



# STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

## CONSULTATION POLICY 2025

### 1. Introduction

Stotfold Town Council is committed to engaging with the local community in a meaningful and effective way. Although there is no statutory requirement for town councils to consult, the Council recognises consultation as an essential part of democratic local governance and good decision-making.

This policy outlines the Council's approach to consultation, ensuring that local residents, businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders have appropriate opportunities to influence decisions that affect them.

### 2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure decisions are informed by local views and experiences.
- Strengthen transparency and accountability.
- Improve service delivery and community trust.
- Build stronger partnerships between the Council and the public.

### 3. Principles of Consultation

All consultations conducted by the Council will adhere to the following principles:

- **Clarity:** Be clear about the purpose, scope, and impact of the consultation.
- **Inclusivity:** Make efforts to reach a representative cross-section of the community.
- **Proportionality:** Match the scale of the consultation to the significance of the issue.
- **Accessibility:** Use formats and platforms that are easy to access and understand.
- **Timeliness:** Allow sufficient time for responses and ensure consultation takes place before decisions are made.
- **Feedback:** Share the outcomes of consultations and explain how responses have influenced final decisions.

### 4. When We Will Consult

The Council will consider consultation when:

- Introducing or significantly changing policies or services.
- Undertaking community projects or developments.
- Preparing strategic documents such as a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Drafting the annual budget or reviewing the precept.
- Responding to consultations from principal authorities or partner agencies.

## 5. Consultation Methods

The Council may use one or more of the following methods, as appropriate:

- Online surveys via the Council website or social media.
- Paper-based surveys available at Council offices or events.
- Public meetings or drop-in sessions.
- Stakeholder workshops or focus groups.
- Informal conversations or feedback via councillors or staff.
- Use of community noticeboards and the town newsletter.

## 6. Consultation Periods

The length of consultation periods will be determined by the complexity and impact of the issue:

- Minimum 3 weeks: For small-scale or straightforward matters (e.g. changes to amenities).
- 4–6 weeks: For moderate-impact issues, budget setting, or project proposals.
- 6–12 weeks: For major policies, strategic documents, or planning-related consultations.
- Shorter periods may be used where time is limited (e.g. responses to consultations from other authorities), but the Council will always aim to maximise notice and engagement.

## 7. Use of Consultation Responses

All responses will be considered carefully and fairly. A summary of responses will be compiled and presented to the relevant committee or full Council. Where possible, decisions will reflect the feedback received, and reasons will be given if significant public views are not adopted.

## 8. Communication of Outcomes

The Council will publish the outcome of consultations via:

- The Council's website.
- A written report or summary.
- Social media platforms.
- Newsletters or public notices where appropriate.

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### Document History

Version	Date Adopted	Review Date	Amendment Summary
1.0	June 2025	June 2026	