

Calne Town Council

Community Engagement Strategy

1. Introduction

Welcome to Calne's Community Engagement Strategy. This strategy sets out what community engagement is, why we do it and the aims and actions which support it.

This strategy is about building on the good practice which already exists in the Town and making it better. It also acknowledges the genuine desire of all partners within our community to work more closely together for the benefit of local residents. Crucially, it seeks to ensure that the many 'communities' in Calne have a voice in the debate around improving the delivery of local services and thus having a positive impact on life and work in the Town.

2. What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement is a term covering many different activities carried out with people who make up our communities. It is about making sure that people can participate and engage in lots of different ways to make Calne a better place. Community engagement can happen in many ways from Town Meetings, survey polls, questionnaires, big events, through to the arts, festivals and much more.

Community engagement can also take place at a number of different levels from low involvement activity to high involvement activity. For example this can range from providing information to people, to consultation by asking for feedback on a particular service or policy, to participation when decision making is shared and through to empowerment which gives people ownership of the decisions and support to carry out their own activities.

3. What is a Community?

Communities can be:

- Communities of Place – people within a defined geographical area like the town wards of North, South, Central and Chilvester & Abberd.
- Communities of Interest – People who share a particular experience or characteristic, such as young people, faith groups, older people, disabled people, ethnic groups or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Communities may define themselves and definitions do change and people often belong to more than one community and communities themselves are often very diverse. The key point is that we always endeavour to engage with all residents.

4. Why Do We Engage?

Community Engagement gives individuals, communities and partners a range of very important benefits:

- Developing a better understanding of and relationship with communities through genuine dialogue
- Involving residents in public services and making sure their knowledge, experience and priorities shape those services so they are more responsive to need
- Encouraging more voluntary and community groups to become involved in planning and delivering local services
- Helping people to establish an improved sense of neighbourhood and more cohesive communities
- Engaging more people in local democracy

5. Our Partners:

There are different partners involved in working together on community engagement:

- All residents of Calne
- Councillors as elected representatives of their communities
- Voluntary and community groups both individually and through local organisations
- Private sector organisations, local businesses and social enterprises
- Public service providers

The approach to community engagement in Calne is founded upon the principle that each agency, public, private or voluntary is responsible for its own community engagement activity.

6. Our Principles which support Engagement:

Through this strategy and the engagement work we are all involved in across the town, we aim to:

- Have clear objectives for engagement and to communicate clearly and openly about decisions and actions and the reasons for them
- Seek to reach those communities and individuals not yet engaged
- Share information and expertise
- Engage in innovative and creative ways using 21st century media where appropriate
- Recognise and value existing channels and work to make these more responsive and effective
- Engage using a range of flexible methods to avoid relying on one source or route

7. Our Commitments:

Through this strategy we are committed to:

- Use the most appropriate level of involvement and participation for each activity
- Build on the existing skills of local people and communities so they are empowered to engage in decision making
- Develop the voluntary and community sector to play a key role in helping in delivering services
- Develop a culture where other peoples' views are valued and listened to and are part of the decision making process and help build cohesion in Calne

8. How we will do it:

To help us achieve effective community engagement we will make use of:

- Noticeboards, the Calne Connection newsletter, the website, polls and survey's, Facebook and Twitter, public meetings, town forum – "Shout out Calne", household delivery of leaflets, press releases, telephone polls and surveys and the Town Council's Information Centre.

9. How will we measure success?

- Through attendance at meetings of the Council, committees and the Annual Town Meeting
- Responses received to questionnaires, survey's and polls
- Statistics from the website
- Statistics from Facebook and Twitter
- The activity of and interest in the town forum "Shout Out Calne"

The Town Council's Annual Report will include a section on community engagement.

Want to Get Involved?

For more information on this strategy, or to find out more about becoming involved in putting it into action, please contact Linda Roberts, Town Clerk:

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By telephone: 01249 814000

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