



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

2020 to 2023

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1. 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.

This document outlines the principles for consultation and engagement for the Council, enabling us to continue to improve service delivery by collecting focused and meaningful feedback from residents, communities and customers.

Key requirements include:

- To support the role of councillors in understanding the needs and wishes of the community
- The need to inform the Council Plan 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

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.

The Performance, Consultation & Insight Unit will deliver this plan and apply the principles to all generic engagement and consultation exercises, as well as providing support and advice for all service-specific consultation and engagement activity that is proposed and carried out. Indeed the Unit will undertake all consultation work for services. The only exceptions are specific consultations undertaken by Planning Policy and for specific planning applications.

The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure the consultation timetable remains up to date and runs in time in parallel with the Council Plan 2019-23.

2. Consultation Methods Used / Forms of Engagement

These are:

Consultation Methods

Online Surveys
Citizens' Panel
Focus Groups
Consultation Events
Depth Interviews
Face to Face Interviews
Paper Surveys
Opinionmeter
Online Community Forum

Forms of Engagement

Community Forums
Complaints procedure
Member led surgeries for communities
Opportunities to attend Council, Cabinet and other meetings
Participation in Planning Meetings
Petitions
Public Meetings
Questions to Council
Social media comments via SDC twitter/Facebook, SDC Consults twitter
Webcasting at Planning Committee, Cabinet, Council
Workshops

3. SDC Corporate Indicators as Measured by Surveys

- How do you rate Stratford District as a place to do business? (*Source: SDC Business Survey*)
- Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live (*Source: SDC Residents Survey*)
- 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*)
- 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*)

In the 2019/23 Council Plan

Priority 5 – Putting Residents and Communities Centre Stage

We will listen to and engage with residents and communities, use what we hear to shape what we do, and communicate the results.

Objective - CP5B - Communicate actively with residents and respond quickly to customers

Task: Create an online community forum to maximise our digital platform and engage more proactively with a younger audience by September 2020.

4. 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
- Councillors (if applicable)
- Relevant Council Committee (if applicable)
- Staff/Members Intranet

Externally

- Press Releases (if applicable)
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council Website
- Community Forums (if applicable)
- Use of Twitter and Facebook
- Council newsletters and publications

5. 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
- Provide evidence and help to inform decisions
- Provide evidence for the guiding and development of policies and strategies
- Provide feedback to services in order to make improvements and show progress over time, particularly when gauging improvement in service delivery.
- Capture ideas from residents, communities and customers that will help the council with service design and resource allocation.
- Identify concerns that need investigation and resolution.

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.

6. Service Standards

The Performance, Consultation & Insight 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,
- Questionnaires are kept for twelve to eighteen months and then destroyed as confidential waste,
- 10% of questionnaires inputted are back-checked to ensure accuracy,
- The processing and storage of the information complies with the Data Protection Act 2016.

7. Timetable

TARGET GROUP	HOW	WHEN
Residents	<i>Citizens' Panel – Whenever issues need consulting on. Minimum 2 a year.</i>	October 2020 January 2021 June 2021 January 2022 June 2022 January 2023
	<i>Budget Consultation:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Questions in Citizens' Panel</i> • <i>On-line survey via website</i> • <i>Specific targeted consultation using external agency</i> 	September 2020 January 2021 January 2022 January 2023
	<i>Residents' Survey</i>	September 2021
	<i>Ad-hoc Surveys (Issues Based), including one-off consultations to those Panel members signed up to receive questionnaires online</i>	On demand
	<i>Community Forums based on localities</i>	Ad-hoc
	<i>Community Engagement Online Portal</i>	Ad-hoc
	<i>Customer Satisfaction Index</i>	November 2020 November 2022
	SDC Employees	<i>Staff Survey</i>
<i>Issues based surveys and Workshops</i>		Ad-hoc
Businesses	<i>Questionnaire</i>	October 2020 October 2022
	<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. Council Plan</i>	Ad-hoc
Community/Voluntary Groups	<i>On-line surveys on different subjects, i.e. Council Plan</i>	Ad-hoc
Visitors	<i>Face to Face Street Survey for Stratford District</i>	Summer 2021
Older People	<i>Questionnaire</i>	On demand
	<i>Forums - SCAN meetings at 5 locations</i>	Every 2 months
Young People	<i>Ad-hoc research – qualitative research in partnership with various agencies</i>	Ad-hoc
Partners/Stakeholders	<i>On-line surveys on different subjects, or via meetings at Elizabeth House, i.e. Council Plan development</i>	Ad-hoc
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

8. 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 between 1,000 and 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 up to three times a year subject to need. If feedback is required on a single issue basis requiring a quick response, the online element of the Panel is used.

