

Broadstone Town Council

Community Engagement Policy

1. Introduction

Broadstone Town Council (“the Council” or “BTC”) recognises that effective community engagement is fundamental to its role as the closest tier of local government to residents. The Council is committed to ensuring that the views, needs and aspirations of the Broadstone community are understood and reflected in its decision-making processes.

This policy sets out how the Council will engage with residents, local organisations, businesses and stakeholders in a consistent, inclusive and transparent manner. It reflects the Council’s Communications Strategy, which establishes BTC as a trusted and accessible source of local information.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote open and meaningful dialogue between the Council and the community
- Ensure residents are informed about Council decisions, services and local issues
- Provide opportunities for residents to influence decisions and express their views
- Strengthen community identity and civic pride within Broadstone
- Ensure engagement methods are inclusive and accessible to all sections of the community

The Council will seek to balance digital engagement with traditional methods to reflect the needs of Broadstone’s diverse population, including those who may not regularly access online services.

3. Principles of Community Engagement

In carrying out its engagement activities, the Council will be guided by the following principles:

Transparency – Information will be shared openly, clearly and in a timely manner.

Accessibility – Communication will be provided in plain English and through a variety of channels to ensure it can be understood and accessed by all residents.

Inclusivity – The Council will seek to engage with all sections of the community, including those who are harder to reach.

Responsiveness – Feedback will be acknowledged and, where appropriate, acted upon.

Consistency – Messaging will be coordinated to ensure clarity and avoid confusion, particularly in relation to the respective responsibilities of the Town Council and other authorities.

4. Methods of Engagement

The Council will use a range of engagement methods to reach residents and stakeholders effectively. These include:

4.1 Digital Engagement

The Council's website will act as the central "source of truth" for information, providing access to agendas, minutes, news updates and key documents.

Social media platforms will be used to provide regular updates, promote events, highlight community activity and encourage feedback. Content will be clear, relevant and locally focused.

A monthly email newsletter ("Broadstone Update") will summarise key decisions, upcoming events and issues affecting the community.

4.2 Offline Engagement

Recognising the importance of non-digital communication within Broadstone, the Council will maintain and regularly update public noticeboards in key locations.

A printed newsletter will be produced periodically and delivered to households to ensure important information reaches residents who may not engage online.

Posters, leaflets and local press will be used for major announcements and events.

4.3 Community-Based Engagement

The Council will work in partnership with local schools, community groups, churches and businesses to share information and gather feedback.

Participation in local events and community initiatives will provide informal opportunities for engagement and dialogue.

4.4 Direct Resident Engagement

Residents will be encouraged to participate through:

- Public meetings and the Annual Town Meeting
 - Consultations and surveys
 - Councillor surgeries and listening groups
 - Submission of questions, suggestions and correspondence
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5. Engagement in Decision-Making

The Council is committed to ensuring that engagement informs decision-making wherever appropriate.

Consultations will be carried out on significant issues affecting the community, with clear information provided on proposals, potential impacts and how residents can respond.

The outcomes of consultations will be considered by the Council and, where appropriate, reflected in decisions. Feedback on outcomes will be communicated to residents to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account.

6. Communication Standards

All communication and engagement activity will reflect the Council's agreed tone of voice, which is:

- Friendly and neighbourly
- Clear and practical
- Informative without unnecessary formality
- Reflective of Broadstone's strong community identity

The Council will avoid overly technical or bureaucratic language and will aim to make all information easy to understand.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Town Clerk (or designated Communications Lead) will have overall responsibility for coordinating communication and engagement activities.

Councillors will play an active role in engaging with residents, attending community events and representing local views within Council discussions.

Committees will ensure that relevant information is communicated effectively in relation to their areas of responsibility.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of community engagement will be monitored through:

- Levels of participation in consultations and events
- Feedback received from residents
- Engagement metrics from digital platforms
- Subscription levels for newsletters

This information will be used to continually improve engagement practices.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains effective and aligned with the Council's objectives and the needs of the community.
