



Public Affairs Consultation Charter

Promoting Transparency, Inclusivity, and Accountability in Planning consultations

August 2025



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PRCA Public Affairs Consultation Charter

This guide is designed to establish a framework for effective public affairs in the consultation process for planning applications and public consultations within the United Kingdom.

The guidelines set out look at the principles for conducting a meaningful consultation.

Transparency and Accessibility:

- We commit to providing clear and accessible information about planning applications and consultation processes, including all relevant documents and materials.
- Information will be made available through multiple channels, such as online platforms, public consultations, and community meetings.
- We commit to publishing consultation objectives and strategy at the outset of the consultation.

Inclusivity and Participation:

- We will actively engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, community groups, and interested parties.
- We will make efforts to engage with hard-to-reach groups.
- Consultation methods will be accessible, diverse and inclusive, allowing for face-to-face meetings, online surveys, and other means to accommodate different preferences and needs.

Timeliness, Accuracy, and Clarity:

- We will establish clear timelines for each stage of the consultation process, ensuring that stakeholders know when and how to provide feedback.
- Responses to questions and feedback will be provided promptly, and any changes to the planning application will be communicated clearly.

Quality Feedback:

- We commit to capturing and analysing feedback from the public and stakeholders in a structured and meaningful manner.
- We will commit to understand and respond to the concerns and suggestions raised during the consultation.

Continuous Improvement:

- We will regularly review and update our consultation methods and processes based on feedback and evolving best practices.
- Lessons learned from past consultations will inform improvements in future planning applications.

Compliance with Legal and Ethical Standards:

- All consultation activities will adhere to legal requirements and legislation.



- Confidentiality and data protection will be maintained throughout the consultation process.
- The consultation will be conducted to high professional and ethical standards.

Review and Accountability:

- This charter will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and relevance.

Guidance for Public Affairs for Planning Applications

The Guidance is intended to establish best practices and ethical standards for public affairs for planning applications. It is aimed at promoting transparency, accessibility, inclusivity, and constructive dialogue among all parties involved in the planning consultation process.

The purpose of this Guidance is to promote effective and meaningful engagement between consultants, applicants, local authorities, elected members, the media, and the community during the planning application process. It aims to ensure fairness, transparency, and integrity in decision-making related to planning applications and enhance public trust and confidence in the public affairs process. This Guidance shall be periodically reviewed and revised to ensure its relevance and effectiveness in supporting fair and transparent public affairs for planning applications.

All PRCA members involved in the planning public affairs process should adhere to the following principles:

- **Transparency:** All relevant information, documents, and data related to planning applications shall be made readily available to stakeholders.
- **Inclusivity:** Consultation shall be accessible and open to all interested parties, and efforts shall be made to ensure representation of diverse perspectives.
- **Respect:** All stakeholders shall be treated with respect and dignity, fostering a constructive and collaborative atmosphere.
- **Timeliness:** Consultants and applicants shall aim to provide timely updates and responses to stakeholder inquiries and concerns.
- **Honesty:** All information provided during the engagement process shall be accurate, truthful, and complete.
- **Accountability:** Consultants and applicants shall be accountable for their actions and decisions throughout the planning application process.
- **Confidentiality:** Confidential information shared during the stakeholder engagement process shall be managed in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and regulations.

The stakeholder engagement process shall include the following steps:

- **Notification:** The consultant shall notify relevant stakeholders, including residents, businesses, elected members and community groups, about the planning application.
- **Consultation:** Stakeholders shall have the opportunity to provide input, feedback, and concerns during the consultation period.
- **Feedback:** Consultants shall provide clear and detailed feedback on how stakeholder input has been considered in the planning application.

Appendix A – Communications with Councillors and MPs

- All communications and interactions with stakeholders, including Councillors and MPs, shall be conducted transparently and in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.
- Elected representatives, such as Councillors and MPs, should have the opportunity to participate in stakeholder engagement processes, ensuring that the concerns and perspectives of their constituents are considered.
- All parties shall treat elected representatives with respect and courtesy, recognising their role as representatives of the community.
- Consultants and applicants shall provide elected representatives with relevant information related to public consultations (including land use planning applications) promptly and impartially.
- Elected representatives shall have the opportunity to consult with applicants and consultants on behalf of their constituents during the planning application process.
- Efforts shall be made to ensure that communications with elected representatives are timely, with responses provided within reasonable timeframes.
- All interactions and communications with elected representatives shall be documented and reported as part of ensure transparency and accountability.

Appendix B – Social media, websites, exhibitions, diversity, media relations, and engagement with members of the public:

Consultants will aim to:

- Use a variety of communication channels, including social media, dedicated websites, public exhibitions, and accessible, diverse and inclusive engagement methods to reach and involve a broad range of stakeholders.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in stakeholder engagement, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of all communities, including underrepresented groups, are heard, and considered.
- Maintain open and honest media relations, providing accurate and timely information to the media while respecting the confidentiality of sensitive matters.
- Engage proactively with members of the public through public meetings, forums, surveys, and other mechanisms to gather input and address concerns related to public consultations (including land use planning applications).
- Comply with the [PRCA PR Code of Conduct](#).

Appendix C – Engaging with representative bodies:

- Take into account the membership numbers that representative bodies (such as trade associations, business groups, charities and campaign groups) advocate on behalf of and ensure it is reflected in the weighting of post-consultation analysis.
- Consider what consultation organisations have carried out with their membership to develop their response (i.e. member meetings, surveys) and ensure it is reflected in post-consultation analysis.
- Be mindful that surveys aimed at individuals may not be appropriate for representative bodies or businesses. Therefore, consider adapting surveys to ensure that questions are appropriate for all potential audiences and/or allow for freeform responses to be submitted.
- Engage proactively with representative bodies and their members through meetings, forums, surveys, and other mechanisms to gather input and address concerns related to public consultations (including land use planning applications).
- Comply with the [PRCA PR Code of Conduct](#).