



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

2015 to 2019

Background

The Council is committed to working closely with the public as part of fulfilling its community engagement role.

Community engagement includes everything that the Council does to involve the public in the Council's work. The Government defines engagement as *"the process whereby public bodies facilitate citizen and community participation in order to incorporate their views and needs into the decision-making process."*

The main purpose of a Community Engagement Plan is to ensure that our services reflect the needs of the local community. This requires SDC to undertake consultation to inform strategy, policy, service development and the allocation of the council budget.

Key requirements include:

- To support the role of councillors in understanding the needs and wishes of the community
- The need to inform the Corporate Strategy and provide a solid base for developing services and service strategies
- To measure customer satisfaction and opinion in relation to service delivery and be able to track changes over time and in relation to service changes
- To measure issues around quality of life, such as the fear of crime
- To measure targets for the performance indicators
- To improve the delivery and take up of our services
- To support bids for resources or the allocation of resources
- To support equality impact assessments

The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure the consultation timetable remains up to date.

It is important to get the full involvement of all elements of the community in the consultation process to ensure our priorities reflect local needs. These are broken down within the plan itself.

Consultation Methods Used / Forms of Engagement

These include:

Consultation Methods

Online Surveys
Citizens' Panel
Focus Groups
Consultation Events, i.e. Partnership
Depth Interviews
Face to Face Interviews
Paper Surveys
Opinionmeter

Forms of Engagement

Public Meetings including Community Forums
Opportunities to attend Council, Cabinet and other meetings
Participation in Planning Meetings
Questions to Council
Petitions
Breakfast Briefings
Complaints Procedure
Forums
Social media via SDC twitter/Facebook, SDC Consults twitter
Workshops
Webcasting – Planning Committee, Cabinet, Council

SDC Corporate Indicators as Measured by Surveys

Corporate Strategy

Objective 1 – A flourishing local economy

Key Performance Indicator

- How do you rate Stratford District as a place to do business? (*Source: SDC Business Survey*)

Objective 2 – People and their environment

Key Performance Indicator

- Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live (*Source: SDC Residents Survey*)

Objective 3 – Responsible Community Leadership

Outcome measures

- Percentage of residents who feel that they can influence decisions in their local area (*Source: SDC Residents Survey*)
- Percentage of residents who found it easy to access Council services (*Source: SDC Residents Survey*)
- Percentage of residents who say that “traffic congestion” requires most improvement (*Source: SDC Residents Survey*)

Corporate Health Key Performance Indicators

- Percentage of residents who say that they are satisfied with the way SDC runs things (*Source: SDC Residents’ Survey*)
- Percentage of residents who think that SDC provides value for money (*Source: SDC Citizens’ Panel*)
- Overall CSI – Customer satisfaction with Council services (*Source: SDC Customer Satisfaction Index*)
- Overall satisfaction of service received on contact with the Council (*Source: SDC Residents’ Survey*)

Other Performance Indicators

- Perception measure: 'How much do you agree with the following statement: The quality of SDC services is generally good overall' (Source: SDC Citizens' Panel)

Results of Consultation Exercises

Dissemination will be via:

Internally

- E-mails to Management Team, plus other relevant officers
- Information Sheets
- To the relevant portfolio holder(s) directly
- Relevant Council Committee if applicable
- Staff/Member Intranet

Externally

- Press Releases if applicable
- Results sent to parish/town councils to insert in their newsletters where possible
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council Website
- Ask Warwickshire
- Community Forums if applicable
- Use of Twitter and Facebook
- Council newsletters and publications
- Display boards in Reception

What we do with the Data and Findings

With the consultation findings we will:

- Make as freely available as possible
- Share the information to the appropriate audiences interested in the consultation
- Provides evidence and helps to inform decisions
- Provide evidence for the guiding and development of policies and strategies
- Provide feedback to services in order to make improvements

Results from consultation exercises will be used alongside advice from experts, officer recommendations, Council strategy and priorities, and Councillor opinion to help finalise decisions or shape future plans.

