



**Buckingham Town Council**  
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
STATEMENT OF INTENT AND  
COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

**Date Agreed: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012**  
**Minute Number: 120.1/12**  
**Prepared by: Mr CP Wayman**  
**Version: 1.1**

## **1. Aims and Objectives**

The Town Council exists to serve the community of Buckingham and the Town Council believes it can operate more effectively by engaging the community in its decision making and the provision of its services to those residents. The Town 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.

To achieve this, the Town Council therefore aims to:

- Represent and promote the interests of Buckingham and all its people in all forums
- Pay particular attention to the needs of our young people, other minority and vulnerable groups
- Provide the best possible amenities and services by the efficient use of available resources
- Actively involve local people in decisions affecting activities in the area
- Promote equality of opportunity and oppose discrimination
- Be open and accountable in all it does
- Support development which is environmentally, socially and economically sound and sustainable

In order to achieve these aims, the Council will:

- Work closely with residents, businesses and community groups
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future
- Ensure, that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process.
- Ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens

The outcomes the Council hopes to achieve are:

- Improved communication with the local community
- A better understanding with the community of the role of the Town Council and of its Councillors
- Local people actively contributing to decision making
- Improved satisfaction with local public services

## **2. Defining the Community**

The Council considers the community of Buckingham to consist of:

- All residents of the town
- All users of the Town Council's services
- All those who work within the town
- All those who own businesses within the town
- All young people who live and/or go to school within the town
- All local voluntary organisations, clubs and societies
- Any group or organisation that represent some or any of the above sections of the community

Additionally, the Council recognises that there are certain bodies that are crucial to the quality of life in Buckingham and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including: the Police, the other tiers of local government and other Town and Parish Councils in Aylesbury Vale and surrounding areas.

## **3. Provision of Information to the Community**

Information is provided by the Town Council to the community in a number of ways, including:

- The Town Council offices at Verney Close, Buckingham, open Tuesday to Friday, and can provide a wide range of information both on Council services and other Buckingham activities and issues
- The Town Council's website [www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk) contains copies of Council documents, such as agendas, minutes, details of Councillors, and provides information both on the work of the Town Council and on other services, local events, local groups and organisations
- The Town Council Notice board is used to display agendas for Council meetings and contact details for local Councillors as well as other information of interest to the local community. Additionally, various Notice boards around the town display local events
- The Town Council's Newsletter, published approximately quarterly and delivered to households. This is also available from the Town Council offices, the local library, the Visitor Information Centre and on the Town Council website
- The Town Council publishes an Annual Report which summarises its activities over the preceding year and its accounts. It is available at the Annual Town meeting and from the Town Council offices, or the Town Council website
- All meetings of the Town Council and its committees and sub-committees are open to the public and a period is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for public questions relating to items on the agenda. Public questions may also be asked on matters which are not on the agenda, provided that notice has been given to the Clerk at least three working days before the date of the meeting

- Public meetings, called to gauge public opinion about important issues affecting the town such as major planning applications or future plans
- Questionnaires, sometimes used to ask local people's opinions about specific matters; these are distributed to local residents or associations
- Social media websites

#### **4. Opportunities for Formal Representations to the Council**

Formal representations to the Council may be made at any time in writing to the Town Clerk.

#### **5. Involvement in Partnerships**

The Town Council often works in partnership with other organisations such as the District Council, County Council, Youth Council, Police and local schools. It is represented on the following local organisations:

- Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils
- Aylesbury Vale Local Strategic Partnership Stakeholder
- Aylesbury Vale Local Council Planning Liaison Group
- Aylesbury Vale North Sports Council
- Buckingham & Gawcott Charitable Trust
- Buckingham & River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board
- Buckingham Centre for the Arts
- Buckingham Community Centre
- Buckingham Community Wildlife Project
- Buckingham Economic Group
- Buckingham General Charities
- Buckingham Partnership
- Buckingham Youth Centre
- CAB
- Local Area Forum
- Licensing Forum
- Neighbourhood Action Group
- North Bucks. Parishes Planning Consortium
- Twinning Association
- Green Buckingham Group
- Tourist Information Centre

#### **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 Councillors 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 which means the Clerk has overall responsibility for the provision of Council services.

## **ACTION PLAN**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Status</b>
Chairman	Chairman to fulfill a civic role and encourage community organisations to invite the Chairman to events	Chairman and Staff	Ongoing
Minutes	Ensure copies of minutes are available, both as hard copy and electronically, for residents and community groups, including a copy on the Town Council Notice board	Staff	Ongoing
Annual Report	Ensure Report is available both as a hard copy and electronically for residents and community organisations and a summary included in the newsletter	Staff	Ongoing
Office Opening Hours	Publicise office opening hours in newsletter and on website and Notice boards	Staff	Ongoing
Annual Town Meeting	Publicise the meeting widely and liaise with stakeholders to encourage good attendance	Staff & members	Annually
Public Forum	Encourage residents to raise any matters of interest or concern via the public participation element of all Full Council and Committee meetings	Staff & members	Ongoing
Notice Boards	Regularly update Notice boards with council and community activities	Staff	Ongoing
Website	Maintain website with information on council services and activities	Staff & members	Ongoing
Newsletter	Produce and deliver a newsletter quarterly	Staff & members	Quarterly
Youth Council	Co-ordinate and support Buckingham Town Youth Council	Staff & members	Ongoing
Businesses	Engage with businesses and business organisations	Staff & members	Ongoing
Local Democracy	Encourage residents to both vote at and stand for the Town Council in Local Council elections	Staff & members	Ongoing but higher priority in the six months leading to local council elections
Press	Liaise regularly with the press sending details of Council meetings and Council activities	Staff	Ongoing

**Statement adopted by Buckingham Town Council at its meeting on [DATE]**