# ADUR & WORTHING
## C O U N C I L S

Key Decision [~~Yes~~/No]
Ward(s) Affected: All

**Engaging Adur and Worthing - how we engage with our Communities**

**Report by the Director for Communities**

**Executive Summary**

---

**1.    Purpose**

1.1.    As Councils' we engage with our communities, partners and elected members on a regular and ongoing basis.  We are committed to engage with our communities in a transparent and inclusive way, that is proportionate and relevant to the issue or opportunity before us.

1.2.    This report provides an update on the Councils' efforts to further this area of our work including:

- consideration of a draft Guide to the Councils' engagement principles and toolkit, and
- provide examples of some of the Councils' recent engagement activities.

---

**2.    Recommendations**

2.1 Note the Councils' ongoing successes in engaging with our communities.

2.2 Agree for the draft Guide on the Councils' Engagement Principles and Toolkit (Attachment A) to be placed on public consultation until December 2019.

2.4 Following consultation, agree to delegate the authority to make any necessary amendments and produce the final Guide on the Councils' Engagement Principles and Toolkit to the Director for Communities in consultation with the Leaders and Executive Members for Customer Service.

2.3 Agree to refer this report to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration within the public consultation timeframe.

## 3. Context

3.1. As Councils we engage with our communities, partners and elected members on a regular and ongoing basis. Engagement is an important element that supports the Councils' decision-making, deepens our relationship with our communities and our partners, and helps us to meet our legal obligations.

3.2. The Councils' ability to effectively engage with our communities and our partners has been critical in realising our ambitions set out in in *Platforms for our Places.* A specific commitment (2.4.1) was made to: *'agree to core principles of engagement and community involvement in design and delivery of the Councils work'*.

3.3. The Joint Strategic Strategic Committee responded to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JOSC) review of consultations (July 2018), which has prompted further work on the Councils' approach to consultations and engagement.

3.4. It should be noted that JOSC's conclusion was on their review of the Councils' approach to consultations was:
*[we are] generally pleased with the way that the Councils undertake consultations and that some Service areas use innovative techniques and provide above average levels of consultation which in turn generate good response rates.* However, the Working Group believes that improvements should be made to the Councils' consultation processes to ensure a consistent approach across all Service areas to consultation delivery.

## 4. Issues for consideration

*Guide to Adur & Worthing Councils engagement principles and toolkit*

4.1. In response to this background officers have reviewed the Councils' approach to engagement and how we can support colleagues undertaking engagement activities on behalf of the Councils, and update and replace the Councils' Consultation and Policy Statement, with a set of guiding Principles.

4.2. This work has resulted in Engaging Adur and Worthing: A Guide to Adur & Worthing Councils engagement principles and toolkit (Attachment A).

4.3. This Guide is designed to inform our communities understanding, and assist the Councils' staff, in how the Councils design, manage and conclude specific engagement activities. This is presented in two parts:

- Part One - Our Engagement Principles
  Outlines the Councils' definition of engagement, how we engage and our core principles for engagement.

  Our core engagement principles are that our engagement will be: **Transparent, Inclusive and Relevant.**

- Part Two - Our Engagement Toolkit
  The toolkit is a starting point to help the Councils' officers to design, manage and conclude engagement activities. It provides models, poses questions, and tips for good practice. This toolkit will be supported by the resources available via the staff intranet and cross team opportunities to share best practice and learning.

  The toolkit identifies three core questions when framing an engagement process or activity:

  a. What are your objectives?
  b. Who are your communities of interest?
  c. How is the best way to reach them and meet your objectives?

4.4. Throughout the Guide there is a recognition that there is no one or prefered method of engagement.  How we engage with our communities will depend upon the nature of the issue or opportunity, as well as the communities we wish to engage with. Instead, there are a range of considerations that underpin the design, management and conclusion of engagement activities.

*Engaging with our communities*

4.5. Whilst these Principles and Toolkit will provide a foundation for our future engagement work, it should be noted that the Councils have and do regularly undertake a variety of engagement activities with our residents and communities.

Keeping our Communities Informed - the Councils' Communications Channels

4.6. Our communications platforms represent critical channels to engage with our communities. The increased views and engagement with our social media posts reflects our communities are increasing informed about what the Council is doing. Over the past year there has been:

- a 94 per cent increase in visits to our facebook page, and
- a 60 per cent increase in engagement across our social media platforms.

