



Connected Communities – BCP Council's Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy 2021-2024

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Version: V6

Date: June 2021

Foreword

We are passionate about our communities and believe that everyone should be able to play an active role in the things that matter to them most. That is why we are committed to empowering and engaging our diverse communities across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole to help inform and shape council services through the Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy.

Engagement is a term that is frequently referred to by the council and our partners and relates to the entire working relationship the council and its partners has with its residents and communities.

Our Community Engagement and Consultation strategy builds on how we currently involve our communities and outlines what we aim to do to improve the way we consult and involve local people across the area over the next three years.

This strategy has been developed following extensive consultation and engagement with our communities across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. We have listened carefully to the feedback we have received and produced this strategy which aims to enhance our involvement offer and encourage more people to take part in our engagement opportunities, whether it is by taking part in online consultations, suggesting an idea on our new digital engagement hub, attending a council meeting, or setting up a neighbourhood forum, we hope there is opportunity for everyone to be more involved with BCP Council.



Councillor Drew Mellor
Leader of the Council



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Cabinet Member for Adults



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Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy

The residents, businesses and communities across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are our greatest assets and it is our role as the Local Authority to serve them by ensuring they have access to quality services which meet their needs. This strategy seeks to ensure that they are at the heart of everything we do and sets out how we are transforming as a council to ensure more people can be involved in the decision-making process and shape local services.

Community engagement is about giving people the confidence, skills, and power so they can get involved, shape and influence the planning, development, and delivery of services. Delivering engagement activities can take many different forms and the level of involvement can vary greatly. This can range from providing simple routes for people to report issues through to consultation on new or changing services.

The Community Engagement & Consultation Strategy details the approach to engaging with communities in order to:

- proactively seek out community values, concerns, and aspirations.
- incorporate those values, concerns and aspirations into a decision-making process or processes; and
- establish an ongoing partnership with the community to ensure that the community's priorities and values continue to shape services
- Embed strength-based approaches to working with our communities, ensuring they are at the heart of everything we do

It provides a set of principles that the council upholds in relation to engaging with, and listening to, the community and what the community can do to get involved and have their say. It also reflects on engagement being a two-way process and includes the role that our communities can play in making a difference.

Consultation and engagement are the keyways the council interacts with and involves local communities and residents. Through this we provide opportunities for communities to understand what the council does, provide a range of ways for community voices to be heard and for these views to feed into the decision-making process.

BCP Council already has a track record of consulting and engaging with local people through established structures such as a network of partnership boards, user groups and forums, resident's surveys and regular consultation and engagement across the full range of council activities. We have strong links with our partners including Town and Parish Councils, Police, Public Health, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, the Community and Voluntary Sector and businesses. Our elected Councillors are also at the centre of consultation and community engagement activity.

Through this strategy we aim to change the ways we involve and consult with our communities. We want to do more, effectively and efficiently, using innovative approaches as well as best practice solutions. This strategy will demonstrate how the council will ensure that people feel well informed about local issues, have opportunities to get involved, influence local decision making, get involved in local democracy and to tell the council what they think about its policies, procedures, service delivery and work with partner organisations. In short, this strategy details how we are putting Vibrant Communities at the heart of everything we do.

Background

The purpose of the Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy is to set out the principles and standards for how the council will engage and consult with its communities in a meaningful, two-way process. It seeks to ensure that our communities are at the heart of everything we do. The strategy also details our commitment to work collaboratively with the community, where resources and timescales allow, to enable the community to:

- have a greater say and choice in the design and delivery of local services
- develop new skills and expertise
- become better informed about the council's work

This will ensure that communities understand the rationale behind the decisions that need to be made by the Council, are aware of the different options that are available to try and address this and can be involved in providing their views about which option is the best for both the council and the community. This enables open and transparent conversations to take place over potentially complex decisions in a more meaningful and productive way.

In January 2020, the council began a comprehensive consultation across the conurbation, asking for resident's views on a set of underlying principles that would inform the development of the Community Engagement & Consultation Strategy. Views were also sought about the ways in which people currently get involved with BCP Council, how they prefer to be engaged with and what would encourage them to have their say. The overwhelming feedback from the consultation was that there was strong support for the proposed principles, and that response is the basis for this strategy. The consultation results are detailed further in section **We asked, you said, we did** of the strategy.

