






# Community Engagement Framework

**August 2020**

## Introduction

1. We aim to make community engagement a part of everything we do as a local authority and in our partnership working. It helps us to deliver our Strategic Plan; quality services; health and wellbeing and community safety. However, we also recognise that successive surveys of our residents find they feel under informed about what we do and unaware of how to influence decision making.
2. This Framework supports the Council's strategic vision, "Pendle is a place where quality of life continues to improve and where people respect one another and their neighbourhoods. We want Pendle to be a sustainable place where everyone aspires to reach their full potential. We want to be recognised locally, regionally and nationally as a great area to live, learn, work, play and visit.", by engaging with residents about:
  - Their quality of life and how it can be improved
  - What they can contribute to the improvement by being better informed and through our consultation opportunities
  - How they can become involved locally, participate in decision making and become empowered as a decision maker
3. This Framework helps to deliver the Council's Strategic Objectives:

	<p><b>Priority 1</b>  <b>Working with partners, the community and volunteers to provide services of good value</b> by giving us a better understanding what is important to residents and how they describe good quality and value for money services</p>		<p><b>Priority 2</b>  <b>Helping to create strong, sustainable economic and housing growth</b> by better understanding residents' views on future development and our contribution to their long-term economic, environmental and social wellbeing</p>
	<p><b>Priority 3</b>  <b>Helping to create and sustain resilient communities</b> by reflecting the Borough's diversity and empowering residents to provide clean, healthy, safe and cohesive communities able to maintain a quality environment and manage climate change</p>		<p><b>Priority 4</b>  <b>Maintaining a sustainable, resilient and efficient organisation which is Digital by Default</b> by ensuring we have a clear understanding of the priorities identified by residents; encouraging different ways of working to deliver services as effectively and efficiently as possible and by ensuring becoming Digital by Default is inclusive for all residents</p>
	<p><b>Priority 5</b>  <b>Delivering our COVID19 response and recovery (whilst working towards rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating our communities)</b>          We will work with our partners and the community, in line with national developments and decisions, to continue to effectively respond to the COVID19 pandemic and enable the transition to recovery via delivery of our Plan for Recovery. We will do this in a co-ordinated way whilst being supporting and sympathetic to the needs of the community and affected individuals, taking into account the resources available</p>		

4. Our commitment to residents who engage with us and our partners includes:

- Encouraging and supporting communities to be involved in issues that matter to them
- Working openly, honestly and with integrity with communities to help shape services
- Ensuring information is clear and easy to find; our methods of engagement are inclusive for all communities and that our methods of engagement do not directly or indirectly exclude any of our communities
- Demonstrating a genuine willingness to listen and be influenced
- Working creatively with communities to engage those least able or used to being engaged and doing things differently to reach our most disenfranchised residents and communities
- Being mindful of the need to inform our communities of what has changed and what their contribution meant to the change
- Supporting communities to access the skills and tools they need to enable them to lead change
- Learning and trying new methods so we continue to improve and learn from best practice elsewhere
- Improving and increasing digital interaction and our cost effectiveness through our website; social media; interactive apps; text messaging and translation software to make our engagement accessible to all.
- Broadening our use of surveys to include short targeted online surveys, social media and text messaging.
- Using our new found knowledge of video conferencing platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom to reach out to new audiences who prefer not to attend public meetings and events or may otherwise be socially isolated.
- Partnering with agencies that have mobile information buses and trailers such as Pendle leisure Trust, the NHS and the Children and Family Wellbeing Service to reach to tap into a broader range of residents and localities including rural locations.
- Making sure communities are given enough time to engage effectively, within any timescale restrictions
- Having asked communities to participate, making sure we feedback to them on the outcome and what we and they plan to do next
- Recognising that in raising awareness and the level of involvement there is also a need to manage expectations
- Increasing our use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS mapping) to present information in an easy to understand and accessible format and on an area basis.

5. This Framework will enable us to work with our partners and the community, in line with national developments and decisions, to continue to effectively respond to the COVID19 pandemic and enable the transition to recovery via delivery of our Plan for Recovery. In particular it will help us to engage residents in managing and isolating local changes and avoiding local lockdowns.

