



FRAMLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Contents

- Introduction
- Aims
- Objectives
- How Will This Be Achieved
- Measuring Success
- Strategy Review
- Action Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

Framlingham Town Council has developed a community engagement policy with the aim of constructing a standard for engagement with its residents and partners.

It recognises that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its residents and the locality.

Framlingham Town Council strongly believes that its residents should be involved in decisions affecting them and their neighbourhood and in shaping the future of their town.

2. AIMS

The aim of the policy is to improve the way in which the Council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues by

- Informing, consulting, involving and providing feedback
- Being inclusive and engaging with all its residents and partners.
- Ensuring views are listened to and used wherever possible to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for residents.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To improve, plan and shape the future of the town according to local needs and priorities.
- To improve the quality and delivery of services, and make better use of resources.
- To use engagement to inform decision making, ensuring decisions are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the town, and develop more creative tailored approaches.
- To maximise opportunities for individuals and groups to use engagement to enhance the wellbeing and individual character of the town.
- To be a stronger, more active and cohesive town.

4. HOW WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED?

Community engagement will be achieved by Framlingham Town Council communicating, consulting, supporting and working together with residents, community and voluntary groups, business groups and public organisations; to ensure that issues and priorities are identified and action taken.

4.1 Communication

- Communication with members of the town will be achieved in many ways to ensure all sections of the community are reached.

- A regular newsletter will be published on the www.framlingham.com website and distributed by email to subscribers, plus a printed version to be made available via Framfare, and displayed on noticeboards in the town informing residents on town issues and the work of the Council.
- The Town Council's website www.framlingham.com has a wealth of local information and is updated regularly. All agendas and minutes are advertised/displayed on the website. Promote the website and newsletter widely to facilitate better communication and engagement.
- Information leaflets are available from the Town Council Office and can also be downloaded from the website. New leaflets will be added as necessary.
- Meetings of the Council and its standing committees are open to the public and each meeting includes an opportunity for members of the town to engage with Councillors.
- Councillors are a rich and important source of two-way communications between the Council, its residents and higher-tier authorities. Members of the Council will continue to inform the residents of the Council's vision, priorities and aspirations. In turn these members will be receiving valuable feedback from the residents that will assist in shaping the vision and priorities.

4.2 Consultation

- Consulting all residents and our partners in community and voluntary groups, business groups, public organisations and partner authorities
- on important issues will be key to the policy. It will ensure those most affected are able to put forward an opinion and given an opportunity to make a difference.
- Ensure consultations include all members of the town by identifying how to reach all people (such as young people, older people, faith groups, the housebound, the disabled, black and ethnic minority people). This may require the establishment of different engagement channels. Higher-tier authority consultation will be carried out where necessary.

4.3 Support

- Supporting local organisations (community, voluntary groups, businesses etc) and engaging with them will assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.
- Supporting all members of the town and hard to reach groups in shaping the future of their town will bring about a more cohesive community.

4.4 Acting Together

- Acting together with residents and partners in finding solutions to local problems will ensure they will be accepted and fit for purpose.
- Acting together in decision making, policy drafting and action plans where appropriate will ensure they have a voice and can make a difference.

5. MEASURING SUCCESS

Success will be measured by predefined targets, including annual reviews of consultation processes.

6. POLICY REVIEWS

Annual reviews of the consultation processes and results will be used as a continual improvement process for changes or amendments to the policy.

7. ACTION PLAN

- Raise awareness of consultation processes – promote it through Framfare, Town Council website and Newsletter, social media, the SCC and ESC websites and EADT newspaper. Implementing and promoting the policy will be an ongoing priority.
- Work with the Police and partner authorities (such as SCDC) – strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones.
- Identify minority / hard to reach groups and identifying how to reach them will ensure they are included in the consultation process.
- Feedback on the consultations – agree method of feedback to residents and partners and ensure this is adhered to and includes details of the use of information gained.
- Review outcomes of key consultations – review consultation outcomes annually to highlight any failings in the process.
- Set up a recognised way, at public Full Council meetings, for Councillors to report back on community engagement and feedback received.
- Publicise and promote the website and TC newsletter, including using social media to inform people of the range of information on the website and any public notices a timely manner.
- Councillors to write quarterly reports on the activities of their committees and publish them in the TC newsletter and on the website
- Support opportunities for individuals and groups to develop events and activities
- Develop a plan for use of Social Media