Experiences of econsultation & Lessons Learned

Stephen Hilton
Bristol City Council

Stages in e-Consultation

- Aiming to Stimulate community-led ‘ground-up’ approaches
- Experimenting with council-led econsultation approaches
- Coordinating Information
1. Consultation Finder – *all council consultations in one place on the web*
2. Examples of council-led econsultations – height matters, I’m a councillor, epetitions, askbristol
3. Some key lessons from the evaluation of the Local eDemocracy National Project
Setting the Scene
About Bristol

- 8th largest city in England
- Population of 400,000
- University city - 36,000 students
- Regional capital of the south west
About Bristol City Council

Turning the clock back to 2000/1
Remember “Joined-up” policy making?

"This is not only a sports policy ... it is a health policy, an education policy, a crime policy, an anti-drugs policy..."

Tony Blair at the Labour Party conference 2000,
“Our [The Audit Commission’s] judgements concern how well council’s understand the needs of their communities and how effectively and relevantly they respond to them – not whether they match prescribed models”

Wendy Thompson, LGC, February 2001
Consultation Strategy

More than twenty five consultations found to be running concurrently when the strategy was being prepared

Bristol City Council
Public Consultation Strategy
Agreed in
September 2001
At the same time...
Growing On-line Opportunity

Growth in Bristol citizens's Web Use

- Have web access
- Regular web use
- Have access but do not use
First steps towards econsultation
Bristol City Council’s CONSULTATION FINDER

- All council consultations in one place on the web
Bristol City Council’s

CONSULTATION FINDER AIMS

Make it easier for…

• Members to find out about consultation in their wards
• Officers to check what consultation is planned, what’s been done before
• Citizens and stakeholders to register interest and to participate
Consultation Finder Features

- Searchable archive of consultations
- Search by subject, status or ward (postcode to look up ward)
- Find out what consultation is planned, register interest and receive notification
- Take part in consultations on-line
- Read background information on-line
- See results of consultations – find out about decisions made following consultation
## Initial Consultation Screen

### Consultation Finder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Area of Interest</th>
<th>By Ward</th>
<th>Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose Interest: All</td>
<td>Choose Status: Open</td>
<td>Go</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Consultations Found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What should the council’s priorities be?</td>
<td>16 Jan 2004 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Council’s Corporate Plan is being reviewed and we want your opinion - what are the main things that the council should be focusing on over the next three years?</td>
<td>16 Jan 2004 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostels and other Temporary Accommodation</td>
<td>16 Jan 2004 to 13 Feb 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Council is preparing supplementary planning guidance for the development of hostels and other types of development which provides accommodation on a temporary basis.</td>
<td>16 Jan 2004 to 13 Feb 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget Consultation 2004/5</td>
<td>15 Dec 2003 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Council is currently considering its budget for next year and the level of council tax.</td>
<td>15 Dec 2003 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Rights</td>
<td>1 Dec 2003 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Citizens’ Panel survey investigating what action people take if they purchase faulty goods or services and if they know where they can get help and advice.</td>
<td>1 Dec 2003 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Gallery at Bristol City Museum</td>
<td>1 Dec 2003 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Museum Service are putting in a bid to win some money to re-develop one of the galleries at the City Museum.</td>
<td>1 Dec 2003 to 31 Jan 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol Compact Consultation Guidelines</td>
<td>11 Nov 2003 to 11 Feb 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bristol Compact, which is an agreement between local public agencies and the voluntary and</td>
<td>11 Nov 2003 to 11 Feb 2004</td>
<td>Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Search by Area of Interest

Consultation Finder

By Area of Interest

Choose Interest:
- All
- Equality
- Health
- Housing & Homelessness
- Older People
- Planning
- Regeneration
- Satisfaction
- Social Services
- Spending & Council Tax
- Technology
- Traffic & Transport

Choose Status:
- Open
- Closed

Bristol City and Industrial Museum Survey
To investigate visitors' attitudes towards the museum.

Child protection case conferences
Survey of parents and carers attending child protection conferences.

School Attendance
A Best Value Review and Select Committee investigation into non-attendance at schools.

Colston Hall Redevelopment
The multi-million dollar refurbishment of Colston Hall is now underway and we wish to consult all Bristol residents about the redevelopment project.

Prefabs and the Priority Stock Strategy
Bristol City Council is expected to agree the way forward for the modernisation and replacement of its worst housing stock at a cabinet meeting to be held on September 2.

