



**Nelson
Town Council**

Community Engagement Strategy and Community Involvement in Planning

Informing, involving, consulting

It's important for everyone to have the opportunity to get involved and have their say in local issues that affect or interest them.

To help make this happen, we are planning on adopting a community engagement strategy setting out how everyone working and living in the Town can get involved.

What is a community engagement strategy^[SW1]?

A community engagement strategy guides us and our partners (including the county council, police and health service) on how we engage with our communities, interested people and organisations in the many services we all provide.

What is community involvement in planning?

This document sets out how we involve the community and other interested individuals and groups as we prepare planning policies and guidance and when we consider planning applications in Nelson.

Listening^[SW2]

A 12 week consultation period will be held on the Strategy to ensure we have included all the relevant factors. All comments will be considered and the document amended where appropriate. The Document will then be taken to Full Council to be adopted.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 encourages local communities to get involved in the development of Local Plans and planning decisions that affect their

area. Local authorities have a role in supporting this, and helping to facilitate neighbourhood planning. Nelson Town Council's Planning Committee is looking at developing a Neighbourhood Plan as one of its priorities. Local authorities also now have a duty to cooperate with neighbouring councils and other public bodies.

The council has encouraged pre-application consultation for large scale development for some time and now the Localism Act 2011 (legislation.gov.uk) formally requires this. The legislation for preparing Local Plans has also been updated. Further information on Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (no 767) can be viewed at (legislation.gov.uk).

Engaging^[SW3]

Nelson Town Council and its partners will inform, consult and involved the community in many ways to influence local services. It will do this through various methods included but not limited to:

- Survey, both electronic and paper based
- Website Forums
- Public Meetings
- Door knocking
- Encouraging more public participation at meetings
- Meeting with local representatives and groups
- Having representatives on outside bodies
- Noticeboards
- Newsletters
- Newspapers
- Social networking including Facebook and Twitter
- Presentations
- Councillor surgeries
- Planning for real exercises

The Town Clerk will

- Develop and assess Questionnaires
- Reporting back to Council
- Identifying the hard to reach groups
- Publishing results
- Receive and store information
- Arrange visits
- Prepare presentations

- Design newsletters
- Place notices in noticeboards
- Update the website, Facebook and twitter pages

How you can influence [SW4]

Contact Your Councillors

Make an appointment, make a phone call, write a letter, send a fax, e-mail a message – let your Councillor know what you think.

Contact your Councillor to:

- let them know what you think
- get advice or help
- pass on a suggestion or good idea

Contact your local council for details about your local government representatives.

Write or Sign a Petition

A petition is a document that states a concern and asks that something be done to improve the situation. Members of the community sign the petition to show their support. The more signatures the better. If someone asks you to sign a petition and you support the idea – sign it.

Petitions are tabled in Full Council. They tell our Councillors how members of the public are feeling about an issue.

If you want to write a petition, decide whether the issue is a local, Borough or County one and contact your Councillor for that Council. They will provide you with information on how to write your petition. You will need to collect signatures and ask your Councillor to present the petition to Full Council.

Write a Letter to the Editor [SW5]

If you want other people to hear about your concern or good idea, a newspaper may be prepared to publish a letter from you in the "letters to the editor" section. Look in the newspaper for details on how to do this.

Join a Political Party

If you want to be involved in selecting candidates (or becoming one) and developing policies, contact the political party of your choice and find out about membership fees and how to apply.

Join or Start a Lobby Group

Lobby groups try to bring about change. A lobby group may be a big organisation or a small community group who share the same ideas about an issue.

Larger lobby groups are listed in the telephone directory and would welcome your enquiry about membership.

Inform the Media

Newspapers, television, and radio are the main way that information is spread. If you feel that you have been disadvantaged or have something worthwhile to tell, consider contacting the media. They may choose to use a journalist to report your story to the community.

Attend or Organise a Rally

It is legal to attend or organise a rally or meeting to express your view on an issue. Protest can be a powerful way of sending a message to your representatives, and often attracts media attention.

Although it is legal to express your opinion by attending or speaking at a rally, make sure that you obey laws about behaviour in public places.

If you plan to organise a rally, contact the police first.

Attend Your Local Council Meetings

Some local councils allow members of the public to speak at their meetings. Contact your local council for more information. The Town Council has an element for Public Participation.