

Community Engagement Policy

This policy sets out a framework of how we will work with residents and partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to influence service provided by the Town Council.

It sets out:

- Our aims for community engagement and how these will be achieved
- Our guiding principles for consultation and community engagement
- Our approach to community engagement and consultation will be tested by measuring outcome

1. Aims

We have set out objectives for what we wish to achieve from engaging and consulting with our communities:

- Strengthen, develop and sustain opportunities for local people and groups to influence what happens in their communities
- Provide opportunities for communities to shape and influence the development and delivery of quality services and policies that reflect local needs and priorities
- Manage and co-ordinate community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality and partner participation and avoid duplication
- Ensure that community engagement activities provide opportunities for participation for all sections of the community, particularly people and groups that are often missed out of community engagement activities
- Listen to communities and ensure feedback to participants about the outcomes of the community consultation and engagement
- Listen and learn from our own and others' experience and share community engagement skills and knowledge of putting the citizen at the heart of decision making

2. Guiding Principles

We will follow a consistent approach to planning for community engagement and consultations:

- We will actively seek to consult with the voluntary and community sectors
- Elected councillors will lead involvement
- We will listen and give feedback:
- We will record and share information with relevant stakeholders as appropriate

We recognise that the Council alone cannot achieve the ambitions set out in this policy. Everyone has a part to play in community engagement and consultation particularly:

- Residents of Bishop Auckland
- Elected representatives
- Council staff
- Community and voluntary sector organisations
- Partners & other authorities and agencies

3. Measuring outcome

We will use a variety of methods to measure and evaluate the success of community engagement, including:-

- Perceptions of residents about their involvement in decision making
- Evidence of information from consultation and engagement that influences Council services