The strategy builds upon existing best practice that currently takes place across council services and our partners. The aim is to embed these principles and procedures to maximise the benefits of engagement for all our communities and enable us to provide services which better meet their needs. The strategy provides a guide on how the council will improve the way in which it involves residents, service users, the community and voluntary sector, local business, and social enterprises and demonstrates the council's commitment to continually involving and consulting to make a real difference to the lives of residents and the type of services provided.

The strategy also builds on the good practice of the Influencing Decisions Strategy 2015-2018 by legacy Bournemouth Borough Council, considering the requirements under the council's duty to consult as outlined in the Local Government Act 1999, the Equality and Diversity Governance Framework, the Council's Corporate Strategy, and the Big Plan 2021.

Strategic Context

This strategy aims to bring consistency, quality and innovation to the way engagement and consultation is delivered across council services. It is aligned to our core strategies, our Big Plan and our transformation programme which is at the heart of the way we want to work and to deliver our services.

Transformation Programme: BCP Council has been working towards transforming itself into a modern, efficient, cost-effective organisation. Our transformation will create:

- a council where customers are better understood and so better served
- modern, efficient ways of working, that give colleagues flexibility to improve work/life balance
- a single BCP Civic Centre in Bournemouth reducing our accommodation costs, supported by several community-based hubs
- financial savings, tackling our medium-term financial pressure and establishing a sustainable operating model for the future
- a reduction in our workforce, over time, consistent with the needs of our operating model and the council's corporate priorities
- a carbon neutral position for BCP Council's operations and activities by 2030.

As part of the transformation of the Council, one of the key principles is to develop Vibrant Communities by ensuring that Community Empowerment and Resilience are at the heart of everything we do. This strategy plays a key role in ensuring that we achieve this by creating the environment and opportunity for everyone to play an active role.



Our Big Plan

'Our Big Plan' was launched in 2021 and outlines our vision for the future of BCP, creating 'A world class city region- one of the best coastal places in the world in which to live, work, invest and play. We want to harness the potential of our coastline of opportunity and make BCP a place where people and businesses want to be because: -

- of the vibrancy of our communities
- the strength of our economy
- the skills of our people
- the wealth of our culture and the quality of our infrastructure
- our environment and quality of life.

The Big Plan involves five big projects that will deliver substantial changes across the conurbation. Underpinning these projects is the work we will do to develop our vibrant communities, with an outstanding quality of life, where everyone plays an active role. The Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy is key to the delivery of this, by ensuring everyone has a way to be involved in shaping and influencing decision-making in a way that works best for them.

Our Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy states a priority to deliver *“Connected Communities: empowering our communities so everyone feels safe, engaged and included.”* The Community Engagement & Consultation Strategy will help the council to achieve this by providing a framework enabling us:

- better understand and respond to the needs of local people.
- be more accountable to local people.
- plan and deliver better services.
- make more efficient use of public resources.
- take transparent decisions based on robust evidence.
- build strong and positive relationships within and between local communities.
- test out ideas and explore emerging issues.
- measure the performance of the Council in delivering services.



The Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy will support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy by ensuring that our communities have opportunities to engage with the council in a variety of ways to ensure that it is accessible to everyone. We are seeking to remove the barriers to engagement, to ensure that the voices of everyone can be heard and listened to, especially those whose voice are seldom heard in the decision-making process.

This strategy sets out BCP Council's vision, mission, ambition and priorities, and the values which underpin the way BCP Council develops and delivers its services. This strategy forms a golden thread throughout the council, ensuring that our communities can expect the same high levels of engagement across all services areas. We want to work with our communities and empower people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs to create a place where all local communities can connect and thrive.

The Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy will form part of the overall council transformation programme, providing a link with how we interact internally and externally, how we see and empower our communities, how we work with them to deliver solutions and how we support them to access new ways of service delivery including digital access. As part of the transformation of BCP Council there is a dedicated Community and Partnerships workstream which seeks to ensure that communities and partnerships are at the heart of the council and it's working. The following are further examples of key council strategies, approaches, policies which work in alignment across the council and will help deliver our principles of engagement and consultation.

Community-Led Strengths Based Approach:

As part of the transformation of the council we are embedding strength-based approaches within our service delivery which seeks to build on the assets that already exist within our communities. This approach challenges the traditional problem-based approach of trying to solve issues by focussing on what is not working. Instead, it focusses on “what’s strong, not what’s wrong” within a community, by demonstrating that local assets such as people, buildings and places are key to ensuring sustainable communities and sustainable community development. This is a commitment and an approach to developing a relationship with residents and giving them the space and support to develop their own solutions.

