

# Statement of intent as to community engagement

Stotfold Town Council

Adopted 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014



## **Statement of intent as to community engagement**

### **1. Aims and Objectives**

#### **Stotfold Town Council aims to:**

- Represent and promote the interests of Stotfold and all its people in all forums
- Pay particular attention to the needs of our children and young people
- Provide the best possible amenities and services by the efficient use of available resources
- Actively involve local people in decisions affecting activities in the area
- Promote equality of opportunity and oppose discrimination
- Be open and accountable in all it does
- Support development which is environmentally, socially and economically sound and sustainable
- Enhance quality of life by protecting and enhancing Stotfold's ecological and environmental assets.

#### **In order to achieve these aims, the Council will:**

- Work closely with residents, businesses and community groups;
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future;
- Ensure, that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents, to capture their views and learn their concerns and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process;
- Ensure that residents have the opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

#### **The outcomes the Council hopes to achieve are:**

- Improved communication with the local community
- A better understanding within the community of the role of the Town Council and of its Councillors
- Local people actively contributing to decision making
- Improved satisfaction with local public services

### **2. Defining the community**

The Council considers the community of Stotfold to consist of:

- All residents of the town
- All users of the Town Council's services
- All those who work within the town
- All those who own businesses within the town
- All young people who live and/or go to school within the town
- All local voluntary organisations, clubs and societies
- Any group or organisation that represents some or any of the members of the above sections of the community

Additionally, the Town Council recognises that there are certain bodies that are crucial to the quality of life in Stotfold and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including the Police, the other tiers of local government and neighbouring town and parish Councils.

### **3. Provision of information to the community and opportunities for community involvement**

Information is provided by the Town Council to the community in a number of ways, including:

- The Town Council offices at the Simpson Centre, Hitchin Road are open Monday to Friday and can provide a wide range of information both on Council services and other Stotfold activities and issues
- The Town Council's website [www.stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk) provides comprehensive information both on the work of the Town Council and on other services, the history of the town, local events, local groups and organisations. The public can contact the Town Council through the website.
- The Town Council provides a noticeboard outside the Simpson Centre to display agendas for Council meetings as well as other information of interest to the local community. Additionally, the Council has provided three additional noticeboards around the town which can be used by local events organisers or groups.
- Town Councillors' surgeries are held at least 6 times a year at a variety of locations where people gather, or at the Town Council offices.
- The Town Council publishes a monthly news article in the locally distributed Stotfold News magazine, and the Town Council's website also carries items of news.
- The Annual Report is produced in June each year and is available from the Town Council offices, on the website and from Stotfold Library. An Annual Report on the Council's activities is also presented by the Mayor at the Annual Town Meeting in March of each year.
- All meetings of the Town Council and its Committees and Sub-Committees are open to the public and a period is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for public questions relating to items on the agenda.
- Public meetings are called to gauge public opinion about important issues affecting the town such as major planning applications.
- Questionnaires are sometimes used to ask local people's opinions about specific matters and these are distributed to local residents, for example through stands at the local Co-operative supermarket, Town Councillor surgeries or downloadable from the Council's website.
- Social media sites, such as Facebook

### **4. Opportunities for Formal Representations to Council**

- Formal representations to the Council may be made at any time in writing to the Town Clerk.

### **5. Involvement in Partnerships**

The Town Council often works in partnership with other organisations such as the Unitary Authority, the Police or the community environmental group Teasel. It has representatives on the following local organisations, which may change from time to time:

- Eleemosynary Charity of William Field
- Stotfold Chamber of Trade
- Stotfold Bowls Club
- Stotfold Football Club Committee
- Mossman Centre Management Committee
- Stotfold Scouts Committee

- St Mary's Academy
- Roecroft Lower School

## **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 the Town Council's website. Members of the public are welcome to contact Councillors 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 to make sure that its services are provided for the local community. The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer for the Council which means that he/she has overall responsibility for the provision of Council services.

Adopted by Council– 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014