

# ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION CHARTER

## Appendix Two



We believe the best decisions are made with people, not just for them. While engagement is a vital part of how we shape our city, we recognise that decisions are informed by a wide range of factors including; legal duties, financial considerations, contractual obligations, land ownership, and national policy, alongside the views and experiences of residents, communities, and partners.

Not every decision the Council makes will require engagement or consultation. However, this Charter focuses on the decisions where we do engage, setting out our commitment to do so openly, respectfully, and meaningfully. When we ask for views, we do it with purpose, and we listen with intent.

We are committed to listening to all voices, but decisions will be based on a range of factors. We recognise that louder voices may not always represent broader community views, and we will strive for balanced, inclusive analysis that reflects the diversity of perspectives shared. Engagement and consultation are not the same as a referendum or vote - they are about gathering insight, understanding experiences, and informing decisions, not necessarily determining them by majority.

We also understand that engagement won't always lead to consensus. When views differ, we will be transparent - clearly explaining what feedback was received, how it was considered, and how it influenced the outcome.

This Charter is our commitment to building trust, fostering a culture of reflection and learning, strengthening relationships, and ensuring every voice helps shape our city's future. It's not a static document—it will grow with us. We'll review it every two years, together with residents and stakeholders, to keep it relevant, ambitious, and meaningful.

### **A scaled approach**

We know that engagement isn't one-size-fits-all. Our approach will be rooted in the Gunning Principles, and will be:

- Proportionate to the scale and impact of the decision.
- Flexible to suit different communities and contexts.
- Legally compliant, meeting all statutory requirements.
- Transparent, with clear communication about the purpose and use of feedback.
- We'll use a range of engagement methods—from informing to empowering—and always be clear about where each activity sits on that spectrum and why.

### **Our engagement and consultation values**

Our approach to engagement will be guided by our corporate values and the following five principles. These are not just words—they shape how we work, how we listen, and how we respond.

#### **1. Respect**

- We treat everyone with dignity and fairness.
- We listen without judgment and value all contributions, not just those with the loudest voices.
- We recognise and celebrate the diversity of our communities.

#### **2. Transparency**

- We are open about what we're doing, why we're doing it, and how decisions are made.
- We share information in clear, accessible formats.

- We explain how feedback has influenced outcomes—or why it hasn't.

### 3. Inclusion

- We will work hard to remove barriers to participation.
- We reach out to underrepresented voices and seldom-heard groups.
- We design engagement that is culturally sensitive, accessible, and equitable.

### 4. Responsiveness

- We listen carefully and act meaningfully.
- We adapt our approach based on what we hear.
- We provide timely feedback and close the loop with participants.

### 5. Partnership

- We will work collaboratively with residents, community groups, and stakeholders.
- We will strive to co-design solutions and share power where possible.
- We will build long-term relationships, not one-off transactions—grounded in mutual respect, curiosity, and a belief in the strengths and potential of every community.

## **Our commitments to residents**

We will:

- Engage early – before decisions are made.
- Be honest – about what can and can't change.
- Speak clearly – using plain language, with technical detail only where needed.
- Offer choice – online, in person, and through trusted community partners.
- Be inclusive – removing barriers and reaching those often left out.
- Feedback – showing how the engagement/consultation shaped the outcome.
- Keep learning – improving how we engage and sharing insights across teams.

## **Our expectations of our staff**

We expect all staff involved in engagement to:

- Be approachable – creating safe, respectful spaces for conversation.
- Be open – welcoming challenge and new ideas.
- Be inclusive – recognising and respecting diverse perspectives.
- Be accountable – following through and being transparent.
- Be collaborative – working with communities and across teams.
- Be prepared – to manage difficult conversations with confidence.

We'll support our staff with the training, tools, and time they need to do engagement well.