



DATA DECISION-MAKING DEMOCRACY DESIGN DISPLAYS EVENTS FORUMS FORMAL INTERACTIVE INTERNET INTERVIEWS LEAFLETS MEDIA MEETINGS NEWSLETTERS PAPERS PARTICIPATION ONE-TO-ONE OPEN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS PARTICIPATIONS PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRES RESPONSE SHARED SITE STAFF SURGERY SURVEYS SURVEY FORCE TELEPHONE SURVEYS TELEVISION AND RADIO VISITS WEBSITES WORKING GROUPS

Surveys

Surveys can be formal or informal. Informal Surveys tend to reach a self-selected group of people whereas formal Surveys are scientifically assembled and administered and aim to obtain information on issues at hand from statistically significant samples of the population. Surveys are a means to get a general sense of an average response from a specific section of the population or the whole population of a particular area. They can provide information on public opinion about particular issues and public concerns related to planning and find out what information people would like to receive. Surveys can be carried out in person, by mail, by phone or by internet. The design of Surveys and structuring of questions need to be conducted carefully to avoid errors in information gathering. Benefits from Surveys – whether conducted by interviewers or completed by respondents – may be improved if local groups are involved in the whole process, including design of the questions, administration of the Surveys and analysis of the results. Some common types of Surveys are described in more detail on the toolsheets: [Internet surveys](#), [Response cards](#), [Telephone surveys](#), [Interviews](#), [Questionnaires](#) and [One-to-one contact](#).



Surveys can be used to collect opinions and ideas but involving people in surveys of the forest is also a useful way to encourage their involvement and perspectives.

Resources and requirements

Skills

- Excellent skills, possibly even expert skills, in structuring the questionnaires or questions.
- Interviewers should preferably be trained to conduct interviews.

Equipment

- Standard office facilities are needed for writing and printing material and carrying out telephone surveys.
- A computer program for analysing the results is useful.

Level of engagement

INFORMING:

CONSULTING: ★

INVOLVING:

PARTNERSHIP:

Strengths

- Surveys can provide a good cross-section of public opinion and people's views about given issues in the area.
- They can be targeted to special groups of the population.
- If properly designed, the results can be statistically valid.
- Informal public opinion surveys are relatively inexpensive.

Weaknesses

- Organising a Survey can be expensive and time and labour intensive.
- Survey design normally requires professional skills.
- Surveys do not provide much opportunity for interaction.
- Interviews may give false impressions if not conducted in the proper way.
- Carrying out a Survey may raise false expectations within communities unless the purpose is made clear.
- The Survey sample must be taken with care.

Time

- Time requirements depend on the type of Survey, but time is always needed for designing and conducting the Survey, and analysing the results.

Costs

- Costs depend on the extent and nature of the Survey; informal Surveys and self-completed questionnaires are generally cheap compared to formal Surveys or interviews.

Useful sources of information

Books

- Community participation in Local Agenda 21. J. Bishop (1994). LGMB, London.
- Creating involvement. Environment Trust Associates (1994). Local Government } Management Board, London.
- The guide to effective participation. D. Wilcox (1994). Partnerships Books, London.

Web

- The Guide to Effective Participation by David Wilcox: www.partnerships.org.uk
- Public involvement techniques for transportation decision-making by United States Department of Transportation: www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/surveys.htm

Training

- The Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research runs courses on Surveys and Questionnaire Design: www.ccsr.ac.uk

What do you Dislike about Cow Hill

A

B

C

What do you Like about Cow Hill

M

N

O

How often do you use Cow Hill

Daily
Weekly
Fortnightly
Monthly
First Visit
Never

Cow Hill Have Your Say

1:17000

How Important is Cow Hill To You (Even if you dont use it)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not Important Very Important

Why Not Important ?

*
*
*

Why Important ?

*
*
*

What are your suggestions to improve Cow Hill?

1

2

3

M					
F					

A Survey form to capture views and ideas of people on a forest (Lochaber Forest District).

This toolbox is designed to assist Forestry Commission staff when they are considering which tools they could use to involve the public in the forest and woodland planning process. For more information please visit the website at: www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox