of questions asked using the telephone. Samples can be taken using a list of telephone numbers or via random digit dialling.	
PROS	CONS
As above - questionnaires	As above - questionnaires
Conducting the survey over the phone gives you a chance to explain questions if necessary	If you conduct the survey over the phone, time constraints may result in hurried answers and there is a danger of the answers reflecting the views of the interviewer
Face-to-face Questionnaire: gives you statistics in response to a set of questions asked in person. Respondents can be approached in their own home, in the street, or while visiting a facility.	
PROS	CONS
As above - questionnaires	As above - questionnaires
Conducting the survey face to face gives you a chance to explain questions if necessary	If you conduct the survey face to face can cause a danger of the answers reflecting the views of the interviewer
Ballots / Referenda / deliberative polling: People are asked to vote either for or against an option or a limited number of options. In deliberative polling, a representative sample of people is initially polled on an issue. They then learn more about the topic through information, asking questions and participating in discussions and at the end of the process are polled again.	
PROS	CONS
Easy to interpret results	No qualitative information
Increasingly easy for people to participate	Results can be based on superficial uninformed responses – but there is no way for you to find this out
	Deliberative polling techniques can be very expensive
	Results can be swayed by the amount and quality of information provided by the supporters of each option
	Low turn outs

Written consultation exercises: provide a formal means by which people can be invited to comment on policies and proposals.

PROS	CONS
Can provide users with detailed, comprehensive information	Low response rates as written documents put some people off
Gives you considered views of respondents based on accurate information	Excludes people who cannot read or write
	Print and distribution costs can be high
	Timescales will be longer than for some other methods
	Analysing responses can be resource intensive

Open days / road-shows / exhibitions: informal occasions when users (and potential users) can find out what you do, meet staff, ask questions and so on. They can also be opportunities where you can show your plans and receive comments. Road-shows go to communities rather than expecting them to come to you. They can also be more structured, with formal presentations and discussions.

PROS	CONS
If a number of dates are given the public have flexibility of when/where to attend	Feedback may be limited to responses to the information displayed
Arouses interest by giving the public something to see or do	People who attend may not be particularly representative of users or non-users
Can be a source of suggestions and comments	Provides little in the way of statistical information apart from figures of attendees
Gives users a chance to become familiar with your premises and meet staff, so promoting good relations	
Provides ad-hoc feedback on services and ideas for change	
Can help you contact potential non-users	
Gives you an easy way to publicise services and provide information to users	
Gives quick feedback	

<u>Visioning:</u> a structured process in which local communities create a shared vision of the future they want and identify action to move them closer to it.	
PROS	CONS
Arouses interest by giving the public something to see or do	Can raise expectations which due to political changes/environment cannot be met
Gives quick feedback	Needs to be led by qualified/expert in order to explain process so can be expensive
Provides ad-hoc feedback on services and ideas for change	Residents/communities can become disenchanted as usually very few “quick wins” are amongst outcomes
Aids longer term planning	Often difficult to overcome here and now issues raised by participants
Good tool to share outcomes with partner agencies and cross cutting services	
<u>User & Carer workshops:</u> Structured day(s) during which users and carers have the opportunity to plan and discuss specific issues in depth and are fully involved in the decision making process.	
PROS	CONS
Useful sounding board on which to rest plans and ideas	Managers may think that once they have a user group that’s all they need to do
Can you give relatively quick feedback	Users can get too close to the organisation
Adds credibility to your consultation feedback	Provides little in the way of statistical information
Creates a continuing dialogue with users	Can be unrepresentative

<p>Information technology: Making participation easier and more fun through new information and communication technologies. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interactive software that helps people to see what new facilities would be like and vote for a preferred option. • information on the web page asking for comments. • kiosks that have a screen and a keyboard giving information and asking for comments. • video booths, where people can give comments on video. 	
INTERNET	
PROS	CONS
Useage spreading rapidly	Limited access won't currently reach large audiences and will never reach everyone
Relatively cheap	Technical problems often occur which can be outside of control of the consulter
Quick response rates and easy for people to use	Information needs to be specifically designed for the internet which requires a degree of knowledge
Can be cheap way of circulating a large amount of information to people	
Information can be quickly updated and amended	
KIOSKS	
PROS	CONS
Easy to use/practical for users if strategically situated	Few in number cannot consult a large sample of people
Can be used to reach rural communities	Can be very expensive
Quick way of collecting comments	Relies on the user taking the initiative
AUDIOVIDEO CASSETTES AND CD-ROMS	
PROS	CONS
Can help reach people with low Literacy levels	Not everyone will have the facility to use these forms of technology
Good for visually impaired people	Can be costly, especially if you have to provide the equipment for recording views
CD-ROM allows you to present a lot of information in an accessible format	
Can make people interested in/take notice of what you are trying to get across	

For further guidance & advice, please contact the Policy Officer, Consultation on 01446 709748

Appendix 5

Effectiveness and cost of different methods of engagement

METHODS GOOD FOR: ✓ = REASONABLE ✓✓✓✓ = VERY GOOD							
CONSULTATION METHOD	RELATIVE Cost	GIVING INFO	GETTING INFO	REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS	QUANTITATIVE VIEWS	QUALITATIVE VIEWS	SPECIAL GROUPS' VIEWS
User comments and complaints	£		✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	
Feedback from staff/suggestions schemes	£ - ££		✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Mystery shopping	££ - £££		✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓
Piloting changes	££ - £££	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓
Open/public meetings	££ - £££	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Using representative groups	£ - ££	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓
Face-to-Face interviews	££ - ££££	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Focus groups	££ - ££££	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
User panels	£ - ££	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Citizens' panels	££ - £££££	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Citizens' juries	££ - ££££	✓✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓
Questionnaire-based surveys	££ - ££££	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓	✓	✓
Ballots/referenda Deliberative polling	££ - ££££	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓		✓
Written consultation exercises	££ - £££	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	
Open days/roadshows/ Exhibitions	££ - £££	✓✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Visioning	££ - £££	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Information technology	££ - ££££	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓
User and carer workshops	££ - £££	✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓✓