

Canvey Island Town Council

Community Engagement Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Canvey Island Town Council is committed to encouraging residents to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the community, to enable the council to deliver better services and to create a more active and informed community. The council recognises that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its residents and the locality.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Community Engagement Strategy is to:

- Set out how the Council ensures that the community is kept informed and can contribute to its activities and decision making.
- To improve the way in which the Council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues.
- Being inclusive and engaging with all its residents and partners.
- Ensuring views are listened to and used to develop, enhance, and improve services, the environment, and the quality of life for residents.
- Improve long-term social, economic, and environmental well-being of residents
- Aid future development of the town in accordance with community priorities and needs

The objectives of the Community Engagement Strategy are to:

- Use a variety of methods to make information available
- Actively facilitate and encourage community engagement
- Proactively engage with all sections of the community
- Ensure decisions meet the need of the community by involving members of the community in the decision-making process
- Work in partnership with other organisations and authorities to improve and deliver better services
- Enhance the well-being of the community

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Information will be made available to all sections of the community in a range of ways/formats which include:

Town Council Office

Residents can contact the office by telephone from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday or visit the office in person on Tuesday 9.30am-12pm, Wednesday 12.30pm-2.30pm or Thursday 9.30am-12pm.

Newsletters

Quarterly newsletters are published informing residents of Town Council activities, community consultations and other local issues.

Council Website

The Town Council's website www.canveyisland-tc.gov.uk has a wealth of local information and is updated regularly. All agendas and minutes of council meetings are advertised as required under the Local Government Act 1972, including supporting documents and financial data.

Media

Press releases are regularly submitted to all local newspapers and magazines to effectively promote and inform the community of the councils' activities.

Social Media

The Councils Facebook page is used to inform and update residents of all council activities and local issues.

Notice Boards

The Council has 7 notice boards situated around the island and in each of the 6 wards providing details of events, councillor and office contact details, local issues, council meetings and agendas.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT

The Town Council makes every opportunity available to residents and the community to allow community involvement which includes:

- Attendance at meetings of the Council and its committees which are open to the public and each meeting includes an opportunity for members of the community of Canvey Island to engage with Councillors.
- Contact forms are available on the Councils website.
- An Annual Town Meeting is arranged every year to allow the public the opportunity to challenge and discuss any issues that they may have regarding Town Council activities.
- Access to Town Councillors - councillors are an important source of two-way communication between the Council, its residents, and higher-tier authorities.
- Access to a local office – the office and its staff are available for all Canvey Island residents to help and assist with issues or concerns or put forward ideas to the Council at its meetings.
- Formal representation – the public are permitted to provide formal representation to the Council as an agenda item should a written request be received and approved by the Town Clerk and Town Mayor.

CONSULTATION

Consultations and surveys on important issues will be carried out. The Council will ensure that residents most affected will be given an opportunity to voice an opinion. Local consultations will be available on the council's website, reported on its Facebook page and where possible all other sources of communication will be used.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Town Council has representatives on many various partnerships and committees and will support and encourage consultation and public meetings with all groups and local authorities. Working together in decision making, policy drafting and action plans where appropriate will provide a voice and can make a difference.

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed in line with Council's Policy Framework or earlier in the event of major changes to legislation or related policies/procedures or if deemed necessary by the Town Clerk.

Canvey Island Town Council

Community Engagement Policy

INTRODUCTION

Canvey Island 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.

Canvey Island 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.

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 and involving.

Being inclusive and engaging with all its residents and partners.

Ensuring views are listened to and used to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for residents.

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.

To use engagement to inform decision making, ensuring decisions are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the town.

To enhance the well-being of the town.

To be a stronger, more active and cohesive town.

APPLICATION OF POLICY

Community engagement will be achieved by Canvey Island Town Council communicating, consulting, supporting and working together with residents.

COMMUNICATION

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

A quarterly newsletter will be published informing residents on Town Council business and local issues.

The Town Council's website www.canveyisland-tc.gov.uk has a wealth of local information and is updated regularly. All agendas and minutes of council meetings are advertised as required under the Local Government Act 1972, including on the website.

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 committees are open to the public and each meeting includes an opportunity for members of the community of Canvey Island 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.

CONSULTATION

Consulting all residents 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.

Ensuring consultations include all members of the community by identifying the hard to reach groups such as youths, the elderly, the housebound, the disabled, ethnic minorities etc, may require the establishment of different engagement channels. Where necessary any higher-tier authority consultation will be carried out.

SUPPORT

Supporting local organisations and engaging with them will assist them in meeting their own aims and objectives.

In order to fulfil the Council's responsibilities in line with the General Power of Competence, participation in local events will raise the awareness of the Council and its aims and objectives.

Supporting members of the community in shaping the future of their town will bring about a more cohesive community.

WORKING TOGETHER

Working together with residents and partners in finding solutions to local problems will ensure they will be accepted and fit for purpose.

Working together in decision making, policy drafting and action plans where appropriate will ensure they have a voice and can make a difference.

Working with the Police and partner authorities to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones.

Identifying minority / hard to reach groups will ensure they are included in the consultation process.

Agreeing a method of feedback to residents and partners and ensuring this is adhered to and includes details of the use of information gained.

Reviewing outcomes of key consultations annually to highlight any failings in the process.

REVIEW

The Policy will be reviewed in line with Council's Policy Framework or earlier in the event of major changes to legislation or related policies/procedures or if deemed necessary by the Town Clerk or nominee.