

Policy and Finance Committee

Date: 17 September 2018

Title: Community Engagement Strategy

Purpose of the Report: To consider approval of the revised Strategy document (attached).

Contact Officer: Sarah Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central Services

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim 1: to consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin future service delivery by the Town Council.	
Implications:		
Financial	X	
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery		
Procedural/Legal	√	To ensure the Community Engagement Strategy is current and fit for purpose
Risk/Health and Safety		

1. RECOMMENDATION/S

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To endorse the revised Community Engagement Strategy.**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting on 26 February 2018, the Committee received a revised Community Engagement Strategy for consideration. This had been updated from the current document adopted in 2012, which was not reflective of the significant growth in digital communications in the intervening years.

2.2 In revising the Strategy, a number of Consultation and Community Engagement strategies for other councils were reviewed (both parish councils and local authorities). The overarching themes had been incorporated into the new document to reflect best practice elsewhere within the local government sector.

- 2.3 The revised Strategy sets out a range of ways in which the Town Council will communicate with the public and a range of guiding principles to be followed.
- 2.4 As stated in the Strategy, it is not possible to formulate a prescriptive process or timescale for engagement, as each project/service will differ. The Town Council will consider timescales, costs and resources for each individual project or service in determining how best to engage with residents and stakeholders.
- 2.5 At its meeting held on 26 January 2009, the Town Council resolved to adopt the principles of the Bedfordshire and Luton Compact, which sets out the ways in which the public sector and the voluntary and community sector will work together. These principles are included in the new draft Strategy.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 An initial period of consultation took place on the draft Strategy from February-May 2018. As reported to Committee on 18 June 2018, social media posts about the consultation reached 2,669 people with 82 engagements (clicks on picture or links, likes, shares and comments). Despite this, the formal response via the online questionnaire was extremely limited.
- 3.2 The consultation has also been promoted via the “news” sections on the website and app and in the About Town community newsletter for May/June 2018.
- 3.3 On 18 June 2018, some minor amendments to the draft Strategy were endorsed by Committee and it was agreed to undertake a further period of consultation to allow a greater period of time for public engagement.
- 3.4 As of 15 August 2018, five scheduled social media posts have promoted the consultation, resulting in 52 clicks through to the consultation page of the website. The consultation page itself has had 1730 views in the period February – August 2018.
- 3.5 Despite the above, only a very small number of the brief 4-question surveys were completed.
- 3.6 Of the responses received, 60% agreed that the revised document was more reflective of current best practice when compared to the existing Community Engagement Strategy.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to consider endorsement of the revised Community Engagement Strategy (**attached**).