

# **CONSULTATION POLICY**

## **SUMMARY**

This policy sets out the principles on which the Parish Council will consult with local people and groups. The Council will consider when it is appropriate to consult with different audiences, including individual residents, partner organisations.

Some of the most common opportunities for consultation arise with the periodic review of an existing service, or the introduction of a new policy or service.

## **BACKGROUND**

There are three good reasons why the Council should consult:

- First and foremost, the Council is committed to seeking the views of local people
- Secondly, it has long been recognised that consulting people who use and pay for services is best practice. The involvement of service users and service deliverers in shaping a service makes it more responsive to the needs of local people and can lead to greater community ownership of local services.
- Thirdly, consultation is required by central government and many funding organisations. The Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 imposes upon local authorities a 'duty to involve'.
- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Equality Standard for Local Government also call for reasonable and proportionate consultation to ensure that discriminating barriers that prevent equal access to services are identified and removed.

## **THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy will provide the guiding principles of how the Council will consult. It is not meant to be an exhaustive document encompassing everything we do.

## **EQUALITIES IN CONSULTATION**

The Council has a duty to consult with, and consider the needs of, all sectors of the community. It must also promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. These requirements are enshrined in a range of legislation, including: the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and the Equalities Act 2006.

## **HOW AND WHEN WILL THE COUNCIL CONSULT LOCAL PEOPLE?**

The primary responsibility and means for consultation is through the role played by the Members of the Parish Council who are duty-bound to represent the views of their Parish. In addition to the role played by individual Members, the Council has arrangements in place for public speaking. Members of the public may attend committee meetings (except for confidential items), where they can also submit questions.

The Council will consult on issues that directly affect the whole parish, such as Emergency services, planning, local services and issues that affect the whole parish. If directly asked to consult the parish council will consider the issue at the next meeting and submit a view. The parish council will not consult on issues where there can not be a whole parish view or where the Parish Council's view carries no more weight than an individual, such as byelaws for another authority but will encourage individual parishioners to submit their own views by advertising the consultation on the website.

The Council will use a variety of methods to seek the views of local people in addition to consulting the general public, the Council will consider when it may be beneficial to consult with groups of individuals or organisations that represent members of the public, for example: community and voluntary groups, schools, and local businesses. The Council will consult as early as possible in the decision making process to allow views to be taken into consideration. consultations)