



Wellington Town Council Community Engagement Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear framework for effective, inclusive, and transparent two-way communication between the Council and the community. This policy ensures that community input is valued and contributes meaningfully to decision-making processes. All officers and elected members of Wellington Town Council share responsibility for ensuring that meaningful community engagement is embedded across all functions. Engagement is not limited to formal consultations — it is an ongoing process of dialogue, listening, and co-creation with the public.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all community engagement activities undertaken by the Council, including but not limited to strategic planning, service delivery, infrastructure projects, policy development, and local governance matters.

3. Objectives

- Facilitate meaningful dialogue between the Council and the community.
- Ensure community views inform council decisions.
- Build trust, transparency, and accountability.
- Foster inclusive participation that reflects the diversity of the community.

4. Principles of Engagement

The Council commits to the following principles:

- Inclusive: Engage with a broad cross-section of the community, including underrepresented and vulnerable groups.
- Transparent: Clearly communicate the purpose, process, and outcomes of engagement.
- Timely: Initiate engagement early in the decision-making process.
- Accessible: Use multiple platforms and formats to suit various needs.
- Respectful: Treat all community contributions with fairness and respect.
- Feedback-Oriented: Close the loop by reporting back on how community input influenced decisions.
- Equitable: Proactively identify and reach out to underrepresented groups, including young people, disabled residents, carers, those on low incomes, and communities who may not engage digitally.

5. Engagement Levels

The Council will apply appropriate engagement levels based on the following principles:

- Inform – Provide information to assist understanding.
- Consult – Obtain feedback on proposals or decisions.
- Involve – Work directly with the public throughout the process.
- Collaborate – Partner with the community in decision-making.

6. Two-Way Communication Strategies

To support two-way communication, the Council will:

- Host public meetings, forums, and workshops.
- Use surveys, focus groups, and online engagement tools.
- Maintain open channels for ongoing dialogue (e.g., social media, email, service centers).
- Appoint community liaisons or advisory groups where appropriate.
- Provide clear feedback on how community input was considered or implemented.

7. Responsibilities

- Councillors: Champion engagement and consider community input in decision-making.
- Council Staff: Design and deliver engagement activities aligned with this policy.
- Community Members: Participate constructively and respectfully in engagement processes.
- The Council: will also work with partners to support residents and local groups to build capacity and confidence to engage effectively, including offering tools, training, or opportunities for co-design and collaboration.

8. Strategic Alignment

This engagement policy supports the delivery of the Wellington Community Development Plan (2025–2030), which relies on widespread public participation to shape priorities and outcomes. Engagement activities undertaken under this policy will directly inform the CDP and future strategic documents. This also strengthens Wellington Town Council's commitment to inclusive, accountable, and transparent governance.

9. Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of community engagement will be regularly reviewed through:

- Feedback from participants.
- Post-engagement evaluations.

- Annual reporting on engagement activities and outcomes.

The report will include activities undertaken, who was engaged, key themes raised, and how community input has influenced Council decisions

This report will contribute to continuous improvement and transparency, and inform updates to the Community Development Plan.

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years or earlier if required.