



## STRATEGY AND STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Strategy will guide our communications and community engagement activity. We want to make sure that our communications are two-way. To tell people about ourselves and also to listen to what people tell us about themselves and the service improvements they would like. The strategy has been written to help us remain outward focused towards local people and stakeholders, involving as many people as possible in a variety of ways.
- 1.2 This Strategy will cover all aspects of how the Town Council communicates and engages with everyone who comes into contact with us either directly or indirectly.

### **2. Objectives**

- To create a positive image of the Town Council by influencing perception
- To effectively inform residents of the aims, objectives and activity of the Town Council
- To build the capacity and motivation of residents to be involved with the Town Council
- To use a variety of methods to ensure that the way we communicate keeps everyone included
- To use different ways of engaging with people to find out what service improvements they would like to see
- To build trust by being open and transparent

### **3. Target Audiences**

- 3.1 We want to reach everyone with a stake in the future of Neston Town Council: people living, working or doing business here, and people who have an influence over the future of the area.
- 3.2 We want dialogue with communities based on where they live and people in communities based on common interests. We want to communicate and listen to people who other agencies have traditionally found hard to reach and hard to hear
  - Residents of the Town
  - Cheshire West and Chester Councillors and officers
  - Member of Parliament
  - Community Groups
  - Agencies and Partners
  - Local service providers
  - Local businesses and employers
  - Young People
  - Older People
  - Schools
  - Opinion Formers e.g. Politicians, journalists, National Government

## **4. Context of Messages**

4.1 It is important that all our communications have as much impact as possible. Therefore to avoid dilution of our messages or contradiction, the following will be the main messages that we will be attempting to relay in our communications:

- The Town Council **can** make a difference
- The Town Council want to hear your opinion
- The Town Council wants to work in partnership for a better future for Neston. The Town Council needs the help and support of the community and partners
- The Town Council wants to celebrate what has already happened - positive messages about Neston to raise community spirit

4.2 The messages should be

- Short and to the point
- Not conflicting
- In plain English
- Focusing on involvement

## **5. Methods**

5.1 Neston Town Council shall use a variety of methods based on what reaches people most effectively and has most credibility. This includes:

- Local radio
- Newsletter – The Neston Matters
- Posters/flyers
- Community/civic events
- Press releases
- Local newspapers and websites
- Community engagement events e.g. Parkgate Marsh consultation event
- Town Council meetings – open forum
- Public meetings
- Visits and networking
- Letters/mail shots
- Word of Mouth
- Training
- Town Council website

5.2 Our communications must leave no one out or we will have missed an opportunity to reach the whole community, or receive fully representative views. It is important therefore that we use different ways of engaging with people. The need and opportunity to engage with local people will undoubtedly increase with the impending changes to the way in which local government services are to be delivered. It is suggested therefore that an action plan be drawn up identifying the best way of explaining to the people of Neston what we do and discussing with them our plans and aspirations for the future.

## **6. Checking how well we are doing**

We will set ourselves targets and measure how well we are doing against them. We will carry out an annual review of our action plan initiatives (see para 8 below)

**7. Reviewing this strategy**

We will review each year our Engagement Strategy and Statement of Community Engagement. The outcomes from our action plan initiatives will help us in our desire to continually improve what we do and how we do it.

**8. Action Plan**

This Strategy and Statement of Community Engagement will help focus the way in which we engage with local residents and partners. We will develop an annual action plan detailing proposed communication, consultation and partnership activity over the following 12 months.