



Have your Say – Our commitment to engaging with you

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1.1 What is this strategy about?

Community engagement is concerned with giving local people a voice and involving them in decisions which affect them and their community. It provides an opportunity for local people to talk to the Council about their aspirations and/or needs in their community and neighbourhood. Community engagement is vital to ensuring Sandy is a vibrant community which provides the services and opportunities that its communities need.

Community engagement means the Council interacting with individuals, voluntary and community organisations and other public-sector bodies to make Sandy a better place. To get involved in making Sandy a better place to live, work and enjoy, you need to let us know what you think.

To do this, you need consistent, coordinated engagement by all the organisations who influence and provide services in Sandy. This includes Sandy Town Council who provide a variety of services within the town and are involved in making decisions that affect the future of the town and the well-being of its residents.

This strategy supports the Council's Community Engagement Policy and outlines how we will work together to inform, consult and involve local people in decision making and improving public services in Sandy.

This strategy sets out our community engagement values and standards and is divided into three main sections:

- The Community Engagement Strategy - an overview
- Visions and values – our commitment to involving you
- Involving you – standards, types of community engagement, how to include everybody and how decisions are made

We want you to have a stronger local voice and to have an impact on your local area and services. Examples of how we've started to go about this are included throughout this document – look out for the boxes.

Did you know...

Central Bedfordshire Council provides Sandy with most of its services, including matters related to highways, waste, planning, street lighting, dog control and more. Central Bedfordshire Council has its own Community Engagement Strategy which can be found on their website at the link detailed below;

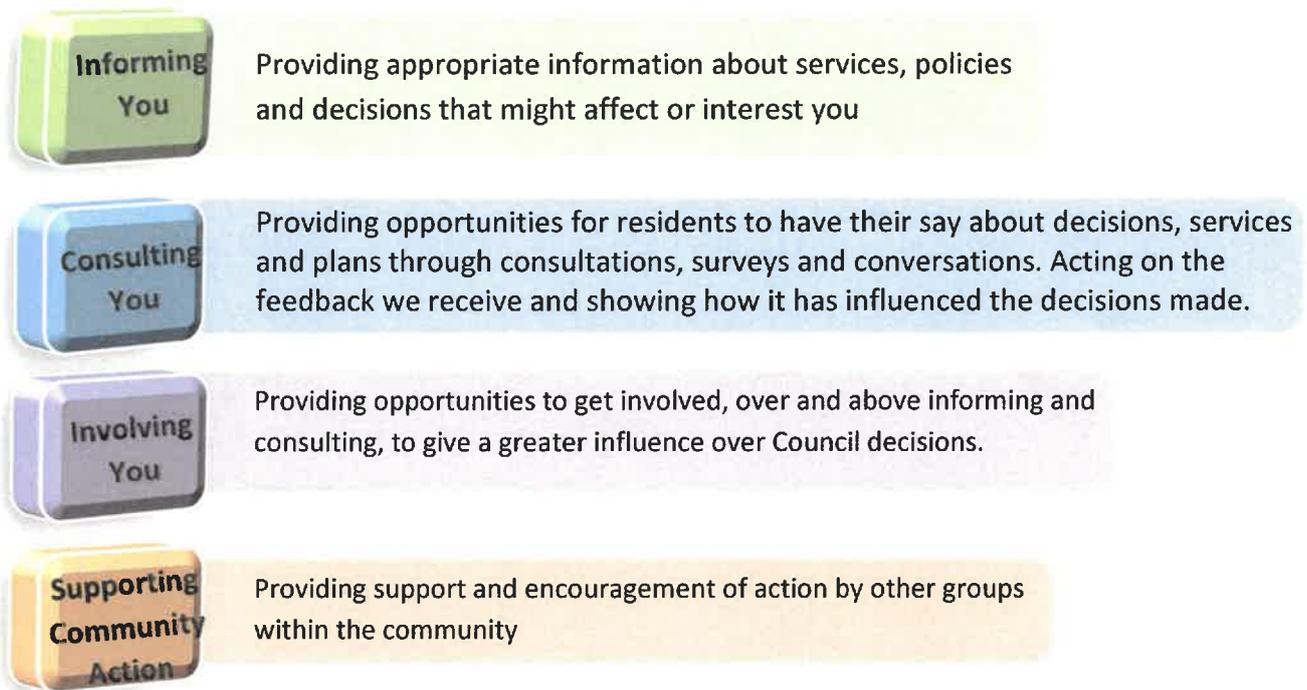
<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/stronger-communities/engagement.aspx>

1.2 What is Community Engagement?

A community is considered as a group of people who have things in common. Communities can be defined by factors such as location (a street or a neighbourhood), race, ethnicity, age, occupation, a shared interest (such as hobbies) or affinity (such as religion or belief) or other common bonds.

Community engagement is about making sure that people can get involved and take part in a range of ways in the planning, development and delivery of services. This includes informing and consulting with residents on a variety of matters, but its scope goes further by seeking to enable communities to take an active role in influencing decision making.

Sandy Town Council's strategy has four main levels guiding its community engagement;



1.3 Who is the strategy for?

This strategy is for use by Sandy Town Council as a means of guiding and monitoring its community engagement and how successful that engagement is. However, the document is for use by anyone who is interested in playing a part in improving Sandy's future by providing details on how they can get involved and contact the Council. This includes public and private organisations, voluntary and community groups, residents, workers and any individual with an interest in how their environment and community evolves.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Our Aim

The Town Council exists to serve the community of Sandy and the Town Council can operate more effectively by engaging the community in its decision making and the provision of its services. The Council also considers it necessary to develop and maintain dialogue with residents and their representative groups.

This strategy is part of the Council's commitment to creating and maintaining effective working relationships with all sectors of the community, based on trust, openness and constructive challenge. The specific aim of the strategy is to improve the way in which the Council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues by:

- Informing, consulting and involving
- Being inclusive and engaging with all of its residents and partners
- Ensuring views are listened to and used to develop, enhance and improve services, the environment and the quality of life for residents.

2.2 Our Objectives

Sandy Town Council is committed in its objectives to provide a democratic representational voice for the people of the Parish of Sandy. Central to this is engagement with the community in a proactive and meaningful way.

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage local community engagement
- Ensure that within the Council there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions which affect them
- Enable the views and aspirations of the community to have an impact on decision making and the way in which services are being delivered
- Identify how the Council can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wider community (with specific reference to "hard to reach" groups)
- To improve, plan and shape the future of the town according to local needs and priorities
- To improve the quality and delivery of services
- To be a stronger, more active and cohesive town

3. Barriers to Community Engagement

3.1 Barriers we Face

Inevitably there will always be barriers to effective Community Engagement, and these must be recognised;

- Capacity and ability of different sections of the community to participate
- Difficulty in accessing hard to reach groups
- Range of methods of communication needed
- Gaps in information

3.2 Overcoming Barriers

To overcome these barriers (and others) the Town Council will consider;

- A variety of techniques and engagement methods
- Location, type and accessibility of any venues used
- Timings to accommodate range of community including working hours and childcare needs
- Use of established social media groups
- Providing Members with information they can use to actively engage with constituents in a consistent manner across the parish

4. Communication and Engagement Groups

4.1 Identifying Key Engagement Groups and Partners

The key individuals, groups and organisations that we intend to improve communication and engagement with include:

- Residents of Sandy and Beeston;
- Users of our Town Council services;
- The Head Teacher and Governors of the Secondary and Primary Schools;
- Young people who live and/or go to school in Sandy and Beeston
- Retail and other businesses in the community;
- Interest groups, clubs and societies;
- Voluntary and support organisations;
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, faith, and other groups;
- Sandy Town Council grant recipients;
- The Bedfordshire Rural Charities Commission;
- Members and staff of Central Bedfordshire Council;

4.2 Current Communication and Engagement Methods

The Council already shows elements of good practice in how we go about communicating and engaging with people. The Council has identified certain activities it undertakes within community engagement, how the service is delivered and how it can be improved;

Activity	What we do now	What we could do
Enable an involved, empowered and active citizenship through:		
The Council's presence in Sandy and ensuring ease of accessibility	Accessible Council Offices in the centre of town. Information point open to public three days a week. Phone lines open 9-5, five days a week. Opening hours are publicised online	
	Attendance of Mayor at local community or business events when invited	
	Organisation and hosting of Mayors Civic events, including civic service and carol service	Ensure better publicity of upcoming civic events on social media
	Organisation of Mayors charity functions in and around Sandy. Often supported by local restaurants	Ensure better press and social media cover following Mayors events (publicise mayor's charities)
	Contact details for the Council, Councillors and the Council office are made available on the Notice Boards and the Council's website. Run regular Councillor surgeries.	Raise profile of all Councillors' biographies using media and social media
	Website and Facebook page provide residents with online ways to communicate with the Council.	Continue to develop media posts and increasing following of media accounts.
Council Meetings – Ensuring transparency and engagement	Notices of meetings, agendas and minutes are posted on the Council website and Facebook page. A schedule of meetings is published in The Bulletin and on the Council website.	Continue to highlight key agenda points on upcoming meetings via social media
Council Meetings – Ensuring transparency and engagement	Council and committee meetings are open to the public	Continue to publicise via social media.

	Council and committee meetings allow an agenda item for public questions	More actively advertise the opportunity to raise questions at a Council meeting
	Council and committee meetings welcome presentations from external organisations and groups	Invite groups to attend where appropriate.
	Minutes of meetings available on Council's website and via social media post links	Continue to Make social media posts about key decisions taken
Annual Town Meeting	Council hosts and advertises an annual town meeting for electors	Better and more regular advertising of the meeting via social media and the press
	The meeting is advertised in the paper and The Bulletin	Promote focus of a town meeting rather than a Council meeting. Topics/questions should be wide ranging
	Residents are asked to submit questions in advance of the meeting	Actively encourage motions and questions to be put forward for discussion at the meeting
		Concentrate the meeting on topical issues which are attracting online and media coverage
		Secure better representation from other organisations to encourage discussion
Consultation Surveys	Engage with residents through simple and quick response surveys that let residents feed in to Council decisions and allow the council to garner some community opinion.	Use the 2019 Town Centre feed back survey as a model for future surveys. Consider the use of surveys on all projects.

Communicate information to our community clearly, factually and appropriately through:		
Council Website	The Council runs a website covering all its services and activity. Links to website are shared via social media.	
Council Facebook	In 2018 the Council has set up a Facebook page with the aim of sharing information to a wider audience and improving the way we communicate.	Continue to develop regular and interactive use of Facebook. Consider widening to other media such as Instagram or Twitter.
Council Documents	Agendas and Minutes are published on the Council's website as soon as possible. Shared on social media.	
	Policy Documents are available via the Council's website. Links to documents and pages of the website are shared on social media.	
	Core Council regulation documents are published on the Council's website. Links to documents are shared on social media.	
Press Releases	Regular press releases are made on key activity or action via the local papers and the Bulletin. Efforts are made to use infographics and images to help communicate messages.	Continue to develop 'friendlier' ways of communicating a message
Annual Report	Produce and publish on our website an annual report which includes a financial summary of the year and reports on works carried out by the Council. Shared on social media. Hard copies are available in the Council office and Library.	
Consultations	Use of leaflets and online surveys as need arises.	Actively consider whether consultation is needed on decisions by Council or changes in service. Ensure

		consultations are widely published and easy to engage with.
To improve our communication with our partners and stakeholders and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts through:		
Support for existing community events and their organising bodies	<p>Council provides an annual budget for the support of community events</p> <p>Council works with the FOSCL to organise and run the annual light switch on event</p>	<p>Greater advertisement of community event grant application opportunities</p> <p>Potential to have a Council stall manned by Councillors at light switch on event</p>
Using occasions with large public gatherings to provide opportunity for residents to engage with Councillors	Attendance by Councillors at events held in Sandy. Organised by the Events Working Group	Production of further promotion and information material for use by Councillors while attending events
Providing chances for residents to partake in new community events which provide benefits to our town while also demonstrating the work of the Town Council and providing engagement opportunities	<p>Established Events Working Group to look at the set up and organisation of new events which provide benefits to residents and the town.</p> <p>Events Working Group has opportunity to work alongside members of other organisations as part of the groups work</p>	
Inviting residents/community groups to provide information for Council publications, website or Facebook	Groups contact the Council to include events/information in the website's Whats On Guide.	Ensure information service is known about and used by more local groups
	Local events and community information is shared via the Councils Facebook page	
Supporting the work of CBC and promoting joint working where possible	Quarterly meetings between STC Mayor/Deputy and CBC Members	
	Clerk liaises with a variety of CBC officers to build up interworking relationships and progress on shared projects/activities	Clerk to continue working with CBC officers and reporting back to STC
Supporting the work of statutory organisations in Sandy	Actively support the aims of organisations such as the police Respond to consultations and commutations as required	

Supporting the work of non-statutory organisations in Sandy	<p>Council representatives sit on community bodies as invited and report back to Council</p> <p>Council promotes activities of other groups in Sandy</p>	Continue to advertise 'What's on' and the Council Facebook page as available tools for community groups and businesses.
Maintaining positive working relationships with local organisations	<p>Council representatives sit on community bodies as invited</p> <p>Identify opportunities to work with other local community groups, as and when the need arises</p>	Publish positive results achieved from working relationships between the council and other community groups/bodies.
Receptive to requests from residents and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known not only to the Town Council but other organisations	<p>Communication relating to STC matters are dealt with by the Clerk and office or referred to a Council meeting</p> <p>Any request/complaint relating to or effecting another organisation will be communicated to that organisation and response provided back</p> <p>STC activities and queries are shared with CBC ward members at quarterly briefings</p>	
To raise the image and reputation of the Council through:		
Issuing press releases covering activities of the Council	Issue press releases as directed by Council in local papers	Continue to issue more regular releases on social media about Council activity and increase positive images/photographs included
Civic and Charity events	<p>Work of the Events Working Group in organising and supporting events</p> <p>Advertise upcoming events in The Bulletin</p>	Advertise positive results of civic and charity events and who benefits on social media

Councillors	Advertise Councillors' contact details and promote activities carried out by Councillors as part of their role Regular Councillor surgeries held	Raise profile of all Councillors' biographies by promoting on social media
Decision making on controversial or widely impacting issues	When dealing with 'controversial' issues that affect a particular community, consideration will be given to holding a public meeting	

5. Action Plan

The Following action plan has been pulled together to ensure the Council works towards improving its community engagement activities.

Action	Monitoring	Status
To enable an involved, empowered and active citizenship through:		
Council Presence, Meetings and Ease Access		
Improve directional signage pointing to Council offices	Installation of signage and monitoring of progress by CSE	Completed
Ensure better press and social media coverage following Mayors events (publicise mayor's charities)	Greater 'press clippings' and Facebook post reach	Increased number of press releases over a 12-month period. Not all press releases issued have been published.
Raise profile of all Councillors' biographies using media and social media and review biographies annually	All Councillors have a profile on the website	The councillor page of the website is shared on social media regularly
Run regular Councillor Surgeries	Reports to each Full Council on surgery numbers and queries raised	Surgeries have been held on a six-week cycle with reports going back to council
Continue to develop Facebook site and use to promote both information and positive aspects of Council activity	Increase number of Facebook followers and reach of posts	Followers have increased by 340 over the last 12 months. The highest reach a post has achieved is 6,500
Highlight key agenda points on upcoming meetings via Facebook and	Increased online interaction on topics or attendance at meetings	Reach and interaction with Facebook posts has

publish key decisions made at meetings on a weekly basis		increased over 12 months. Latest posts have 2,584 reach
More actively encourage and promote public attendance at meetings and opportunity for public participation via Facebook, press and posters	Increased attendance at meetings	Ongoing
Annual Town Meeting		
	Monitoring	Status
Increase promotion of the Annual Town Meeting via social media and press releases. Place emphasis on submission of widescale questions that focus on development of town	Greater attendance numbers at town meeting	2020 Annual Meeting Cancelled due to COVID 19.
Secure representation from; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Bedfordshire Council • Bedfordshire Police • Another body with relevance to issues in Sandy at the time 	Speakers present at meeting from other organisations than just the Council Increased attendance	2020 Annual Meeting Cancelled due to COVID 19.
Agree a 'theme' focused on topical issues, such as East West Rail Link or crime rates. Ensure speakers appropriate to the theme are able to attend		
Community and Management Plans		
Consult via a variety of methods on the proposed Community Plan and agree a target for the number of responses received	Community Plan Group to monitor number of responses received and feed into Plan. Report back to Council	Plan completed. To be reviewed.
Consult on the Beeston Green Management Plan via a variety of methods and agree a target for the number of responses received	Beeston Working Group to monitor number of responses received and feed into Plan. Report back to Council	Plan Completed. To be reviewed.
Communicate information to our community clearly, factually and appropriately through:		
Website and Social Media		
Ensure website is regularly audited and updated		Gradual rolling audit carried out monthly by administrators
Continue to develop regular and interactive use of Facebook and greater publication of Council activity	Increased Facebook 'Followers' and 'Likes'	Followers and Likes have increased but further work required.
Council Documents		

