



SAXMUNDHAM TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Review Body: Civic and Community Committee

Policy Approved: Town Council

Approval Date: September 2025

Minute Item: 66/25TC

Review Period: Annual

Next Review: September 2026



1. Purpose

Saxmundham Town Council is committed to open, transparent, and inclusive governance. Guided by our Strategic Plan (2025–2030), this policy sets out how we will engage with our residents, businesses, partners, and stakeholders to ensure our decisions reflect the needs and aspirations of the whole community.

Community engagement is central to our role: it strengthens democracy, ensures accountability, and builds trust. This policy demonstrates how we will embed the Council's core values of serving our community, openness and transparency, a strong and respected voice, delivering quality and value, collaboration and partnerships, and creativity and innovation into all our engagement work.

2. Aims and Objectives

Through this policy, the Town Council aims to:

- **Serve our community** by listening actively and giving residents opportunities to shape decisions.
- **Promote openness and transparency** in all that we do, ensuring information is clear, timely, and accessible.
- **Act as a strong and respected voice** for Saxmundham, representing local views in decision-making forums.
- **Deliver quality and value** by ensuring engagement activities are purposeful, efficient, and proportionate.
- **Collaborate and build partnerships** with voluntary groups, statutory authorities, and local organisations to maximise community benefit.
- **Embrace creativity and innovation** in how we engage, recognising that different people prefer different ways of being involved.

3. How We Will Engage

The Council will use a variety of methods to ensure that engagement is wide-reaching, inclusive, and representative:

- **Informing** – providing clear, accessible, and timely information through our website, social media, newsletters, local noticeboards, and press releases.
- **Consulting** – seeking feedback on major issues and projects through surveys, public meetings, and targeted engagement with underrepresented groups.
- **Involving** – encouraging residents to attend Council meetings, contribute ideas, and work alongside councillors and officers on community initiatives.
- **Collaborating** – forming partnerships with organisations, businesses, and agencies to deliver shared goals and maximise resources.
- **Empowering** – supporting local groups and residents to take the lead on initiatives, recognising that community-led projects often have the greatest impact.



4. Defining Our Community

Our community includes:

- All residents of the town.
- Users of the Town Council's services.
- Local businesses, employees, and investors.
- Voluntary organisations, clubs, and societies.
- Children and young people who live or go to school locally.
- Visitors to Saxmundham.

We also recognise the importance of working closely with statutory authorities, neighbouring parishes, and partner organisations whose activities affect the town.

5. Future Improvements

In line with our Strategic Plan, the Council is committed to continuous improvement in community engagement by:

- Strengthening relationships with community groups and networks.
- Reaching out to underrepresented voices to ensure inclusivity.
- Sharing both successes and challenges transparently, helping residents understand the realities of decision-making.
- Celebrating and publicising positive outcomes to build pride and encourage participation.
- Evaluating engagement activities and applying lessons learned to future work.

6. Outcomes

By embedding our values into community engagement, we aim to achieve:

- Stronger participation in local democracy.
- A clearer understanding of the Council's role and responsibilities.
- Higher levels of resident satisfaction with local services.
- Greater pride, cohesion, and belonging within the community.
- Better decisions, rooted in the views and aspirations of local people.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan and responsive to community needs. Effectiveness will be assessed by councillors and officers, with improvements made where necessary.