



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Weston-super-Mare Town **Council Community** **Engagement Plan**



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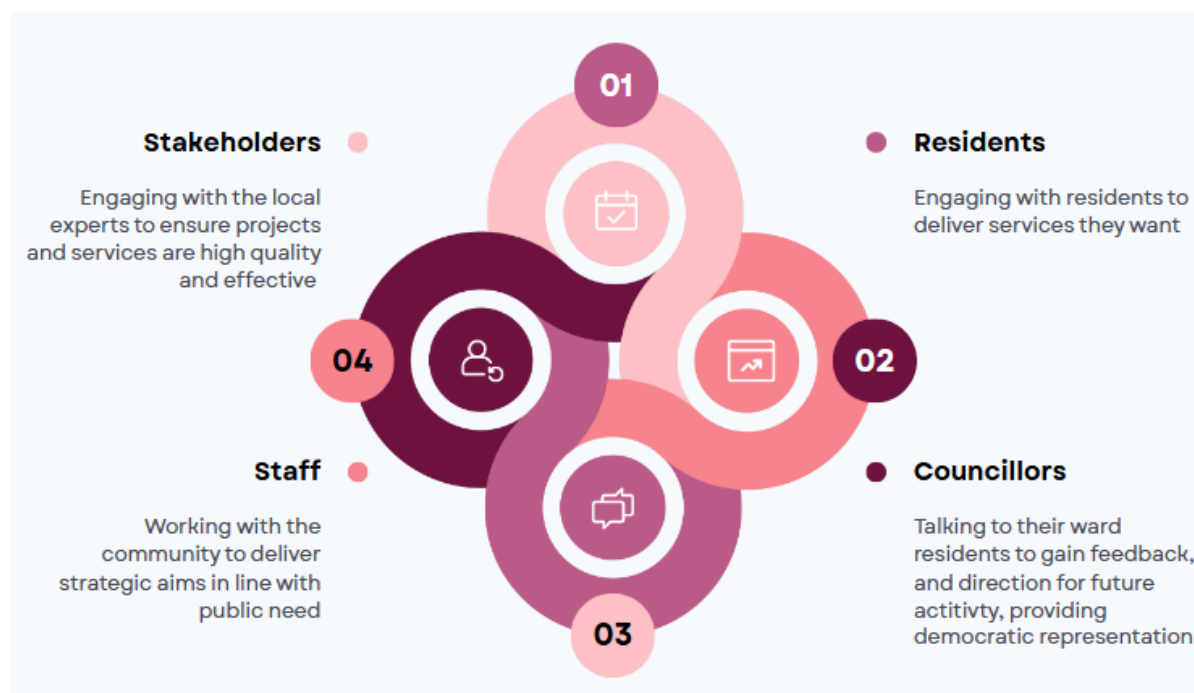
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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Purpose

This document provides a high-level overview of the Council's approach to community engagement. Operational detail, delivery plans and detailed analysis will be contained within a separate annual delivery programme.



The council has already recognised and agreed to the principles of community engagement via its strategy, Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), specifically Section 5 and the adopted Community Outcomes.

Town Council Strategy:

- “1.13 Encourage people living and working in Weston to participate and to engage in decision making.”
- “1.7 Seek to identify and deliver opportunities to be directly responsive to community needs and aims through consultation and active listening – delivering a ‘you said, we did’ approach.”

6 Principle Community Outcomes

(adopted by Community Services Committee 8th March 2021):

1. Connectivity
2. Collaboration
3. Resilience
4. Community Capability
5. Collective Efficacy
6. Community Cohesion

1.2 Key Objectives



2. Community Analysis – what do we already know

2.1 Community Profile - what is does this look like

We recognise we are a large, growing town, and whilst we have proven an ability to engage in the past, it has not been truly reflective of our large population.

Notwithstanding the above, the Town Council has a baseline audience who actively engage with us. We often see similar names and faces engaging with our meetings, events, services and projects. This is reflective of a quality service delivery. When people know about us, they come back.

A sample of our existing audience can be evidenced through the Your Town Your Voice consultation. A more detailed demographic analysis will sit within the annual delivery programme.