Share agendas and minutes through social media	Council's appointed Facebook editors to monitor number and frequency of posts and review posts reach	Ongoing
Share links to key policy documents through social media		
Share links to Core documents through social media		
Consider friendlier ways of communicating a message, such as infographics via social media and the Bulletin	Monitor number and frequency of posts and review posts reach	Ongoing
Annual Report		
Make hard copies of annual report available more easily via the Library	Report and review of Annual Report distribution to be provided to Council	2019/20 report drafted, awaiting accounts completion.
Publish a link to the annual report on Facebook and a series of individual posts with excerpts of information contained		
Consultations		
Actively consider whether consultation is needed on decisions by Council or changes in service. Ensure consultations are widely published and easy to engage with	Council to agree consultation activities and receive all data for review as and when required	Ongoing
Improve our communication with our partners and stakeholders and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts through:		
Supporting Other Organisations/Groups		
Issue six monthly communication to all community groups and Sandy organisations to invite them to share information via Whats on Guide and the Council's Facebook Page.	Increased communication from outside groups on events to share	Ongoing
Clerk to continue working with CBC officers and reporting back to STC	Monitored via Action Lists and updates to Council	Ongoing
Development of a Council youth engagement plan for ages 7 to 15.	Review of plan by CSE Committee and the completion of a number of the proposed actions within in it.	Plan agreed. Work with Schools and youth bodies to agree format and dates to be undertaken.
Supporting Sandy Youth Voice by hosting meetings and interaction with Councillors at the end of meetings to discuss issues raised	Reports back to CSE Committee briefing Councillors on matters discussed.	Fortnightly meetings
To raise the image and reputation of the Council through:		

Issue more regular releases on social media about Council activity and increase positive images/photographs included	Increased 'Press Clippings' and Facebook 'Followers'	Ongoing
Advertise positive results of civic and charity events and who benefits on Facebook, website and press releases		Ongoing
Hold regular councillor surgeries	Reports on each surgery to go to Council	Completed Ongoing activity

6. **Role of Council Members and Officers**

Council Members (Councillors) are the elected decision makers of the Town Council. Their contact details are available from the Town Council offices and on the Town Council website. Members of the public are welcome to contact officers to raise any issues.

The Council's officers are staff who are employed to carry out the day to day functions of the Council and make sure that its services are provided for the local community. The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer for the Council.

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sandy Town Council wants to work closely with the public – residents, communities, businesses and voluntary organisations. Our aim is to engage with residents and encourage their participation in the local democratic process; creating a more active and informed community that is involved in decision making and securing better services.

1.2 This document forms the Town Council’s Community Engagement Policy.

It sets out:

- The role of community engagement and its importance;
- How Sandy Town Council engages with the wider community and identifies the needs and aspirations of the community;
- How the Town Council can improve community engagement.

1.3 The objectives of the policy are to:

- Encourage effective local community engagement;
- Ensure that embedded throughout the Council there is a clear understanding of the need to engage with communities about decisions which affect them;
- Enable the aspirations/comments/suggestions etc obtained from community engagement to have an impact on decision making and the way in which services are being delivered;
- Identify how the Council can enhance its profile by improving engagement with the wider community (with specific reference to hard to reach groups).

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Community engagement means the involvement of local people in decisions which affect them and their community. This can include individuals and community groups as well as businesses and other public bodies. It provides an opportunity for local people to communicate with the Council about their community and neighbourhoods needs and/or aspirations.

- 2.2 Community engagement provides the Council with an opportunity to consult and inform the public about its services and projects.
- 2.3 'Hard to reach' groups within the community can be those who experience social exclusion and can be perceived as being disempowered. An example may be young people, elderly people or those with a disability.
- 2.4 The key aspects of community engagement includes;
- Development of a network of relationships between the Council, individuals and groups;
 - Clear and open communication to ensure that information is made accessible to all groups;
 - Listening to and understanding a range of people to identify aspirations, needs and problems
- 2.5 The benefits of community engagement include;
- Problems and needs within communities are identified so they can be addressed;
 - Those participating feel more empowered by being involved in decision making and a sense of ownership over new facilities/initiatives can be developed;
 - May result in a renewed respect for the Council; enhanced leadership and greater interest in elections or standing for Council.