One of the fundamental principles is that everyone and everywhere has assets upon which resilient, healthy communities can be built. Some of these assets may be obvious such as parks and open spaces, community events, community centres and community and voluntary sector organisations. But many assets are hidden within our communities, often within the residents that make up our communities and may need time, trust, and patience to be discovered. These assets may be skills, gifts, talents, or networks - such as a local business letting residents use their office space, a retired teacher looking to get involved in the local community, the parent who volunteers at a youth club, a local pre-school who engages with children and parents or the local café that opens in the evening for a social meet up.

As part of the transformation of the council we are expanding how we use strength-based approaches, not only in terms of how we operate as a council but also in relation to how we support our priority neighbourhoods across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. Investment into the Community Development function of the council is enabling us to work in all our priority neighbourhoods across Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole, working with and enabling the local community rather than using a ‘top down’ approach.

Adult Social Care: Within the council, Adult Social Care are reviewing their delivery services under “what is strong, not what is wrong” strength-based approach, co-producing adult social care services in line with local needs and priorities and engaging care communities in how to access services and the delivery of those services whilst using appropriate information sharing processes and procedures.

Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy: This strategy will identify how to involve children and young people appropriately and effectively in having their say on the delivery of these services across the area.

Communications Strategy: The role of this strategy is to promote awareness, understanding and action through proactive campaigns that inform, engage, and motivate our audiences. It seeks to use clear, honest, and compelling messages, delivered through the channels that people use, at a time when they use them.

Community and Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy: This strategy sets out how the Council will work in partnership with our community and voluntary sector to achieve better outcomes. It also sets out our aspirations for growing opportunities for volunteering throughout Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole, ensuring that volunteering is accessible to all. The strategy will work across the Council on how to develop volunteering practices and procedures internally and externally and how to embed them appropriately and effectively. It will demonstrate how we want to engage with our voluntary and community sector partners in supporting the sector and delivering real outcomes.

Dorset Integrated Care System: The Dorset ICS, known as 'Our Dorset,' is a partnership of the two new local councils, NHS services and the community and voluntary sector, all working together to address local health, wellbeing, quality, and financial challenges across the county. Engagement leads across these organisations meet regularly to review engagement activity across the partners.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA): The purpose of the Public Sector Equalities Duty is to integrate the consideration of equalities into the day-to-day business of public authorities. It requires the local authority to consider and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion work objectives. EQIA's are used as evidence-based reporting tools that demonstrate how the Council has considered and will mitigate inequalities and remove barriers for its diverse communities

Health and Wellbeing Board: A forum with leaders from the local Councils and health and care sector, working together to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population. The board's current priorities are prevention at scale; the 20% most deprived areas and tackling food insecurity

Smart Places: Creating digital solutions to improve the lives of our residents, the vibrancy of our communities and the prospects of our local businesses. These innovative solutions utilise the benefits of innovative digital technology, interconnected information, and the latest high-speed connectivity. Developing innovative engagement tools for our residents who are digitally enabled. The Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy will align with this work, ensuring we have a range of engagement tools for everyone.

Statement of Community Involvement: Community involvement is essential in creating and delivering inclusive, accessible, and safe sustainable communities. A consistent approach to planning engagement with individuals, local communities, and other stakeholders on a range of planning matters. It sets out how we will: consider and determine planning applications for development and how the community can be involved in the process involve and engage with the community and other stakeholders in the preparation of Local Development Plan and Supplementary Plan Documents, and other planning documents.

Parish and Town Councils: The first tier of local government and the closest to the community they serve. A Town Council is a parish council which has resolved to call itself a Town Council. The chairperson of a Town Council can also be called the Town Mayor. There are some 8,500 Parish and Town Councils in England. As a tier of local government, they are elected bodies, with discretionary powers and rights laid down by Parliament to represent their communities and provide services for them. All local authorities are constituted in the same way with councillors elected by the local government electorate and a Chair, who must be one of them. County and District or Unitary Councils are obliged by law to consult the Local Council on certain matters affecting the parish. The range of services and amenities provided by Local Councils varies enormously. Within BCP Council we currently have the following Parish and Town Councils:

- Burton and Winkton Parish Council
- Christchurch Town Council
- Highcliffe and Walkford Parish Council
- Hurn Parish Council
- Throop and Holdenhurst Village Council

Urban Regeneration Company: The URC represents a step change in the scale, pace, and ambition of regeneration in the BCP city region as appropriate to the council's status as the 10th

largest urban authority in the UK. The URC will bring additional place making expertise to bear ensuring that we make the most of our city region's potential. The URC will build strong relationships with key local stakeholders and delivery partners, including the Bournemouth Development Company and Boscombe Towns Fund Board. The URC will work with the Community Engagement and the Consultation Team to write an Engagement Strategy which follows BCP Council's engagement and consultation principles.