2.2 Stakeholder Mapping – focus areas

There are clear strengths and weaknesses in our current reach and engagement level. Whilst raising awareness will be the focus, it should be noted that there will always be a marginal allowance for people who know and see, but do not want to engage (e.g. unlikely to get engagement on play area surveys from people without children).

Moving forward we will need to keep a balance between trying to reach new audiences, whilst not neglecting the existing audience we have. In order to do this, we must look at what we do well, and where we are lacking.

2.3 Communication Channels – the How

The Town Council aims to use a mix of formal, informal, digital and place-based engagement channels, recognising that no single approach reaches everyone, and that different communities and projects require different methods of engagement.

Existing channels of engagement:

- **Elected representation through Town Councillors as part of the democratic process.**
- **Committee and Sub-Committee Structure** - Formal decision-making routes offering opportunities for public participation.
- **Direct communication with Town Councillors** - Including ward-based drop in surgeries, informal conversations, and issues raised directly by residents and community groups.
- **Project-specific engagement and consultation** - Targeted engagement activity undertaken for specific projects, initiatives or funding requirements
- **Public meetings, briefings and workshops** - Including consultations, drop-in sessions and engagement events held in response to specific issues or proposals.
- **Digital communications and information channels** - Use of the Town Council website, social media and digital platforms
- **Partnership and stakeholder engagement** - Ongoing engagement through partnerships with community organisations, voluntary groups, statutory partners and delivery organisations.
- **Print publications** – noticeboards, leaflets, newsletters.

Channels of engagement to explore:

- **Place-based engagement** - Taking engagement to where people already are, rather than expecting them to come to meetings
- **Formalised programme of conversations (Development Team)** - A commitment to regular community engagement (monthly) regardless of a specific need. More about building relationships and awareness.
- **Community champions and co-created data sampling** - Working with stakeholders to share engagement data and gain insight in a different way
- **Feedback loops** - The act of 'closing' the community engagement loop to make sure people see the outcome of their engagement – “you said, we did”.
- **Targeted engagement** - Looking to achieve the SMART objectives outlined in section 3.

3. Goals and Objectives

3.1 Engagement Goal

The initial engagement goal centres around relationship building, which this plan give a basis for. A more detailed annual programme will be delivered also.

3.2 SMART Objectives – what are we focusing on (Council Strategy)

Town Council strategy

In recognition of our community profile and our current engaging audience, we are focusing our SMART objectives on making improvements to our reach and strategic project delivery in line with the strategy and council ambitions.

Engagement Reach SMART objectives (with reference to where this is referenced within the strategy pillars):

1. **Youth Engagement** (3.3, 3.4)
2. **Inclusive Engagement – accessible to all** (3.8)

Strategic project and ambition SMART objectives (with reference to where this is referenced within the strategy pillars):

1. **Parks, play areas & open spaces (capital + activation)** (3.6)
2. **Health, wellbeing & inclusion through outdoor activity** (3.1, 3.8, 3.9, 5.5)
3. **Old Town Quarry: heritage, community use & sustainability** (5.1, 5.4, 5.8, 5.9)
4. **Cleaner, greener infrastructure (trees, biodiversity, climate resilience)** (2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.10, 2.11)
5. **Community-led activity, volunteering & social cohesion** (3.1, 3.2, 4.7, 5.5)

4. Strategies and Activities - what

4.1 Engagement Strategies – how

Engagement activity will be proportionate, inclusive and outcome-focused. Different approaches will be used depending on the scale, impact and nature of the decision or project, recognising that no single method of engagement is suitable for all communities or circumstances. Whilst there will always be an element of flexibility, a full annual delivery programme will be delivered, which will, in essence, cover:

1. Programme of councillor open days - (recognised in 5.12 of the MTFP)
2. Team led engagement programme - focusing on the four members of the development team aiming to carrying out 1 engagement per month each (48 per year)
3. Key Officers engagement opportunities
4. Project specific engagement exercises in line with existing projects programmed (e.g. play strategy, devolution, Old Town Quarry).
5. Focus on under-represented voices – targeted engagement where there are known gaps
6. Feedback and report – ensuring outcomes are reported back

