

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

Community Engagement Policy

INTRODUCTION

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council is committed to encouraging residents to become actively involved in decisions that affect them and the community, to enable the council to deliver better services and to create a more active and informed community. The council recognises that the services it provides must reflect the needs of its residents and the locality.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Community Engagement Strategy is to:

- Set out how the Council ensures that the community is kept informed and can contribute to its activities and decision making.
- To improve the way in which the Council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues.
- Being inclusive and engaging with all its residents and partners.
- Ensuring views are listened to and used to develop, enhance, and improve services, the environment, and the quality of life for residents.
 - Improve long-term social, economic, and environmental well-being of residents
- Aid future development of the town in accordance with community priorities and needs

The objectives of the Community Engagement Strategy are to:

- Use a variety of methods to make information available
- Actively facilitate and encourage community engagement
- Proactively engage with all sections of the community
- Ensure decisions meet the need of the community by involving members of the community in the decision-making process
- Work in partnership with other organisations and authorities to improve and deliver better services
- Enhance the well-being of the community

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Information will be made available to all sections of the community in a range of ways/formats which include:

Town Council Office

Residents can contact the office by telephone or visit the office in person located at Champions Manor Hall, first floor from 9am- 4.30pm Monday to Thursday or Friday 9.00am-4pm.

Magazine

Monthly news is published in a local magazine informing residents of Town Council activities, community consultations and other local issues.

Council Website

The Town Council's website www.southwoodhamferrerstc.gov.uk has a wealth of local information and is updated regularly. All agendas and minutes of council meetings are advertised as required under the Local Government Act 1972, including supporting documents and financial data. Media Press releases are regularly submitted to the Focus to effectively promote and inform the community of the councils' activities.

Social Media

All social media platforms are used to inform and update residents of all council activities and local issues.

Notice Boards

The Council has five notice boards situated around the town and in each of the four wards providing details of events, councillor and office contact details, local issues, council meetings and agendas.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT

The Town Council makes every opportunity available to residents and the community to allow community involvement which includes:

- Attendance at meetings of the Council and its committees which are open to the public and each meeting includes an opportunity for members of the community of South Woodham Ferrers to engage with Councillors.
- Contact information is available on the Councils website.
- An Annual Town Meeting is arranged every year to allow the public the opportunity to challenge and discuss any issues that they may have regarding Town Council activities.
- Access to Town Councillors - councillors are an important source of two-way communication between the Council, its residents, and higher-tier authorities.
- Access to a local office – the office and its staff are available for all South Woodham residents to help and assist with issues or concerns or put forward ideas to the Council at its meetings.
- Formal representation – the public are permitted to provide formal representation to the Council as an agenda item should a written request be received by Councillors and approved by the Town Clerk and Town Mayor.

CONSULTATION

Consultations and surveys on important issues will be carried out. The Council will ensure that residents most affected will be given an opportunity to voice an opinion. Local consultations will be available on the council's website, reported on its Facebook page and where possible all other sources of communication will be used.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Town Council has representatives on many various partnerships and committees and will support and encourage consultation and public meetings with all groups and local authorities. Working together in decision making, policy drafting and action plans where appropriate will provide a voice and can make a difference.

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed in line with Council's Policy Framework or earlier in the event of major changes to legislation or related policies/procedures or if deemed necessary by the Town Clerk.

Adopted by Council – 13th May 2025

Minute ref C25 -142 Annual Council

Next review date March 2027