

Clacton Town Board Communications Protocol

Introduction

The Clacton Town Board has been established as part of the governance process to lead activity around the Long Term Plan for Towns of which Clacton is a part – and for which Clacton is due to receive £20million over ten years.

This protocol is designed to ensure that communications relating to the Board’s work are clear and consistent; promoting a positive message of positive change for Clacton (while not shying away from its challenges).

Principles

Communications from the Clacton Town Board should be:

- Clear: in tone and language, but also honest on the scope and abilities of the Board, such as what funding can and cannot be used for and what is achievable. Tackle mis-information and rumour
- Consistent: Projects and milestones may change over time, but an overall narrative of positive change should run as a golden thread throughout
- United: The Board may well have robust discussions, and there may be times when not all Board Members agree with final decisions as part of the consensus approach set out in the Terms of Reference. Such discussion should take place privately. Publicly there should be respect and support for the Board’s adopted position – a divided Board will not be successful. This does not preclude Members speaking out in relation to their own businesses or organisations
- Apolitical: Communications from the Town Board should not seek to affect support for any particular political party. This does not mean the Board cannot communicate support or concern about government policy where it is relevant to the Board’s work. Particular care should be taken in this regard during periods of heightened sensitivity (such as pre-election periods)
- Accessible: Using plain English and meeting basic accessibility standards

Quotations

The default position is that the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman in their absence) is quoted in press releases, media comments, and interviews. However, there may be times when it is more appropriate for the leader of a task and finish group, or the representative of a particular sector, to carry out this role.

There may also be times where partners – such as a particular town centre business – is quoted if it adds support to a release.

Clearance

Press releases and comments will need the approval of the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman in their absence) – along with anyone quoted if this is someone else – before being issued.

Tendring District Council, as the accountable body for the Board, should also approve releases to ensure it does not put across messaging counter to statutory governance and financial processes.

Distribution

News releases should be issued to all Board members at the same time as they are issued to the media.

Social Media

The Board may wish to establish its own social media channels. If it does so then clear guidance must be created alongside this to govern its use and maintain consistency. This should include consideration of what third-party content will be shared (giving due consideration to precedent and equity); who has access and in what capacity they post.

Resources

TBC