



## **Community Engagement Strategy**

### **1. Introduction**

This Community Engagement Strategy sets out how the Town Council will engage with residents, community groups, businesses, and other interested parties to ensure inclusive participation in local decision-making.

The strategy aims to strengthen relationships, improve communication, and ensure that a wide range of voices are heard and reflected in council decisions.

Effective community engagement is essential to contribute meaningfully to local decision-making. This strategy sets out a structured and inclusive approach to engagement across the town.

The Community Engagement Strategy outlines the Council's commitment to inclusive participation, transparency, and accountability. It identifies objectives, principles, engagement methods, and approaches for reaching diverse and under-represented groups.

### **2. Objectives**

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage inclusive and meaningful community participation
- Engage under-represented and diverse groups
- Improve transparency and trust between the Council and the community
- Use a range of engagement methods suited to different needs
- Ensure community feedback informs Council decisions

### **3. Principles of Engagement**

The Town Council will follow these core principles:

- Inclusivity – removing barriers to participation
- Accessibility – providing information in clear and appropriate formats
- Transparency – clearly explaining decisions and constraints
- Respect – valuing all contributions and perspectives
- Accountability – reporting outcomes and actions taken

### **4. Engagement Methods**

A range of engagement methods will be used, including:

- Public meetings, drop-in sessions, and workshops

- Online surveys and consultations
- Social media and digital communications
- Printed materials and noticeboards
- Pop-up engagement at community events using the Town Council gazebo
- Partnership working with local organisations

## **5. Reaching Diverse and Under-Represented Groups**

Targeted engagement will be used to reach:

- Young people and families
- Older residents
- Minority ethnic communities
- People with disabilities or caring responsibilities
- New residents and socially isolated individuals

The Council will work with trusted community groups and partner organisations to tailor engagement approaches.

## **6. Feedback and Communication**

The Council is committed to closing the feedback loop by:

- Publishing engagement outcomes
- Explaining how community views influenced decisions
- Communicating next steps clearly
- Thanking participants for their involvement

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

Engagement activity will be monitored to assess participation levels and effectiveness. The strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and responsive to community needs.

## **8. Conclusion**

This strategy demonstrates the Town Council's commitment to inclusive, ongoing, and meaningful community engagement.

## **9. Delivery Action Timetable**

The following timetable sets out key actions to deliver the Community Engagement Strategy. Timescales may be adjusted to reflect local priorities and available resources.

Action	Engagement Method	Responsible	Timescale
Launch Community Engagement Strategy	Website, social media, printed noticeboards	Town Clerk / Events & Marketing Officer	Month 1
Establish community contact database	Partnership outreach	Council Officers	Months 1-2

Hold community drop-in sessions	In-person events at accessible venues and/or Champions Manor Hall	Councillors	Quarterly
Online and paper consultations	Surveys and feedback forms	Council Officers	As required
Targeted engagement with under-represented groups	Focus groups and partnership working	Council Officers / Chelmsford City Council / Councillors / Working Parties	Ongoing
Youth engagement activity	Schools, youth forums, events	Officers / Town Mayor	Annually
Publish engagement feedback reports	Website and newsletters	Town Clerk / Events & Marketing Officer	After each engagement activity
Review engagement methods	Internal review and feedback analysis	Town Clerk	As required

### **10. Financial Implications**

The strategy will largely be delivered using existing staff resources and budgets. Any additional costs arising from specific engagement activities will be reported to the appropriate committee.

### **11. Risk Management**

Failure to engage effectively with the community may result in reduced participation and confidence in Council decision-making. This strategy mitigates this risk by setting out clear and inclusive engagement processes.

### **12. Equality and Accessibility**

The strategy places a strong emphasis on inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that engagement activities are designed to reach diverse and under-represented groups.

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**Next review March 2027**