SANDY
Town Council

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME FOUNDATION

WALKERS ARE WELCOME

Have your Say – Our commitment to engaging with you

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1.1 What is this strategy about?

Community engagement is concerned with giving local people a voice and involving them in decisions which affect them and their community. It provides an opportunity for local people to talk to the Council about their aspirations and/or needs in their community and neighbourhood. Community engagement is vital to ensuring Sandy is a vibrant community which provides the services and opportunities that its communities need.

Community engagement means the Council interacting with individuals, voluntary and community organisations and other public-sector bodies to make Sandy a better place. To get involved in making Sandy a better place to live, work and enjoy, you need to let us know what you think.

To do this, you need consistent, coordinated engagement by all the organisations who influence and provide services in Sandy. This includes Sandy Town Council who provide a variety of services within the town and are involved in making decisions that affect the future of the town and the well-being of its residents.

This strategy supports the Council's Community Engagement Policy and outlines how we will work together to inform, consult and involve local people in decision making and improving public services in Sandy.

This strategy sets out our community engagement values and standards and is divided into three main sections:

- The Community Engagement Strategy - an overview
- Visions and values – our commitment to involving you
- Involving you – standards, types of community engagement, how to include everybody and how decisions are made

We want you to have a stronger local voice and to have an impact on your local area and services. Examples of how we've started to go about this are included throughout this document – look out for the boxes.

Did you know...

Central Bedfordshire Council provides Sandy with most of its services, including matters related to highways, waste, planning, street lighting, dog control and more. Central Bedfordshire Council has its own Community Engagement Strategy which can be found on their website at the link detailed below;

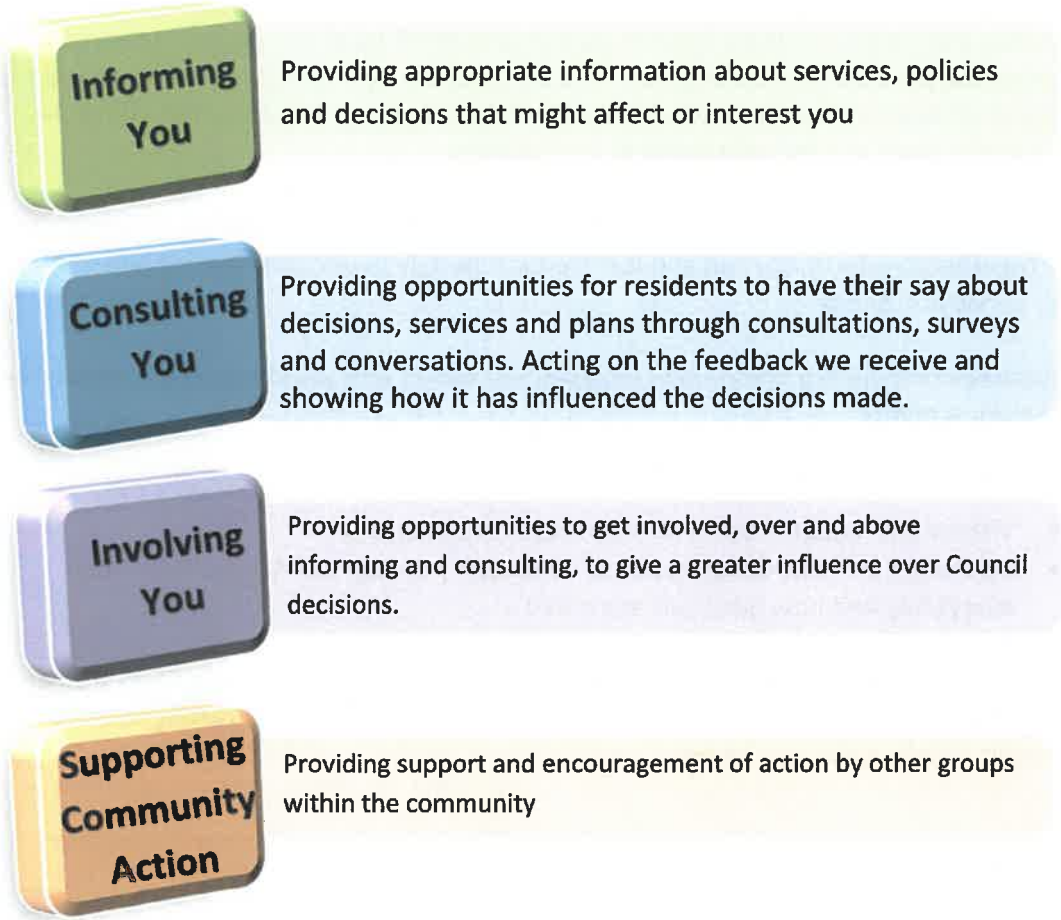
http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/stronger-communities/engagement.aspx