We asked, you said, we did



In January 2020 we launched a comprehensive consultation programme across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole seeking residents' views on a set of draft principles to inform the development of the Community Engagement and Consultation Strategy. BCP Council is committed to asking everyone with an interest in the services that the council provides, including residents, community groups, partners, and staff, to consider proposals and share views so that they can be considered when the council makes decisions.

A key challenge for councils is how to engage and consult with members of the community who often avoid mainstream engagement methods. It is for this reason that we included a wide range of communication processes and channels within our consultation plan.

We adopted a 12-week (three months) period for the consultation on the Community Engagement & Consultation Strategy. The consultation period commenced on Monday 13th January 2020 and closed on Sunday 12th April 2020. The consultation provided information on the proposed Community Engagement & Consultation Strategy principles and asked people how much they agreed or disagreed with them.

Through the Consultation we also sought views on:

- levels of engagement with groups, forums, councillors, the council etc over the last 12 months
- views on their ability to influence decisions affecting their local area
- views on being involved in decision-making processes
- How their involvement in the decision-making process could be improved
- views on their local community
- views on local groups and forums
- The way in which people like to engage (face to face, social media, Council publications, email etc)

The full questionnaire was available as an online survey and as hard copies in libraries and other locations as required. Alternative formats (large print etc) were also available upon request. In addition to undertaking consultation in these formats we also committed to spending a minimum of a day in each ward across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole carrying out consultation in the locations where people were already going to. This was to ensure that we removed the barriers to people taking part in the consultation rather than relying on people coming to a series of consultation events. Staff took the consultation to parks and open spaces, school gates at drop off and pick up times, local shops, churches and libraries and any other locations where people were already visiting. Unfortunately, the emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic in early 2020 caused us to cease the roadshows at the end of February, however consultation via the more traditional methods continued until the consultation closed.

A total of 871 responses were received to the online survey, over 600 through the paper survey and co-ordinated roadshows in 27 of the 33 wards.

Key findings:

Over 1,400 people gave feedback on how they would like to get involved in council services and the decisions we make. Here are some of the results of the consultation and how we have used them to shape this strategy.

Respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the draft Community Engagement and Consultation Principles. All five principles received over three quarters (75%) agreement



As the majority of respondents agreed with the principles, we have adopted these to form our strategy

56% of respondents said they would prefer to get involved in council decisions affecting the local area by taking part online



We have established a new digital engagement hub online and will continue to explore different ways of digitally engaging with our communities

Just under half of respondents would prefer to take part using paper surveys and consultation material



Whilst it is hoped that more people will start to engage with the council using online engagement methods paper questionnaires and consultation material will always be available upon request and we have established 'have your say' points in our libraries to display any printed material

When asked what type of meetings would work in the local area, neighbourhood /area forums and safer neighbourhood meetings were the most preferred style of meetings.



This will form the basis of a range of diverse ways the council wants to engage and consult with our communities. Area/neighbourhood forums will form a key approach allowing us to build on all the work that has been done in communities by those communities to support each other during the pandemic

On the following pages you can see some key data about our resident population; this provides some insight into who we are trying to engage with through this strategy.

BCP Data Insight – Our Community

Data insight – our community



Population growth

2011 378,888

(Census 2011)

2019 395,331

(MYE 2019)

2030 404,838

(SNPP 2018 based)

Growth is slower than previous projections predicted.

Growth driven by migration to the area and by an increase in the number of over 65s.

Number of births projected to fall to 2030, deaths to increase.



Age profile

(Mid-Year Estimates and HESA)

Children 17%

Working age 61%

Pensioners 22%

Students 21,500
across 3 universities

Gender

(Census 2011)

Male 49%

Female 51%



Life expectancy at birth

higher than national

Men 80.5

Women 83.7

Healthy life expectancy

higher than national

Men 64.5

Women 66.6



Life limiting illness (BCP)

A little 10%

A lot 8%

Not at all 82%

[more data](#)



LGBTQ+

Sexual orientation

The percentage of the population identifying as **heterosexual** has decreased to **94.6%** in 2018.

The proportion identifying as **LGB** has increased to **2.2%**.

Young people most likely to identify as LGB (16-24).

