



## LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Liskeard Town Council is committed to providing a democratic representational voice for the people of Liskeard, central to this ethos is engagement with the local community in a proactive and meaningful way.
- 1.2 The Council has developed a Community Engagement Strategy which aims to set a standard for engagement with residents, communities, businesses, voluntary organisations and other partners.
- 1.3 It recognises that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its residents and locality.
- 1.4 It strongly believes that its residents should be involved in decisions affecting them and their neighbourhood and in shaping the future of their town.

#### 2 WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

- 2.1 Community engagement is concerned with giving local people a voice and involving them in decisions which affect them and their community. This may include individuals, voluntary and community organisations as well as other public and private sector bodies.

It provides an opportunity for local people to talk to the Council about their aspirations and/or needs in their community and neighbourhood. It allows the Council to consult with and inform people about what services it provides, how its priorities and policies are determined and how well it is performing.

- 2.2 Effective and meaningful community engagement can provide a number of benefits:
  - The problems and needs of local people are clearly identified in order that appropriate new or improved facilities/services can be provided.
  - Those participating feel empowered by being involved in decision making in their local community and a sense of ownership and pride in the new facilities/initiatives.
  - It may result in a renewed respect for the Council; enhanced leadership and greater interest in elections or for standing for Council.

#### 3 AIMS

- 3.1 To work more closely with residents, community groups and businesses.

3.2 To be inclusive in engaging with as many people as possible.

3.3 To actively encourage residents' involvement.

3.4 To listen to views and have regard to them in enhancing services.

#### **4 OBJECTIVES**

4.1 To encourage effective local community engagement.

4.2 Ensure that embedded throughout the Council there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions which affect them.

4.3 Adopt modes of communication which enable as many people as possible to be reached.

4.4 Enable the aspirations / comments / suggestions etc obtained from the community engagement to have an impact on decision making and the way in which services are being delivered.

4.5 To inform residents of the role of the Town Council and its Councillors

4.6 To improve, plan and shape the future of the town according to local needs and priorities.

4.7 To be a stronger, more active and cohesive town.

#### **5 CURRENT METHODS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

##### **5.1 Communication**

- Publication of contact details for all Council members and officers on the website.
- Council office, which is fully accessible, conveniently located in the town centre and open from 09.00 until 13.00 from Monday to Friday.
- Public Participation sessions at the beginning of all council and committee meetings. This provides an opportunity for local residents to make representations to the Council or ask questions relating to items on the agenda.
- Publication of agendas and minutes of council and committee meetings.
- Publication of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, precept and budgeting information.
- Publication of a wealth of local information on our websites, which is updated on a regular basis.

- Operation of the Tourist Information Centre open to the public 6 days per week, providing information to local people and tourists and responding to requests.
- Regular publication of local events and latest developments within the Council and the wider community.
- Regular posts on social media which the public can immediately respond to.
- Council press releases featured in local newspapers, and on our website and social media, to keep the public informed of community events, Town Council projects and other items as necessary.

## **5.2 Partnership**

- Involvement in partnerships with other authorities and community groups to provide improved facilities and services, and enhance the town.
- Some members and officers act as representatives for Outside Bodies such as community groups, local organisations, and other government agencies, and regularly attend their meetings.
- Operation of the Liskeard and District Museum, with a team of local volunteers, holding artifacts on behalf of the community, preserving, recording and researching local history and making this available to the public.

## **5.3 Support**

- Working closely with, and in support of, our town schools and youth groups, and finding opportunities to engage young people such as the Youth Council.
- Support local projects and organisations and assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.
- Continue to support the Town Forum as a platform for community involvement.

## **5.4 Consultation**

- Participating in town and community events providing the opportunity for the public to meet their councillors, raise awareness of the Town Council and its aims, and to undertake consultation on topical issues.
- Hold an annual Community Fair to showcase local community organisations and charities, both to encourage volunteering and participation, and as a means of finding support.
- Consultation exercises with local residents to make provision or their needs such as those conducted for the Neighbourhood Development Plan and Active Travel.

- Where appropriate use focus groups, identifying members of the town with specific skills who can be consulted on specialist subjects.
- Operation of the Public Hall complex, regularly used by a diverse variety of local groups and organisations, whose views can be easily collected when they visit the premises.
- Unlike other tiers of local government, Town Councillors always live or work within the town they serve or within a three-mile radius and have close ties to their constituents and local voluntary and community organisations on a day-to-day basis. This makes them uniquely placed in terms of informed representation.

## **6 PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 Continuing the above activities and services into the future, ensuring they are as inclusive as possible, by using a wide range of communication methods to try and engage people from minority and 'hard to reach groups'.
- 6.2 Ensuring that all communication is clear and concise (and available in appropriate formats).
- 6.3 Identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups and participating in local networks to share knowledge and experience.
- 6.4 Publicising the positive results that have been achieved from working relationships between the Council and other community groups; to encourage new relationships/partnerships to be formed and grow community spirit.
- 6.5 Using consultation where it is possible to influence decision-making or when the council needs to identify user satisfaction, for example on major policy decisions, controversial decisions, items that involve a significant proportion of overall spending, new services or those with low user satisfaction.
- 6.6 Providing feedback on the results to those who have been consulted, explaining how these results have been taken into account.
- 6.7 Ensuring that appropriate evaluation is carried out following consultation exercises to ensure that lessons learned are carried forward and an assessment of how effective/useful the consultation was.

## **7 THE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Liskeard Town Council is committed to following this strategy to help shape the direction of the council's work.

Adopted by Liskeard Town Council on 19 December 2017

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