1.2 What is Community Engagement?

A community is considered as a group of people who have things in common. Communities can be defined by factors such as location (a street or a neighbourhood), race, ethnicity, age, occupation, a shared interest (such as hobbies) or affinity (such as religion or belief) or other common bonds.

Community engagement is about making sure that people can get involved and take part in a range of ways in the planning, development and delivery of services. This includes informing and consulting with residents on a variety of matters, but its scope goes further by seeking to enable communities to take an active role in influencing decision making.

Sandy Town Council's strategy has four main levels guiding its community engagement;



1.3 Who is the strategy for?

This strategy is for use by Sandy Town Council as a means of guiding and monitoring its community engagement and how successful that engagement is. However, the document is for use by anyone who is interested in playing a part in improving Sandy's future by providing details on how they can get involved and contact the Council. This includes public and private organisations, voluntary and community groups, residents, workers and any individual with an interest in how their environment and community evolves.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Our Aim

The Town Council exists to serve the community of Sandy and the Town Council can operate more effectively by engaging the community in its decision making and the provision of its services. The Council also considers it necessary to develop and maintain dialogue with residents and their representative groups.

This strategy is part of the Council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. The specific aim of the strategy is to improve the way in which the Council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues by:

- Informing, consulting and involving
- Being inclusive and engaging with all of its residents and partners
- Ensuring views are listened to and used to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for residents.

2.2 Our Objectives

Sandy Town Council is committed in its objectives to provide a democratic representational voice for the people of the Parish of Sandy. Central to this is engagement with the community in a proactive and meaningful way.

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage local community engagement
- Ensure that within the Council there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions which affect them
- Enable the views and aspirations of the community to have an impact on decision making and the way in which services are being delivered
- Identify how the Council can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wider community (with specific reference to "hard to reach" groups)
- To improve, plan and shape the future of the town according to local needs and priorities
- To improve the quality and delivery of services
- To be a stronger, more active and cohesive town

3. Barriers to Community Engagement

3.1 Barriers we Face

Inevitably there will always be barriers to effective Community Engagement and these must be recognised;

- Capacity and ability of different sections of the community to participate
- Difficulty in accessing hard to reach groups
- Range of methods of communication needed
- Gaps in information

3.2 Overcoming Barriers

To overcome these barriers (and others) the Town Council will consider;

- A variety of techniques and engagement methods
- Location, type and accessibility of any venues used
- Timings to accommodate range of community including working hours and childcare needs
- Use of established social media groups
- Providing Members with information they can use to actively engage with constituents in a consistent manner across the parish

4. Communication and Engagement Groups

4.1 Identifying Key Engagement Groups and Partners

The key individuals, groups and organisations that we intend to improve communication and engagement with include:

- Residents of Sandy and Beeston;
- Users of our Town Council services;
- The Head Teacher and Governors of the Primary Schools;
- Young people who live and/or go to school in Sandy and Beeston
- Retail and other businesses in the community;
- Interest groups, clubs and societies;
- Voluntary and support organisations;
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups;
- Sandy Town Council grant recipients;
- The Bedfordshire Rural Charities Commission;
- Members and staff of Central Bedfordshire Council;

4.2 Current Communication and Engagement Methods

The Council already shows good practice in how we go about communicating and engaging with people. The Council has identified certain activities it undertakes within community engagement, how the service is delivered and how it can be improved;