→ ons.gov.uk

Religion

(Census, full breakdown on Tableau)

Christian 60%

No religion 29%

Not stated 8%

Other 2%

Muslim 1%

Ethnicity

White British 88%

White other 6%

BME 6%



Number of households

176,600

1,200 more than in 2013
(+0.7%)

15,115

Number of businesses

(UK Business Counts, 2020)

Most common (2020)

Construction **2,530**

Professional, scientific and technical **2,305**

Business admin and support **1,270**

Retail **1,160**



Median salary

Working in BCP area
£29,200

Living in BCP area
£29,300

Deprivation

16,000 people
in decile 1 (4%)

45,400 people
in deciles 1+2 (12%)



Community

BCP Council recognises that each community will have diverse needs and priorities. Communities can mean different things to different people and there are many diverse groups that make up a community.

- Geographical communities defined by a particular geographical area with physical boundaries e.g., a housing estate. These communities may have similar concerns about issues that affect their local area.
- Communities of interest defined by a shared interest, experience, or situation e.g., loneliness, social isolation, and climate change.
- Community of identity is defined by how people identify themselves or how they are identified by society. This can be by using demography such as young people, older people, faith groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer + (LGBTQ+) and ethnically diverse communities.

Individuals can associate themselves with more than one community and this can relate to where they live, work and their interests. It is essential to let people define their own communities.

Community Engagement

Community engagement can take many different forms. Each type of involvement is important to help the council with its decision-making and service provision. Community engagement is about giving people the confidence, skills, and power so they can get involved, shape and influence the planning, development, and delivery of services.

Delivering engagement activities can take many different forms and the level of involvement can vary greatly. It may not always be possible to reach consensus around issues. However, greater involvement and participation will bring about better understanding of sometimes complex issues. The council uses a variety of community engagement methods, these range from active involvement (empowerment) to passive involvement (receiving information) depending on the activity and circumstances.

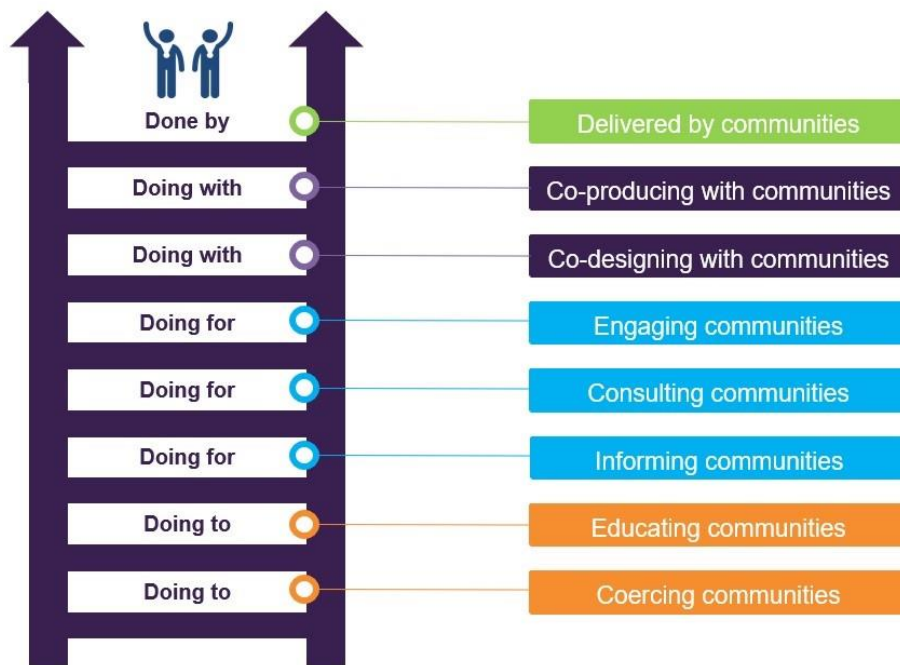
Consultation

Consultation is a two-way process in which people are fully informed about the options available and are asked their opinion on an issue the council is considering. Consultation has a defined start and end date and opinions from consultation activity should be used to inform decisions in a clear and transparent way. Feedback from consultation activity is used alongside performance, intelligence, legal, financial and sustainability information to make decisions about how council services are delivered.

We want to ensure that our communities can be aware of and be able to comment on consultations which matter to them. Within the action plan we outline the ways in which people will be able to be aware of upcoming consultations and improve the ways in which they can get involved and have their say. We also want to ensure that we have consistent standards for how we consult with our communities and the action plan contains a range of measures which will help us to achieve this.

What is good engagement?

