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South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

Engagement Pledge

Introduction

As a council partnership, we are committed to delivering a broad range of council services that provide value for money for residents and businesses and that meet their needs and expectations.

To ensure that the services we provide to the community are delivered and targeted in the right way, it's vital that we seek the views of residents and businesses to find out what they want and expect from us. We want residents to know their views are being listened to.

This Engagement Pledge for the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership sets out the broad principles that will underpin our engagement with residents, businesses and stakeholders on the work we do.

With more than 300,000 residents, thousands of small, medium and large businesses and a broad number of stakeholder agencies (such as neighbouring councils, Police, NHS, government and non-government agencies) across the sub-region, it is vital that the Partnership's work reflects the thoughts and ambitions of its communities.
This Pledge outlines our commitment to inclusivity, transparency, collaboration, and responsiveness in all our engagement activities.

Engagement and consultation – what is the difference?

The Partnership's engagement and consultation processes are crucial to how and when it communicates with its residents, businesses and stakeholders however each serve slightly different purposes.

Engagement refers to the process of involving the community in decision-making and keeping them informed about our activities. Engagement is about relationship building,

gathering feedback, and encouraging a sense of involvement and ownership among residents.

Consultation is a more formal process which seeks input from the community on specific issues or decisions. This often involves seeking feedback on proposed policies, projects, or plans and may include public meetings, surveys, or focus groups.

In essence, engagement is broader and ongoing, focusing on communication and relationship-building, while consultation is more targeted and specific, often when the Partnership is seeking input on particular matters.

Principles of Engagement

Inclusivity

We are committed to engaging with all members of our community, regardless of background or identity. We will actively pursue diverse perspectives and make sure all voices are heard and valued.

Easy

We will ensure that our engagement activities make it as easy as possible for people to get involved, including engaging people in the spaces and places they frequent, and employing different engagement tactics to meet different needs.

Transparency

We will provide clear, accessible information about our decision-making processes, policies, and initiatives. We will strive to communicate openly and honestly, keeping the community up-to-date and informed every step of the way and in everything we do.

Accessibility

We will make our engagement opportunities and channels accessible to all residents, businesses, and stakeholders. We will accommodate different communication preferences and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part in the engagement process.

Respect

We will treat all individuals with respect and dignity in our engagement efforts. We will listen, acknowledge different viewpoints, and engage in constructive dialogue.

Accountability

We will hold ourselves accountable for the outcomes of our engagement activities. We will follow through on commitments made to the community and continually seek feedback to improve our practices.

Best Practice

Proactive Outreach

We will reach out to communities via different channels, including public meetings, surveys, social media, and community events. We will seek input at various stages of decision-making processes to ensure meaningful participation. In some cases, we will also work alongside community leaders and champions.

Consultation and collaboration

We will engage residents, businesses, and stakeholders in meaningful consultation when we require or seek the views of residents, businesses and stakeholders to look at suitable solutions that meet the needs of the community.

Feedback

We will establish clear feedback mechanisms (public sessions, dedicated email addresses, Microsoft Forms, direct communication to identified stakeholders/residents in the form of letters, emails, etc., paper copies of consultation form) to gather input, suggestions, and concerns from the community. We will respond timely to enquiries and feedback, keeping the community informed of any actions taken.

Education and Information

We will provide resources and information to encourage the community to participate effectively in engagement activities. We will make sure all engagement materials are clear, concise, and easily understandable.

Evaluation

We will regularly evaluate our engagement process to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. We will adapt our engagement approach based on feedback from those we wish to gain the views of and best practices to enhance the effectiveness of our engagement activities.

Principles of consultation

Have a purpose

We will not consult for the sake of it. We will consult about policies or implementation plans when they are at a formative stage.

Informative

We will give enough information to make sure those consulted understand the issues and can give an informed response. We will include assessments of the costs and benefits of the options being considered when possible.

Length of consultation

We will consider the length of the consultation. Consulting for too long could delay policy development, while consulting too quickly may not give enough time for consideration and could reduce the quality of responses.

Publishing responses

We will publish consultation responses within 12 weeks of the consultation or provide an explanation why this is not possible. Each of the Council's Planning departments are governed by specific national statutory legislation.