Activity	What we do now	What we could do
Enable an involved, empowered and active citizenship through:		
The Council's presence in Sandy and ensuring ease of accessibility	Accessible Council Offices in the centre of town. Information point open to public three days a week. Phone lines open 9-5, five days a week. Opening hours are publicised online	Improved directional signage pointing to Council offices
	Attendance of Mayor at local community or business events when invited	
	Organisation and hosting of Mayors Civic events, including civic service and carol service	Ensure better publicity of upcoming civic events on social media
	Organisation of Mayors charity functions in and around Sandy. Often supported by local restaurants	Ensure better press and social media cover following Mayors events (publicise mayor's charities)
	Contact details for the Council, Councillors and the Council office are made available on the Notice Boards and the Council's website	Raise profile of all Councillors' biographies using media and social media
		Run regular Councillor surgeries
	Website and Facebook page provide residents with online ways to communicate with the Council	Continue to develop Facebook site and use to promote both information and positive aspects of Council activity
Council Meetings – Ensuring transparency and engagement	Notices of meetings, agendas and minutes are posted on the Council website and Facebook page. A schedule of meetings is published in The Bulletin and on the Council website	Highlight key agenda points on upcoming meetings via social media

Council Meetings – Ensuring transparency and engagement	Council and committee meetings are open to the public	More actively encourage and promote
	Council and committee meetings allow an agenda item for public questions	More actively advertise the opportunity to raise questions at a Council meeting
	Council and committee meetings welcome presentations from external organisations and groups	
	Minutes of meetings available on Council's website	Publicise key decisions made at meetings on social media on a regular (weekly) basis
Annual Town Meeting	Council hosts and advertises an annual town meeting for electors The meeting is advertised in the paper and The Bulletin Residents are asked to submit questions in advance of the meeting	Better and more regular advertising of the meeting via social media and the press
		Promote focus of a town meeting rather than a Council meeting. Topics/questions should be wide ranging.
		Actively encourage motions and questions to be put forward for discussion at the meeting
		Concentrate the meeting on topical issues which are attracting online and media coverage
		Secure better representation from other organisations to encourage discussion
Community Plan	Developing a community plan to ensure input/agreement from the community on what facilities/services a developing Sandy requires	Consult via a variety of methods on the proposed Community Plan

Communicate information to our community clearly, factually and appropriately through:		
Council Website	The Council runs a website covering all its services and activity	Ensure website is regularly audited and updated
Council Facebook	The Council has set up a Facebook page with the aim of sharing information to a wider audience and improving the way we communicate	Continue to develop regular and interactive use of Facebook
Council Documents	Agendas and Minutes are published on the Council's website as soon as possible	Share agendas and minutes through social media
	Policy Documents are available via the Council's website	Share links to key policy documents through social media
	Core Council regulation documents are published on the Council's website	Share links to Core documents through social media
Press Releases	Regular press releases are made on key activity or action via the local papers and the Bulletin	Consider friendlier ways of communicating a message, such as infographics via social media and the Bulletin
Annual Report	Produce and publish on our website an annual report which includes a financial summary of the year and reports on works carried out by the Council	Make hard copies available more easily via the Library
		Publish a link to the report on Facebook and a series of individual posts with excerpts of information contained
Consultations	Use of leaflets and online survey providers as need arises	Actively consider whether consultation is needed on decisions by Council or changes in service. Ensure consultations are widely published and easy to engage with

To improve our communication with our partners and stakeholders and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts through:		
Inviting residents/community groups to provide information for Council publications, website or Facebook	Groups contact the Council to include events/information in the website's Whats On Guide.	Ensure information service is known about and used by more local groups
	Local events and community information is shared via the Councils Facebook page	
Supporting the work of CBC and promoting joint working where possible	Quarterly meetings between STC Mayor/Deputy and CBC Members	Publish some of the key discussion points and action arising on Facebook
	Clerk liaises with a variety of CBC officers to build up interworking relationships and progress on shared projects/activities	Clerk to continue working with CBC officers and reporting back to STC
Supporting the work of statutory organisations in Sandy	Actively support the aims of organisations such as the police Respond to consultations and commutations as required	Place greater emphasis on understanding the roles and aims of statutory bodies in Sandy and asking them how the Council can support them
Supporting the work of non-statutory organisations in Sandy	Council representatives sit on community bodies as invited and report back to Council Council promotes activities of other groups in Sandy	Provide group fundraising and awareness opportunities via Council surgeries and activities such as talks
Maintaining positive working relationships with local organisations	Council representatives sit on community bodies as invited Identify opportunities to work with other local community groups, as and when the need arises	Publish positive results achieved from working relationships between the council and other community groups/bodies. Look at areas of our Community Plan that require action and invite other relevant groups to work with us on achieving desired results

