



Community Engagement Strategy

Scope:	This strategy applies to all employees of the council.
Effective Date:	March 2025
Review Date:	March 2028
Author:	Assistant Director (Customer Services & Transformation)
Strategy Owned by:	Assistant Director (Customer Services & Transformation)
Statute:	Health & Social Care Act 2012 Public Sector Equality Duty, created by Equality Act 2010 Local Government Act (1997) Local Government and Public Involvement Act Localism Act (2011) Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 Climate Change Act (2008)
National Standards and Guidance	Best Value Standards and Intervention
Related Policies	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy Vulnerable Person & Reasonable Adjustment Policy Resident Involvement Strategy Transformation Strategy Transition to Net Zero Strategy



1 Scope

- 1.1 This strategy outlines the council's approach to Community Engagement.

2 Policy Statement

- 2.1 Our Vision is to put the Community at the Heart of everything we do.
- 2.2 To do that successfully, we need to work in partnership with residents, businesses and other stakeholders across the borough and beyond.
- 2.3 Community engagement gives our stakeholders the chance to be informed, have their say and be part of decisions that matter to them.
- 2.4 This strategy sets out the council's approach to community engagement over the next three years (2025-2028). This strategy should be read in conjunction with the council's Transformation Strategy which sets out our approach to improving customer experience and promoting channel shift and the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

3 Our Community

- 3.1 With a population of around 120,000 residents, Welwyn Hatfield is located in central Hertfordshire, just off the A1(M) motorway and 25 minutes by train from Central London.
- 3.2 Many major businesses are based in the borough, including the headquarters of Tesco and Ocado, as well as many smaller and independent businesses. The University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield is famous for its strong ties with industry, attracting students from around the world for courses in business, engineering and computer science. The University of London's Royal Veterinary College also has a campus in the borough and is ranked number 1 globally for Veterinary Science.
- 3.3 We are a landlord, responsible for engaging with tenants and leaseholders in over 10,000 properties. Please refer to the council's Resident Involvement Strategy for more detailed information about tenant and leaseholder engagement ([Council Housing Resident Involvement Strategy 2024-2027 – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council](#)).
- 3.4 From our most recent Community Survey undertaken in Autumn 2023, 57% of respondents told us they feel well informed by the council. This is consistent with our tenants' view, with 57% of tenants surveyed telling us we listen and act upon their views and 70% telling us we keep them informed about things that matter to them (based on 2024-25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures).

3.5 Data published by Herts Insight shows that the borough has an equal split between males (49%) and females (51%), with 65% of the population between 16-64 years old. Most residents are white British (78.7.5%) followed by Asian/Asian British (8.8%), with Polish and Romanian amongst the most Non-English spoken languages. Over 17,906 residents assess themselves as disabled under the Equalities Act 2010 and around 6% of the population have informal caring responsibilities. Christianity is the most common religion (47%). Please refer to Appendix A for a further breakdown.

4 Types of Community Engagement

4.1 The council engages with the community in the following ways at different levels:

	Inform – Providing Information	Consult – offering options, deciding together or using feedback to improve services	Empower – Support independent community action	Collaborate-forming partnerships with the community to put decisions into practice
What this is	We provide stakeholders with information about Council services and keep them informed.	We engage and consult with the community through surveys and formal consultation. This feedback will be used to make decisions on service changes and service improvements.	We support the community to take action and make positive changes in their community.	We work collaboratively with our community, forming meaningful partnerships to make a positive difference.
How we do this:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Council websites • Social media pages that are regularly updated with council news and events • Regular Press Releases promoting council news and events • Residents' Magazine • Tenant Newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory consultation e.g. planning, parking. • Survey on new strategies/service changes • Regular Staff survey • Conduct borough-wide survey every three years • Offer satisfaction survey as part of complaints process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving self-serve so our community can contact us and access services more easily • Support network of volunteers working across the council • Sign post to funding and grant opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents panel for tenants • Youth Council • Community Safety Partnership • Creating effective partnerships with stakeholders.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Newsletter • Staff Newsletter • Project Newsletters • Publish key decisions in advance of them being made • Promote partners and partner events, as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake rolling tenant satisfaction surveys 	<p>and other resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking individuals and community groups with shared goals 	
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5 Our Community Engagement Commitments

