

CREWKERNE TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Statement of Intent

The Council will respond to the concerns of the community by keeping in touch through effective channels of communication. We do this through:

Communication and Consultation

- The town website. The Council has a webpage within it which has much information and is updated. Special events and important notices will continue to be added. All agendas and minutes are on the page. It may be possible to develop our own website.
- Information leaflets e.g. Bincombe Beeches booklet and activities for children and adults are available in the Local Information Centre in the Town Hall.
- Public sessions or ‘Open Forum’ at all Town Council meetings and principal Committees
- Members of the Council will continue to inform Crewkerne citizens of the Council’s vision, priorities and aspirations. In turn Councillors receive valuable feedback which will assist in shaping the vision and priorities.
- The Council’s quarterly newsletters are delivered to virtually every household in the town and inform residents on important issues. Also available on the website
- Reports and press articles in the local papers.
- Agendas and dates of meetings are displayed two notice boards in the town centre.
- The Council Annual Report, informs residents of Council work during the year. It is delivered to households, and available in the Community Office and various prime locations in the town, as well as on the *webpage*.
- Speaking directly to the Clerk and staff every weekday morning at the Town Hall offices or by phone or email.
- Social media– events and Wednesday market information
- Obtaining views via the quarterly newsletter
- Offering the facility to pass comments via regular councillor surgeries

Involvement

- Working closely with the Police and community *organisations* to deal with antisocial behaviour
- Participating with a large number of outside bodies i.e. Community groups such as ABCD and other organisations
- Working with local schools to promote democracy and citizenship and on local events
- Working with the youth – collaboration to help improve play facilities e.g. Skateboard park

Engagement

- Special events e.g. Happy Valley Picnic event, PACT meetings and initiatives
- Going out to ‘hard to reach groups’ such as schools to obtain views from the young
- Working closely on issues e.g. with residents, Chamber of Trade and British Legion

Public Exhibition

- Display of plans and photographs of new projects on display at the Community Office, at the Annual Town meeting in Victoria Hall and other town locations

OUR OVERALL AIM OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

This Community Engagement Strategy aims to support an active, strong and inclusive community, which is informed and involved in decision-making that will enable the Council to improve public services and to enhance the quality of life of our residents.

- An active community, where people are supported to improve and enhance their quality of life
- A strong community, that can form and sustain their own organisations, to bring people together to collaborate on common interests
- An inclusive community, where all sections of the community feel they have opportunities in decision making on public services

OUR OBJECTIVES

Our objectives will be to strengthen, develop and sustain opportunities to shape and influence the future.

1. Encourage and support residents of Crewkerne to consider local needs and aspirations and to develop interest to tackle local issues.
2. Ensure that the community is clearly and regularly informed about the services that are provided by the Town Council.
3. Ensure that after a consultation exercise, the community is informed about the results.
4. Ensure that information obtained from consultation and engagement is shared with other agencies to provide a common base of evidence.
5. Try to ensure that consultation and engagement activities are conducted in partnership with other agencies wherever possible, to minimise duplication.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR ACHIEVEMENTS?

Specific performance measures may include residents feeling that:

- they are kept well informed by the Council
- the Council listens to their views, and acts on their concerns
- complaints are handled well
- the Council is trustworthy
- the Council involves them in making decisions about future priorities
- they have opportunities to participate with the council, and can influence the decision-making process
- they are satisfied with the way the Council runs things, and with particular reference to services provided by the Council
- the council provides value for money

This information will be obtained through a questionnaire within the website.

STRATEGY REVIEWS

This Strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the aims and objectives are being met. Targets to be achieved by next review:

- Communication – more information on social media
- Consultation – website questionnaire.
- Involvement – in community resources e.g. Friends of Henhayes and Bincombe, Crewkerne in Bloom etc to improve everyone's quality of life