Receptive to requests from residents and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known not only to the Town Council but other organisations	Communication relating to STC matters are dealt with by the Clerk and office or referred to a Council meeting Any request/complaint relating to or effecting another organisation will be communicated to that organisation and response provided back STC activities and queries are shared with CBC ward members at quarterly briefings	
To raise the image and reputation of the Council through:		
Issuing press releases covering activities of the Council	Issue press releases as directed by Council in local papers	Issue more regular releases on social media about Council activity and increase positive images/photographs included
Civic and Charity events	Advertise upcoming events in The Bulletin	Advertise positive results of civic and charity events and who benefits on social media
Councillors	Advertise Councillors' contact details and promote activities carried out by Councillors as part of their role	Raise profile of all Councillors' biographies by promoting on social media
		Hold regular councillor surgeries
Decision making on controversial or widely impacting issues	When dealing with 'controversial' issues that affect a particular community, consideration will be given to holding a public meeting	
Evidencing dedication to professional and community service provision	Achieved foundation level of the Local Council Award Scheme	Gaining the next level of the Local Council Award Scheme

5. Action Plan

The Following action plan has been pulled together to ensure the Council works towards improving its community engagement activities.

Action	Who	When	Monitoring
To enable an involved, empowered and active citizenship through:			
Council Presence, Meetings and Ease Access			
Improve directional signage pointing to Council offices	Clerk CSE CBC	March 31st 2018	Installation of signage and monitoring of progress by CSE
Ensure better press and social media coverage following Mayors events (publicise mayor's charities)	Clerk Admin Mayor	Ongoing	Greater 'press clippings' and Facebook post reach
Raise profile of all Councillors' biographies using media and social media and review biographies annually	Councillors Admin	Ongoing	
Run regular Councillor Surgeries	Councillors Clerk	March '18 May '18 July '18 Sep '18 Nov '18	Reports to each Full Council on surgery numbers and queries raised
Continue to develop Facebook site and use to promote both information and positive aspects of Council activity	Clerk Admin	Ongoing	Increase number of Facebook followers and reach of posts
Highlight key agenda points on upcoming meetings via Facebook and publish key decisions made at meetings on a weekly basis	Clerk Admin	Ongoing	Increased online interaction on topics or attendance at meetings
More actively encourage and promote public attendance at meetings and opportunity for public participation via Facebook, press and posters	Cllrs Admin	Ongoing	Increased attendance at meetings
Annual Town Meeting			
Increase promotion of the Annual Town Meeting via social media and press releases. Place emphasis on submission of widescale questions that focus on development of town	Clerk Admin	Annually April	Greater attendance numbers at town meeting
Secure representation from; • Central Bedfordshire Council • Bedfordshire Police • Another body with relevance to issues in Sandy at the time	Clerk Admin Cllrs	Annually April	Speakers present at meeting from other organisations than just the Council

Agree a 'theme' focused on topical issues, such as East West Rail Link or crime rates. Ensure speakers appropriate to the theme are able to attend	Cllrs Clerk Admin	Annually April	Increased attendance
Community and Management Plans			
Consult via a variety of methods on the proposed Community Plan and agree a target for the number of responses received	Community Plan Group Clerk	Date to be agreed by Community Plan Group	Community Plan Group to monitor number of responses received and feed into Plan. Report back to Council
Consult on the Beeston Green Management Plan via a variety of methods and agree a target for the number of responses received	Beeston Working Group	Date to be Agreed by Working Group	Beeston Working Group to monitor number of responses received and feed into Plan. Report back to Council
Communicate information to our community clearly, factually and appropriately through:			
Website and Social Media			
Ensure website is regularly audited and updated	Admin Clerk Cllrs	Monthly with complete audit annually	*Assign a Councillor/s to help audit once a year and confirm process carried out to council (?)*
Continue to develop regular and interactive use of Facebook and greater publication of Council activity	Admin Clerk	Ongoing	Increased Facebook 'Followers' and 'Likes'
Council Documents			
Share agendas and minutes through social media	Admin	Ongoing	Council's appointed Facebook editors to monitor number and frequency of posts and review posts reach
Share links to key policy documents through social media	Admin	Ongoing	
Share links to Core documents through social media	Admin	Ongoing	