User Satisfaction Surveys 2003/04
A government required survey to determine satisfaction levels with all areas of council services and to form Best Value Performance Indicators.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2003/04
Annual statutory customer satisfaction survey, where a random sample of council tenants are asked their opinion on a range of issues which directly affect them.

Double Click - Young Citizens' Panel
Double Click is for people under age 18 who live in Bristol. It's a chance to see what other young people in the city are saying and to send your comments straight to the council.

Fishponds Area Housing Committee Meetings
Fishponds Area Housing Committee Meetings are held around once a month for any council tenants in the area.

Benefits Satisfaction Survey June/July '03
Benefits Satisfaction Survey June/July '03

Search

## Search by Status

### Consultation Finder

#### By Area of Interest
- Choose Interest: Social Services

#### Choose Status:
- Closed
- Recently Closed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Focus - Join the debate</th>
<th>10 Feb 2003 to 1 May 2003</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Focus is one of the council’s key customers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health Best Value Review</th>
<th>7 Jan 2008 to 30 Jun 2008</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder conferences for users of the mental health service, focusing on meaningful activity and occupation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Plan Review</th>
<th>1 Jan 2003 to 3 Mar 2003</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Corporate Plan covers Bristol City Council’s values, aims and priorities for the coming years. The plan will be reviewed every year in the light of new challenges the council and the city faces.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fair Access to Social Care Services for Adults</th>
<th>3 Dec 2002 to 31 Jan 2003</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal consultation on revision of Social Services &amp; Health’s eligibility criteria for social care services for adults.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bristol Partnership - Draft Community Strategy</th>
<th>2 Dec 2002 to 31 Jan 2003</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bristol Partnership has been formed to improve services and the quality of life in Bristol through closer joint working between the public, private and voluntary sectors and the communities they serve.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to Council Services</th>
<th>1 Nov 2002 to 30 Nov 2002</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A review of the way people access council services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best and Worst Things about Bristol</th>
<th>29 Jul 2002 to 30 Sep 2002</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Citizens’ Panel survey to assess broad views of Bristol.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Payments for Older People &amp; Disabled Adults</th>
<th>1 Jun 2002 to 31 Aug 2002</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Payments (DP) is money paid to people instead of services to extend their choice and control after assessment. Social Services &amp; Health is consulting as part of a review of DP.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dual Heritage Project Foster Carers</th>
<th>1 Feb 2002 to 31 Mar 2002</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consulted foster carers caring for children of dual heritage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charges for Non-Residential Social Care</th>
<th>10 Dec 2001 to 31 Mar 2002</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consulted foster carers caring for children of non-residential social care.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Take part in an current consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultation Finder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultations Found</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bristol City and Industrial Museum Survey 2004</strong> 2 Feb 2004 to 18 Feb 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To investigate visitors’ attitudes towards the City and Industrial museums and how satisfied they are with the service during 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child protection case conferences</strong> 31 Dec 2003 to 31 Mar 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of parents and carers attending child protection case conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Attendance</strong> 1 Nov 2003 to 31 Mar 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Best Value Review and Select Committee investigation into non-attendance at schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colston Hall Redevelopment</strong> 1 Oct 2003 to 1 Jun 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The multi-million dollar refurbishment of Colston Hall is now underway and we wish to consult all Bristol residents about the redevelopment project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prefabs and the Priority Stock Strategy</strong> 2 Sep 2003 to 1 Jun 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol City Council is expected to agree the way forward for the modernisation and replacement of its worst housing stock at a cabinet meeting to be held on September 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>User Satisfaction Surveys 2003/04</strong> 1 Sep 2003 to 29 Feb 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A government required survey to determine satisfaction levels with all areas of council services and to form Best Value Performance Indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2003/04</strong> 1 Sep 2003 to 30 Mar 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual statutory customer satisfaction survey, where a random sample of council tenants are asked their opinion on a range of issues which directly affect them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Double Click - Young Citizens’ Panel</strong> 1 Jul 2003 to 1 Apr 2004 Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Click is for people under age 18 who live in Bristol. It’s a chance to see what other young people in the city are saying and to send your comments straight to the council.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fishponds Area Housing Committee Meetings</strong> 1 Jul 2003 to 1 Dec 2004 Open</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishponds Area Housing Committee Meetings are held around once a month for any council tenants in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits Satisfaction Survey June/July 03</strong> 1 Jun 2003 to 31 May 2003 Open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(For more information, please visit the [Bristol City Council website](http://www.bristol.gov.uk).)
Complete on-line survey

Whether you take them or not, we want to know how you feel about drugs.

