

# Engagement Strategy

## 2018 - 2023

This document explains how we, the county council, will engage with the people of Lincolnshire, what we'll do and why we'd like to do it. The strategy is the result of conversations about what engagement means so it includes a series of commitments to you, as we embark on what we would like to be a positive relationship.

## The Introduction

As the Community Engagement Team talked to people about what should be in this strategy, the recurring theme was about making a commitment to one another, so this document is our proposal to you, the people who live in, work in and visit Lincolnshire!

The Council has a Community Engagement Team that provides [advice and support](#) on the best ways to reach people. Before any of our staff begin planning how they will engage you, they will have spoken to the team. Engaging with you refers to any interaction that you have with the County Council. When delivered well, engagement demonstrates our commitment to making the whole experience of dealing with us as easy as possible and can help to build relationships. It is important to offer different ways of keeping in touch with each other. You can engage in a number of ways, including contact with the [Customer Service Centre](#), filling in an online form, submitting a [petition](#), responding to a survey we've sent about developing services or talking something through with your local councillor.

As you can imagine, there are quite a few strategies, policies, procedures, guidelines, rules and laws that we work with every day. Some are national and others are quite unique to Lincolnshire. We've made links to some of these things throughout this document.

References to 'you' throughout the strategy mean members of the public, community and business leaders; people who live in, work in or visit Lincolnshire. 'We' refers to the County Council, of which the Community Engagement Team is a part.

## Aims and objectives – the proposal

The Community Engagement Team is part of the Community Resilience and Assets Service. As such, the team will work towards the service's aims to ensure:

- ◆ You are informed and engaged
- ◆ You can do things for yourselves
- ◆ Resources are transferred to you so you can take action
- ◆ Assets are protected and celebrated
- ◆ You have a strong 'sense of place'

It's really important that you have the chance to have a say on local issues, whether it's something we're asking for your views on or something you want to tell or ask us about. There are all sorts of different ways to engage from a simple conversation over the telephone to focus groups and a Facebook post to attending community events. We can't always give you lots of ways to engage with us because we have limited resources, but we'll always try to offer more than one method so people can find something that suits them and you can sign up to our [Engagement Database](#) to receive information about relevant opportunities.

Councillors have many different roles and are also known as elected members, the front door to the council, the face of the council and so on. They are your representatives and could be your greatest ally. You can [contact them](#), by telephone, e-mail, via social media, post and even meet them in person and they will work with you and council staff to help resolve any issue you have. They can make contact with the right officer inside the Council and find out information if they don't have it to hand. Staff within the Council will work with our councillors and other organisations, such as those in the voluntary & community sector, town and parish councils, other public sector services, the private sector and others who wish to engage with local people, to make it as easy as possible for everyone to contact and respond to the County Council.

We'd like to be bold and say that by 2023 we want to not only get better at engaging with you, but do the best job that we can when it comes to engaging with each other. So if we ask you what you think about how well we engage, at least 95% of you would say we do it well. We can't promise to always say 'yes'. Some resources are limited which means sometimes we will only be able to deliver a 'statutory service'. This means not all

conversations we have will be easy, particularly when we have to make difficult decisions or when you tell us we got something wrong. We will, however, do our best. We'll talk to you about your needs, concerns, frustrations and desires and listen to what you tell us, then feedback to you so all parties can check that we've understood correctly.