3. AIMS

Sandy Town Council strives to undertake the following:

3.1 To enable an involved, empowered and active citizenship through:

- (i) All meetings of the Town Council and its committees will be open to the public and press and there is a period set aside for residents to speak.
Residents can access agendas for Council meetings via the Council's website, Council office, Library and Council notice boards.
- (ii) involving residents in community issues and informing local people of the Council's services and actions taken via social media and press releases
- (iii) details of how to contact the Council are displayed on notice boards, website, Facebook and in the monthly Bulletin page
- (iv) engaging proactively with all sections of the community

- (v) considering use of consultations and surveys where necessary and appropriate and making results available

3.2 To communicate information to our community clearly, factually and appropriately through:

- (i) a website detailing all council services and activities
- (ii) regular press releases and advertisements in local publications
- (iii) use of social media via the Town Council Facebook page (in line with the Council Social Media Policy)
- (iv) an annual report
- (v) display of information on public noticeboards
- (vi) use of plain English
- (vii) use of lamppost banners to promote the Council and the town, or to celebrate and advertise community or national events of significance

3.3 To improve our communication with our partners and stakeholders and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts through:

- (i) supporting the work of statutory agencies in Sandy
- (ii) supporting the work of non-statutory organisations in Sandy
- (iii) maintaining positive working relationships with local organisations
- (iv) identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups, as and when the need arises
- (v) receptive to requests from residents and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known not only to the Town Council but other organisations
- (vi) ensure local people and communities are referred to the correct department/officer/council and that they are aware of the ways that they can use relevant systems to make their views known

3.4 To raise the image and reputation of the Council through:

- (i) inviting residents to be actively involved in meetings via the public forum
- (ii) publicising the Annual Town Meeting
- (iii) inviting residents/community groups to provide information for Council publications, website or Facebook
- (iv) issuing press releases covering activities of the Council
- (v) encouraging the Mayor to represent the Council and the community by issuing statements, articles or attending events

- (vi) when dealing with 'controversial' issues that affect a particular community consideration will be given to holding a public meeting
- (vii) publishing positive results achieved from working relationships between the council and other community groups/bodies

3.5 To enable every councillor to maximise their role as elected representatives and community leaders through:

- (i) the supply of a New Members Pack
- (ii) encouraging Councillors to attend appropriate training as set out in the Council Training Statement of Intent
- (iii) encouraging Councillors to attend meetings of community organisations and resident's associations when these arise
- (iv) encouraging Councillors to take up places on community groups and organisations
- (v) holding Councillor surgeries

3.6 To ensure every member of staff understands the council's role and priorities through:

- (i) development of a customer care programme
- (ii) the staff appraisal scheme
- (iii) encouraging staff to provide input into the decision making process
- (iv) encouraging staff to represent the Council at community events
- (v) provision of regular staff training, continuous professional development and briefings

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 1.1 The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with our audiences in new ways. It is important that the Council is able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that the Council balance this with its duties to its service users and partners, its legal responsibilities and its reputation.

For example, the Council's use of social networking applications has implications for its duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. There are also implications for employees, Councillors and the Council as a corporate body.

- 1.2 This policy is intended to help Councillors and Council staff make appropriate decisions about the use of social media and provide a framework of good practice.

- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- that the Council is not exposed to legal and governance risks;
- that the reputation of the Council is not adversely affected;
- that our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the Council.
- Management of the Council's Facebook site

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This policy covers all individuals working at all levels with the Council, including all elected and co-opted Councillors, the Clerk to the Council and all other employees and volunteers. These groups are referred to collectively as 'Council representatives' for brevity.

- 2.2 The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any Council-related purpose and regardless of whether the applications are hosted corporately or not. They must also be considered where Council representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

- 2.3 The Council has a corporate presence on the web and by use of email, which it uses to communicate with people who live in, work in and visit the parish. Over time the Town Council may add channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these

changes occur, this Social Media Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

- 2.4 All members and staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to protect the reputation, privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the Council, its services, employees, partners and community.

