Tools for engaging citizens

There are numerous " tools "or methods that can be used to engage with communities. A list of these is given below, with a summary of why and how they should be used, associated advantages and disadvantages, and also any local examples. This list is intended as an initial guide and is by no means exhaustive or prescriptive.

Tool	Objective	Purpose	Advantage	Disadvantage	Example
Publicity – newsletters	**Information -giving**	**To provide information specific to an organisation or neighbourhood initiative**	• **Potential for regular updates** • **Can reach a wide audience depending on coverage and readership**	• **Can be costly and time consuming to produce and distribute** • **Often perceived as junk mail** • **Not always read/seen by target audience**	• **BIG newsletter** • **About Leeds**
Consultation documents	**Information-giving/Consultation**	**To provide information and can also be used to gather views by including a response slip**	• **Good starting point for consultation** • **Makes the view of the organisation clear**	• **Can be costly to produce and circulate** • **May not be read by many** • **Needs to be produced in many different formats to be accessible**	• **Development dept – Statement of community involvement**
Exhibitions, road-shows, open- days	**Information-giving/Consultation**	**Used to provide information and to obtain views on specific projects or services**	• **Effective in publicising services/ organisations** • **Can give the public longer to comment on issues**	• **Groups who are reached are dependant on location and timing of road show, exhibition etc** • **Likely to obtain views**	• **JSC event** • **Chapeltown Rd Dev Plan event** • **Oakwood T & DC display**

				of a small number of people who are not representative of the target population	
Planning for Real	**Local involvement**	**Structured consultation method that uses map of the neighbourhood to ascertain what physical changes people want for their local area**	• **Easy to set up** • **Entertaining and involves those who wouldn't normally participate** • **Makes it easy to obtain honest and wide ranging opinions** • **Can deal with complex issues**	• **Can be costly** • **Difficult to ensure representative ness** • **Many maps may be required if consultation is to be far reaching**	• **Moortown ward at Carr Manor school** • **Beckhill Implementation Group**
Self-completion questionnaires/surveys	**Consultation**	**Market research exercise. Can be used to gather views, opinions and to measure attitudes**	• **Relatively low cost in time and money** • **Effective way of gaining information from a lot of people very quickly** • **Analysis can be relatively straightforward for someone with the relevant skills**	• **Open-ended questions can be difficult to analyse** • **Can yield a low response so requires a large sample** • **Difficult to engage with hard to reach groups** • **Cannot always control how different people interpret questions**	• **Chapeltown Community safety survey** • **Leeds NE Homes/IMPaCT customer research**
Area Committee meetings	**Information giving/consultation**	**Formal public decision –making. Public may attend and be permitted to speak.**	• **Provides a formal structure for decision making**	• **Limited public involvement**	• **Area Committee meetings**
Forums	**Consultation/Local**	**Structured meetings**	• **Regular process of**	• **Attendees are**	• **Ward forums in**

	involvement	with local residents/interest groups to consult/debate issues of local importance	engagement • Useful link between partner agencies and local people • Can be used to seek committed involvement from local people • Relatively cheap • Can be held at times and locations appropriate to target communities	likely to be small numbers and therefore not represent the views of the whole community • Can be dominated by the most vocal • Minutes can be taken • Needs effective management	Roundhay, Moortown and Chapel Allerton
Electronic consultation/e-government/Internet/email	Information giving/Consultation/Local Involvement	Provides information using web technology	• Very cheap and quick • Background information can be made readily available • Potentially wide-reaching and likely to be used extensively	• Only available to people who are IT literate and have access to appropriate equipment • Some groups less likely to use PCs and internet therefore unlikely to be able to obtain completely representative views(e.g elderly, low income	• Leeds Communities Online