Consider friendlier ways of communicating a message, such as infographics via social media and the Bulletin	Clerk	Ongoing	
Annual Report			
Make hard copies of annual report available more easily via the Library	Admin	July '18	Report and review of Annual Report distribution to be provided to Council
Publish a link to the annual report on Facebook and a series of individual posts with excerpts of information contained	Admin	July '18	
Consultations			
Actively consider whether consultation is needed on decisions by Council or changes in service. Ensure consultations are widely published and easy to engage with	Cllrs	Ongoing	Council to agree consultation activities and receive all data for review
Improve our communication with our partners and stakeholders and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts through:			
Supporting Other Organisations/Groups			
Issue six monthly communication to all community groups and Sandy organisations to invite them to share information via Whats on Guide and the Council's Facebook Page.	Admin	April September	Increased communication from outside groups on events to share. *Summary report on activities/information shared to be provided to Council every six months (?)*
Clerk to continue working with CBC officers and reporting back to STC	Clerk	Ongoing	Monitored via Action Lists and updates to Council
Place greater emphasis on understanding the roles and aims of statutory bodies in Sandy and asking them how the Council can support them	Cllrs Clerk	Ongoing	
Invite groups to attend Councillors surgeries and arrange refreshments at Council arranged talks - to provide an opportunity for fundraising and promotion	Clerk Admin	Monthly during 2018	Attendance of a different community group at each Councillor surgery and WW1 talk
Publish positive results achieved from working relationships between the Council and other community groups/bodies.	Clerk Admin	Ongoing	Increased 'Press Clippings' and Facebook 'Followers'

Look at areas of our Community Plan that require action and invite other relevant groups to work with us on achieving desired results	Cllrs	April/May 2018	
To raise the image and reputation of the Council through:			
Issue more regular releases on social media about Council activity and increase positive images/photographs included	Admin Clerk	Ongoing	Increased 'Press Clippings' and Facebook 'Followers'
Advertise positive results of civic and charity events and who benefits on Facebook, website and press releases	Mayor Admin	Ongoing	
Raise profile of all Councillors' biographies by promoting on Facebook	Cllrs Admin	Ongoing	Increased reach numbers of Facebook posts
Hold regular councillor surgeries	Cllrs	2018 March May July September November	Reports on each surgery to go to Council
Gaining the next level of the Local Council Award Scheme	Clerk Admin Cllrs	August 2018	PFR Committee to monitor progress against checklist throughout 2018/19

6. Role of Council Members and Officers

Council Members (Councillors) are the elected decision makers of the Town Council. Their contact details are available from the Town Council offices and on the Town Council website. Members of the public are welcome to contact officers to raise any issues.

The Council's officers are staff who are employed to carry out the day to day functions of the Council and make sure that its services are provided for the local community. The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer for the Council.

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sandy Town Council wants to work closely with the public – residents, communities, businesses and voluntary organisations. Our aim is to engage with residents and encourage their participation in the local democratic process; creating a more active and informed community that is involved in decision making and securing better services.

1.2 This document forms the Town Council's Community Engagement Policy.
It sets out:

- The role of community engagement and its importance;
- How Sandy Town Council engages with the wider community and identifies the needs and aspirations of the community;
- How the Town Council can improve community engagement.

1.3 The objectives of the policy are to:

- Encourage effective local community engagement;
- Ensure that embedded throughout the Council there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions which affect them;
- Enable the aspirations/comments/suggestions etc obtained from community engagement to have an impact on decision making and the way in which services are being delivered;
- Identify how the Council can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wider community (with specific reference to hard to reach groups).

2. COMMUNNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Community engagement means the involvement of local people in decisions which affect them and their community. This can include individuals and community groups as well as businesses and other public bodies. It provides an opportunity for local people to communicate with the Council about their community and neighbourhoods needs and/or aspirations.

