



Ramsgate Town Council

## Community Engagement Policy

Adopted	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
Due to review	As required, reviewed 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2026

Community engagement is an essential part of effective governance. A policy that promotes two-way communication between the Council and the community is critical for ensuring that the community's needs and priorities are reflected in the council's decision-making processes. [This policy should be read alongside the Council's Communications Policy and Communication Strategy.](#)

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for meaningful and effective communication between Ramsgate Town Council and the community, [in line with the Council's Communications Policy and Communication Strategy.](#)

### Definition

Community engagement refers to the process of involving members of the community in decision-making processes that affect them. Two-way communication involves the exchange of information and ideas between Ramsgate Town Council and the community [through appropriate, accessible and inclusive communication channels.](#)

### Principles

Ramsgate Town Council is committed to the following principles in its engagement with the community:

- a. **Transparency:** The council will be open and transparent about its decision-making processes, providing information about how decisions are made and the factors considered in making them.
- b. **Accessibility:** The council will provide opportunities for community members to engage in meaningful and constructive dialogue, including through various communication channels [and in ways that support accessibility, inclusion and digital exclusion.](#)
- c. **Inclusivity:** The council will strive to engage all members of the community, including those who are traditionally underrepresented or [marginalised, digitally excluded or who may require reasonable adjustments.](#)
- d. **Timeliness:** The council will ensure that engagement processes are timely, allowing community members to provide input at a meaningful stage of decision-making.

- e. **Accountability:** The council will be accountable to the community for the decisions it makes, taking into consideration the input received through engagement processes and explaining, where appropriate, how feedback has been considered.

## **Two-way Communication**

The council will use a range of communication methods to engage with the community, recognising that different residents and stakeholders access information in different ways, including but not limited to:

- a. **Public meetings:** The council will hold public meetings to inform the community about important issues and to provide opportunities for community members to ask questions and provide feedback.
- b. **Surveys and questionnaires:** The council will use surveys and questionnaires to gather feedback from the community on specific issues.
- c. **Social media:** The council will use social media to provide updates and engage with the community on issues of importance. The official channels used by the council are detailed in an annex to this policy. Official Council social media content should be accurate, appropriate, accessible, politically neutral where required, and consistent with the Council's Communications Policy. Council-controlled online content, including social media accounts, should be moderated to address unlawful or harmful content where required.
- d. **Community forums:** The council will host community forums to discuss specific issues and provide opportunities for community members to provide input.
- e. **Public consultations:** The council will hold public consultations to gather input from the community on specific issues.
- f. **Community Groups:** The council will foster and encourage the excellent volunteering community within Ramsgate. A close community that is relied upon for communication on a ground level and for sharing local knowledge and feedback.
- g. **Website, newsletters, noticeboards and printed communication:** The Council will use its website, newsletters, noticeboards, printed materials and other appropriate channels to share information with residents, recognising that not all members of the community use social media.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- a. **Council:** The council is responsible for initiating and leading community engagement processes. Council members and staff should engage with the community in a respectful and constructive manner and in line with the Council's Communications Policy.
- b. **Community:** The community is responsible for engaging with the council in a respectful and constructive manner. Community members should provide feedback that is informed, constructive, and relevant to the issues at hand.
- c. **Council Staff:** Council staff are responsible for facilitating engagement processes and providing accurate and timely information to the community. Staff should ensure that engagement processes are accessible, inclusive, and respectful and that communications are consistent with the Council's Communications Policy, data protection requirements and agreed procedures.
- d. **Councillors:** Councillors use their own social media platforms to communicate with the local community, and should make clear whether they are speaking

personally or on behalf of the Council. Councillors should avoid giving the impression of making Council decisions outside formal meetings and should ensure communications are respectful, accurate and consistent with the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Council's Communications Policy.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

The council will protect the privacy of individuals who provide feedback through engagement processes. The council will not disclose personal information **except where there is a lawful basis to do so, in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's relevant data protection policies.**

### **Accessibility**

The council will ensure that engagement processes are accessible to all members of the community, including those with disabilities or language barriers, **digital exclusion or other access needs.** The council will provide alternative formats and language translations where necessary **and proportionate, including accessible digital content and other reasonable adjustments where appropriate.**

The council will ensure that all communication is clear, and the language used is simplified. The council will avoid using jargon and all communication will be in plain English. **Where technical terms are used, they should be explained.** The community needs to be able to understand the main issues being expressed by the council **and how they can engage or respond.**

### **Adoption and Implementation**

This policy will be adopted by the council and implemented by council staff. The policy will be communicated to the community through various channels, including the council website, social media, **newsletters, noticeboards, printed materials** and public meetings **where relevant.**

### **Reporting and Feedback**

The council will report back to the community on the input received through engagement processes and how that input has been considered in decision-making, **where appropriate.** The council will also provide opportunities for community members to provide feedback on the effectiveness of engagement processes.

### **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

The council will evaluate the effectiveness of its engagement processes and continuously improve them based on feedback from the community. The council will use a variety of indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of engagement processes, such as the number of participants, the quality of feedback, **accessibility, reach across different audiences** and the level of satisfaction of participants.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in promoting two-way communication between the council and the community **and should be reviewed alongside relevant reviews of the Communications Policy and Communication Strategy.**

## **Annex: Official Town Council Social Media Channels**

The following social media channels are currently listed as official Town Council channels and should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain active, accurate and consistent with the Council's Communications Policy and Communication Strategy.

### **Facebook**

Ramsgate Town Council – [www.facebook.com/RamsgateTown](http://www.facebook.com/RamsgateTown)  
Mayor of Ramsgate – [www.facebook.com/MayorofRamsgate](http://www.facebook.com/MayorofRamsgate)  
Visit Ramsgate – [www.facebook.com/VisitRamsgate](http://www.facebook.com/VisitRamsgate)  
Radford House – [www.facebook.com/RadfordHouseRTC](http://www.facebook.com/RadfordHouseRTC)

### **X / Twitter**

Ramsgate Town Council – [www.twitter.com/RamsgateTown](http://www.twitter.com/RamsgateTown)  
Mayor of Ramsgate – [www.twitter.com/MayorRamsgate](http://www.twitter.com/MayorRamsgate)  
Visit Ramsgate – [www.twitter.com/VisitRamsgateUK](http://www.twitter.com/VisitRamsgateUK)

### **Instagram**

Ramsgate Town Council – [www.instagram.com/RamsgateTown](http://www.instagram.com/RamsgateTown)  
Mayor of Ramsgate – [www.instagram.com/MayorofRamsgate](http://www.instagram.com/MayorofRamsgate)  
Visit Ramsgate – [www.instagram.com/VisitRamsgate](http://www.instagram.com/VisitRamsgate)  
Radford House – [www.instagram.com/RadfordHouseRTC](http://www.instagram.com/RadfordHouseRTC)

### **LinkedIn**

Ramsgate Town Council – [www.linkedin.com/company/ramsgate-town-council](http://www.linkedin.com/company/ramsgate-town-council)

### **Youtube**

Ramsgate Town Council – [www.youtube.com/RamsgateTown](http://www.youtube.com/RamsgateTown)  
Active Ramsgate – [www.youtube.com/@ActiveRamsgate](http://www.youtube.com/@ActiveRamsgate)