

Case Study: Surrey County Council

Summary of the Project

Over recent years, the role of local authorities in education has changed: from a much more hands on role in the running of schools, to a strategic commissioner (ensuring that the right sort of provision is available in the right place at the right time). To reflect that change, Surrey were keen to engage all stakeholders – teachers, pupils, governors and parents - in a discussion about how education should be shaped across the county, to best meet the needs of the community now and in the future.

In summer 2007, the challenge was to establish a participative process to develop the Learning Strategy for Surrey in time to support their Building Schools for the Future bid (expected to be made Autumn 2008).

EightyTwenty Insight were engaged to establish the learning strategy project – to ensure that the plans and resourcing were soundly based and that the research / development programme was drawn widely enough to set a robust strategy. The plans included an extensive consultation process engaging every ward across the County and were dovetailed with the County's management and governance processes.

Insights gained from this Project

The following insights can be gained from this project:

- a) For consultation to be effective – and to be seen to be effective – sufficient time must be factored in to plans to allow both the gathering of views and feedback to those who have participated
- b) Sufficient time must be factored in to project plans to allow for approvals and governance processes – these can often require several weeks at each stage.