### **Our commitment to you**

- ◆ We will involve you when making significant changes to your services – this will usually be directly with you and can be done in a number of different ways. Sometimes we will also work with other organisations that represent you, such as supporting organisations, advocates, town or parish councils, networks and forums We will work within the law and regulations set out by courts and [Government](#), with specific reference in this context to our [equalities](#) duties, [consultation](#) and using your [personal information](#)
- ◆ We will share our knowledge and expertise through training, advice and support to councillors, council staff and volunteers so engagement is as good as we can make it We, including the Community Engagement Team, will participate in project work that helps communities come together, celebrate achievements and enhance your sense of belonging and value
- ◆ We will also share and/or [transfer resources](#), ideas, [funding information](#) and facilities so you can do things for yourselves if you wish to
- ◆ We will keep you informed so you know what is happening, how it will affect you and how you can be [involved](#). When you've taken time to give us feedback we will
- ◆ feedback to you in a clear way, for example using a 'you said, we did' approach to check our understanding and so you know what action has been taken or have an explanation as to why something hasn't happened
- ◆ The Community Engagement Team and equalities champions throughout the Council will promote and encourage the use of [formats](#) and methods that make sure people are included, regardless of age, ability or ethnicity for example. We'll aim to resolve any queries or [complaints](#) as efficiently and fully as possible and within the
- ◆ guidelines set out so you know what to expect
- ◆ Communication is key to any relationship, so we will always try to be clear, concise and approachable.

**Appendices (the extra information you might want) - How will we meet our Aims and Objectives? Let's get on with it...**

There's more detail about exactly what the Community Engagement Team and other teams within the Council, will do and what the main benefits will be in the Community Resilience and Assets Commissioning Strategy and action plan, but this table summarises our main activities:

<b>What we'll do</b>	<b>Why we're doing it: So that...</b>	<b>Who will do it</b>	<b>What we'll need to do it</b>	<b>When we'll start</b>	<b>How we'll report progress/next steps</b>
<b>Deliver training and share good practice to help others engage well</b>	Engagement is as good as it can be; Staff and volunteers feel more confident, skilled and supported	Community Engagement Team; Community networks	Trainers; Venues; Promotion; Training packs	Already underway	Throughout life of strategy; Evaluate each course
<b>Work with councillors to enhance engagement</b>	Engagement is as good as it can be; you can inform decision making	Community Engagement Team; Council service areas	Workshop-style sessions; Good working relationships	July 2018	Throughout life of strategy
<b>Work with parish/town councils and their urban equivalents</b>	Those who represent you can do so more easily; you can inform decision making	Community Engagement Team; Council service areas, particularly Highways	Workshop-style sessions; Good working relationships with named contacts	Already underway	Throughout life of strategy; Annual updates until June 2023; Mid-term review Sept 2021
<b>Work with partner organisations to make sure engagement and customer service is as inclusive as can be</b>	Those who represent you can do so more easily; You can inform decision making; Work well together	Community Engagement Team; Council service areas Partner and representative organisations	Workshop-style sessions; Good working relationships with named contacts	Already underway	Throughout life of strategy; Annual updates until June 2023; Mid-term review Sept 2021
<b>Continue to support engagement</b>	Those whose voices aren't always heard	Community Engagement;	Staff to attend/facilitate;	Already underway with established	Throughout life of Strategy;

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<b>activities with specific groups</b>	have a direct route in to the Council	Children's Services; Adult Services (depending on audience)	Venues to meet; Good working relationships	partners	Annual updates until June 2023
<b>Provide information on <a href="#">funding opportunities</a></b>	Enhance access to resources, resilience and sustainability; Support each other	Community Engagement Team;	Funding portal; Training; Networks	Already underway	Throughout life of strategy; Annual updates until June 2023; Review Sept 2021
<b>Support the <a href="#">transfer of community resources</a> where appropriate, for example Bourne Town Hall</b>	Enhance access to resources; Increase community action and resilience	Community Engagement Team; Council service areas, such as property and Legal Services	Training; Good working relationships; Funding; Legal advice	June 2018	Mid-term review Sept 2021
<b>Support <a href="#">volunteers</a></b>	Their role and community resilience is enhanced; Support each other	Community Engagement Team; Council service areas, such as Heritage	Robust policies; Training; Networks; People and time	LCC Strategy review June 2018	Review again June 2021
<b>Participate in, support and lead appropriate projects, for example Join the Dots</b>	Community resilience and learning is enhanced eg sharing expertise	Community Engagement Team; Partner organisations	Good working relationships; Funding; People and time	Already underway	Review March 2019
<b>Routinely provide feedback</b>	You're informed of what's happening and more likely to engage with us again	Community Engagement Team; Council service areas	A feedback loop; You said we did template; Means to share	July 2018	Annual updates until June 2023