Service Standards

The Consultation Unit's Manager is a member of the research industry's professional body, The Market Research Society and therefore works under its Code of Conduct.

All data processing is conducted under the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct, whereby in summary;

- All surveys are confidential and that only anonymised data is published,
- 10% of questionnaires inputted are back-checked to ensure accuracy,
- The processing and storage of the information complies with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Manager also holds the Consultation Institute Certificate of Professional Development.

TIMETABLE

TARGET GROUP	HOW	WHEN
Residents	<i>Citizens' Panel</i>	January 2016 June 2016 January 2017 October 2017 January 2018 June 2018 January 2019
	<i>Focus Groups based on areas on corporate or service specific issues</i>	On demand
	<i>Budget Consultation: Residents Postal Survey or questions in Citizens' Panel On-line survey via website</i>	January 2016 January 2017 January 2018 January 2019
	<i>Residents' Survey</i>	October 2016 October 2018
	<i>Ad-hoc Corporate Surveys (Issues Based), including one-off consultations to those Panel members signed up to receive questionnaires online</i>	On demand
	<i>Community Forums (6) based on localities</i>	Every 3 months
	<i>Customer Satisfaction Index</i>	March 2016 November 2017
	SDC Employees	<i>Staff Attitude Survey</i>
<i>Issues based surveys, i.e. Flexitime Survey</i>		Ad-hoc
Businesses	<i>Questionnaire</i>	January 2016 March 2018
	<i>Business Sounding Board</i>	Ad-hoc
	<i>Ad-hoc consultation using different methods, i.e. breakfast meetings</i>	On demand
Parish / Town Councils	<i>On-line surveys on different subjects, i.e. Satisfaction with planning, Combined Authorities</i>	Ad-hoc
Community / Voluntary Groups	<i>On-line surveys on different subjects, i.e. Combined Authorities, Corporate Strategy</i>	Ad-hoc
Visitors	<i>Face to Face Street Survey in Stratford Town</i>	Summer 2015
	<i>Face to Face Street Survey in Market Towns</i>	Summer 2016
Older People	<i>Questionnaire</i>	On demand
	<i>Forums - SCAN meetings at 6 locations</i>	Every 2 months
Young People	<i>Ad-hoc research – qualitative in partnership with County Council Youth & Community Service and Education Dept</i>	Ad-hoc
	<i>Young Persons Have Your Say Survey</i>	May 2016 May 2018
Ethnic Minorities	<i>Corporate surveys include a profile question</i>	When undertaken
People with Disabilities	<i>Corporate surveys include a profile question</i>	When undertaken
Gypsies & Travellers	<i>Face to face consultation at sites across the district</i>	Ad-hoc
Partners	<i>On-line surveys on different subjects, i.e. Corporate Strategy, Combined Authorities</i>	Ad-hoc
Faith	<i>Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum</i>	Ad-hoc

WHO THE COUNCIL WILL CONSULT

RESIDENTS

Citizens' Panel

The Citizens' Panel is the main tool used to consult residents in Stratford District. Ideally, the Panel has 1,200 people, broadly representative of the District, who have agreed to participate in the Panel. Perceptions of the Council as a whole are researched using the Citizens' Panel. The Panel is consulted by a series of postal/online questionnaires. Topics covered refer directly to individual service areas, Council objectives, performance indicators and priorities. The Panel is consulted two or three times a year subject to need. If feedback is required on a single issue basis requiring quick feedback, the online element of the Panel is used.

Focus Groups

The Groups give the opportunity for residents to discuss specific topics in more detail either on corporate issues or service specific matters. The Groups are an offshoot of the Citizens' Panel – a self-selecting sample of local residents. Focus groups take place where a panel of 8-12 people discusses a variety of issues. They are based on geographical areas and combine the six forum areas into three focus groups. These are undertaken on an ad-hoc basis.

Residents' Survey

The Residents' Survey is used to measure what people think of the area in which they live, what they think about Stratford DC services, and the way the District Council works. It is undertaken every two years and goes to 5,500 residents identified randomly. The survey findings will also be used by the Council to help establish its priorities for the future and in improving its services. It also provides information for performance indicators.

