



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy


# Improving digital consultations & our use of Citizen Space


Marilyn Booth, October 2017



# Last summer's project

- Started as BIS project – ended as BEIS.
- To evaluate consultations, calls for evidence, independent reviews and informal consultations/engagement since 2014.
- To provide targets for consultation views and conversion rates based on sound data – rather than 'guestimations'.
- To be able to advise policy colleagues on the resource required to develop and analyse the consultation; manage policy expectations about responses; and offer insight into successful approaches.
- To understand the impact Citizen Space actually has on response and engagement rates.



Search consultations 

Consultation Hub Find Consultations We Asked, You Said, We Did

Improving the internal consultation process

### Overview


Within BEIS, the digital communications team have been looking at our processes for support consultations, reviews and calls for evidence - but we need your help to understand how the consultation process works in practice for you, and how we can improve it.

So, we would like to hear the experiences of those of you who have previously run a consultation, review or call for evidence and to hear your views of where you would go for support if you have not yet run such an exercise.

This survey is aimed at ex-BIS staff too, so if you are now in DfE or DfT we hope you will take part.

**Closes 16 Sep 2016**  
Opened 12 Aug 2016

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# Background

- BIS procured Citizen Space in April 2014.
- Use and capability developed.
- Recognised that we needed to improve quality and consistency of content on there and our approach to consultation.
- Meet our aim of securing departmental reputation online – needs good quality written/question content as well as visuals; remove the difficulty of GOV.UK integration.

The screenshot shows the 'Consultation Hub' page of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the department's logo, a search bar labeled 'Search consultations', and links for 'Consultation Hub', 'Find Consultations', and 'We Asked, You Said, We Did'. The main header area is dark blue with the title 'Consultation Hub' in white. Below this, a text block explains the site's purpose: 'This site will help you find, share and participate in consultations that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy runs. Consultations up to 14 July 2016 were run by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills or Department for Energy and Climate Change.' It also provides a link to GOV.UK for more information. The page features two main sections: 'Open Consultations' and 'Closed Consultations'. The 'Open Consultations' section lists 'Furniture and furnishings fire safety regulations: proposed changes (2016)' with a 'Date Closes' of '11 Nov 2016' and a button to 'See All Open Consultations'. The 'Closed Consultations' section lists 'Climate Change Agreements: Review of Buy-out Price' with a 'Date Closed' of '23 Sep 2016'.

Open Consultations	Date Closes
<a href="#">Furniture and furnishings fire safety regulations: proposed changes (2016)</a>	11 Nov 2016

[See All Open Consultations](#)

Closed Consultations	Date Closed
<a href="#">Climate Change Agreements: Review of Buy-out Price</a>	23 Sep 2016



Independent Review of the Sharing Economy - Call for Evidence

What should working days during shared parental leave be called?

**National Innovation Plan: call for ideas**

Building our Industrial Sector

Building our Industrial Strategy

Supercomputer at the STFC Daresbury Hartree Facility. Credit: STFC.



At the moment the data that we have looks at whether learners achieve their qualifications. This can be useful as people want to know whether they're likely to pass the qualification they are thinking about taking, but it doesn't tell the whole



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# Gathering our data

Click on data ranges to see more info about the ranges used within the spreadsheet									
Title		Type	Opened	Closed	Response	Length (weeks)	Theme	Citizen Space used?	Gov.uk (unique views)
Public Data Group		team engage	17-Dec-2014	28-Feb-2015	yes	10:25:43	Public Data	y	
Science and research: proposals for long-term capital investment	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/science-and-research-proposals-for-long-term-capital-investment">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/science-and-research-proposals-for-long-term-capital-investment</a>	consultation	25-Apr-2014	4-Jul-2014	yes	10:00:00	Science & Research	y	
Science & Innovation Strategy	CS only	team engage	25-Jul-2014	12-Sep-2014	yes	7:00:00	Innovation	y	
Adult further education: how do we measure success?	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/adult-further-education-how-do-we-measure-success">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/adult-further-education-how-do-we-measure-success</a>	consultation	12-Aug-2014	10-Oct-2014	yes	8:25:43	Further Education	y	
Sharing Economy Review	CS only	Review	29-Sep-2014	11-Nov-2014	yes	6:08:34	Business	y	
Sunday trading rules	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/devolving-sunday-trading-rules">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/devolving-sunday-trading-rules</a>	consultation	5-Aug-2015	16-Sep-2015	yes	6:00:00	Consumers	y	
	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/apprenticeships-levy-e">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/apprenticeships-levy-e</a>								

- To have robust data from a broad dataset, all 96 BIS consultation, calls for evidence, independent reviews and informal consultations initially reviewed.
- Now over 170 cases; able to compare BIS, DECC and BEIS performance.
- Considered a wide range of data points including policy theme, visits to GOV.UK and Citizen Space, presence of digital engagement plan, response rates and much more (25+ pieces of data for each exercise).
- Created a 'beast' of an excel document that can be regularly updated, and used to provide both quantitative and qualitative insights on ongoing basis.