Preparing for Service Change - Alternate Weekly Collections

4.7. Our communications team have provided dedicated and ongoing support to the project to introduce Alternate Weekly Collections across Adur and Worthing, advising the project team on all matters relating to providing good quality and timely information to our residents regarding the nature of the changes and what, how and where people can recycle, using a variety of tools:
- Regular social media posts, including specifically produced videos
- Engagement through traditional media using press releases and advertising
- Developing dedicated resources on the Councis' website
- information leaflets delivered door-to-door over June, July and August
- Waste team roadshows.

4.8. Over the course of the campaign (May-October) our posts over Twitter and Facebook were seen over 300,000 times.

https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/news/archive/pr19-131.html

4.9. Another means of engaging our community about the Alternative Weekly Collections has been through involving residents in waste audits. Residents requesting larger bins in the lead up to the change in service have been offered a waste audit.  Residents participate in going through their waste to identify ways to reduce waste and waste that can be recycled. This is supplemented with information from our waste teams so they have information to reinforce what they have learnt during the audit.  The waste audit have also been used as case studies to communicate to our wider communities.

Evolving engagement - Brooklands Park Masterplan

4.10. Our most recent engagement activities associated with Brooklands Park was started with our communities engaging with the Worthing Borough Council. It reflects how ongoing engagement can evolve overtime. A petition calling for an improvement to Brooklands lake, which resulted in the Council taking action.

4.11. Following the dredging of Brooklands lake, members of Worthing Borough Council determined that there was an opportunity to develop the park and develop this significant asset.

4.12. Over a period of several months, a range of engagement activities took place in schools, with community groups, with the Friends Of group and with the general public both face to face and online. Our post on the across the Councils' social media platforms were viewed over 40,000 times, with the interactive map on our website accessed 2,400. Overall 800 responses were received to the initial engagement work, which led to the development of the concept MasterPlan.

4.13. This project continues and further engagement with the public, informing them about the latest iteration of this Master Plan, took place at Brooklands Park Halloween event in October 2019. There will also be ongoing involvement of the Friends Of group to strengthen their role in community engagement and development and Brooklands.

https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/brooklands-park-masterplan/

Engaging Strategic Partners - Homelessness is everyone's business

4.14. Throughout 2017 and 2018 our Housing Teams worked tirelessly to develop a truly multi-agency, shared approach to preventing homelessness.

4.15. The Making Homelessness Everybody's Business project started with a research element that spent time listening to those who had lived experience of homelessness, workers on the front line, providers of external services and colleagues from other statutory agencies.

4.16. This approach to research is intensive and not feasible or necessary for all of the work that we do. However this provided the teams with rich and relevant data on which to develop our approaches to tackling this wicked issue, and redesign the way in which we work internally, with partners and most critically, with our communities

http://sameroom.adur-worthing.gov.uk/homelessness-is-everyones-business/

**5. Engagement and Communication**

5.1. The Guide and identification of resources to support the toolkit have been informed by existing policies and practices within the public and community and voluntary sector, the issues raised by JOSC, and internal engagement with our staff.

5.2. Of the five recommendations made by as a result of JOSC's review of consultations the Joint Strategic Committee agreed to one, agreed-in-principle to two and did not agree with two others. The Guide and the wider approach of online resources and establishing a virtual and physical community of interest seek to address the Committee's response outlined in its
November 2018 report.

5.3. Further internal consultation is underway with staff providing them an opportunity to:
- provide comments, feedback and suggest edits,
- Share views on what good engagement looks like,
- Seek feedback on what information or support will help officers to run an engagement activity, and
- Share experience and learnings from recent engagement with our communities.

*External Consultation*

5.5 The Committee is asked to agree to external consultation on the Guide until December 2019. The Objective of this consultation will be to:

- inform our communities and partners about how the Councils design, manage and conclude specifically designed engagement activities.
- seek comments, feedback and suggests about the Guide, and
- seek further views on what good engagement looks like.

5.6 The information gathered as part of the consultation will help to:

- refine the Engagement Guide, and
- Inform any additional support required for those undertaking engagement activities.

5.7 We will use the Councils website and social media platforms to promote the engagement, and make contact with strategic partners to encourage participation.

5.8 The Committee is also asked to agree to refer this report and the Guide to JOSC for their consideration within the consultation's timeframes,

given their existing interest in this matter and it is currently listed on their work programme.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1  There are no direct financial implications arising from the draft engagement guide. The cost of consultations and engagements are funded from individual service budgets.

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1.  The Toolkit encourages consultation with legal services as early as possible to identify any legal issues and the statutory power or duty that the Councils will use to carry out the proposal.

7.2.  The Councils are required to carry out statutory consultation in relation to certain matters. The correct statutory process must be followed in these cases.

