

PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Consulting your community

One of the very few conditions of the Invest Local programme is that a wide range of local people need to have their say in how the money is spent. Before the funding will be released, there needs to be clear evidence that the community has been widely consulted.

This is why it is important to get the consultation right. This means thinking about who you are going to consult and how you will do it. At the early community meetings, you will think about who needs to be involved in the programme and this should also help you think about who you need to consult.

What do we consult the community on?

Invest Local is a different type of programme because it does not have fixed themes or topics. It is completely open to whatever each community decides are its priorities. There is no need to limit people to specific topics (like health or the environment) as there are no pre-conditions for the funding. You will be given a consultation questionnaire, with questions to encourage local people to talk about the issues that are important to them.

Looking at priorities, not problems

Many communities involved in Invest Local are areas which have been previously labelled as 'poor', and consultations in the past have often been focussed on the needs of areas or what isn't here.

Invest Local doesn't assume that there are lots of things missing from communities or that they have lots of problems. Some areas may decide to work on issues that could be seen as problems, but others may choose to focus on opportunities, or making the good things in their communities even stronger.

How will the consultation be done?

You will be given a questionnaire that is designed to get people talking about the key issues that effect their community. The questionnaire can be given out to allow people to write answers or it can be done as a conversation.

The questionnaire could be done at community events – like fetes or fun days – or taken to local groups that meet regularly, or to the local church or school. You will know the best ways to reach as many people as possible.

What happens next?

After the consultation has been done, you will need to review the responses, work out what the priorities are for the community, then decide which projects or activities will best address those priorities.

At this stage, you should also look at what other organisations or programmes are already doing. Some of your priorities may already be being addressed by other organisations. Sometimes the role of Invest Local will be to 'fill in gaps' of existing projects, or to work with existing projects where local residents don't feel that they are working as well as they could.

Help and advice

We will give ongoing advice and support on the consultation process, and on how you can use the information to decide what your community's priorities should be. For more information, speak to your Invest Local officer.