Click here to fill in the survey

* You can complete the survey anonymously and all your answers will be kept confidential.

* The results of this survey are going to be used by the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership to help inform the development of plans for drug services for young people.

Text 2 Talk

Use your mobile phone to take part in monthly opinion polls on topics such as:

* public transport
  - parking

HELP

If you want more information or want to talk to someone about drugs or alcohol, contact details for all local and national services are available by clicking here.
Complete on-line surveys

Any information you give in this survey will be kept confidential and won't be passed onto anybody else. However, if there are any questions you don't feel comfortable answering, please just skip over them.

There are six sections in this survey. It should take you about 10 minutes to complete.

Section One: Drugs in Bristol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Generally, how big a problem do you think drugs are in Bristol?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A very big problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A fairly big problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a very big problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a problem at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>In your local area, how much of a problem are the following things?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People doing drugs on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People selling drugs on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discarded needles or other litter from people doing drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drug-related crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do drugs cause any other problems in your local area?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress: [ ]

Next
### Gaol Ferry Bridge

**Consultation Overview**

In 2004 the Gaol Ferry Bridge will be 70 years old and it is the 200th anniversary of the digging of the New Cut which it crosses over. Help choose the new colour of the bridge!

#### Read background papers

- **Who was consulting?**
  - Environment, Transport & Leisure

- **And why?**
  - We plan to celebrate this throughout the following year and hope that local communities and businesses will want to get involved. We would like interested parties to participate by feeding back to us.

- **Who did they want to consult?**
  - General Public

- **When did the consultation take place?**
  - Start Date: 23 Oct 2003
  - End Date: 31 Oct 2003

- **What response did they get?**
  - More than 1000 leaflets were handed out to rush-hour commuters at the Gaol Ferry Bridge on 23rd October 2003. Members of the public were also invited to respond via an online poll on the council website. Over 500 responses were received.

- **What were the findings?**
  - Nearly two-thirds of people (61%) voted for the bridge to be painted in the Victorian red and linen colour scheme. The bridge will receive its new coat of paint in spring 2004.

- **More detailed findings**

#### Contact Information

- Marketing and Operations Team
  - 0117 9223099
- Email: research_promotions_mops@bristol-city.gov.uk
Links to web sites

Bristol Citizens’ Panel

We present on this page our latest reports from the Bristol Citizens’ Panel, together with instructions on how to access previous panel reports.

Latest Panel Reports

- **Spare Some Change** - Begging in Bristol
  - Attitudes and beliefs about begging including views on giving money directly to people who beg or to an authorised collection box scheme.
  - June 2002, Adobe pdf, 206 kb

- **The E-Communications Revolution**
  - A Citizens’ Panel survey which explores the use of the Internet and other new technologies in Bristol.
  - February 2003, Adobe pdf, 568 kb

- **Best and Worst of Bristol**
  - Citizen’s Panellists were asked to list the best and the worst things about living in Bristol for the latest update of this key indicator.
  - November 2002, Adobe pdf, 349 kb

Access the files by clicking on the title of the report or the picture above.
Visits to Consultation Finder


Visits

- May-02: 472
- Jul-02: 554
- Aug-02: 586
- Sep-02: 524
- Oct-02: 541
- Nov-02: 669
- Dec-02: 898
- Jan-03: 731
- Feb-03: 772
- Mar-03: 847
- Apr-03: 979
- May-03: 91
- Jun-03: 885
- Jul-03: 836
- Aug-03: 95
- Sep-03: 979
- Oct-03: 991
- Nov-03: 
- Dec-03: 1740
- Jan-04: 1556
- Feb-04: 1526
- Mar-04: 1185
- Apr-04: 176
- May-04: 1027
- Jun-04: 1079
- Jul-04: 1238
- Aug-04: 1715
- Sep-04: 1581
- Oct-04: 2078
- Nov-04: 1581
2 - Examples of Bristol econsultations
Height Matters?
The future of tall buildings in Bristol
May 2004.