7.3.  There may also be other occasions when consultation is required such as where the Councils have made a commitment to consult and there is a legitimate expectation of consultation.

7.4.  Adopting an updated consultation guide and toolkit will assist officers in carrying out meaningful and informed consultation.

**Background Papers**
- JSC Response - JOSC Review of Consultations
  (Joint Strategic Committee - 6 November 2018)
- Scrutiny review of consultations
  (Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 26 July 2018)
- Platforms for Our Places
- Adur & Worthing Councils' Consultation Policy Statement

**Officer Contact Details:**
Alan Higgins
Chief Executive's Policy Officer
01903 221003
alan.higgins@adur-worthing.gov.uk

# Sustainability & Risk Assessment

**1.     Economic**

**1.1**     The Guide will assist the Councils engage with our partners and stakeholders in our business community, and assist in how we engage with our communities to improve their economic participation.

**2.     Social**

**2.1     Social Value**

2.1.1   The Guide will assist the Councils engage with our communities.  The Guide specific highlights the importance to consider engaging with specific groups who may be affected by an engagement's objectives.

2.1.2   The Guide also states that one of the reasons we engage is to deepen our relationships with our communities.

**2.2     Equality Issues**

2.2.1   The Guide specific highlights the importance to consider engaging with specific groups who may be affected by an engagement's objectives.

**2.3     Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

2.3.1   Engaged communities can contribute to improved community safety outcomes.

**2.4     Human Rights Issues**

2.4.1   Engagement can be an important means for our communities to engage their Human Rights, and ensure that their Human Rights are considered as part of Councils decision-making and other processes.

**3.     Environmental**

3.1     The Councils have recognised that engagement is a critical element to respond to issues to manage our natural environment and response to climate change.

**4.     Governance**

4.1     This Guide seeks to strengthen the Council approach to engaging with our communities, informing and strengthen decision making, deepening our relationship and reputation with our communities and fulfil our legal obligations.

# Engaging Adur and Worthing

*A Guide to Adur & Worthing Councils engagement principles and toolkit*

**ADUR & WORTHING**
C O U N C I L S

# November 2019

# Purpose of this Guide

As Councils' we engage with our communities, partners and elected members on a regular and ongoing basis. We are committed to engage with our communities in a transparent and inclusive way, that is proportion and relevant to the issue or opportunity before us.

This Guide is designed to inform our communities understanding, and assist the Councils' Staff in how the Councils design, manage and conclude specifically designed engagement activities. This is done in two parts:

**Part One - Our Engagement Principles**

Outlines the Councils definition of engagement, how we engage and our core principles to engagement.

**Part Two - Our Engagement Toolkit**

Acts as a starting point to help the Councils' Officers to design, manage and conclude engagement activities by providing models, posing questions, and tips for good practice. This toolkit is supported by the resources available via the staff intranet and opportunities to share best practice and learning.

Throughout the Guide there is a recognition that due to the issue, communities of interest involved and other factors and contexts there is no single approach to engagement. Instead there is a range of considerations that go into designing, managing and concluding engagement activities.

If you would like more information about this guide and Councils engagement activities, please have a look at the Councils' engagement webpage or email: policy@adur-worthing.gov.uk

# Part One: Our Engagement Principles

## What is Engagement?

We define engaged engagement as:

> *a planned activity with the specific purpose of working across organisations, partners and communities to help shape the decisions or actions of the community, partners or organisation about an issue or opportunity.*

Engagement can include internal engagement with our staff, or involve our communities based on a specific location or interests. Engagement activities can have a specific focus, or be part of an ongoing pieces of work.  Engagement activities may also vary over time or as the context changes.

## Why we engage

We have seen how local government engages with our communities evolve from our ongoing legal obligations to recognising the broader benefits of engaging with our communities.

### Supporting decision-making

Engagement helps us and our communities to understand an issue from a variety of perspectives. This supports better information exchange, understanding and decision making within the Councils and across our communities.

### Deepening relationships

We recognise our communities want to have a dialogue with us and have opportunities to engage on relevant issues. Engagement also enables the Councils and our communities to create a deeper understanding from a variety of perspectives and develop mutually respectful relationships.

### Meeting our legal obligations

We have an ongoing requirement to consult with our communities on changes to specific policies set established by legislation or case law.

## Why we don't engage (in a particular way)

There may be times it may not be appropriate to engage in a particular way.  This can be due to  internal or external constraints which exist around the issue.  These constraints may relate to time or resources available, who has the decision-making responsibility or provisions set out in legislation.  We also need to consider the needs of our communities or specific groups in our communities, including managing engagement fatigue.  We may also have access to other sources of information, which means a particular engagement activity is not suitable or needed.

