

Public consultations guidance

Help shape council decisions

We want residents to have a real say in the council decisions that affect them. This guide explains our consultation process, how you can get involved and what you can expect from us.

Reasons for carrying out consultations

- Issues where the council has a statutory duty to consult;
- to improve planning, policy and decision making;
- to make better use of resources;
- to access new information, ideas and suggestions;
- to encourage greater participation in the activities of the council;
- to govern by consent;
- to measure residents' satisfaction with the council; and
- to shape council activities around residents' needs and aspirations.

Our promise for a fair consultation

To ensure our consultations are fair, we follow four key legal rules:

- **We'll ask you early:** we'll consult you while ideas are still being developed, so your feedback can make a real difference.
- **We'll give you clear information:** we'll provide the information you need to understand the proposal and give an informed response.
- **We'll give you enough time to respond:** you will have a proper amount of time to consider proposals and share your views without being rushed.
- **We'll genuinely listen to your feedback:** we will carefully consider every response before a final decision is made and show how feedback was used.

How long do consultations last?

Our public consultations typically run for at least six weeks, and wherever possible, for eight weeks. This is our standard to ensure everyone has a fair chance to participate.

Get involved

You can find current and upcoming consultations on:

- our website: swale.gov.uk/consultations
- our social media channels
- posters and leaflets in local community spaces, like libraries.

Your voice matters, and we look forward to hearing from you.