‘Height Matters?’ is a series of events being promoted by Bristol City Council and the Architecture Centre to encourage people to join the debate on tall buildings in Bristol. Events are planned to coincide with Bristol City Council publishing its draft supplementary planning guidance on tall buildings.

The Big Question

Broadmead, Harbourside and Temple. This interest in building tall is likely to increase.

The last significant era of building high (1950s-70s), has generally left a legacy of poor quality tall buildings, often unloved by their occupants and too dominant in the urban landscape.

Thus, there is a need for better policy guidance to
Height Matters

Key Features

• Consultation on proposed tall buildings policy – policy advice note
• April 04 – June 04
• Range of e-consultation / participation tools used – survey, forum and “eDecide”
• Offline and Online working together
Height matters? - the future of tall buildings in Bristol

The Big Question
A new wave of tall buildings is being constructed in major cities in this country and in other parts of the world. As a large UK and European city, this renewed interest in building tall has reached Bristol with new proposals for tall buildings in our city, particularly in the city centre’s main regeneration areas; Broadmead, Harbourside and Temple. Broadmead, Harbourside and Temple. This renewed interest in building tall is likely to increase.

The last significant era of building high (1950s-70s), has generally left a legacy of poor quality tall buildings, often unloved by their occupants and too dominant in the urban landscape. Thus, there is a need for better policy guidance to ensure the mistakes of this period are not repeated with any future tall buildings.

The big question therefore is “How should we respond to this renewed interest in tall buildings in Bristol?” This survey has been designed to help you think through some of the issues.

This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete

Progress

Reset Next
Online survey

- Bristol’s largest online survey to date – 85% online response / 643 respondents
e-Decide

- A deliberative polling tool
- Interactive tool which presents both sides of the debate, challenging people’s beliefs
- Used as a pre-consultation tool to encourage more informed consultees
- 367 consultees used e-decide
Are you quite certain?

Since few matters are black or white, eDecide will challenge your opinion and present both sides of the debate to encourage more informed consultation.

You will be presented with 5 more arguments, each one prompted by your answer but arguing the opposite point of view. Only your last choice will be recorded as your view on this issue. At the end of the process you can view the votes cast and participate in an important survey. You can also register to join a focus group.

Bristol is not the place for tall buildings

Many people believe that Bristol, particularly the centre area of the city, is not suited to tall buildings. The city’s last flirtation with tall buildings in the 60s and 70s has largely created awkward blocks which detract from a low rise city providing a backdrop for our many spires and monuments.

“Bristol like Edinburgh, Dublin and...”
e-petitions

- Bristol City Council & Kingston upon Thames, first to use e-petitioner
- Previously used by Scottish Parliament
- Developed by Tele Democracy Centre at Napier University
- Part of Local eDemocracy National Project
E-petitioner – Key Functions

• Anyone can use petitioner to gather support
• Provides background information, photos, links
• On and offline petitions listed in one place
• Discussion forum can contain comments for and against each petition
• Allows citizens and decision-makers to weigh up both sides of the argument
• Tracks progress – encourages feedback
Bristol e-Petitioner

To view a petition click on a subject below. To view archived petitions, select the year from the drop-down list and then click 'Go'.

View: Current Petitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Principal Petitioner:</th>
<th>Closing Date:</th>
<th>Status:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e-Petitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose ID Cards and centralised accumulation of data on citizens</td>
<td>Dave Gould</td>
<td>30 June 2005</td>
<td>Collecting Signatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with local businesses and shops to reduce waste packaging</td>
<td>Gerald Rosenberg</td>
<td>09 May 2005</td>
<td>Collecting Signatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More comprehensive conditions for striptease entertainment venues</td>
<td>Bristol Women’s Forum</td>
<td>25 April 2005</td>
<td>Collecting Signatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Halal certified food stalls</td>
<td>Farhan Shah</td>
<td>03 April 2005</td>
<td>To Be Submitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Bristol e-Petitioner website provides an interactive platform for citizens to submit and sign petitions on various issues. The website allows users to view current and archived petitions, select petitions by clicking on their topics, and view details such as the principal petitioner, closing dates, and status of the petitions. The platform encourages participation in civic matters, enabling residents to express their opinions and concerns effectively.
Petition Details

