

West Somerset Council switches to INOVEM to manage public consultations and comply with Duty to Involve

INOVEM Inclusionware replaces existing consultation software at South West local authority, increasing engagement with constituents

London, UK, June 30 2010 – [INOVEM](#), a pioneer of Web 2.0 technologies that enable public sector organisations and private businesses to collaborate, consult and engage with internal and external stakeholders, has enabled West Somerset Council to manage its own consultations across multiple channels with INOVEM Inclusionware.

The council upgraded some cumbersome existing online consultation software and is now using INOVEM Consult to manage online and offline responses from public consultations and to host them in one place.

West Somerset Council was particularly interested in finding a product that would offer more advanced functionality than its existing solution, as well as greater value for money. As with any public organisation, transparency and demonstrable value for tax-payers are very important considerations for the council.

Following a competitive tendering process, INOVEM was chosen for its flexibility, ease of administration and ability to manage a wide variety of consultation exercises and response channels, while demonstrating thought leadership in the market. Somerset County Council was also involved in the procurement process and also selected INOVEM.

The upgrade to INOVEM ensures compliance with statutory government standards for public sector agencies to deliver 'Best Value' in procurement as well as to satisfy the 'Duty to Involve', which requires local authorities to inform, consult and involve citizens.

Using INOVEM software, West Somerset Council can collect feedback from the public in a clear, understandable way, encouraging high levels of participation in online and offline consultation programmes and maximising inclusion across communities and channels.

Particularly within West Somerset Council, one of the smallest councils in the UK with just 100 employees serving more than 35,000 constituents, INOVEM complements current offline consultation methods and has broadened the reach of existing consultation resources.

The council has already been very successful using INOVEM Consult, notably with this year's annual staff survey. Over 70 percent of all employees undertook the survey, marking a dramatic increase from the previous year. This higher level of involvement helped the council achieve a better understanding of its employees' needs and opinions.

Both staff and the public have been quick to adopt INOVEM Consult, and it is now a key component of the council's consultation strategy to monitor internal and external satisfaction. West Somerset Council is currently promoting online surveys via social media to engage with hard-to-reach groups.

Tom Bown, corporate information officer for West Somerset Council, said: “We needed an eConsultation solution that would allow us to better interact with our public across social media channels and would meet all legislative requirements. INOVEM fitted the bill on all fronts. It is cost-effective, powerful, highly configurable, and it allows us to manage and deploy consultations across a wealth of media.

“The frustrations of administering our old system are a thing of the past. INOVEM is easy to use and manage, and it enables open engagement and consultation. We can now produce surveys online and offline without having to create separate documents, plus we can mail merge straight from INOVEM Consult. INOVEM genuinely understands how technology can be used to engage the public and ensure participation. It also has a reputation of being very reliable, with a strong support team and a smooth implementation process.”

John Glover, sales and marketing director at INOVEM, said: “Not all consultation software is the same – as illustrated by West Somerset Council’s decision to replace its existing solutions with INOVEM. Local councils need dependable tools that help them meet legislative and community requirements. Inclusionware lets the council build a community portal for discussions about local initiatives, create surveys to gauge public opinion, and maintain databases that securely store data gathered from consultation processes. West Somerset is a great example of a local authority that understands the value of good Web 2.0 tools for effective two-way engagement.”

Note to editors:

About INOVEM

INOVEM is a developer of [collaboration workspace](#) and [consultation software](#) that enables public sector organisations and private businesses to collaborate, consult and engage internal and external stakeholders. INOVEM Inclusionware solutions are definitive Web 2.0 technologies that exemplify the second wave of interactive web applications: harnessing collective intelligence – the architecture of participation.

More information can be found at www.inovem.com

About West Somerset Council

West Somerset Council aims to work in partnership with both private and public sector organisation to establish a good quality of life for all residents in West Somerset.

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