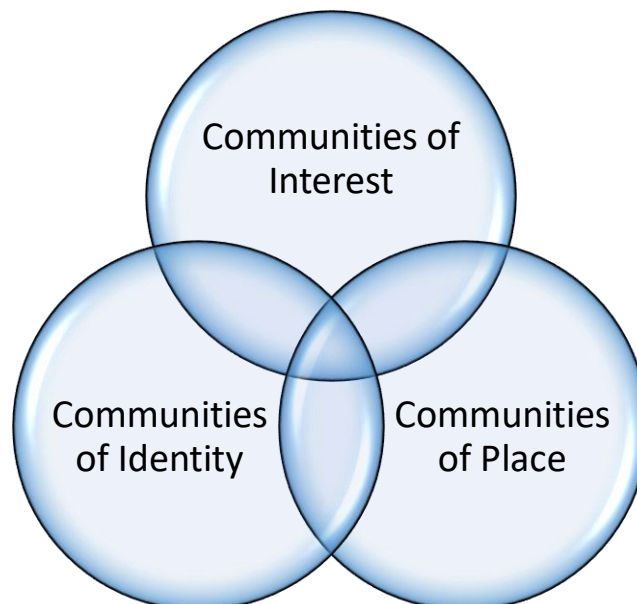
6. This framework, supported by the Localities and Policy Unit, will guide staff, Members and the communities where we work to achieve our community engagement aims of:

- Providing more efficient and effective services which meet the need of the communities where we work and offer higher levels of satisfaction and value for money

- Enabling our communities to have a voice by increasing the opportunity for engagement and awareness of those opportunities
- Increasing involvement in the democratic process and in decision making specifically
- Supporting the communities described below to problem solve their issues and identify their needs
- Building on our experience from Bradley Big Local by enabling communities to take their own action and drive what we and our partners can do to support them develop their own and shared solutions
- Developing ways of sharing what communities and we do around engagement; measuring its success and understanding where improvement is needed
- Working with partners to use the outcome of community engagement they have done already; collaborate on community engagement they are undertaking and work with them on community engagement we have planned

## Who we engage with

7. We engage with communities of place; communities of interest and communities of identity.



**Communities of place** have a common interest around location. We include in this:

- Constituted residents' groups
- Informal residents' groups
- Town and Parish Councils
- In Bloom Groups
- Bradley Big Local
- Friends of Parks Groups
- Millennium Green Town Talk Facebook Groups
- Nelson Town Team

8. **Communities of interest** share a common subject interest or experience. We include in this:

- Pick up for Pendle
- Uniform groups
- Special interest clubs
- Armed Forces Support Groups
- Cycle Development Pendle Partnership
- Bike Revival Scheme

Communities of identity share something in common about who they are and their life experiences. We include in this:

- Dementia Positive Pendle
- Syrian Refugees
- PEEF
- Pendle Women's Forum
- Pendle Disability Forum
- Youth Council
- Youth Parliament
- Soroptimists
- Vision Board
- Chamber of Commerce

9. We recognise our role in both supporting these groups and helping to achieve our common purpose through **information; consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowerment.**

10. We appreciate the opportunity to engage extends beyond the purpose of the group or the part of the Council they normally engage with to become involved in a broader range of issues.

11. Equally, the service areas within the Council appreciate there are both practical and learning opportunities to be gained from each other in the variety of approaches we use in community engagement.

12. The Localities and Policy Unit will continue to be a focal point for community engagement; able to identify opportunities, tracking how it is used, recording its effect and sharing best practice.

13. Service areas, assisted by the Localities and Policy Unit, are encouraged to share information about upcoming community engagement surveys, consultations and events so there is broad input to how the engagement is carried out; they can be promoted more widely and all areas can learn from both the input and the output.

14. As well as the use of online calendars, social media and partners' communications channels, service areas are encouraged to make the Contact Centre aware of upcoming community engagement surveys, consultations and events so staff can deal effectively with queries from the public and promote the engagement with members of the public they may feel are interested. Contact Centre staff are encouraged to report on feedback from the public on their

perception of community engagement, specific methods used and where the Council can improve.