- **Petition title:** Pedestrian bridge between Wapping Wharf and Canon's Marsh
- **Raised by:** Cllr Roy Tails
- **Date raised:** 04 January 2005
- **Corresponding issue:** Transport
- **Number of discussion comments:** 14
- **Number of signatures:** 355
- **Recent signatures:**
  - Marjukka Grover, North Somerset
  - Sarah Hills, South Gloucester
  - Aslin Carter, Clifton
  - Hugh Grant-Peterkin, Gotham
  - Yaara, Hortfield

**View all of the signatures**

**Petition Progress**

Sorry, we do not have any feedback information on this petition at the moment.
Pedestrian bridge between Wapping Wharf and Canon's Marsh
Raised by: Cllr Roy Tallis on 04 January 2005

We the undersigned residents of and visitors to Bristol urge the City Council to invite proposals for a pedestrian bridge spanning the docks from the Maritime Museum to Canon’s Marsh. Such a bridge would have a major beneficial impact on the communities south of the river Aven and visitors to Bristol wishing to include the ss Great Britain in their tour.
Here are some of the comments added so far. To read more, just click on the comment you want. If there is a + sign before a comment, you can click on it to see the replies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The proposed ID Cards scheme will connect every bit of data held about us on computers eg phone, int......(read more...)</td>
<td>Dave Gould</td>
<td>01/04/2005 15:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave - you over estimate how easy it is for different databases to talk to each other. I'm sure we......(read more...)</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>14/04/2005 15:43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree with James. I'm of the opinion that if you haven't got anything to hide, you haven't got an......(read more...)</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>15/04/2005 10:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi Sarah, If you have nothing to hide, please post up your FULL name, a photo, phone number, home a......(read more...)</td>
<td>Dave Gould</td>
<td>16/04/2005 05:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James - I have a degree in Computer Science and this is how I first heard about the dangers. It i......(read more...)</td>
<td>Dave Gould</td>
<td>16/04/2005 04:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spanish ID is little more than a laminated photo. This is totally different from what is being ......(read more...)</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>15/04/2005 15:47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simply I agree</td>
<td>Dave Gould</td>
<td>16/04/2005 05:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Dave Gould i mean</td>
<td>Lolly Walsh</td>
<td>17/04/2005 16:42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO REOPEN RAILWAY LINE

11:00 - 31 January 2005

It is surely crazy that the last few miles of the Bristol to Portishead branch line lie rusting while thousands more houses are being built in Portishead, and commuters on the A369 get ever more frustrated. Now I read that MP Dr Liam Fox is to raise the issue in the House of Commons ("Cut congestion with train link", Post, January 24).

Maximum public support for this issue is essential if anything is to get done. If any reader wishes to help support the campaign for the reopening of the line, there is a petition running on the Bristol City Council website (www.bristol.gov.uk/item/epetition). Just click on "ist petitions".

The campaign to reopen the line, the Portishead Heritage Rail Project, also has a
Petition Progress

This petition was presented to Cabinet on 21 September (agenda at: http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/Fuguri/frame.html?A+AMM01902+BG+F+AMM00103) for discussion during item 7: Strategy for the provision of public toilets in the street scene.

The decision reached was:

1. That the policy, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report of the Director of Neighbourhood and Housing Services, particularly the British Toilet Association's Standard, be adopted for the proposed core provision of public toilets in Bristol.
2. That public consultation be undertaken on the toilets being recommended for closure
3. That officers explore the potential for providing automated public conveniences (APC's) in key locations through an advertising arrangement with a private sector provider
4. That the Cabinet receive a report, benefitting from local consultation, equalities impact assessments, and in-depth feasibility studies, to enable final decisions to be made for public toilet provision in Bristol.
I’m a councillor...

- Used to support Local Democracy Week 04
- Aimed at young people in schools – 245 participants in 6 schools
- 6 councillors, including Executive Members answered 257 questions from young people
- Two councillors voted-off each week
- Winner became “Youth e-Champion”
Gimmick or Good Practice?

- Certainly gimmicky – borrows from successful TV show format
- But a gimmick that worked well during Local Democracy Week
- Attractive format for young people, engaged with them and livened-up citizenship classes
- Good outputs for investment, media interest, buy-in from elected members etc
James, aged 13, said: "This is the first time I have ever asked a councillor a question. I am surprised, they are all much nicer than I expected. I definitely plan to vote when I am older."