Residents' Survey

This is the main piece of consultation with the public. 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 6,000 residents identified randomly (approximately to one in ten households). 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 the Citizens' Panel, and online surveys. Following the Coronavirus outbreak, and when able to, the Council will embark on a major budget consultation exercise.

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. This also gives us the ability to benchmark with these 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, visitors to Elizabeth House, Committee structure etc.

Online Community Platform

In the Council Plan, there is an action to create an online community forum to maximise our digital platform and engage more proactively with a younger audience. This will be developed in the first year of the Plan period.

Community Forums

This includes not only residents, but parish and town councils, voluntary organisations and partners. They are ran by Warwickshire County Council.

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. At the time of writing, only two at Shipston and Southam have operated in the previous eighteen months. They are currently under review by Warwickshire County Council.

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 the Council Plan.

The Warwickshire Local Councils 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.

VISITORS

The Stratford Town Visitor Survey last took place in the summer of 2015, with a similar exercise for the market towns in 2016. Depending on funding, a district-wide survey is planned for 2020 or 2021.

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

The community and voluntary sector are consulted online on major consultations on subjects, such as the development of the Council Plan and if any subject matter is relevant to this group. Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (Stratford) is the engagement vehicle used, where we utilise their newsletter to the groups in the organisation (500 plus).

PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Dialogue with our partners and stakeholders occurs on a regular basis, often via online surveys. Where appropriate, the Council will hold workshops or meetings with key stakeholders to discuss particular issues and key technical matters in depth.

SPECIFIC GROUPINGS

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 and older. 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 five SCANS operating across the district in the following towns/villages: 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 300 people, although some members do not attend the meetings on a regular basis. Meetings are free to attend and start with refreshments and an opportunity to socialise.

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 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 will need to be 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.

Stratford Youth Forum (SYF) are a group of young people who have been elected in the Warwickshire Youth Elections. Members are the local face of the regional and national UK Youth Parliaments, run by young people, for young people. They meet usually once a month at the Saltway Centre, supported by experienced Youth Workers who are part of the Children and Families Team at Warwickshire County Council. They represent the Stratford-on-Avon District and focus on the issues that are important to young people in this geographical area.

Stratford Town Trust have consulted with young people in Stratford and its environs and presents some useful feedback for the Council. This source can be utilised further.

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.

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.

"OTHER" CONSULTATIONS

Equality Impact Assessments

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

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. Welfare, Mobile Phone users.

Regular consultation for Member development is important on the aspects of Council work they require more knowledge, and obtain their views on issues pertinent at the time. These are all carried out online.

Responsible Community Leadership

State of the District

Analysis of engagement and consultation, added to the relevant 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 (SCI)

Planning decisions affect many aspects of the built and natural environment, so it is important that local communities, businesses and other interested parties have the opportunity to engage in the processes for plan-making and development management decision-making. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) identifies how and when they can be involved.

Whilst the SCI primarily sets out how the Council will engage with communities as it prepares Development Plan Documents, it also provides useful guidance to assist neighbourhood planning groups to undertake effective consultation. Methodologies depend on the type and stage of plan making and may include:

- Online engagement - such as website, social media, email alerts, online surveys
- Face-to-Face engagement - such as events, drop-ins, exhibitions, presentations, meetings
- Written Notifications - such as email notifications
- Publicising Notifications - such as adverts, public notices, press releases, posters, site notices, leaflets

The preparation of the SCI is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Localism Act 2011 re-emphasises the importance of enabling communities to contribute towards shaping the places where they live. The Council established the SCI in 2006 and the latest version was adopted in December 2018, available to view at the following link: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-building/statement-of-community-involvement.cfm>

Local Development Scheme

For the Local Development Scheme there are key consultation milestones up to the end of 2022. The key ones are:

- Core Strategy review:
 - Issues and Options: Jan/Feb 2021
 - Preferred Options: Jan/Feb 2022
 - Proposed Submission Nov/Dec 2022
- Site Allocations Plan
 - Preferred Options: Oct/Nov 2020
 - Proposed Submission: April/May 2021
- Gypsy & Traveller Plan
 - Preferred Options: May/June 2021
 - Proposed Submission: Nov/Dec 2021
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule Review
 - Draft Charging Schedule: Jan/Feb 2022
 - Submission Charging Schedule: Nov/Dec 2022

(All the above are draft and are subject to change)

Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Planning

There have been a lot of engagement opportunities 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 role. We envisage less work in respect of Neighbourhood Plans, but possibly for Neighbourhood Plan refreshes that will have to be implemented in the future, which may include an element of consultation. Community/Parish Plan consultations are expected to occur in the timeframe of the Engagement Plan.