

POLICY TITLE

Community Engagement Policy

REVISION DATE

March 2016

REPLACES POLICY

New Policy

POLICY NUMBER

POLICY AIM

The aim of this policy is to assist Skegness Town Council as an open and transparent Council, which values the opinions of the community which it serves. To continue to listen to the needs and concerns of the community, and to do everything within their power and financial constraints to make Skegness a better place to live and work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy sets out a framework of how Skegness Town Council will work with residents and partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to give local people more of a say about what services they want and need and how they would like them delivered.

POLICY STATEMENT

Skegness Town Council is committed to giving local people a voice. To enable the Council to do this it will, as far as is reasonably and financially practicable, they will:

- Represent and promote the interests of Skegness and its residents in all forums;
- Listen to the needs of our children and young people;
- Listen to the needs of our elderly residents;
- Provide the best possible amenities and services by the efficient use of available resources;
- Actively involve local people in decisions affecting activities in the area;
- Promote equality of opportunity and oppose discrimination;
- Be open and accountable whilst ensuring all information published is clear, concise and widely available;
- Support development which is environmentally, socially and economically sound and sustainable;
- Encourage partnership working;
- Listen to communities and ensure feedback to participants about the outcomes of the community consultation.

Skegness Town Council are keen to reach all groups and individuals who work, or live in the area. They have historical links with many local self-help groups, voluntary groups, businesses and other local government bodies working for the good of the town, to ensure that as wide a cross section as possible of the community can have access to the council, its Members, and its staff.

Additionally, they recognise that there are certain bodies that are crucial to the quality of life in the Town and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including the Police, the other tiers of local government and neighbouring Town and Parish Councils.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to achieve these aims, Skegness Town Council will:

- Work closely with residents, businesses and community groups;
- Engage with as many people as possible that want to participate in decision making;
- Monitor services and plan for the future;
- Ensure, that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, they actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Allocate a specific agenda item for 'Comments from the Public' during each Full Council meeting. This provides an opportunity for local residents to make representations to the Council or to ask questions relating to any of its areas of responsibility. Comments can be in verbal form by attendance of the meeting and/or by writing in advance. Written comments need to be received by the Town Clerk no later than 7 days prior to the Full Council Meeting;
- Publish all Council and Committee meeting agendas both online, and on various notice boards around the Town;
- Ensure that minutes of Full Council meetings and Committee meetings are available on the website, or that printed copies are available upon request;
- The annual external audit offers the opportunity for questions to be asked about the latest Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet. A synopsis of the financial accounts is published within the Annual Report;
- Publish contact details of all Council members on the website and at the council offices;
- Undertake consultation exercises with local residents, children and other user groups where appropriate;
- Invite members of the public to attend all Council meetings;
- To ensure Members and Officers attend, as appropriate, meetings of 'Outside Bodies' as well as those comprising community groups and other levels of local government agencies;

Skegness Town Council have many avenues through which they communicate with their community to include:

- The Town Clerks Office in the Town Hall, North Parade, Skegness, PE25 1DA are open Monday-Friday 9.00am-4.00pm and can provide a wide range of information about Council services;
- The Town Council's website www.skegness.gov.uk that goes beyond the work of the Town Council, and provides links to many other useful services, including services provided by East Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council;
- The Town Council Facebook page www.facebook.com/Skegness-Town-Council-449930725129635 which promotes community engagement.
- The provision of three notice boards, two of which are located at the front and rear entrance to the Town Hall and the third is located outside Hildreds Shopping Centre in the Town Centre. The notice boards display agendas for Council meetings, contact details for local Councillors as well as other information of interest to the local community.
- The Annual Report is available to view on the website or to view at the Town Clerks office in the Town Hall.
- All meetings of the Town Council and its committees and sub-committees are open to the public and a period is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for public questions relating to items on the agenda;
- Contact details of all the Councillors and the Clerk are published on notice boards and on our website;
- Published agendas for all Full Council and Committee Meetings on the notice boards and on our website.
- Published minutes for all Full Council and Committee Meetings on our website.

Skegness Town Council ensure that the electorate has the opportunity to have access to council meetings and facilities ensuring increased and representative community involvement.

A public forum session is available at every full Town Council meeting, where the electorate can raise issues in relation to the business on the agenda. The electorate can also request other matters to be discussed at future meetings.

Where there is a specific issue, or a new project that the Town Council wish to consider, it is of value to the Town Council to seek the views of the community who will be most affected. The residents of the Town can have confidence that their "voice" will be heard, and that the Council will work with the community to reach a common goal.

MONITORING

This statement will be reviewed annually or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed at least every two years, next due April 2018

POLICY APPROVAL

Approved by Council on 6th April 2016.