Effective engagement and consultation require a variety of approaches. Diverse communities, residents, and businesses all have different needs and prefer to engage using different methods and at different levels. It may be appropriate just to inform about local issues or challenges, whilst at other times this will need to be done in greater depth.



These tools help to build confidence and trust between the council and its communities. With effective engagement and consultation comes improved relationships, an increase in involvement in local decision making and the improvement of a council's democratic legitimacy with its residents and partners. Effective dissemination of information and an improvement of stakeholder dialogue will also raise the council's reputation and build trust. Communities given the opportunity to have greater choice in the design, and delivery of their services will see those services delivered appropriately and more effectively. Removing any physical, language or social barriers for communities to access information or voice their opinions will see local communities better informed and with a clearer understanding of the policies, priorities, and the challenges.

Evidence shows that effective engagement brings increased satisfaction with public services and effective engagement gives participants opportunities to learn new skills, share expertise and ways of working. Engagement activity and regular information about results of what they said and how this has impacted service delivery allows service providers to reach a better understanding of their communities and be more in tune with needs or problems as they arise.

Collaborating with our communities is at the core of what we do. To deliver the right services, in the right way. We are evaluating our ways of working both internally and externally and this strategy is part of a bigger transformational picture. Through the delivery of this strategy, we will encourage communities, where appropriate, to take more control of their own neighbourhoods, create joint planning, development, and delivery of services.

Community Engagement and Consultation Principles

The following five principles are built on council best practice, values, and behaviours. Alongside the feedback from the community engagement consultation held across the area from January to April 2020, the principles form the basis of our delivery plan for our engagement and consultation activities.



Principle 1 - Involved Communities



We will provide flexible and innovative involvement opportunities for communities to help shape the development and delivery of quality services and the relevant policies that reflect local needs. We will put residents at the centre of collaborative decision-making processes, sharing skills, and engagement and consultation opportunities.

We will	So that
Provide training for staff and partners in community led strength-based community development approaches	Staff, partners, and councillors have the tools they need to engage with communities effectively and efficiently
Follow strength-based community development principles – exploring what is already available in communities through different agencies and organisations and wrapping these around the individual	Staff and councillors have the skills to understand the needs of their communities
Establish an engagement leads network to share best practice, deliver consistency and ensure a reduction in duplication	We can ensure a consistent approach across all services and include all the relevant stakeholders
Establish a consultation hub e.g., Engagement HQ where we can promote opportunities to gather views, ideas, and insights in a single place.	It makes it easier for communities to find opportunities for involvement.
Actively promote registration to our consultation hub through our communication channels	
Present feedback from engagement and consultation activity in a clear ‘you said, we did, you did’ format.	There is feedback when communities have helped to shape our policy.
Strengthen our engagement with our business community by continuing to support and engage with various networks including, the Business Improvement Districts, Local Enterprise Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce and various sector networks including digital and engineering.	We continue to listen and engage with the business community
Continue to stream all public committee meetings post COVID 19 and further promote this amongst our community.	We continue to improve transparency of the decision- making process.
Explore options and associated costs for introducing a 360 immersive experience of council meetings.	People can have the full experience of a committee meeting from locations convenient to them.

Principle 2 - Inclusive Communities



We will make information accessible to all and consider how best to engage in diverse ways and in a variety of accessible formats. Our engagement with communities will be timely and meaningful and we will work hard to include all communities who have a stake in the matter.

We will	So that
Develop our internal and external engagement networks. E.g., Dorset Integrated Care System, Youth Participation, Resident Involvement	We extend our engagement research and target seldom heard groups
Extend Community Equality Champions Network - internal and external community front facing staff and community representatives that support community engagement amongst ethnically diverse communities	We extend our engagement research and target seldom heard groups
We will work with DOTS Disability to provide opportunities for disabled people (with a range of impairment types), unpaid carers and older people to inform council services, decisions, and Equality Impact Assessments. DOTS Disability will monitor the diversity of disabled people involved in DOTS Consultations to ensure the widest representation possible.	We can ensure we consider the views of disabled people (with a range of impairment types), unpaid carers and older people before making decisions about policies and changes to services.
Establish and promote consultation points in libraries	Consultation and engagement opportunities are available to those in the community who would prefer to respond using a paper format.
Conduct annual residents' surveys which will include community engagement questions	We can regularly measure how involved our community feels and whether they think we act on local concerns.
Monitor the profile of respondents to our consultations.	We can look to improve the representativeness of our consultation activity and improve engagement with any communities we seemingly may not be reaching.
Develop and extend area/neighbourhood community forums/celebrations /events across the area	We can create effective dialogue with our communities

Principle 3 - Transparent with our Communities



3

**Transparent
with our
communities**

We have
integrity

We will strive to engage and consult with our community in ways that work for them. We will share outcomes of engagement activity and responses will influence our decision making. We will admit when we make mistakes.