7. Alignment with existing governance – ensuring the right reporting and decision-making mechanisms are in place.

5. Roles and Responsibilities - who

Role	Who	Responsibility
Ward Councillors	X31	• Councillor Open Days • Ward based surgery • Committee structure • Public meetings, briefings and workshops • Partnership and stakeholder engagement
Key Officers	• Senior Management Team • Leadership Team • Development Team	• Engagement opportunities • Committee structure • Project specific engagement • Public meetings, briefings and workshops • Programme of engagement • Digital communication • Partnership and stakeholder engagement • Print publication
Community Leaders	As and when identified	• Partnership and stakeholder engagement

6. Timeline

6.1 Implementation Timeline

- Development of an annual delivery programme to be reviewed annually.
- Delivery programme to start April 2026

7. Budget

7.1 Resource Allocation

Overhead costs will be absorbed within existing staffing budgets and job roles, with requirements within job descriptions to deliver community engagement.

Individual projects may come with budget specifically for community engagement.

External consultants will not be routinely used, however may be required on a project/need basis.

7.2 Cost Management

Budgets where applicable will be managed by the Development Team and RFO in line with Town Council Financial Regulations.

8. Communication Plan

8.1 Communication Strategies

Key staff will work in collaboration with the Communications and Marketing Team to deliver an effective model using a balance of digital, physical and in person feedback to ensure it is inclusive and available for all.

9. Evaluation and Metrics

9.1 Evaluation Plan

The Town Council will provide details of all programmed community engagement and outcomes on the website.

Evaluation can be provided in several ways:

1. Annual review of general community engagement processes
2. Project specific feedback and evaluation
3. One on one engagement feedback (real time comments)

9.2 Success Metrics

As the primary aim in the short term is relationship building, there will be a record kept of community engagement.

We would also look to provide specific examples, case studies and instances of 'value added' to demonstrate where a relationship built has resulted in any additional outcomes (e.g. funding secured, event delivered, partnership created).

10. Risk Management

10.1 Potential Risks

In recognising an annual programme, there are a number of potential risks that could impact on the delivery, scope or focus of the Community Engagement Plan. These include:

1. **Changes in political leadership or strategic priorities** - Changes in political composition following the 2027 Town Council elections, or shifts in strategic priorities during the life of the plan, may result in changes to the level, focus or nature of engagement activity.
2. **Changes in service provision or organisational structure** - Future changes to Town Council services, responsibilities or delivery models (including devolution or transfer of services) may require engagement activity to be re-prioritised or adapted at short notice.
3. **Financial pressures and budget reductions** - Reductions in available budgets, inflationary pressures or competing financial priorities may limit the scale or frequency of engagement activity that can be delivered over the programme period.

4. **Capacity and reliance on specific staff** - Delivery of the engagement programme is dependent on staff capacity, skills and continuity. Staff turnover, vacancies, long-term absence or changes in roles may impact the Council's ability to deliver planned engagement activity consistently.
5. **Competing organisational priorities** - Emerging issues, statutory requirements or high-profile projects may require resources to be diverted away from planned engagement activity, impacting delivery against the programme.
6. **Engagement fatigue among residents and stakeholders** - There is a risk of reduced participation if communities are over-consulted, unclear about the purpose of engagement, or do not see how their input influences outcomes.
7. **Inequality of participation** - Some communities or groups may be harder to reach using standard engagement approaches, creating a risk that engagement does not fully reflect the diversity of the town.
8. **Reputational risk** - Poorly timed, unclear or inadequately resourced engagement activity may lead to unrealistic expectations, dissatisfaction or perceptions of tick box consultation.
9. **External factors beyond the Council's control** - National policy changes, partner decisions, economic pressures or unforeseen events may impact on planned projects and, in turn, associated engagement activity.

10.2 Risk Mitigation

These risks will be managed through regular review of the engagement programme, alignment with corporate priorities and budgets, flexible delivery models, and clear communication with members, partners and communities regarding scope, timescales and influence.