

This is another extract from LGA best practice guidance of how long any body should run a consultation for:

How long should consultation take?

If you do decide to go ahead with a consultation exercise, it's important to make sure you give people enough time to respond. You also need to make sure that you have allowed sufficient time to analyse the results, evaluate the process and consider their views before you make any decisions about the next steps.

Think about when a decision is needed, and work backwards. The length of time needed will vary depending on:

- the consultation channels you have selected
- the ability of consultees to participate (for example, if they have specific needs)
- the time of year (for example school holidays) – election periods should be avoided
- the level of response you are seeking
- if other local events are taking place (can you use this to your advantage, or is it likely to dilute the level of interest in your consultation)?

Best practice suggests you should plan for up to six to 12 weeks for a consultation exercise. You should also be aware of the legal requirements for your specific consultation topic (statutory consultation has specific rules). If you are embarking on a major consultation, you should plan this well in advance of when a decision is needed. Stakeholders who meet infrequently might need more time to discuss their reply. You may need to allow extra time to publicise and promote your consultation in order to raise awareness. Consultations can take longer than expected, so make sure you build in sufficient time.

What is consultation?

Consultation is technically any activity that gives local people a voice and an opportunity to influence important decisions. It involves listening to and learning from local people before decisions are made or priorities are set. Resident surveys and Who Reads What? surveys would fall under the heading of consultation, but the term is usually applied when talking about activities where different parties are trying to reach an agreement or for more formal or detailed pieces of work aimed at finding out what residents think about significant changes or proposals that affect them, such as plans to close schools, regenerate or redevelop a local area, or planning applications.

Councils sometimes have a statutory requirement to consult their residents and this is especially true for issues such as planning, or redevelopments. Statutory consultations are bound by legal requirements, such as Best Value legislation, and can have strict rules surrounding how they should be conducted. If you fail to run a statutory consultation in line with those rules you could be liable for a judicial review so it is important to make sure that you check the guidelines surrounding your specific consultation plans.

Amongst other things, I refer you to the Local Government Association (LGA) guidance on how to conduct a consultation exercise.

I am sending this in before your nominated deadline, this is likely to be subject to judicial review.

For info, I attach a link to the Local Government Association's guidance on consultations:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/comms-hub->

Section 4: Consulting residents | Local Government Association

There are many occasions where you need to know more detail about what your residents, partners and wider communities think about specific issues that affect them. This is known as consultation.

www.local.gov.uk

Thank you.

I would ask that there is a proper response to a consultation process. This would mean that there is a published response that tries to summarise the responses. This should happen before any further final Local Plan is put to agreement of the Council, and before a final Plan is put to the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State.

Can you please include a period of time between your published document that summaries responses to the consultation, and before any further steps are taken?

I received through my letterbox today a leaflet advertising a Draft Local Plan. It appears from searching online that there is a Draft Local Plan and a New Enfield Local Plan. Which document should I be looking at?

You don't seem to be allowing much time for a consultation (deadline for replies seems to be 13 September 2021, if I were to read the New Enfield Local Plan). In the meantime, could you explain to me in layperson's language what is the difference labelled in your Appendices between "Site Allocations" and "Outside of the Placemaking Areas – Site Allocations".

