



FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council aims to provide services of high quality and to represent the interests of its residents throughout its area. This statement outlines the Council's intentions with regard to community engagement.

2. THE COMMUNITY

2.1 The Council is directly responsible to the people of its area, who collectively form the community. Within the community, there are a variety of different bodies and the Council must therefore relate closely to those bodies as well as the community as a whole.

2.2 The different bodies making up the community are likely to include:

- Businesses and their representative bodies
- Those who use the services provided by the council, whether residents or not
- Non-residents working in the town
- Visitors, whether tourists or those using the town's facilities and shops
- Voluntary groups including church and youth organisations
- Schools and other educational establishments
- Other statutory bodies providing services within the council area.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The council aims to ensure that residents and the bodies making up the community are appropriately involved in the decision-making process, particularly in relation to the provision of services and facilities. Whenever possible and practical, the council will encourage the involvement of community members in order to identify their needs and concerns.

3.2 To this end, the council will maintain and develop effective working relationships with all sectors of the community in the expectation that this will lead to:

- An improved quality of and satisfaction with public services in the area.
- A greater sense within the community that people are involved in decisions which affect them
- Greater awareness within the community of the role and responsibilities of the Council
- Enhanced well-being and a stronger, more cohesive parish.

4. MEANS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Communication with the community by means of:

- An accessible Council office at the heart of the community.
- Two-way communication with individual ward Councillors.
- A website which includes a wide range of information and how the community can contact the Council, a timetable and records of meetings, and a calendar of events.
- Active Council Facebook & Twitter accounts for more immediate news and announcements.
- A quarterly newsletter inserted in a local magazine.
- An opportunity at the start of Council and Committee meetings for questions from members of the public.
- Nominated Councillors as representatives to outside bodies with interests affecting the area.
- An Annual Parish Meeting at which all community members can raise issues of concern.

4.2 Consultation with the community on issues of importance:

- Informally, by noting and collating representations made to the Council through the Office, the Clerk, and Councillors, or by post or email.
- Formally, on topics of sufficient importance, by making arrangements for public meetings in accessible locations, or by a written consultation or referendum.
- Striving to ensure that consultations include all members of the parish by identifying harder to reach groups such as youths, the elderly, the housebound, the disabled, and ethnic minorities, recognising that some may require different engagement channels

4.3 Support for the community by means of:

- Engagement with local organisations (including businesses) to promote common interests.
- Cooperating with local projects and events to promote community well-being.
- Working strategically with other agencies to develop the long-term future of the parish

Policy due for review: May 2021