We will deliver engagement and consultation opportunities, where we are clear about the decision-making processes, what can be influenced and what can be delivered. We will work with our communities to produce solutions and we will encourage communities to be actively engaged and help to deliver these solutions.

We will...	So that
Support communities to access council information through e newsletters, social media, Engagement HQ, Livestreaming, BCP Council website.	Local people have clear messaging and therefore find it easier to be involved and feel that they make a difference
Create a Community Engagement Toolkit for all staff that provides step by-step practical advice for staff on how to select and use the most appropriate engagement tools.	Staff, partners, and councillors have the tools they need to engage with communities effectively and efficiently
Improve our messages to our residents so that they are more accessible and targeted.	Local people have clear messaging and therefore find it easier to be involved and feel that they make a difference
Ensure all services carrying out consultation and engagement activity are equipped to prepare and deliver a Community Engagement & Consultation Plan (CECP) effectively	There is consistency in the delivery of consultation and engagement activities across the Council
Establish permanent spaces for involvement (digital and physical)	Local people know what and how they have influenced decision making
Share results of consultation and engagement activity and be open about what we have been able to do because of the feedback we have received.	

Principle 4 - Keeping it simple



4

Keeping it simple for our Communities

We embrace innovation

We will use plain English in our communication materials. We will strive to make our engagement interesting, relevant and to the point. We will keep up with digital technology to keep you informed.

We will use appropriate and consistent approaches to engagement and use clear and concise language as part of the process. Feedback to our communities will be delivered clearly across all formats, digital and in person.

We will...	So that
Ensure consultation literature will be in Plain English, we will aim to make documents as clear and concise as possible	Our communities have adequate clear information to base their opinions on when taking part in BCP Council consultations.
Ensure there is a clear call to action on consultation material	
Pilot the use of a range of engagement techniques on Engagement HQ, including ideas walls, location comments, online forums, pulse surveys etc	We can try out new ways of gaining opinions.
Identify initiatives with partners to improve communities' access to digital and improve their skills.	Local people are aware of digital services and are supported to use them.

Principle 5 - Collaborative Communities



5

Collaborative Communities

We take **pride** in what we do

We will work with our communities to develop plans to address issues such as the climate emergency. We will work to ensure everyone knows what their role is so that we can all take pride in making a difference.

We will promote partnership working and the crucial role that it plays in delivering services for all our residents. We will support local community and voluntary groups to help ensure that they have the capacity to improve the lives of the communities they serve.

We will...	So that
Set up a central register of community stakeholder and residents' groups which is updated every quarter	We can make sure we are communicating engagement opportunities to established groups within the community.
Community Development Officers (CDO) to support communities across the top 20% deprivation areas in BCP	Communities are seen in a strengths-based way able to be supported in delivering their own solutions
Work with our partners Community Action Network to deliver shared objectives to support community groups and communities	Communities are supported and empowered to deliver their own solutions
Continue to work with our partner organisations as part of Our Dorset Sustainability and Transformation Plan	We can ensure a joined-up engagement approach for the transformation in health and wellbeing.
Meet with our Town and Parish Council representatives four times a year.	We can have an on-going dialogue of information and engagement.
Work with our community centres so they can thrive as places for people to meet	Communities have local places to meet, learn, and address local needs e.g., loneliness and isolation
Support community and voluntary sector groups through the continued delivery of the BH Coastal Lottery.	Voluntary & Community sector organisations supported
Work with the Urban Regeneration Company (URC) to support the development of their engagement strategy, aligning BCP Council's engagement principles within the regeneration projects.	The URC and BCP Council's engagement principles are aligned.

Implementation

Through our partnerships, we will work with other organisations, groups and individuals from the community, voluntary and business sectors to make sure that engagement activities influence the future direction of the district.

