

Looe Town Council

Community Engagement Strategy

Introduction

Looe Town Council has been developing a Community Engagement Strategy as part of its work to secure re-accreditation under the Quality Council Scheme. The Strategy development is an ongoing process, and while some changes to the way we do things have already been implemented, others will be introduced when they have been refined. New features which support the strategy will be added in the future, and especially in response to community feedback and public scrutiny.

Statutory underpinning.

The *Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill* places a duty on local government to engage with the communities they serve. The aim of this Community Engagement Strategy is to let our community know how we will improve the way in which Looe Town Council engages and consults its residents, to ensure that :-

- They are fully informed, consulted and involved.
- They are all included in the engagement process, even those who are socially excluded, and hardest to reach or consult; for instance the young, elderly and infirm.
- Their views are heard and used to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for all residents.

Community Engagement Strategy (the strategy)

"Increase transparency in council decision-making; achieve active community involvement with the council; and promote local democracy. We will make the council more accountable, visible and representative. We will strengthen leadership by the council, make it a stronger advocate for local people, and encourage value for money."

Themes for action:

1. LTC will change the content and presentation of information about council meetings, and make it clear for everyone what decisions are to be taken and what issues are under discussion.
2. LTC will change its website to increase public access to information about the council, including, what councillors are accountable for and how your town council tax is spent.

3. LTC will make it easier for the opinions and ideas of residents to be considered by the council.

A list of ideas for action that have either been implemented or are under consideration are shown in the Appendix.

A snapshot of where we are now:

A more detailed account can be found in our Quality council re-accreditation application document which is available on-line or at the council offices.

Examples of how we engagement with the public:

- Allocation of a 'Public Representation' session at the beginning of each Full Council and committee meetings. This provides an opportunity for local residents to make representations to the Council or ask questions relating to items on the agenda.
- Publishing contact details of all Council members and officers on the website and council notice boards.
- Production of regular newsletters in Community News highlighting local events and latest developments within the Council and the wider community (available on the website);
- Ensuring that the Annual report, agendas and minutes of Committee meetings are available on the website or copies available on request, and in draft form if unapproved;
- Involvement in partnerships with Cornwall council and other organisations to provide improved community amenities; for instance, local management of road sweeping public conveniences; financial support for the community computer centre; representation on East and West Looe town Trusts and other organisation in town and around.
- Consultation exercises and public meetings with local residents such as the recent Traffic management consultation, and planning pre-application events;
- The Council enjoys a good working relationship with the Looe community school. Councillors are involved in citizenship lessons and in the process they obtain the views and opinions of both the youth and organisations involved with young people. A representative from the school student council reports to full meetings of the council.
- Councillors and Officers have regular meetings with the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in regard to addressing crime and anti-social issues in the local area. The town's CCTV system is owned, maintained, and managed by the council.
- The Council has an office conveniently located in the Guildhall and open from 10.00 to until 13.00 from Monday to Friday.
- Town Councillors always live within the town they serve or within a three mile radius and have close ties to their

constituents and local voluntary and community organisations on a day-to-day basis. This makes them uniquely placed in terms of informed representation

- Council press releases are featured in local newspapers to keep the general public informed of community events, town Council projects and other items as necessary.
Representatives of the local press attend Council meetings.

Review will be on-going

The review will be informed by continued community engagement; future statutory requirements and guidance; reference to good practice elsewhere in local government and the private sector; developments and extended availability in information technology – especially opinion survey and polling applications; good practice in engaging with vulnerable and hard to reach groups.

The effect of this Community Engagement Strategy.

In adopting this strategy the council Resolves that future resolutions and policies of the council should be capable of being tested against the yardstick of the strategy.