2.2 Community engagement provides the Council with an opportunity to consult and inform the public about its services and projects.

2.3 'Hard to reach' groups within the community can be those who experience social exclusion and can be perceived as being disempowered. An example may be young people, elderly people or those with a disability.

2.4 The key aspects of community engagement includes;

- Development of a network of relationships between the Council, individuals and groups;
- Clear and open communication to ensure that information is made accessible to all groups;
- Listening to and understanding a range of people to identify aspirations, needs and problems

2.5 The benefits of community engagement include;

- Problems and needs within communities are identified so they can be addressed;
- Those participating feel more empowered by being involved in decision making and a sense of ownership over new facilities/initiatives can be developed;
- May result in a renewed respect for the Council; enhanced leadership and greater interest in elections or standing for Council.

3. AIMS

Sandy Town Council strives to undertake the following:

3.1 To enable an involved, empowered and active citizenship through:

(i) All meetings of the Town Council and its committees will be open to the public and press and there is a period set aside for residents to speak.
Residents can access agendas for Council meetings via the Council's website, Council office, Library and Council notice boards.

(ii) involving residents in community issues and informing local people of the Council's services and actions taken

(iii) details of how to contact the Council are displayed on notice boards, website, Facebook and in the monthly Bulletin page

(iv) engaging proactively with all sections of the community

(v) considering consultations and surveys where necessary and appropriate and making results available

3.2 To communicate information to our community clearly, factually and appropriately through:

(i) a website detailing all council services and activities
(ii) regular press releases and advertisements in local publications
(iii) use of social media via the Town Council Facebook page (in line with the Council Social Media Policy)
(iv) an annual report
(v) display of information on public noticeboards
(vi) use of plain English

3.3 To improve our communication with our partners and stakeholders and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts through:

(i) supporting the work of statutory agencies in Sandy
(ii) supporting the work of non-statutory organisations in Sandy
(iii) maintaining positive working relationships with local organisations
(iv) identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups, as and when the need arises
(v) receptive to requests from residents and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known not only to the Town Council but other organisations
(vi) ensure local people and communities are referred to the correct department/officer/council and that they are aware of the ways that they can use relevant systems to make their views known

3.4 To raise the image and reputation of the Council through:

(i) inviting residents to be actively involved in meetings via the public forum
(ii) publicising the Annual Town Meeting
(iii) inviting residents/community groups to provide information for Council publications, website or Facebook
(iv) issuing press releases covering activities of the Council
(v) encouraging the Mayor to represent the Council and the community
(vi) when dealing with 'controversial' issues that affect a particular community consideration will be given to holding a public meeting

(vii) publishing positive results achieved from working relationships between the council and other community groups/bodies

3.5 To enable every councillor to maximise their role as elected representatives and community leaders through:

(i) the supply of a New Members Pack
(ii) encouraging Councillors to attend appropriate training as set out in the Council Training Statement of Intent
(iii) encouraging Councillors to attend meetings of community organisations and resident's associations in their respective wards
(iv) encouraging Councillors to take up places on community groups and organisations
(v) holding Councillor surgeries

3.6 To ensure every member of staff understands the council's role and priorities through:

(i) development of a customer care programme
(ii) the staff appraisal scheme
(iii) encouraging staff to provide input into the decision making process
(iv) encouraging staff to represent the Council at community events
(v) provision of regular staff training, continuous professional development and briefings

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL

DRAFT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1.1 The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with our audiences in new ways. It is important that the Council is able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that the Council balance this with its duties to its service users and partners, its legal responsibilities and its reputation.

For example, the Council's use of social networking applications has implications for its duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. There also implications for employees, councillors and the Council as a corporate body.

1.2 This policy is intended to help councillors and council staff make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such and provide a framework of good practice.

1.3 The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- that the Council is not exposed to legal and governance risks;
- that the reputation of the Council is not adversely affected;
- that our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the Council.
- Management of the Council's Facebook site

2. Scope of Policy

2.1 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels with the council, including all elected and co-opted councillors, the clerk to the council and all other employees and volunteers. These groups are referred to collectively as 'Council representatives' for brevity.

