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1. It would be of considerable advantage to the area if consultation took place on the ground with people who make the difference.

Example:- Across the road we have a folly built within the past ten years that attracted a great deal of interest and investment and promised much more. It was and is afforded an importance far beyond its worth and is already in decline. It directly employs a dozen or so staff though mostly low paid and seasonal and this seems to have been its justification.

On this side of the road, there is an existing small business that attracts visitors who spend perhaps 30% of the local economy, including a significant input to the folly abovementioned, and has never had assistance of any kind.

In over 16 years no-one from the Local Authority or indeed the Area Tourist Board has seen fit to visit this side of the road to find the answers your flier seeks.

Let me therefore ask you the pertinent question:-

If either of the above businesses were to close its gates which do you consider would have the greater impact locally?

This would seem to me to be the obvious basis for any management investment decision but if you never ask the right people the right questions how can you ever expect to find the right answers? Indeed, in the preparation of the last AJSP it seems likely that some of the decisions were founded on the wrong answers from the wrong people.

It is all very well and perhaps very modern to give everyone the opportunity to 'have (their) say' but maybe this just gives rise to an amalgam of basic opinion that really has very little objectivity. One would opine that some selective research could produce some exciting and potentially rewarding ideas but then would there be the courage to follow through? Do we not live in a culture that restricts risk and individual expression, especially in Local Government?

Should we live in hope?

Iain M Robertson