

CABINET

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PARTNERSHIPS

7 OCTOBER 2022

A.6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek Cabinet's approval to the introduction of a Community Engagement Strategy, which is attached as Appendix A.6.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community engagement is the process by which Tendring District Council aims to build strong connected, involved and empowered communities with voices that will be heard and responded to as part of local decision-making.

The Community Engagement Strategy sets out the Council's aims in relation to community engagement and outlines how we will engage with our communities.

The aims of the strategy are to support strong, active and inclusive communities who:

- are informed and involved in decision making;
- can influence and shape the area in which they live and work; and
- have the capacity to develop and deliver their own projects.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the draft Community Engagement Strategy, attached as Appendix A.6, is adopted.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

Cabinet are recommended to approve the draft Community Engagement Strategy, which details the approaches the Council will use to engage and consult with the community. This will ensure that the Council delivers its Corporate Plan vision *'to put community leadership at the heart of everything we do through the delivery of high quality, affordable services and working positively with others'* and delivering against identified governance requirements.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not to have a Community Engagement Strategy. Although there is no legal requirement to develop a Community Engagement Strategy, it is considered best practice to have a document which details how the Council will engage with its stakeholders and the Council has committed to doing so through the Annual Governance Statement and the Cabinet's Highlight Priorities for 2022/23.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The proposed Community Engagement Strategy will contribute to the Corporate Plan vision ‘to put community leadership at the heart of everything we do through the delivery of high quality, affordable services and working positively with others’.

Specifically, it will contribute directly towards each of the Plan’s key ambitions:

- Delivering high quality services;
- Community leadership through partnerships;
- Building sustainable communities for the future;
- Strong finance and governance and;
- A growing and inclusive economy.

At its meeting in February 2022, Cabinet adopted its 2022/23 Highlight Actions to deliver the Council’s Corporate Priorities and included within C3 Effective and Positive Governance ‘to review the way it engages with the community and to present a draft strategy for approval’. Following adoption, the Community Engagement Strategy will be promoted across the organisation.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation has taken place with UNISON, the Council’s Monitoring Officer, Section 151 and community groups CVST and CAT. The outcome of the consultation is as follows:

Unison has read and is happy for the Community Engagement Strategy to go forward to Cabinet

Comments from the Council’s Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer are included in the relevant sections of this report.

An officer working group has also reviewed the content of the Community Engagement Strategy and the comments of this group have been incorporated into the strategy.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	Yes	If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant effect on two or more wards <input type="checkbox"/> Involves £100,000 expenditure/income <input type="checkbox"/> Is otherwise significant for the service budget
		And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	2 December 2021

The Council is required to undertake consultation when there is a statutory duty to do so through individual legislative frameworks, such as for planning, licensing and housing. In addition, under the general duty set out in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999, which requires an authority to

'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness', the authority is under an obligation to consult certain groups of persons for the purpose of deciding how to fulfil this duty.

The proposed Community Engagement Strategy sets out how the Council will consult and engage with people in the future to ensure that residents and other stakeholders have the opportunity to shape and influence decision making.

Although, there is no legal requirement to develop a Community Engagement Strategy, it is considered best practice to have a document which details how the Council will engage with its stakeholders.

The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:

One of the seven principles of Good Governance is Ensuring Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement, the Council's Annual Governance Statement has previously identified the need to establish a corporate framework to support community engagement. The original required action was to develop the Council's approach and adopting principles for community engagement through 2020/21, this was delayed due to the impact of Covid-19 and Cabinet included the action within its Priorities for 2022/23.

At its meeting in February 2021, Cabinet was presented with proposed changes to Article 10 of the Council's Constitution which relates to **Area Committees & Forums (Community Consultation and Participation) as set out in Part 2.28 to 2.35** following the outcome of a light touch review by Officers. The Portfolio Holder's Constitution Review Working Party had also been made aware that a more comprehensive review would be undertaken by a small officer working group focusing on community consultation and engagement and that this could lead to further amendments to the Constitution in due course.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that any costs arising from the implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy, including staffing, can be met from within existing budgets within the Partnerships directorate.

The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:

None.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

<p>A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;</p>	<p>Through the implementation of the strategy, the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make our engagement arrangements more efficient across partners thereby getting best value for the resources being invested. • Ensure that our statutory engagement requirements are effective and efficient.
<p>B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and</p>	<p>Through the implementation of the strategy, the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable good governance, fair and informed decision making through building confident,

	<p>skilled, active and confidence communities and a culture of getting involved and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our decision making structures and processes are understood and accessible for individuals and communities.
<p>C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.</p>	<p>Through the implementation of the strategy, the Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and cultivate relationships with people and community organisations and improve the connection between the Council, voluntary and community organisations • Understand people's experience of the services they use and the communities they live in, work in or visit and use this intelligence to improve wellbeing, quality of places and our services. • Make the most of what already exists in communities and improve capacity.
<p>MILESTONES AND DELIVERY</p>	
<p>The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to check that it is fit for purpose and a more detailed review of the strategy will take place every three years. This will include checking with the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer that it still meets the necessary governance requirements.</p>	
<p>ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION</p>	
<p>There are not considered to be any risks associated with the implementation of this strategy.</p>	
<p>EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS</p>	
<p>The Community Engagement Strategy will ensure that equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do by making sure there are appropriate methods for communicating and engaging with communities.</p> <p>A key principle of the strategy relates to inclusion and confirms that we will work with businesses, and those that work, live, worship, study and volunteer in the Tendring district, making a particular effort to connect with seldom heard communities and those likely to be most affected by any potential change. It also confirms our intention to value existing community engagement arrangements and work with these.</p>	
<p>SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS</p>	
<p>Community engagement aims to generate positive social outcomes and, through an ABCD approach, can increase and strengthen the value of assets within the community and make areas safer, more attractive and vibrant for members of the community.</p>	
<p>IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030</p>	
<p>Although the implementation of this strategy does not present a direct impact on the Council's target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions from its business operations by 2030, all engagement approaches and activities will take this into account.</p>	
<p>OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS</p>	
<p>Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of</p>	

the following and any significant issues are set out below.	
Crime and Disorder	<p>There are benefits to both communities and the Council when engagement is undertaken and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building strong, involved and empowered communities that are more resilient and self-sufficient; and • Creating a sense of place where people feel that they belong to a community; <p>Both of these could have a positive impact on crime and disorder in communities.</p>
Health Inequalities	<p>The Community Engagement Strategy will seek to ensure that inclusion is at the heart of everything we do by ensuring there are appropriate methods for communicating and engaging with communities.</p> <p>There can also be positive public health implications from the development of a robust, comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy as residents will have clearly defined routes for engaging with the Council in order to raise issues or concerns.</p> <p>A reported benefit of community engagement is also a reduction in community inequalities.</p>
Area or Ward affected	All

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND
<p>Community engagement is about giving people the confidence, skills and power so they can get involved, shape and influence the planning, development and delivery of services. Engagement activities can take many different forms and the level of involvement can vary greatly from simply being informed to being empowered to achieve their own outcomes.</p> <p>The proposed Community Engagement Strategy sets out our approach to engaging with communities and provides a set of principles that the Council will uphold in relation to engaging with and listening to community.</p>
PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS
None
BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL
None
APPENDICES
Appendix A.6 – Draft Community Engagement Strategy

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