## What we can do together



**15. Inform** – provide communities with information and help with understanding problems and, alternatives and solutions. We do this by or with:

- Ensuring our website and all our communications are kept up to date, are easily accessible for all communities, use Plain English and positively encourage feedback
- Making information available in our partners' venues and providing links on their websites
- The role of the Mayor in delivering key messages and promoting community engagement to target and specialist audiences
- Targeting GP surgeries and dentists with messages
- Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale Council for Voluntary Service newsletter and e-bulletin
- Pendle Council Business e-newsletter
- Lancashire County Council's Schools' Portal
- Number One Market Street
- Pendle Voice
- TV screen at Boundary Mill and other venues
- HTML emails via Dotmailer. People have signed up to a number of themes which we regularly communicate on:
  - Leisure Centres
  - Pendle Rise
  - Newspapers
  - Libraries

**16. Consult** – collect community feedback on understanding problems, options, solutions, alternatives and potential decisions. We do this by or with:

- Informing and consulting on every planning application we receive
- Town and Parish Councils
- Elected Members
- Area committees
- Youth Parliament
- Citizens' Survey
- Specific surveys and consultations
- Supermarkets and indoor markets as high footfall locations
- BPR CVS database of groups
- Pendle Seniors' Group

- Roadshows
- Pendle Community Radio

**17. Deciding together (involve)** – engage communities directly and consistently take into account their concerns and aspirations

- Using the Director's Blog and Message of the Day to encourage staff to involve the communities they work with to participate in community engagement activities
- Preparing our Local Plan
- Talkaoke (an interactive tool to engage people in discussion) – with In-Situ and/or Building Bridges
- One Lancashire Community Champions
- Landlords' Forum (EH)
- Promoting discussion and inclusion through the Council's Facebook page, Twitter page, LinkedIn and YouTube
- Pendle Youth Council
- Statutory consultations
- Town Teams and Forums
- Dementia Positive Pendle
- Faith groups and leaders

**18. Acting together (collaborate)** – partnering with communities in policy development and decision making

- Residents Groups: Whitefield; Walverden & Clover Hill; Higherford; Horsfield; Waterside
- Pendle Community Safety Partnership and Colne Working Group
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Community Clean ups and working with Pick Up for Pendle
- Flood Relief Groups
- Masterplanning
- Positive Action in the Community
- Volunteering
- Friends Groups
- In Bloom Groups
- Colne BID



**19. Empower** – communities are making decision and leading policy making

- Bradley Big Local resident-led action plan
- Participatory budgeting
- Community Mediation
- Flood Response Groups
- Town and Parish Councils through the transfer of services
- Armed Forces Covenant Group

## How we break down the barriers to engagement and deliver this Framework effectively

20. We will deliver on this Framework by:

### **Communicating our purpose**

- Ensuring our commitment to community engagement is reflected in our Strategic Plan and our Service Plans
- Ensuring digital consultation is fully inclusive
- Turning positives into negatives wherever possible
- Continuing to transfer services so they are closer to the communities which use them
- Continuing to learn from the compliments and complaints we receive
- Dealing as effectively as possible with rumours and gossip
- Promoting resident led ideas such as Bradley Big Local and the initiatives which led to the BMX pump track and Steven Burke Sports Hub
- Valuing public involvement and treating participants as valued, equal partners is increasingly a part of our organisational culture

### **Effective communication**

- Recognising word of mouth is still the most commonly used and widely recognised way of communicating information and engaging with residents
- Challenging the effectiveness of the usual methods of communication in every situation; does the target audience read local papers, do they look at posters in shop windows, do they have access to the internet, etc?
- Improving and increasing digital interaction; broadening our use of surveys; and using our new found knowledge of video conferencing platforms to reach out to new audiences who prefer not to attend public meetings and events or may otherwise be socially isolated.
- Partnering with agencies that have mobile information buses and trailers such as Pendle leisure Trust, the NHS and the Children and Family Wellbeing Service to reach to tap into a broader range of residents and localities including rural locations.
- Ensuring involvement exercises have a clear purpose; members of the community are fully informed about the nature and scope of the initiatives they are participating in and they are aware of the purpose of an initiative
- Providing comprehensive and unbiased information about relevant issues to enable the communities where we work to give informed opinions and make informed choices
- Feeding back on outcomes to our communities generally and to those who participate specifically
- Making it clear when there is an opportunity to influence or change a decision

### **Ways of working**

- Providing a clear understanding of the timescale, processes, participants' role, and realistic expectations of the outcomes from their involvement
- Involving the community in the early stages of planning and strategy development as appropriate; enabling them to have a real input in formulating approaches rather than simply endorsing the approaches we develop



- Recognising participants have a right to be told how the information they give will be used, who will have access and how it will be stored.
- Recognising a right to confidentiality and anonymity and, when this could be compromised, they are told in advance
- Mitigating any negative impact on the self-esteem of participants