5.1 Our commitments to drive community engagement are:

<p>1. More Effective Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer information in clear language and different formats • Ensure information of the Council website is useful, clear and easy to navigate • Engage our communities through a range of communication channels • Provide regular opportunities for feedback • Share updates on our service and performance • Be open and transparent
<p>2. Partnership Working to Influence and Improve Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a culture where stakeholders are actively encouraged to be involved in scrutinising, shaping and feeding back on services, helping to improve customer satisfaction. • Consult with stakeholders, ensuring worthwhile conversations and feedback on results. • Provide a simple, accessible and defined complaints process and using feedback to shape future service delivery. • Demonstrate the results and impact of stakeholder involvement.
<p>3. Widen Participation</p>

- Create inclusive involvement opportunities to suit different needs and interest.
- Ensure all residents who want to, have the opportunity to engage with us and actively seek to reach those communities and individuals who do not engage with us.
- Identify a wide-ranging stakeholder group.
- Raise awareness of our stakeholder involvement activities.
- Support resident groups and partner organisations.
- Continue to consider what may prevent stakeholders from engaging with us and how these can be overcome.
- Improve the digital offering to widen our audience and access to services.

4. Celebrate our Thriving Communities

- Work with partner organisations to strengthen our communities.
- Support residents and business to take pride in where they live.
- Celebrate our successes with our community.
- Consider our stakeholders at the heart of decision making.

5. Ensure our Engagement meets our Standards

- Review achievements against this strategy every year.
- Make surveys and consultations clear and easy to access.
- Provide clear governance and terms of reference for the different engagement groups, as required.
- Treat all customers with fairness and respect, ensuring we understand their different needs.
- Continue to be inclusive and representative.

6 Governance

- 6.1 To deliver on the commitments, the council has drafted a Community Engagement action plan. Please refer to Appendix B. This will be overseen by the council's Community Engagement Group, a group of officers who meet monthly to review community events and engagement.
- 6.2 Key Community Engagement achievements will be reported monthly to Senior Management Team and quarterly to Cabinet as part of the council's quarterly achievements list and Annual Report.

6.3 The Action Plan will be reviewed and agreed annually by Cabinet.

Appendix A – Welwyn Hatfield Equality & Diversity Profile

Appendix B – Community & Engagement Action Plan 2025-26

Action	Service Responsible	By When
More Effective Communication		
Review inclusivity and accessibility of service information (including a review of Sign Video and Language Line)	Transformation & Customer Services (Customer Services)	July 2025
Review the effectiveness of Council's social media platforms, residents' magazine and ONE Website	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	September 2025
Develop monthly communication and engagement insight reporting	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	April 2025
Identify appropriate tools to support with effective consultation and engagement	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	June 2025
Partnership Working to Influence and Improve Services		
Promote and support key stakeholder's activity, as appropriate.	All	Ongoing
Review the council's existing communication and promotion of all town centres events	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing) Regeneration & Economic Development	September 2025
Widen Participation		
Identify all the council's stakeholders and develop a stakeholder contact list	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	September 2025
Achieve level AA or above in line with government web content accessibility guidelines	IT & Digital	Ongoing

Develop a business case for a community e-newsletter	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	September 2025
Implement a resident satisfaction survey	Transformation & Customer Services	September 2025
Promote opportunities to be involved in Resident's Panel (for tenants & leaseholders) and the Youth Council	All	Ongoing
Celebrate our Thriving Communities		
Work with the council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group to ensure engagement and events represent the community	All	Ongoing
Publish the Council's quarterly achievement list and Annual Plan to celebrate achievements with our stakeholders.	Transformation & Customer Services	Ongoing
Ensure our Engagement meets our Standards		
Refresh the council's Community & Stakeholder Engagement Group	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	March 2025
Publish the council's Event Calendar on the ONE website	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	Ongoing from April 2025
Feedback and evidence how stakeholder views are considered as part of the decision-making process.	Transformation & Customer Services (Communications, Engagement & Marketing)	Ongoing