**Consultation And Decision-Making Process**

Civic engagement is central to modern democracy. The Scottish Government and other public bodies should ensure that individual Community Councils are consulted directly at the earliest possible stage in the development of policy and the decision-making process on local issues.

Any consultation document should include:

• an executive summary

• a clearly defined purpose leading to the consultation process

• clear objectives required from consultation process

• any document should be comprehensible, concise, jargon free and widely accessible

• specific questions in relation to the consultation exercise

• minimum response period of 12 weeks – longer if over a holiday period

• proposed timescale for outcomes

• feedback options including a choice of preferred format.

Irrespective of whether formal or informal, once the consultation process has been completed, and the responses analysed, then a summary of the responses, including any resulting proposals for change or actions, should be made available in a variety of formats, such as:

• the organisation’s website

• in paper format as requested

• through face to face sessions

At the onset of any consultation process, each organisation should ensure that the lead officer or staff member responsible for the consultation exercise is also responsible for co-ordinating the dissemination of feedback information, which should be made available in a range of appropriate formats. The feedback should provide an analysis of the responses received and an explanation of proposals for change in light of the consultation process. The outcome of consultation exercises should be made available by the consulting body.

There should be a resistance to publishing feedback as glossy brochures or the indiscriminate circulation of information in paper format. The analysed responses and proposals, which result from the consultation process, should be freely available.

The [National Standards for Community Engagement](https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/) set out good practice principles to help guide the process of good community engagement.