2.2 The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any Council-related purpose and regardless of whether the applications are hosted corporately or not. They must also be considered where Council representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

2.3 The council has a corporate presence on the web and by use of email, which it uses to communicate with people who live in, work in and visit the parish. Over time the Town Council may add channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these

changes occur this Social Media Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

2.4 All members and staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the council, its services, employees, partners and community.

3. Enforcement

3.1 Serious breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with under the Employee Disciplinary Procedure. The Council may take disciplinary action in respect of unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive comments by an employee.

3.2 Behaviour required by the members' Code of Conduct shall apply to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. Members will bear in mind that inappropriate conduct can still attract adverse publicity, even when the code does not apply. Online content should be objective, balanced, informative and accurate.
Members must be aware that their profile as a councillor means the more likely it is they will be seen as acting in an official capacity when networking or blogging.

3.3 Breach of the policy by volunteers will result in the council no longer using their services and, if necessary, appropriate action will be taken.

3.4 Communications on the internet are permanent and public. When communicating in a 'private' group it should be ensured that the council would be content with the statement should it be made public.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

4.1 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums
- Collaborative spaces
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter.

4.2 All Council representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

4.3 This policy is based on the Civil Service Code: Principles for Participation Online and advice produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and other sources of good practice.

5. Rules for using Social Media

5.1 Staff and Councillors must not allow their interaction on any website or blogs to damage their working relationships with others. They must not make any derogatory, discriminatory, defamatory or offensive comments about other staff, councillors, the council or about the people, businesses and agencies the council works with and serves.

5.2 Posts must not contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.

5.3 If staff or councillors blog, tweet or post personally they must not act, claim to act, or give the impression that they are acting as a representative of the council. If in doubt, they should make it clear they are posting personally, especially when posting on subjects which are the concern of the council.

5.4 All staff and councillors must ensure they use the council facilities appropriately. If using a council-provided website or social networking area, any posts made will be viewed as made in an official capacity. Council facilities cannot be used for personal or political blogs.

5.5 When participating in online communication on behalf of the council staff and councillors must;

- Never make false or misleading statements
- Never name an individual third party unless you have written permission to do so.
- Never use language that may be deemed as offensive, relating in particular to sexuality, race, disability, gender, age or religion.

5.6 Discussions and documents which are part of council meetings and are open to the public may be freely referred to in online communications. However e-mail communications, discussions of meetings or parts of meeting which are not open to the public, and any other correspondence or communication should be regarded as confidential unless specifically agreed otherwise.

6. Managing the Council Facebook Page

6.1 The Council will appoint at least three nominated persons as editors and moderators. They will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content on council pages, ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy. The moderators will have authority to immediately, without notice or comment, remove any posts from the council's Facebook page if they are deemed to be inflammatory or of a defamatory or libellous nature. Such posts will be reported to the Clerk for council records.

6.2 The Clerk reserves the right to require the removal of content published by Council representatives which may adversely affect the reputation of the Council or put it at risk of legal action.

6.2 The Facebook page will be used to;

- Post notices and minutes of meetings
- Advertise events and activities
- Post news stories about council activities and decisions
- Link to appropriate websites
- Advertise vacancies
- Share information from partners, i.e CBC, Police, Library
- Announce new information appropriate to the council
- Post or share information promoting bodies for community benefit, such as sports clubs and community groups
- Post information about council services
- Post contact information for the council
- Post other items as the council sees fit
- Facebook may be used to support the Town Council website and its information as above.

6.3 The site will be checked on a regular basis to ensure security settings are in place. Access passwords for the site will be given to the Clerk and appointed Council editors/moderators only.

6.4 The Council will only monitor the page during office work hours and an automatic message will alert any 'posters' to this.

6.5 If a matter is raised on the Facebook page which needs further consideration by the council it may be raised at either the public participation session or as an agenda item for consideration by a quorum of councillors. The 'poster' shall be informed via the page or a direct message that this is the case and invited to contact the clerk directly. Any response agreed by council will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

6.6 Reports of any concerns regarding content on the Facebook page should be reported to the Clerk for referral to the moderators and/or council as required.

6.7 The use of the Council's logo and other branding elements should be used where appropriate to indicate the Council's support. The logo should not be used on social networking applications which are unrelated to or are not representative of the Council's official position.