



# Tiverton Town Council

## Community Engagement Policy

Policy Name	Community Engagement Policy
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Approved by	Full Council
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### 1. Introduction

Tiverton Town Council is committed to forging and maintaining secure, ethical and positive working relationships with other public governing bodies, local charities, partnerships, schools, community groups and other local organisations. The Council welcomes and invites public participation in the planning and delivery of its services. Members invite participation from all members of the community who have an economic, social or environmental interest in the community, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and faith. The Council aim to meet the following key objectives concerning community engagement;

- Improved communication by exploring new channels of engagement, including social media as appropriate.
- Better understanding of the role of the Town Council and the Town Councillors
- Improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision making.
- Improved satisfaction with Town Council services

### 2. Purpose

The Council and its Members recognise that public services which consult with their users with regards to planning, operation or delivery, will be of a higher quality and more relevant to the community that they serve. This policy describes how the Council interact with the community and consult with them on planning and policy matters.

### 3. Scope

This document is a legal requirement of Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act in 2008 and the Localism Act in 2011) and it sets out how Tiverton Town Council will involve and consult with the Community on planning matters.

## 4. Process

### a. Planning Applications

Tiverton Town Council play a vital role in the planning application process and are able to influence decisions which affect the development of the local community. The Council and it's Members actively encourage local stakeholders, interested parties and members of the public to attend planning meetings and have a chance to share their input.

Developers are also given an opportunity to consult with the Town Council, for any potential concerns or queries from council Members regarding the plans, to be addressed as part of the pre-application process.

Members who serve on the Planning Committee are also given training to understand the procedures required on how to challenge a planning application that is not in the best interests of the local community.

### b. Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan is a framework for how Tiverton will be developed in future years, what these changes will look like and how they will evolve. It helps to identify the needs of the local community and help to mould the development framework around the future aspirations and requirements of the local community. Tiverton Town Council has committed to providing a robust plan and to achieve this it will:

- Hold Public Consultations
- Include members of the public on the steering group
- Provide Councillors who will serve onto interest groups
- Provide Planning training to serving members of the steering group, in order that the discourse around planning decisions can be fully understood.
- Employ external consultants to advise the steering group.

### c. Council Meetings

All Council and Committee meetings are open for the public to attend (excluding the Staffing Committee). In order to encourage public involvement and attendance at meetings the Council:

- Publishes notice of meetings with a minimum of three days' notice to the date of the meeting, on public notice boards in the town and on the Council website.
- Sets aside a democratic period, where members of the public are encouraged to speak if they wish to do so and allow for questions to be put to Members.
- Encourage the schools, societies and organisations of the local community to participate in meetings by way of a presentation, to provide elected Members with an update of the ongoing work being done by the groups and governing bodies to actively participate in the community.

## d. Public Consultations

From time to time, there may be a need for the Council to hold a public consultation. There may be a significant decision needed, which could have a large impact on the local community or affect how services are provided or change the way in which they operate. In this instance, the Council would need to consult with the wider community in order to gain an understanding of the potential direct and indirect consequences of such a decision. Thus, providing a suitable way to manage the impact on the community it serves as effectively as possible. If a public consultation need arises, the Council will ensure the following;

- Time frames for consultations will be decided on a case by case basis, to ensure enough time for a considered and careful response.
- Ensure that the local community have a chance to be heard.
- Aim to involve a full range of stakeholders and interested parties.
- Avoid launching consultations during local or national election periods.
- Ensure the relevant information relating to the consultation is made accessible by posting onto the Council website or social media pages as appropriate.