



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

South Molton Town Council's Community Engagement Strategy is reviewed by the Council annually. It was last approved 20th April 2017.

Introduction

The purpose of the community engagement strategy is to enable and empower the local community to engage with the Town Council in identifying, prioritising and responding to local needs. It seeks to involve local residents and partner organisations in the decision-making process thereby ensuring a strong and inclusive community and an improved quality of life for all.

Town Council's Vision

South Molton Town Council believes that: -

- All the community should be involved in decisions which affect their lives.
- Everyone deserves good quality services which respond to their needs.
- The Town Council's policies and priorities should reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community.
- The Town Council should be the voice of the community in discussions with partners, other local authorities, central government and outside bodies.
- The history and heritage of the town are to be cherished, but the needs of the 21st century community must be addressed.
- South Molton should be a safe and healthy community which supports all its residents regardless of age, gender or creed.

Objectives

- Develop meaningful and sustainable opportunities for the community to engage with the Town Council.
- Develop a culture of consultation and engagement within the Town Council.
- Work with partners, community groups, residents' associations and others to identify and include those sections of the community which are not readily engaged.
- Provide feedback on the outcome of consultation processes.

Implementation

- Council Surgery – held monthly in the Amory Centre. An opportunity for residents to talk to Town Councillors, District Councillors, and their County Councillor to raise issues of concern and give their views on current consultation processes.
- Town Clerk Surgery – held every Tuesday afternoon in the Amory Centre.
- Website – the website will be used for consultation and feedback. A “Contact the Town Council” section has been added to the website which allows questions, concerns, and comments on any issue to be sent to the Council. In addition, the contact details of all Town Councillors appear on the website as do the agendas and minutes of meetings.
- Pannier Market Social Media – Facebook and Twitter accounts to be used to engage with the community.
- Newsletter – published quarterly and circulated to addresses within the parish. Contains information on Town Council activities and proposed future actions.
- Local Press – a monthly Town Council column is written for the local monthly newspaper (South Molton News).
- Weekly Report – a copy of the weekly report to councillors appears on the website.
- Partnership working – the Town Council will continue to seek partnership opportunities with the voluntary sector and social enterprise organisations to improve the quality of life for local residents.
- Councillor training – Councillors are encouraged to attend courses to enable them to use existing powers more effectively and to promote the culture of consultation and engagement with the community.

Evaluation

The Town Council’s Policy Committee is responsible for the overall evaluation of the community strategy, making recommendations to the Town Council on the effectiveness, or otherwise, of existing procedures and the opportunities available for improved communications.

In doing this, the Committee will be mindful of current and proposed legislation, e.g. Sustainable Communities Act, General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, and will actively seek out training opportunities to allow members to use their skills more effectively and to engage with the community in the decision making process.

The Committee will also rely on feedback from Town Council committees on the effectiveness of targeted consultations and what, if anything, could have been done to improve the system.

Finally, the Committee will rely on feedback from the community, or part of the community, engaged in a specific process on how they perceive the consultation to have been implemented.

[End]