3. Enforcement

- 3.1 Serious breaches of this policy by employees may be dealt with under the Employee Disciplinary Procedure. The Council may take disciplinary action in respect of unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive comments by an employee.
- 3.2 Behaviour required by the members' Code of Conduct shall apply to online activity in the same way it does to other written or verbal communication. Members will bear in mind that inappropriate conduct can still attract adverse publicity, even when the code does not apply. Online content should be objective, balanced, informative and accurate. Members must be aware that their profile as a councillor means the more likely it is that they will be seen as acting in an official capacity when networking or blogging.
- 3.3 Breach of the policy by volunteers will result in the Council no longer using their services and, if necessary, appropriate action will be taken.
- 3.4 Communications on the internet are permanent and public. When communicating in a 'private' group it should be ensured that the Council would be content with the statement, should it be made public.

4. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

- 4.1 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:
- Blogs
 - Online discussion forums
 - Collaborative spaces
 - Media sharing services, for example YouTube
 - 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter.
- 4.2 All Council representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

4.3 This policy is based on the Civil Service Code: Principles for Participation Online and advice produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and other sources of good practice.

5. Rules for using Social Media

5.1 Staff and Councillors must not allow their interaction on any website or blogs to damage their working relationships with others. They must not make any derogatory, discriminatory, defamatory or offensive comments about other staff, councillors, the council or about the people, businesses and agencies the council works with and serves.

5.2 Posts must not contain anyone's personal information, other than necessary basic contact details.

5.3 If staff or councillors blog, tweet or post personally they must not act, claim to act, or give the impression that they are acting as a representative of the council. If in doubt, they should make it clear they are posting personally, especially when posting on subjects which are the concern of the council.

5.4 All staff and councillors must ensure they use the council facilities appropriately. If using a council-provided website or social networking area, any posts made will be viewed as made in an official capacity. Council facilities cannot be used for personal or political blogs.

5.5 When participating in online communication on behalf of the council, staff and councillors must;

- Never make false or misleading statements
- Never name an individual third party unless you have written permission to do so.
- Never use language that may be deemed as offensive, relating in particular to sexuality, race, disability, gender, age or religion.

5.6 Discussions and documents which are part of council meetings and are open to the public, may be freely referred to in online communications. However, e-mail communications, discussions of meetings or parts of a meeting which are not open to the public, and any other correspondence or communication should be regarded as confidential unless specifically agreed otherwise.

6. Managing the Council Facebook and Instagram Accounts

6.1 The Council will appoint at least two nominated persons as editors and moderators. They will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content on council pages, ensuring it complies with the Social Media Policy. The moderators will have authority to immediately, without notice or comment, remove any posts from the council's Facebook or Instagram pages if they are deemed to be inflammatory or of a defamatory or libellous nature. Such posts will be reported to the Clerk for council records.

- 6.2 The Clerk reserves the right to require the removal of content published by Council representatives which may adversely affect the reputation of the Council or put it at risk of legal action.
- 6.3 The Facebook page and Instagram account will be used to;
- Post notices and minutes of meetings
 - Advertise events and activities
 - Post news stories about council activities and decisions
 - Link to appropriate websites
 - Advertise vacancies
 - Share information from partners, i.e CBC, Police, Library
 - Announce new information appropriate to the council
 - Post or share information promoting bodies for community benefit, such as sports clubs and community groups
 - Post information about council services
 - Post contact information for the council
 - Post other items as the council sees fit
 - Both accounts may be used to support the Town Council website and its information as above.
- 6.4 The Facebook site and Instagram application settings will be checked on a regular basis to ensure security settings are in place. Access passwords for the site will be given to the Clerk and appointed Council editors/moderators only.
- 6.5 The Council will only monitor social media accounts during office work hours.
- 6.6 If a matter is raised on the Facebook page or Instagram post which needs further consideration by the Council, it may be raised at either the public participation session or as an agenda item for consideration by a quorum of councillors. The 'poster' shall be informed via the page or a direct message that this is the case and invited to contact the clerk directly. Any response agreed by council will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 6.7 Reports of any concerns regarding content on the social media accounts should be reported to the Clerk for referral to the moderators and/or council as required.
- 6.8 The use of the Council's logo and other branding elements should be used where appropriate to indicate the Council's support. The logo should not be used on social networking applications which are unrelated to or are not representative of the Council's official position.

