

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 and providing opportunities for residents to share their views and participate in local decision-making.

Communication and Consultation

The council will communicate and consult with residents through a range of appropriate channels, including:

- **The Town Council website.** The council's website provides information about the council, its services, activities, projects, meetings, agendas together with important notices and updates.
- Information leaflets and publications are made available through the Local Information Centre and other locations, where relevant.
- Public participation and Open Forum sessions at Town Council meetings and Committees, where appropriate.
- Councillors will communicate the council's priorities and activities, and provide opportunities for residents to share feedback which can assist in shaping the council's priorities.
- Newsletters provide residents with information about council activities, services and important local issues. Newsletters may be distributed in hard copy or electronically, as appropriate.
- Reports and press articles in the local media. Council officers will aim to provide local media outlets with information about council activities and important local matters where appropriate and resources permits.
- Council noticeboards are used to display meeting dates, agendas, notices and other relevant information.
- The council's Annual Report informs residents of council's work and activities during the year and is made available through appropriate channels.
- Direct contact with council officers by telephone, email or in person during opening hours.
- Social media – using the council's social media channels to provide information, updates and opportunities for engagement.
- Obtaining residents' views through newsletters, surveys and other appropriate consultation methods.
- Offering opportunities for residents to raise issues and share views through Councillor surgeries and other community engagement activities.
- Ensuring that residents are kept informed of the Neighbourhood Plan and what it means for the town, and providing two-way communication so that residents can contribute their views and understand the progress of the Plan towards referendum.

Involvement

The council will seek to work collaboratively with local organisations and partners to support the community, including:

- Working closely with the Police and community organisations to address antisocial behaviour.
- Working with local community, voluntary and other organisations to support the needs of the community.

- Working with local schools to promote democracy and citizenship and to support ~~on~~ local events and activities.
- Working with young people and youth organisations to seek their views and support improvements to local facilities and activities.

Engagement

The council will seek opportunities to engage directly with the community through:

- Community events and activities providing opportunities for residents to engage with the council and each other.
- Engaging with schools, youth groups, Scout and Guide groups and other organisations to seek the views of young people.
- Working with residents, businesses, community groups, voluntary organisations and other local partners on issues affecting the town.

Public Exhibition

Where appropriate, plans, proposals, ~~and~~ photographs and information about council projects may be displayed at the Town Hall, Local Information Centre, George Reynolds Centre, at the Annual Town meeting and other suitable locations.

Aim of the 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, where local organisations and groups can develop and work together on matters of common interest.
- An inclusive community, where all sections of the community have opportunities to participate in local decision making.

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 take an interest in local issues.
2. Ensure that the community is clearly and regularly informed about the services, activities and decisions of the Town Council.
3. Ensure that, following a consultation exercise, the community is informed of the outcome where appropriate.
4. Ensure that information obtained from consultation and engagement is shared with relevant partners where appropriate, to support a evidence base.
5. Seek to undertake consultation and engagement in partnership with other organisations wherever possible, to minimise duplication and make effective use of resources.
6. Provide appropriate opportunities for residents and community groups to contribute to the council's decision-making and priorities.

How Will We Assess our Engagement?

The effectiveness of the council's community engagement may be assessed through:

- Feedback from residents about whether they feel well informed by the council.
- Participation in consultations, surveys, meetings and engagement activities.
- Feedback and complaints relating to council communication and engagement.
- Whether consultation and engagement outcomes are communicated to residents where appropriate.
- Feedback from community organisations and other local partners.

Strategy Reviews

This Strategy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the aims and objectives remain relevant and are being met.

Ongoing priorities:

- Maintain clear, timely and accessible communication through a range of channels
- Provide meaningful opportunities for residents to share their views and contribute to local decision-making.
- Continue to work with the community, voluntary and partner organisations
- Provide opportunities for young people to engage with the council and contribute their views

Version Control:

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This policy will be reviewed every four years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or council practice.

Review Date: **October 2030**