# Our core engagement principles

## Transparent

We will be clear about why we are engaging with our communities, what influence they have in the process and keep them informed about the engagement process and its outcomes.

## Inclusive

Our engagement activities will be designed with the needs of the relevant communities of interest in mind.  We will make an effort to identify and access the wide range of perspectives that may exist within in our communities or specific communities of interest, and provide enough time for them to be engaged on the issue or opportunity.

## Relevant

Our engagement activities will reflect the impact and the interest in the issue or opportunities within our communities, and the level of influence our communities have on the issue.  How we engage will be determined by what we are trying to achieve, the range and level of interest and the best way to reach those interested, and within the Councils' available resources.

# Part Two: Our Engagement Toolkit

## Models of Engagement

The models of engagement can help us to understand who is responsible for defining and leading an engagement activity and who will act as a result of an engagement activity.  Over the course of an engagement activity you may seek to move from one model to another.

Models of engagement help us get the best out of any activity by starting to identify:

- who we involve and the impact they will have,
- how we engage - what methods we may use to achieve your engagement objectives, and
- what resources and roles are required.

### Community Advocacy
(Community Leads | Organisation Acts)

- Our communities propose an action that requires a response from an organisation.
- Community uses advocacy to encourage an organisation to act.

### Community Act & Contribute
(Community Leads | Community Acts)

- Our communities lead the conversation and are responsible for the action
- Engagement is used to build understanding and commitment to act.

### Shared Leadership and Action

- Shared responsibility to lead and take action
- Collaborative approach to decision-making and shared accountability on outcomes.

### Organisation Implementation
(Organisation Leads | Organisation Acts)

- Organisation leads and seeks input or provides information.
- Engagement is used to inform and gain some input to shape an issue
- Final decision and delivery sits with the organisation.

### Behaviour Change
(Organisation Leads | Community Acts)

- An organisation leads the conversation with our communities, with individuals taking responsibility for their actions.

# Types of Engagement

Engagement ranges from sharing information, through consulting on peoples' views, to involving, collaborating and empowering people directly in a process.

No type of engagement is better than another. The type of engagement used will depend upon the nature of the issue being considered and the level of influence our those being engaged have in the final decision.

Each type of engagement will also inform the methods and tools to support an engagement activity and achieves your objectives. You may also use different types of engagement over the course of an engagement activity.

|  | Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Engagement Goals** | Providing balanced and objective information to assist our communities of interest to understand the issue, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | Obtaining feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | Working directly with relevant communities of interest throughout a process to enable their concerns and aspirations to be heard, understood and considered. | Partnering with those being engaged with in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and identify identification of preferred solutions. | To place the final decision in the hands of those we are engaging with. |
| **Promise to those being engaged** | We will keep you informed | We will keep you informed, listen and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in alternative being developed and provide feedback. | We will work together to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the final decision as much as possible. | We will implement your decision. |

# Framing your engagement activities

## Core Questions

There are three core questions when framing an engagement process:
1.  What are your objectives?
2.  Who are your communities of interest?
3.  How is the best way to reach them and meet your objectives?

---

## Communities of Interest

Across our communities people can define themselves by their interests, identity, experience as well as where they live - some examples are:

- People who often identify themselves or are identified by society, by demographic characteristics, for example, children and young people, faith groups, older people, black and minority ethnic people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people or people with a shared social background.

- People with a shared or similar interest, for example, in climate change, art, a local school or allotment.

- People with a similar or the same profession or place of work, for example, hoteliers, council workers, police officers, business associations

---

## Deeper questions

**Your objectives**

- Is it clear why you are engaging and what you are trying to achieve?
- What is the real level of influence can your communities of interest have on this issue?
- What resources do you have available to undertake the engagement (time, staff, technology, finances, networks)?
- What is the role of elected members before, during and after the engagement process - how will they be kept informed or involved?
- What does success look like? How are you going to capture learning from this engagement process?

**Your communities of interest**

- Who are the communities of interest on this issue?
- What are the best ways to engage with your communities of interest?
- What information do your communities of interest need to be engaged?
- What questions can be possessed in order that your engagement is meaningful to you and those your communities of interest?

- Is there value in targeting specific groups or individuals, compared to seeking the views of the whole community?

**How you engage**

- What are the best ways to reach communities of interest and meet your objectives?
- Who (and how) can actively support your engagement process internally or externally to the Councils? Are they potential partners in your engagement activity?
- Are there other issues which may impact on your engagement?
- How and when are you going to communicate progress and/or feedback?

