



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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Chairman: Cllr Jane Ward

Vice-Chairman: Cllr Valerie Morgan

Town Clerk: Helen Symmons

STATEMENT OF INTENT – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Adopted: November 2017

Review: November 2021

INTRODUCTION

Local Councils have an overarching role to play in their area which no other body can provide. In performing a community leadership role, Councils can articulate and represent the views and needs of the local community more effectively. This will involve listening to the local community and communicating what it is doing through a variety of mediums. If the community knows and understands what the Council is doing for them, its reputation will be higher.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council is committed to high standards of engagement with its community. Our Council is part of a tier of local government which belongs to, is part of and is directly accountable to its local community. Councillors play an important role as they are elected to make decision on matters affecting our Parish. We aim to make a measurable difference to the quality of life of the community we serve and to be responsive to the needs of our community. This statement sets out how we ensure the community is kept informed about and can contribute to the activities and decision-making of this Council to the benefit of this Parish.

WHAT IS OUR COMMUNITY?

We believe our community is everyone within the boundaries of our Parish including all ages, any organisations, groups and individuals within it. We also recognise that residents pay for the activities of the Town Council and that visitors to our community form an important part of the vibrancy of community life. We understand that there are certain bodies that are crucial to local quality of life and we will strive to achieve excellent working relationships with these bodies including Town organisations, the Policy and Southend Borough Council.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council has many avenues through which it communicates with its community.

These include:

- The Council's website – www.leighonseatncouncil.gov.uk – a wealth of information including:
Councillor details
Freedom of Information Scheme

- Links to other organisations including Southend Borough Council (primary authority)
- Annual Report (hard copies available at the Annual Town Meeting)
- Agendas and Minutes of Council and Committees
- Six noticeboards around the Town
- Annual Town Meeting
- Bi-annual publication - LeighTown Council magazine
- Annual External Audit
- Social Media – Facebook and Twitter accounts
- The Community Centre and Town Council Office

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council makes every opportunity available to the electorate to ensure excellent community involvement. These will include the following methods:

- Public Representation agenda item on every Council and Committee meeting where the electorate can raise issues “in relation to the business on the agenda or request matters to be discussed at a subsequent meeting”.
- At all Committee meetings the public are permitted to ask questions and provide input at the discretion of the Chairman.
- The website will contain a feedback form to enable residents to input into current issues and raise concerns.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

This ‘Statement of Intent’ has elsewhere listed the many opportunities that exist for the public to make formal representations to the Town Council. Issues received in writing, providing they are received before the deadline for closure of the agenda, are considered for inclusion as a stated item on the next agenda.

It is a target that correspondence received from a member of the public is at least acknowledged, wherever possible, within two working days and actioned within 10 working days.

INVOLVEMENTS IN PARTNERSHIPS

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council has representation on various partnerships, and committees. Representatives are elected at the Annual Council Meeting. The Town Council encourages and supports public meetings organised by the Police, Health Authority, and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council where they feel information should be made available to the residents of Leigh-on-Sea.

ROLE OF COUNCIL MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

As an open and transparent Town Council, both Members and officers seek to offer a high quality professional service to all whom they serve. Both Members and Officers are keen to maintain relevant Codes of Conduct in their business, and see the community as “customers” rather than an electorate.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Where there is a specific issue, or a new project, that the Town Council wish to consider, it is of value to the Town Council to seek the views of the community who will be most affected. The residents of the Town can have confidence that their “voice” will be heard, and that the Council will work with the community to reach a common goal.