# What does our data tell us?

- The first BIS Citizen Space consultation had a 7% conversion rate (ie 7% of visitors who visited the consultation actually completed the consultation survey) We considered 7% a high rate based on our knowledge of GOV.UK data at the time.
- This figure has now been surpassed many times, with the highest conversion at 52%.
- Initially, average conversion rate if the consultation is on **Citizen Space was 21% rising to 25% with sustained and targeted digital engagement and outreach**. Both visits and responses also increase significantly with digital engagement.
- By comparison, the average conversion rate for consultation/review only on **GOV.UK was 3%**.
- Citizen Space is working on multiple levels to create a more successful consultation experience for policy makers.



# Digital activity and its impacts

- All consultations have some degree of digital support (from publishing through to CS training).
- 14: sustained engagement and an “open policy” approach throughout their lifespans. (More actively listening).
- With digital support, Citizen Space views > up by over 400% - average views increase from below 1,000 to over 4,000.
- With policy maker digital activity, views & response rates also increase.
- Average response rates are also much higher where the consultation has had sustained digital activity throughout the life of the project. **Citizen Space average responses rise to over 1000, compared to just over 100 without support.**
- 34% of referrals to consultations come from GOV.UK - but 66% come in via other routes, many traceable back to digital outreach.



## Research funding Occam's corner

How should the government invest in science research? - live chat

Join our discussion with the UK science minister David Willetts on **Monday 16 June, 12-2pm BST**, about how the government should invest the £5.9bn it has committed to spend on research infrastructure over the next five years



## Blog Innovate UK

Organisations: [Innovate UK](#)



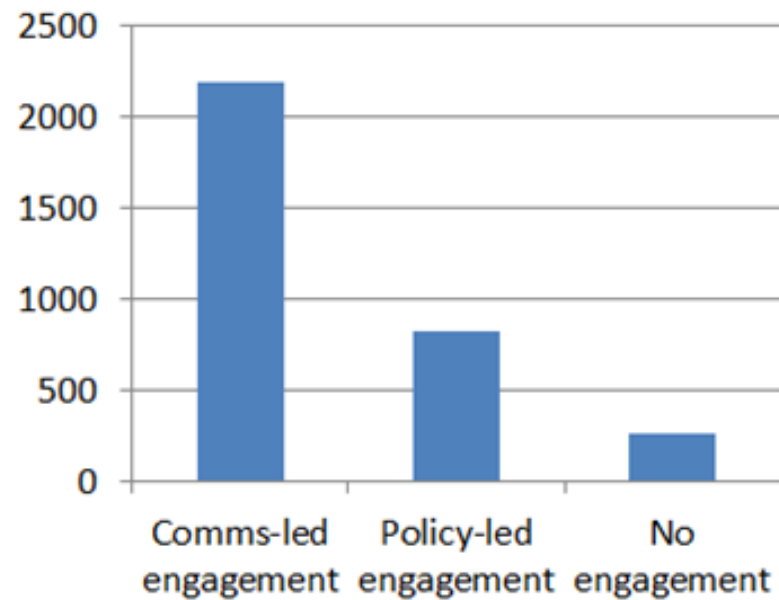
**Amanda Brooks** Director, Business Innovation at Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

**The National Innovation Plan Survey**  
Amanda Brooks Director, Business Innovation at Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 23 May 2016 — corporate





## Consultation responses 2014 - 2017







# Why is Citizen Space getting better results?

- Citizen Space audience more engaged and more likely to submit a response than if the consultation is on GOV.UK alone [3% v 21% conversion rates].
- Citizen Space training and support encourages policy colleagues to think about question design & analysis.
- Potentially more visually appealing content.
- Using skip logic can mean consultations can be broken down into sections relevant to audiences.
- Digital engagement means that a broader (and more specific) range of audiences are being targeted.
- But equally, should we be concerned with the 79% who don't respond (Next phase of this review).



## What next?

- Using our data to advise more policy colleagues.
- Set realistic comms targets.
- Analysis.
- Thinking about the non-responders – how do we compare?