We recognise that the council alone cannot achieve the ambitions in this strategy. Everyone has a part to play in making this strategy work, in particular: -

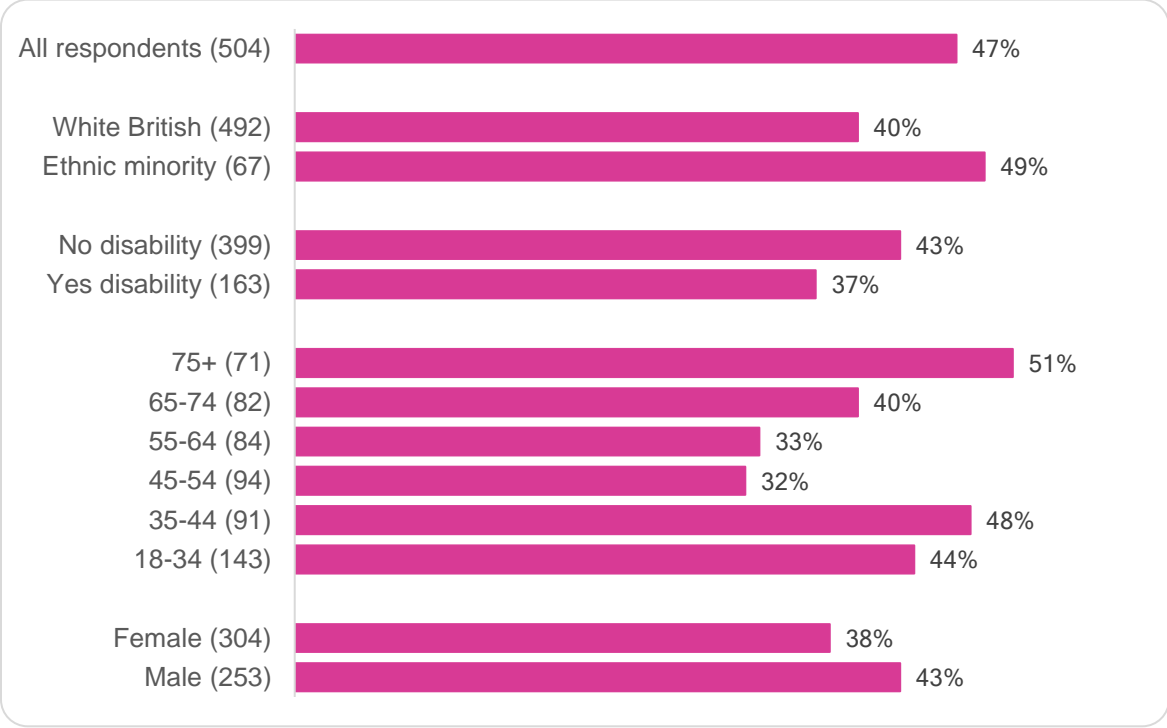
- Residents
- Councillors - play a key role in delivering the aims in this strategy
- Town and Parish Councils
- Council staff – everyone is involved in community engagement activity in various forms
- Staff forums
- Community and voluntary sector organisations - who provide local services, work directly with communities, work with members of usually excluded groups and represent the views of their sectors
- Businesses/local enterprises
- Partners - by working with other organisations and partnerships to make sure that services across the area complement each other
- Neighbourhoods, wards, and communities
- Tenant and resident groups
- People who use the services and those who do not
- Interest/advocacy/pressure groups
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, gender, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation
- Mobile populations, refugee communities, people for whom English is not the first language
- Public and private sector stakeholders
- People who study or work in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole.

We also know that we need to work closely with communities to encourage effective community engagement and ensure that processes are flexible and can be tailored to diverse groups and individuals in different areas of the district. We understand that sometimes people are reluctant to get involved and we will work with other partners to ensure that community engagement is as straightforward as possible and targeted appropriately.

Measuring our progress

We will review the strategy annually to ensure that the actions and aims are still appropriate and relevant. It is important to know whether this strategy is making a difference and that we are working to our principles. We will measure the overall success of the strategy by aiming to increase the percentage of people agreeing that they can influence decisions affecting their local area. We hope to see an increase in percentage from the people within our communities.

% Of respondents who agree they can influence decisions in local area (random sample survey)



In our delivery plan you can see how we will measure the success of each of the individual actions.

Other ways we can monitor the delivery of the strategy and its impact across council’s service delivery and alongside our partners is to show that: -

- Better understand the needs of our local communities
- Identify and work more closely with our diverse and seldom heard from communities
- Using this to ensure information, consultation, involvement, and empowerment opportunities are provided and that they target the right people and are accessible
- Local communities - people feel that there are sufficient opportunities to get involved and they know how to access them if they want to.
- Our communities recognise that the council’s policies reflect this involvement, and those services are accessible, responsive, and tailored to the different needs of our local communities.