

# TOWN AND CINQUE PORT OF HYTHE



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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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[WWW.HYTHERTC.GOV.UK/POLICIES/GENERAL](http://WWW.HYTHERTC.GOV.UK/POLICIES/GENERAL)

This Policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on: 01 September 2022

Minute 136/22

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Minute 180/22

GOVERNING BODY: HYTHE TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, OAKLANDS, 1 STADE STREET, HYTHE, KENT.  
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## Introduction

Hythe Town Council's policy on Community Engagement is an overarching framework to better coordinate how we consult and engage with our community and give Hythe residents more opportunities to have their say on the services the council provides.

This policy builds on good practice which already exists in the town and acknowledges the council's genuine desire to place engagement at the heart of our role in championing the needs of our communities and involving them in decisions that affect them. We are committed to delivering services, policies and strategies that reflect local priorities, requirements and aspirations.

Crucially, it seeks to establish the minimum standards we will follow when developing a consultation and engagement exercise to ensure that the many different "communities" in the town have a voice in the debate regarding how services are delivered. It acknowledges the need to provide appropriate opportunities for communities to participate at whatever level they wish to and influence how services are provided, decisions are made and policies are developed.

### 1. Background

Hythe Town Council recognises its essential role to work more closely together and with local people to:

- Shape public services according to what local taxpayers really want.
- Work with a greater range of organisations that provide public services in the town
- Provide good value for money

This builds on the UK Government's 'Big Society' aspirations and sets out a framework of how we will work with residents and partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to give local people more of a say on what services they want and need and how they would like them delivered.

It sets out:

- Our objectives for community engagement and how these will be achieved
- Our guiding principles for consultation and community engagement
- Key tasks, as we are an organisation who will undertake to implement our approach to community engagement and consultation.

### 2. Our Objectives

We have set out objectives for what we wish to achieve from engaging and consulting with our communities:

- Strengthen, develop, and sustain opportunities for local people and groups to influence what happens in their communities.
- Provide opportunities for communities to shape and influence the development and delivery of quality services and policies that reflect local needs and priorities.
- Manage and coordinate community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality, participation, and compliance avoiding duplication.
- Ensure that community engagement activities provide opportunities for participation for all sections of the community, particularly people and groups that are often missed out on community engagement activities.
- Listen to communities feedback from participants regarding the outcomes of consultations and engagements.
- Listen and learn from our own and others' experiences and share community engagement skills and knowledge, putting the citizen at the heart of decision-making.



### 3. Our Guiding Principles

- **We will follow a consistent approach to planning for community engagement and consultations:**

Our consultations will be pre-planned and have a clear purpose and outcome, carefully considering the target audience and the methods used to engage them.

- **We will actively seek to bring the voluntary and community sectors on board:**

With many organisations providing services in Hythe, this sector has huge potential for making consultation work.

- **Elected councillors will encourage involvement:**

Encouragement from elected councillors is crucial to the success of a good consultation. They are strategically placed in the community to build relations with residents and are often well-respected.

- **We will listen and feedback:**

Consultation results will be properly analysed and used to inform decisions about how we deliver services. We will feedback on overall responses from consultations, the council's subsequent decision (where specific to service) and how the consultation influenced it.

- **Recording and sharing information with relevant stakeholders:**

Information from engagement and consultation will be captured in a structured way that is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations and this together with a summary of key messages and outcomes will be shared with councillors, officers, partners, and other audiences as appropriate.

### 4. Who is the Policy for?

We recognise that the council alone cannot achieve the ambitions set out in this policy. Everyone has a part to play in community engagement and consultation particularly:

- All residents in Hythe.
- Elected councillors, who play a key role in actively encouraging involvement at a very local level.
- Council staff, everyone is involved in community engagement activity in various forms.
- Community and voluntary sector organisations, who provide local services, work directly with local groups and organisations and with members of usually excluded groups and represent the view of their sectors.
- Partners, by working with other organisations and partnerships to make sure services across the town complement each other.

We will work with other organisations such as the Police, Schools and Colleges, Health Service Providers, groups and individuals from the community, voluntary and private sectors to make sure that community engagement activities influence the future direction of the town.

### 5. How will we measure our achievements?

It is important to understand how we are doing when it comes to evaluating the success of this policy. We will use a variety of methods to measure this, including:

- The perceptions of residents who feel Hythe Town Council engages with them in relation to its decision-making.
- Evidence of information from consultation and engagement that influences council services.



## **6. What has been achieved so far?**

Hythe Town Council already engages on a range of issues utilising many different forms of engagement.

The purpose of this policy is to introduce a consistent and compliant way in which we plan, develop, and share learning from engagement and consultations to influence the way in which we continue to provide services in the future