# Role of elected members

Elected members have an important role in our engagement activities.  As representatives of our communities they can:

- advise officers on particular communities of interests or sensitivities the Councils may need to consider when planning an engagement process,
- help to promote engagement activities to their constituents, as well be engaged in the process themselves, and
- use the outcomes from engagement to be kept informed of our communities views on issues and provide an important input into the decision making process.

Engagement outcomes are one of many of the  important inputs that an elected member will consider as part of a decision making processes.  This includes service, financial and legal considerations, policy and political objectives, and weight up the range of views expressed through engagement activities, the media and their own work as representative.  Elected members use their democratic mandate to make decisions on behalf of the community based on these range of inputs.

# Managing your engagement process

*Good practice to your engagement*

Each engagement process is different and you need to manage it in response to the issue, context and resources available. However there is general good practice that you may consider.

## Be clear about the scope of the engagement

You should be clear about why you are engaging, what you want to achieve, who you are seeking to engage with, how they can engage, what they can and cannot be influenced, how you will use the information gathered, and what are the benefits being involved.

## Use existing evidence and insights

No engagement activity starts from nowhere, use available research, knowledge and community intelligence to help plan and provide context to those who you are engaging.

## Timing

Allow sufficient time to design, carry out your engagement activities and incorporate the outcomes into policy, plans or service design.

The duration of engagement activity will depend on the context, issues and resources, but a general rule of thumb is between six and eight weeks. Holidays in August and Christmas and the Purdah period prior to elections in May should be avoided or compensated for.

The Councils' engagement webpage and the Councils' engagement community of practice should also be referred to identify other planned engagement activities, to avoid engagement fatigue and reducing the willingness of our communities, or communities of interest, to engage with the issue.

## Honest and clear communications

Communications should be open, honest and clear. They should be jargon free and relevant to the intended audience. A range of communications channels and opportunities can be used to tell and keep people informed about an engagement activity.

You should also include a contact if people want to find out more or seek clarification.

The Councils' Communications team will be able to help about using communications channels: news@adur-worthing.gov.uk

## Tapping into expertise

We have a range of expertise across the Councils and in our communities who assist in accessing specific communities of interest and provide specific insights. Where possible and appropriate these should be accessed. For example:
● Place and Economy - Business Sector
● Wellbeing - Community and Voluntary Sector
● Human Resources - Engagement Training and Staff
● Legal Service - to identify any legal issues and the statutory power or duty that the Councils will use to carry out the proposal.

## Beyond the usual suspect

Consideration should be given to how you access a variety of views beyond those who regularly participate in the Councils' engagement activities.

Depending on the scope of the engagement consideration should be given about how you access individuals and groups who are often not heard from due to access to engagement and communications channels or other reasons (physical, economic, social or cultural).

External partners may help you or provide advice about accessing these groups.

# Concluding your engagement process

## Analysis

At the conclusion of your engagement activities (or appropriate milestones) you will have to take your raw data and intelligence to develop your understanding of what the response to your engagement activity has been.  This may range from the numbers and demographics who engaged to an analysis of the main points raised and recommended courses of action.

This analysis may also help in your reporting, feedback and evaluation.  Your analysis should be considered in the context of other information you have available when preparing final recommendations and taking further actions on the issue or opportunity being engaged on.

## Reporting

Decision-makers are formally told about the planning for and outcomes from engagement activities through the Councils reports.

In the *Engagement and Communication* section of a report you should outline:
- What internal and/or external engagement activities have been planned or occurred?
- Include the main points raised through the engagement process and how these points have?
- How engagement outcomes and decisions have been or will be communicated?

You may wish to attach a more detailed  engagement report outlining the engagement activities and outcomes in more detail.

## Feedback

It is important you conclude an engagement activity by providing feedback to those who participated. In providing feedback you should consider:
- the messages are clear and understandable,
- using a 'you said, we did' approach, outlining a clear reasoning on how the feedback was considered and used, and how decisions were reached.
- what are the next steps and are there opportunities for further involvement.

## Evaluation

Establishing how an engagement activity went can let you and colleagues know what went well and what you would do differently next time.

This can be done by reflecting within your team and/or getting feedback from those who participated in the engagement activity.

There will be opportunities within the Councils to share what you have learned. You may also want to include this in your reporting (if relevant to the decision-making) and as part of your engagement feedback.

# Additional Support and Resources

This toolkit is supported by the resources available via the staff intranet and opportunities to share best practice and learning through an engagement community of interest.  Our engagement community of interest will also assist the management of engagement fatigue.

For more information please email: [policy@adur-worthing.gov.uk](mailto:policy@adur-worthing.gov.uk)