Other Major Surveys

Members wish to involve council tax payers of SDC in helping to prioritise spending by the Council. SDC has used a mixture of techniques in order to achieve this in the past few years. After the comprehensive Simalto exercise in 2010, more conventional techniques have been used including postal surveys of residents, the Citizens' Panel, and online surveys.

The Council uses a Customer Satisfaction Index survey (classic gap analysis) every two years to measure public satisfaction with the services provided by the Council. This is the main technique used to monitor service satisfaction against how important an element of a service is. This technique is used widely in the private and public sectors.

Service Users

There is a number of service specific consultation exercises undertaken throughout the year – various ongoing housing satisfaction surveys, various surveys surrounding leisure activity, planning applicants, Election Day feedback, Committee structure etc.

Community Forums

This includes not only residents, but parish and town councils, voluntary organisations and partners.

The Community Forum is an advisory body that acts as a vehicle for community engagement within the locality. Members of the public can raise issues of concern and wherever possible, together with relevant agencies, solutions to those concerns can be worked out. There are six located for the areas of Alcester/Bidford, Henley/Studley, Shipston, Southam, Stratford, and Wellesbourne/Kineton.

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

An online questionnaire to all town / parish councils would be included in Parish/Partners Talk; with the hope all parish and town councillors in the District would receive it. This survey would obtain valuable feedback on how councillors view the relationship with SDC, receive feedback on the planning application process, how SDC deal with parishes via democratic services, standards, and help with parish/neighbourhood plans etc.

Councils are consulted on an ad-hoc basis on subjects such as Combined Authorities and the Corporate Strategy.

The new Warwickshire Town Charter is where parish and town councils in Warwickshire have agreed with the county and district councils on how they will work together for the benefit of local people in planning, consultation, communication and the delivery of public services. As far as is practicable, SDC will aim to give town and parish councils the opportunity to comment before making decisions that affect their area.

BUSINESSES

National non-domestic ratepayers and related business organisations in Stratford District. Businesses will be consulted through targeted consultation. SDC consult with businesses through either questionnaires, targeted meetings and the website. As well as a survey every two years, research will be undertaken on an ad-hoc basis as and when issues require consultation with businesses. A "Business Sounding Board" was established in 2013 where SDC can consult on issues quickly by sending an online survey to a group of businesses signed up to receive surveys on a more regular basis. Consultation on policy changes/issues occurs through regular meetings with the taxi trade, landlords for example. An annual State of Business in the District presentation is made at the SDC Business Conference, which includes insight and consultation findings.

VISITORS

The Stratford Town Visitor Survey took place in the summer of 2015, with a similar exercise for the market towns in 2016.

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

The community and voluntary sector are regularly consulted online on major consultations on subjects such as Combined Authorities, the Corporate Strategy and the confederation approach. VASA Stratford (sub-contracted from CAVA) is the engagement vehicle where we utilise their newsletter to the groups in the organisation (500 plus).

HARD TO REACH GROUPS

Older People

Consultation is via the Senior Citizens' Action Network (SCAN) and the associated Chairs. Older people are, strictly speaking, defined as anyone over the age of 55, although membership of SCAN tends to be primarily people of retirement age. Stratford District

Council provides regular officer time to support these networks and there is also close liaison with County Council staff in the Localities & Communities team.

The SCAN initiative, run by older people for older people, aims to improve services for and policies relating to older people, by working with a range of public bodies and other organisations. The meetings also provide a platform for older people to 'have their say' on a wide range of matters of concern or interest to them, within the informal setting of these forums.

At present there are six SCANS operating across the district in the following towns/villages: Alcester, Bidford-on-Avon, Henley-in-Arden, Shipston-on-Stour, Southam, and Stratford-upon-Avon. Each group meets six times per annum and the combined groups have a membership of in excess of 500 people, although some members do not attend the meetings on a regular basis.

