

WELTON-BY-LINCOLN PARISH COUNCIL

Community Engagement & Consultation Policy

Welton-by-Lincoln Parish Council's community engagement and consultation activities have been brought together into one overarching framework for the Council so as to better coordinate how we consult and engage with our community and to give Welton residents more opportunities to have their say on the services the Council provides. This policy builds on good practice which already exists in the community and acknowledges the Council's genuine desire to place consultation and engagement at the heart of our role in championing the needs of our community and involving them in decisions that affect them. We are committed to delivering services, policies and strategies that reflect local priorities, requirements and aspirations. Crucially, it seeks to establish the minimum standards we will follow when developing a consultation and engagement exercise to ensure that all members of the community have a voice in the debate around how services are delivered. It acknowledges the need to provide appropriate opportunities for the community to participate at whatever level they wish to influence how services are provided, decision making and policy development.

Background

Welton-by-Lincoln Parish Council recognises its essential role to work more closely together and with local people to:

- Shape services according to what the community really want
- Work with other organisations that provide public services in the district
- Provide good value for money

This policy sets out a framework of how we will work with residents and partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to give local people more of a say on what services they want and need and how they would like them delivered.

It sets out:

- Our objectives for community engagement and how these will be achieved
- Our guiding principles for consultation and community engagement
- The key tasks, we as a Council will undertake to implement our approach to community engagement and consultation

Our Objectives

We have set out objectives for what we wish to achieve from engaging and consulting with our community:

- Strengthen, develop and sustain opportunities for local people and groups to influence what happens in their community
- Provide opportunities for the community to shape and influence the development and delivery of quality services and policies that reflect local needs and priorities
- Manage and co-ordinate community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality and partner participation and avoid duplication
- Ensure that community engagement activities provide opportunities for participation for all sections of the community, particularly people and groups that are often missed out of community engagement activities

- Listen to the community and ensure feedback to participants about the outcomes of the community consultation and engagement
- Listen and learn from our own and others' experience and share community engagement skills and knowledge of putting the citizen at the heart of decision making

Our Guiding Principles:

- We will follow a consistent approach to planning for community engagement and consultations: Our consultations will be planned in advance, have a clear purpose and outcome, consider carefully the target audience that needs to be engaged with and the methods used to engage them.
- We will actively seek to bring the voluntary and community sector on board.
- Elected councillors will lead involvement: Encouragement from elected councillors is crucial to the success of a good consultation. They are strategically placed in the community to build relations with residents and are often well-respected.
- We will listen and feed back: Consultation results will be properly analysed and used to inform decisions about how we deliver services. We will feedback the overall responses from consultations, the council's subsequent decision (where specific to a service) and how the consultation influenced it.
- Recording and sharing information with relevant stakeholders: Information from consultations will be captured in a structured way and this, and summary key messages and outcomes, will be shared with councillors, officers, partners and other audiences as appropriate.

Who is this Policy for?

We recognise that the Council alone cannot achieve the ambitions set out in this policy. Everyone has a part to play in community engagement and consultation particularly:

- All residents of Welton.
- Councillors, who play a key role in actively encouraging involvement at a very local level.
- Council staff; everyone is involved in community engagement activities in various forms.
- Community and voluntary sector organisations, who provide local services, work directly with local groups and organisations and with members of usually excluded groups and represent the view of their sectors.
- Partners, by working with other organisations and partnerships to make sure services in the village complement each other. We will work with other organisations, such as the police, schools, health service providers and groups and individuals from the community, voluntary and private sectors to make sure that community engagement activities influence the future direction of the village.

The purpose of this policy

Welton-by-Lincoln Parish Council already engages and consults on a wide range of issues utilising many different forms of engagement. The purpose of this policy is to ensure there is a consistency to the way in which we plan, develop and share learning from consultations to influence the way in which we provide services in the future.