

Giffordtown & District Community Council			
Local Policy			
Policy Title:	Community Consultation and Engagement		
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1. This policy provides a framework for determining when and how the Community Council (CC) should consult with the community before adopting positions, making representations, or undertaking activities on behalf of residents.

2. **Principles.** The following should be considered as part of any community consultation and engagement:

- a. Consultation should have a clear purpose.
- b. Engagement should be proportionate to the significance of the issue.
- c. Community views should be sought where they may influence decisions.
- d. Consultation should be transparent, accessible, and inclusive.
- e. The CC should communicate outcomes and explain how feedback has been considered.

3. **Types of Communication.** The following types of communication shall be considered by the CC

- a. Information Sharing – providing updates, notices, and factual information.
- b. Consultation and Engagement – seeking views to inform decisions, priorities, or representations.

4. **Information Sharing.** The CC will share information directly with the community in the following circumstances:

- a. When requested by a relevant statutory authority
- b. Where a majority of CC members feel there is relevance in sharing information (this includes request from non statutory organisations).

5. The CC will agree by what method information will be conducted. This includes: Social media/Messaging, Community Website, Newsletter/Gazette, Stand alone circular

6. **Consultations & Engagement.** The CC should consider community consultation & engagement in the following circumstances:

- a. The issue affects a significant proportion of residents.

- b. The issue may have a substantial impact on community facilities, services, environment, housing, transport, or local character.
 - c. There is likely to be a range of differing community views.
 - d. The CC is considering adopting a formal position on behalf of the community.
 - e. The issue could have long-term consequences for residents.
7. Consultation may not be necessary in the following circumstances:
- a. The matter is routine or administrative.
 - b. The Community Council is simply sharing information.
 - c. A statutory body/alternative authority is already undertaking a formal consultation.
 - d. The issue is urgent and meaningful consultation is not practical.
 - e. The matter affects only a small number of individuals who have already been directly engaged.
8. **Consultation Threshold Test.** Before consulting the community, CC members should consider:
- a. What decision is being informed?
 - b. Can community feedback influence the outcome?
 - c. How many residents may be affected?
 - d. What are the potential consequences of taking a position?
 - e. Is consultation proportionate to the issue's significance?
9. **Methods of Consultation.** The following types of consultation should be considered depending on the significance of the issue. The CC may use a combination of consultation methods where this is necessary to achieve a representative understanding of community views.
- a. Informal methods: email, social media, community groups, posters, meetings, and conversations.
 - b. Formal methods: surveys, public meetings, workshops, written submissions, and consultation exercises.

10. **Public Meetings & Workshops.** Where the significance, complexity, or level of public interest in an issue warrants additional engagement, the CC may organise public meetings and/or workshops to gather community views.

a. **Workshops.** Workshops are intended to encourage discussion, explore options, identify concerns, and potentially consider a strategy for managing a particular issue. The following is to be considered:

- i. Workshops should normally be facilitated in a manner that encourages participation from all attendees.
- ii. Information about the issue should be provided in advance where practical.
- iii. The workshop should be chaired by a suitably agreed member of the CC.
- iv. Workshops should focus on understanding views, identifying potential solutions/strategy, and gathering local knowledge rather than necessarily seeking formal decisions.
- v. Notes of key themes, issues raised, and suggestions should be recorded and considered by the CC.
- vi. Workshops may be used where issues are complex, there are multiple options under consideration, or the CC wishes to explore community aspirations before forming a position.

b. **Public Meetings.** Public meetings are intended to provide information, explain proposals, and allow residents to express views in an open forum. When considering a public meeting the following should be considered:

- i. Reasonable notice of a public meeting should be provided through appropriate communication channels.
- ii. The purpose of the meeting should be clearly stated in advance.
- iii. Meetings should be chaired in line with normal CC rules.
- iv. Attendees should be given a reasonable opportunity to ask questions and express their views.
- v. The CC should ensure an accurate summary of the issues discussed and views expressed is recorded.
- vi. Public meetings are advisory in nature and do not constitute a binding vote unless expressly stated. #

c. **Accessibility and Inclusion.** For all public meetings and workshops, the CC should seek to:

- i. Choose venues and formats that are accessible to residents.
- ii. Consider the timing of events to maximise participation.
- iii. Provide alternative methods of engagement where attendance may not be practical.
- iv. Ensure discussion is conducted openly and respectfully.

11. **Post Consultation Actions.** Following any type of consultation the following is to be undertaken:

- a. Feedback should be collated and shared with CC members.
- b. The CC should consider both the number and strength of views expressed.
- c. Where views are divided, the CC may choose to remain neutral or present a balanced summary of differing perspectives.
- d. The CC should agree how to communicate any consultation findings, including any decisions or further representations to the community.

12. **Review.** This policy should be reviewed annually and updated as required.