Specific speakers are arranged to address the SCAN groups, primarily through the Chairs and the SDC Policy Officer. SDC maintains close liaison with these groups to help shape and influence organisational policy and strategy development and to assess the impact of service change. Work continues to increase and broaden SCAN membership and to specifically target older people who may be socially isolated.

Young People

This element of consultation is part of our commitment to give young people a voice on the services that affect them too. We aim to give young people a genuine and stronger voice in the decision-making process. Classified as young people aged 25 or under, the 11-16 age group is relatively easy to engage. However, the challenge is to engage with those in the 17 to 25 year age group. A closer relationship with Stratford College has developed and there are opportunities to engage with Warwickshire College and Sixth Forms of the schools in the district. There will be a need to consult with evening school classes and apprentice networks.

In addition, the County Education Service has a number of schools who operate School Councils. Ad-hoc consultation on specific issues of interest can be organised through schools, e.g. the Local Development Plan.

Young people in Warwickshire aged between 11 and 18 are represented on the Warwickshire Voice 4 Youth which is the county Youth Parliament. This is a vehicle to engage with if necessary.

Young people are consulted at the "Your Town, Your Choice" initiative, a multi-agency event in the summer that focuses on young adults to reduce violent crime and alcohol-related disorder in south Warwickshire.

The main quantitative survey is sent out every two years, and is based on the Residents' Survey. This is known as the Young Persons Have Your Say Survey.

Ethnic Minorities

As there are no organised ethnic minority groups in the District, effective consultation has been difficult to achieve. However, all corporate surveys include a question on ethnic minorities.

People with Disabilities

Accessible Stratford is willing to be consulted on various issues and has developed a Disability Guide for the town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Consultation in the future will also

use mailing lists provided by the Orbit Heart of England Housing Association, for example.

Gypsies and Travellers

Face to face consultation occurs at the various sites across the district including Pathlow and Darlingscott, e.g. for the Housing Strategy, SDC services, site allocation policies.

Faith Groups

Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum meets on a regular basis and could be used if the need arose to consult.

"OTHER" CONSULTATIONS

Equality Impact Assessments

Consultation is a key element of any equality impact assessment and the section is involved for primary or secondary research.

SDC Employees / Members

Regular consultation with its employees is an important aspect for an organisation to undertake.

Consultation will include staff surveys, internal quality of service surveys and ad hoc issue based surveys, e.g. Staff Benefits, Stress.

Regular consultation for Member development is important on the aspects of Council work they require more knowledge, and obtain their views on issues such as the Governance Review, complaints arrangements etc. These are all carried out online.

Joint Consultation with Other Authorities

On an ad-hoc basis we may be asked to undertake a consultation alongside other local authorities. In the past this has included SDC being the lead on joint consultations with Cherwell District Council/South Northamptonshire on subjects such as joint working and business support services.

Responsible Community Leadership

State of the District

Analysis of engagement and consultation, added to the relevant customer insight is included in the yearly State of the District paper presented to Council in October. This can include primary research to get views on the District in general and the use of secondary research from the consultation done in the previous year.

Statement of Community Involvement

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that sets out how the local authority will involve interested parties in preparing and revising Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and for consulting on all planning applications. The SCI describes the consultation approaches that the District Council will employ, who it will consult and provides part of the assessment criteria for approval of Development Plan Documents by

the Secretary of State. The Council established the SCI in April 2006 and updated it in April 2014.

Its aim is to allow local people and other interested parties the opportunity to be fully and effectively involved in influencing the Local Plan and the planning application decision-making process. This is a key indicator in the SDC Corporate Strategy.

There is more linkage with community plans and strategies - neighbourhood plans, parish and town plans, village design statements etc. Methodologies used include surveys via the website together with usage of current corporate consultation surveys and questionnaires. Community events and meetings are held as appropriate.

Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Planning

There have been a lot of engagement opportunities for the Unit for Parish and Neighbourhood Planning, Community Empowerment etc. This area of work is very important for the Council to be involved in for its community leadership. We envisage this to continue in the next two years, although at a slower rate.

Results will be passed on to SDC services and the action plans will be examined for relevance to the Council's work.