7. Friends of Sandy Green Wheel Facebook Page

- 7.1 The Council will host a Friends of Sandy Green Wheel (FOSGW) Facebook page via its account. The Clerk will be the administrator of the page. A Council administrator and a Councillor representative from the Green Wheel group will be assigned as editors of the page. They will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content on the FOSGW page, ensuring it complies with this Social Media Policy. The moderators will have authority to immediately, without notice or comment, remove any posts from the FOSGW Facebook page if they are deemed to be inflammatory or of a defamatory or libellous nature. Such posts will be reported to the Clerk for Council records.
- 7.2 The Clerk reserves the right to require the removal of content published by Council representatives which may adversely affect the reputation of the Council or put it at risk of legal action.
- 7.3 The FOSGW Facebook page will be used to;
- Promote and advertise the Sandy Green Wheel
 - Advertise the route of the Green Wheel
 - Advertise events and activities related to the Green Wheel
 - Post news stories about activities and decisions made by the Council and/or the Green Wheel Working Group
 - Link to appropriate websites supporting the Green Wheel
 - Share information from partners, i.e CBC, BRCC, Greensands Country
 - Announce new information appropriate to the development and enhancement of the Green Wheel
 - Post or share information promoting bodies which benefit the Green Wheel or the wider remit of promoting and enhancing Sandy's green spaces
 - Post information on recruiting volunteers to become Friends of the Green Wheel
 - Posting updates pertinent to the route of the Green Wheel (street works, damaged gates etc)
 - Posting questions or gathering comments and feedback on the Green Wheel or any proposed projects related to it.
 - Promote Sandy to walking groups, such as Ivel Valley Walkers etc
- 7.4 The page will be checked on a regular basis to ensure security settings are in place. Access passwords for the site will be given to the Clerk and appointed Council editors/moderators only.
- 7.5 Reports of any concerns regarding content on the Facebook page should be reported to the Clerk for referral to the moderators and/or council as required.

- 7.6 The Green Wheel logo will be used on the Page and the branding will be taken from the already developed and published marketing material.
- 7.7 The use of the Town Council's logo and BRCC logo may be used where appropriate to indicate the Council's support of the Green Wheel, Greensands Country or related activities.

8. Skatepark Project Facebook Page

8.1 The Council hosts a Skatepark Project Facebook page via its account. The Clerk will be the administrator of the page. A Council administrator will be assigned as editor/manager of the page. They, along with the Clerk will be responsible for posting and monitoring of the content on the page, ensuring it complies with this Social Media Policy. The moderators will have authority to immediately, without notice or comment, remove any posts from the page if they are deemed to be inflammatory or of a defamatory or libellous nature. Such posts will be reported to the Clerk for Council records.

8.2 The Skatepark Project Facebook page will be used to;

- Promote and advertise the Council's ambition to create a new skatepark for Sandy
- Advertise any events or engagement sessions to be held by the Skatepark Working group or its appointed contractor, Maverick
- Promote and link to surveys or questionnaires which will be used to generate data to support the design of the skatepark and funding applications.
- Post news stories about activities and decisions made by the Council and/or the Skatepark Working Group in relation to the project.
- Link to appropriate websites supporting skating, BMX-ing and scootering in the UK.
- Share information from partners which may pertain to the skatepark project, funding or wider skating/BMX-ing as a sport
- Announce new information and updates about the project, funding obtained or work undertaken.
- Post or share information promoting bodies which benefit the development of the skatepark or its funding
- Post information on recruiting volunteers in the design process
- Posting questions or gathering comments and feedback on the proposed skatepark
- Link to funding providers sites or social media accounts when they have supported the project
- Post and share skating UK information and facts to help drive traffic through to the page

- 8.3 The page will be checked on a regular basis to ensure security settings are in place. Access passwords for the site will be given to the Clerk and appointed Council editors/moderators only.
- 8.4 Reports of any concerns regarding content on the Facebook page should be reported to the Clerk for referral to the moderators and/or council as required.
- 8.5 The use of the Town Council's logo may be used where appropriate to indicate that it is a Council project,
- 8.6 The use of funder's logos may be used to promote their support for the project.