Councillor Claire Cook
Became a Youth Champion
Shortly to undertake a blog
3 - eDemocracy National Project. Lessons from Evaluation
Expert Evaluation Group

- Multi-disciplinary approach - technologist, political scientist and experimental psychologist
- Independent from Project
Ground-Up Evaluation

Participation

Consultation

Information

Structure of Evaluation & Research

Top-Down Evaluation

Young People’s Research

Citizens Research

Local Authority Research

Ground-Up Evaluation
Multi-Method Research & Evaluation

- Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders on ‘key dimensions’ of the projects
- Observation and user-testing
- Field tests with members of the public, using computers in public libraries
- Online discussion and usage statistics from e-democracy tools and web servers
- Online questionnaires
- Review of project documentation
What Works… to achieve what?

- “Technologists too often assume that government is just another machine to be fixed”

- Evaluation involves more than the question of “what works”, for that begs the more interesting question: “What works to achieve what?”
Two Key Questions to Emerge

• How can eDemocracy strengthen existing democratic relationships between members, officers and citizens?

• Can the conscious creation of online networks invigorate the democratic characteristics of local government?
The Research Context

- In depth research with young people
- YouGov survey of citizens
- Mori research with Local Authorities
Research with Citizens

- Young People want the opportunity to speak up on issues which affect them (72%) but…
- Half (52%) say they are not interested in politics
- Once familiar with the idea, the vast majority of citizens (79%) feel e-Democracy is something that Governments should pursue
YouGov – Research with Citizens

• But two-thirds of those defined as currently having ‘low-level political interest’ do not want more involvement in local issues… why?
e-Democracy is about Trust & Confidence

- Building trust in online citizen-government relations is a key element of e-democracy

My council doesn't care what I think

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<th>agree</th>
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<th>disagree</th>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
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MORI research with Local Authorities

- 55% of authorities plan to have written eDemocracy strategy in place by September 05
- There is a significant gap between what is available offline and what has been made available online – space for quick wins
- Activity is top-down (council-led) rather than focused on developing “community capacity”
- Interesting positive association noted between investment in eDem and higher performance-rating in CPA!
Projects included

- Epetitions
- Online Citizens’ Panels
- Local Issues Forums
- Cross cutting issues and partnerships
- Website for fifty plus
- Work with BBC ICAN
- Webcasting
- Young people’s perceptions of various approaches
- Micro-Democracy
Limited Time for Implementation - Scale of Activity in First 2-3 Months

- Epetitions – 19 petitions, 1200 signatures, 74 discussion comments
- Issues Forums, 260 comments from 161 people
- Online Citizens’ Panel (Bristol), 735 users, 495 comments
- Website for fifty plus, 1000 registered users, 90 visits per week
- Work with BBC ICAN – 10,000 registered users during first two years, 14 campaigns started in LA pilots
Key Messages from Across all of these Approaches

- Join it up
- Take a leap - try something different
- Be inclusive
- Invest in online promotion and outreach
- Actively Moderate
- Keep it simple
- Work with trusted intermediaries
- Develop networks – social capital
Where Next?

- Identify and work with those who have real enthusiasm for econsultation / participation
- Train community moderators
- Identify how we can work with trusted partners – BBC etc
- Explore how we can stimulate conditions for ground-up participation (e-innovations project)
But … Don’t Over-Promise!

• “iCAN … restores my faith in humanity. It just makes me realise that there are some fantastic people all around the country who really believe in helping other people, working with other people and who are really passionate and committed to what they do”
  *iCAN Worker*

• “I suppose it is better that it is there than not”
  *Citizen*
Research & Evaluation Outputs

- What Works, literature review (available now)
- Baseline survey of Councils (available now)
- eMethods Guide and Context Report (June)
- Evaluation of council-led ‘top-down’ approaches (June)
- Evaluation of community focussed ‘ground-up’ approaches (June)
- Evaluation of Young People’s Perceptions of eDemocracy (June)
- Comparative study of changes in citizens’ perceptions (June)
- eDemocracy video –visual Exec Summary (June)
Links and Contacts

- e-Petitions
  - [http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/item/epetition.html](http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/item/epetition.html)

- Ask Bristol
  - [http://www.askbristol.com](http://www.askbristol.com)

- Bristol City Council
  - [http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk](http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk)

- Local e-Democracy National Project
  - [http://www.e-democracy.gov.uk](http://www.e-democracy.gov.uk)

- Stephen Hilton, Consultation Manager, Bristol City Council
  - 0117 922 2848
  - Stephen_hilton@bristol-city.gov.uk