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<b>Recognise and celebrate achievements</b>	You know that you are valued and belong/ have meaningful connections to your community; Support each other	Community Engagement Team; Corporate Communications; Voluntary and other public sector partner organisations	Awards and events; Funding; People and venues; Promotional messages	Already Underway	Annual updates until June 2023
<b>Carry out an audit of community engagement</b>	Check how the Community Engagement Team and <a href="#">Policy</a> are doing; Review and build on our strengths; Learn lessons to improve further	Community Engagement Team; Scrutiny Committee	Feedback process/ citizen survey Baseline of views on engagement now re 95% satisfaction	June 2018	Annually until June 2023

## Glossary – what do you mean by that?

We've tried to avoid too much council-speak and the use of abbreviations and acronyms, but if there are any terms you don't understand, you should find an explanation here:

Term	Explanation
<b>Asset Transfer</b>	Transfer of management and/or ownership of public land and buildings from its owner (usually a local council) to a community organisation (such as a development trust or social enterprise) for less than market value to achieve a local social, economic or environmental benefit
<b>Commissioning Strategy</b>	A plan of what the whole service area (our part of the County Council) will do, which teams will do it and how we'll know the team has done it well
<b>Community</b>	A group of people with something in common. They might live in the same place or share an interest, such as knitting; a characteristic, such as age; or a belief, such as religion or ideals
<b>Community Resilience and Assets</b>	People coming together to use their resources to prepare for, respond to or recover from a difficult situation or challenge. People themselves can be an asset, as well as physical resources like money, buildings or 4x4s for example. This is also the name of our service area within the Council
<b>Consultation</b>	A formal opportunity to have a say on a specific matter, at a given time, using different methods to communicate that opinion
<b>Customer Insight</b>	Using data and information that we hold to better understand people who use Council services and help us to make improvements
<b>Elected member</b>	Another name for a local councillor – a local person who has been elected by local residents and can help with County Council-related enquiries
<b>Engagement</b>	A relationship between at least two people that involves a conversation and often a commitment to act
<b>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</b>	A law in force from 2018 to provide a more up to date set of rules to protect data in Europe (and will remain in place after we leave the EU in 2019). As a result it will significantly change previous data protection legislation in the UK, replacing the Data Protection Act 1998
<b>Legitimate Expectation</b>	A legal term that means we will act in accordance with our policies or when something has been done before during consultation, for example a particular method, the public has a right to assume that service will offer something similar next time
<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	Person who could be affected (positively or negatively) due to their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity
<b>Public sector</b>	Government-run organisations that provide services for local people
<b>Service area/s</b>	Teams within the Council working toward a shared interest/goal
<b>Statutory service</b>	Services the Council has to provide by law. Rules are in place to explain what is expected, for example 'comprehensive and efficient'. Other services are 'non-statutory' or 'discretionary'/the Council's choice
<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	<a href="#">Organisations</a> that don't make a profit, often run to support communities
<b>You said, we did</b>	A simple method of feeding back to people with whom we've engaged that explains what was said and what the Council has done about it, will do or why we haven't done something if it's not been possible

# Making sure you're included

Lincolnshire County Council, in accordance with current legislation, wants to treat everyone fairly.

Although we do not translate things as a matter of course, there are times when the language barrier prevents people from accessing a service. In such cases it may be appropriate to provide an interpreter or written translation. Further information can be found by accessing the following web link:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/interpreting-and-translating/>

In line with the Accessible Information Standard, where a customer needs this document in a different format, for example, large print, braille or easy read, they should contact us on 01522 782060.

## Councillor contributions

The following councillors attended a workshop which led to the development of this document:

Cllr B Adams  
Cllr T Ashton  
Cllr W Bowkett  
Cllr T Bridges  
Cllr M Brookes  
Cllr I Fleetwood

Cllr R Foulkes  
Cllr M Overton  
Cllr R Oxby  
Cllr R Parker  
Cllr N Pepper

Cllr C Perraton-Williams  
Cllr S Roe  
Cllr E Sneath  
Cllr M Thompson  
Cllr S Woolley